

# Introduction: Bioethics and Human Enhancement

## Introducción: Bioética y mejora humana

**Blanca Rodríguez**

Universidad Complutense de Madrid  
[bmerino@ucm.es](mailto:bmerino@ucm.es)

**Paloma García**

Universidad de Granada  
[palomagdiaz@ugr.es](mailto:palomagdiaz@ugr.es)

**Olga Campos**

Universidad de Granada  
[olgacampos@ugr.es](mailto:olgacampos@ugr.es)

**ABSTRACT:** The works collected in this Monograph on human enhancement are the outgrowth of the II International Workshop on "Practical Ethics. Bioethics and Human Enhancement". All of them shift from the classical opposition between two ethical sides, bioconservatism and posthumanism, to new philosophical insights. They also take into account the problem of public perception and assessment on biotechnologies. All of the articles illuminate ways to deal with issues surrounding cognitive enhancement such as an analysis of the increase in individual and collective benefits that cognitive enhancements would give rise to; a new account of how a society would achieve the equality of opportunities for intellectually disabled and non-disabled persons by the means of genetic enhancement; an inquiry on the interplay of cognitive enhancement and human authenticity; a new moral justification for enhancements, which is thought as a third way to classical framing; and, finally a call for more reflexive bioethical inquiries.

**RESUMEN:** Los trabajos recogidos en este Monográfico sobre mejora humana son el resultado del II International Workshop "Practical Ethics. Bioethics and Human Enhancement". Todos ellos dejan de lado la oposición clásica entre dos posturas éticas, bioconservadurismo y posthumanismo, y se mueven hacia nuevas ideas filosóficas. Todos los artículos vislumbran nuevas maneras de tratar con tema de mejora cognitiva y ofrecen: un análisis del aumento de beneficios individuales y colectivos que derivarían de la mejora cognitiva; una nueva explicación de cómo podrían las sociedades alcanzar la igualdad de oportunidades entre discapacitados intelectuales y el resto de la sociedad por medio de mejoras genéticas; un estudio sobre la relación entre mejora y autenticidad humana; una nueva justificación moral para las mejoras, pensada como una tercera vía para los enfoques morales clásicos; y, finalmente, una llamada de atención para que se realicen investigaciones bioéticas más reflexivas.

**KEYWORDS:** cognitive enhancement, authenticity, individual and collective benefits, equality of opportunities, reflexivity

**PALABRAS-CLAVE:** mejora cognitiva, autenticidad, beneficios individuales y colectivos, igualdad de oportunidades, reflexividad

The works collected in this Monograph on human enhancement are the outgrowth of the II International Workshop on "Practical Ethics. Bioethics and Human Enhancement" held at the University of Granada the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2014. This Workshop on contemporary debates on the enhancement of human capabilities was organized by the Research Project "Ethics and Politics of Biomedical Advances in Human Enhancement" (FFI2012-32565). It gathered philosophers, lawyers and social scientists from different nationalities whose fruitful discussions contributed to the high quality of this meeting. Furthermore, this Workshop enjoyed the participation of Julian Savulescu and Andy Miah as keynote speakers, two of the most prominent philosophers and most influential thinkers in the debate on enhancing human capabilities.

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The ethical debate on human enhancement has been most commonly framed in terms of the opposition of two sides, but this framing is now under pressure. The first is a bioconservative one that rejects the improvement of human capacities through the use of sophisticated biomedical techniques or drugs (Sandel, 2009). Scholars within bioconservatism argue against all type of biomedical enhancements as they consider that upgrading people's longevity and intelligence, and improving traits of character and genetics are examples of playing God. The second one is a posthumanist –or pro-enhancement side– that welcomes improvements of human functioning (Bostrom, 2005a, 2005b; Savulescu, 2009). This debate has been useful in order to settle and clarify the reasons and arguments within ethical theories for supporting or debunking the main project of the enhancement of humans through biomedical techniques, e.g., the cognitive enhancement as well as the physical and moral enhancement by drugs and clinical techniques. The ethical debate in terms of bioconservatism and posthumanism has also successfully given rise to enthusiastic discourses and philosophical argumentations committed to the idea of a better humanity by respecting and non-altering the pristine nature of humans from one perspective, or by the means of improving it through sophisticated biomedical techniques from the other.

