

# HUMAN ENHANCEMENT, THE PERSON, AND POSTHUMAN PERSONHOOD

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## Abstract

*This article examines the problem of enhancing human beings and the possibility of making them into posthuman persons. I begin by presenting the major ideas of the project and their corresponding implementations. Then I consider the significance of these ideas from two different conceptions of the person, namely the naturalist and the personalist. Finally, I review the ethical projects associated with naturalism and personalism in an attempt to determine the emergent moral questions that arise when the two confront the possibility of human enhancement. These positions differ substantially in terms of their assessment of various interventions as permissible or ethically praiseworthy. Despite the major advancements in genetic technology that can make such interventions possible, we are still divided by basic understandings of who we are, whom we want to become, and what human goods should be promoted. At any rate, we cannot sideline these important humanist considerations.*

**Key words:** Human enhancement; Person; Posthuman person; Naturalism; Personalism

## Introduction

Discussion of human enhancement is already well under way, as it raises the interest of both the general public as well as the professional scholar. Concerning the latter, there are a good number of philosophers presently engaged in the debates on human enhancement. As a consequence, many scholarly articles are published in an attempt to investigate the possible influence of such intervention on various aspects of human lives and wellbeing. Strangely enough, these papers are advanced even though very few of the discussed innovations can be successfully implemented in practice. Thus, the whole issue may seem a part of futurology. Even without considering their veracity, it must be said that many ideas constituting particular debates are worthy of serious attention. One such idea is that of prolonging and changing human life to the point of questioning whether the resulting creature is still a human being, or more particularly, a human person. For the sake of our inquiry, we can assume at the very outset that a kind of posthuman person is possible at a certain point in the process of enhancing members of our species. If in a well-established philosophy of the person there is a place for discussing non-human persons (e.g. angelic, divine), there should be also a place for talk about “more advanced” posthuman persons. What they might be like in their entirety is, to a considerable extent, a matter of speculation, although we can ascribe to them some characteristics right now.

After some preliminary remarks regarding human enhancement, I first will sketch out the views of several proponents of this activity concerning a prolongation and betterment of human life leading to a so-called posthuman personhood. Second, I will point towards some difficulties associated with these ideas. Third, I will consider

two versions of personhood which possibly come into play, namely the naturalist and the personalist. Finally, I will draw some ethical conclusions from these scientific, metaphysical, and anthropological investigations.

### **Toward Making Better People**

At the beginning of our investigation, we should classify the various enhancing interventions. From a general point of view, we must point to a certain kind of logic that operates in all enhancement projects, namely the move from “good” to “better,” that is, the move from a good state of human existence to a better one. However, from a wider perspective, we must also include an earlier move from “bad” to “good.” Thus the elimination of undesirable states of health, pathological states, and any improvements will fall within our range of interest. Torbjörn Tännsjö covers each of these moves: He points to *negative* interventions aimed at curing a disease or eliminating a handicap; *positive* interventions directed at improving “the functioning of a human organism within a natural variations”; and *enhancing interventions*, which concentrate on taking an individual beyond the normal functioning of a human organism (Tännsjö 2009: 316). Although only the latter two seem to have a clearly ameliorating character, there are also negative interventions which can overlap with, to some extent, positive as well as enhancing ones.<sup>1</sup> But let us accept Tännsjö’s distinction for the sake of present analyses, because it seems sufficient for the issues we want to investigate in this paper.

What are technical ways to implement these enhancement-oriented goals? Let us point to some generally agreed upon standards which are typically included in the enhancement debate. Simply stated, given procedures can be applied at all stages of human life, but the earlier the intervention, the better. Thus, while gene therapy can be used successfully on adult individuals to modify their genetic makeup, gametes and early embryos are better candidates to implement desirable change via genetic engineering (reason: they are not particularly complex and are relatively easy to manipulate). These interventions consist in replacing a so-called “bad” gene with a “good” one, or a “good” one with a “better” one. The aim is to create the best possible chromosome, which will bring with it the guarantee of a desired phenotype. Moreover, it becomes possible to speculate the creation of an artificial chromosome with the genes required to obtain radical enhancement and add this new structure to an existing natural one (Stock 2002: ch. 4; Agar 2010: 29). Also, among other proposals, some bioethicists discuss transforming human reproductive systems in such a way that they secure production of desirable (upgraded) reproductive cells (Bostrom, Savulescu 2009: 10).

Further undertakings within human enhancement include regenerative medicine associated with manipulation on a genotype of cells and so-called nano-medicine. For instance, successful recreation of vital organs (reared from stem cells) combined with a switching-off of genes responsible for the aging process can substantially contribute to a prolongation of human life. It will be a clear sign that we have reached a stage of enhanced individuals if, due to this modification, we are able to live 300 years or more (Harris 2007: 52). Nano-medicine, stemming from the growing domain of nanotechnologies, is not yet available and so remains a project for the future. What we can tell about it now is that nano-robots the size of bacteria can be introduced into

the human organism as devices that monitor and repair damaged cells and tissues. Thus, if successful, they too will contribute to longer and healthier lives (O'