Although this debate in favor or against biomedical enhancement techniques has been fruitful in many ways, this dualistic and dichotomized framing of contemporary debates seems more and more outmoded. Nowadays, much of the contemporary discussions have shifted to new philosophical insights. Ongoing debates on human enhancement still revisit classical problems such as the distinction between enhancement and therapy (Schermer and Bolt, 2011), the relationship between enhancement and human authenticity (Parens, 2005), and enhancement and autonomy (Juth, 2011). Apart from these, the state-of-the-art developments in transgenesis, germ-line research and pharmaceutical enhancements spread over closer possibilities for individuals and collectivities; groups of enhanced professionals, such as sport practitioners, judges, doctors and soldiers; and for able or disabled people (Savulescu & Bennett, 2011; Enck, 2013). As biomedicine grows and grows, the so-called enhancement technologies become safer and more effective. In this context, past considerations about "playing God" by means of techno-scientific developments seem today inappropriate. Instead of focusing on the dichotomized debate, it is better to concentrate on specific domains of the en-

hancement of human capacities (Overall, 2009). Contemporary debates on human enhancement thus draw great attention to all those topics from the point of view of science, philosophy, law and so on. Furthermore, the increasing and enormous variety of biomedical developments gives rise to a flourishing literature on studies of public perception and assessment on biotechnologies.

The articles gathered in this Monograph are along the same lines. They all center on philosophical controversies that have to do with cognitive enhancements. The Monograph commences with an analysis of the increase in individual and collective benefits that cognitive enhancements would give rise to. This analysis is followed by an account of how a society would achieve the equality of opportunities for intellectually disabled and non-disabled persons by the means of genetic enhancement. The next inquiry focuses on the interplay of cognitive enhancement and human authenticity. The two last issues develop, firstly, a new way to justify moral justification for enhancements, which is suitable for moral enhancements, and secondly, a call for more reflexive bioethical inquiries.

Ioana Petre's work (*Balancing Individual and Collective Benefits in the Case of Cognitive Enhancement*) centers on cognitive enhancement from a broad point of view: enhancement of normal daily intake, such as caffeine, external devices of information technologies, neuroenhancement drugs and so on. Her illuminating article focuses on the inquiry about the identity of the beneficiaries of cognitive enhancement and the exploration of individual and collective goals achieved through the use of cognitive enhancements. She tackles how different types of cognitive enhancements give rise to the clash of individual and societal sets of goals. Furthermore she offers a proposal that aims to balance those different sets of goals.

The article of Mosquera (*Disability, Enhancement, and Equality*) deals with the question of equality of opportunities among disabled and non-disabled individuals. In so doing, she draws attention to the relationship between intellectually disabled individuals and natural and social accounts of disability. She thus argues for genetic enhancement as a means to deal both with the issue of real equality of opportunities and problems within both accounts of disability. Finally, Julia Mosquera's proposal enriches the debate on intellectual disability and real equality of opportunities since she takes account of some potential objections that relate to the issue of relative inequality.

Regarding authenticity, the article of Pei-hua Huang (*Authenticity, Autonomy, and Enhancement*) goes in depth about the theoretical debate on moral evaluation of enhancement techniques. She asks whether human authenticity is negatively affected by cognitive enhancement. Huang deals thus with the relationship between authenticity and identity, on the one hand, and autonomy, on the other. Then she identifies some requirements for arguing a satisfactory insight of authenticity.

José Luis Pérez Triviño also analyzes the delicate interplay of equality, human rights and genetic manipulations (as well as other enhancing techniques, such as implants, prosthesis and transgenesis). Triviño argues in his article (*Equality of Access to Enhancement Technology in a Posthumanist Society*) that the question of equality is binding for addressing the moral justification of human enhancement by means of such techniques. One of the most interesting findings in Triviño's article is how he shifts from classical accounts on the moral justification of genetic enhancements. He offers a third way between prohibitionist and approving positions to enhancements implementations grounded in some ideas of Rawlsian primary goods. In his view, such a third way would allow us to think two phases for the genetic enhancement of individuals, a first phase where genetic enhancements would be open access, and a second one where it would be compulsory.

Paloma García Díaz differentiate scholarly bioethics and "bioethics in the making" in order to cope with the role of public interest within the ethical debate on the enhancement of human capabilities. Then she outlines in her work (*The philosophical debate upon human enhancement and the question of public interest*) three philosophical discourses on human enhancement and analyzes several philosophical arguments present in those works that do not allow to reflect in-depth the role of public interest within scholarly bioethics. She calls for more reflexivity and for the inclusion of moral reasons that arise from the public in order to enrich bioethical deliberations.

We wish to end this short introduction showing our gratefulness to all those persons who have participated with their articles in this Monograph, and to the participants in the workshop, especially Julian Savulescu and Andy Miah. We would also give our special thanks to *Dilemata. International Journal of Applied Ethics* for supporting this Monograph.

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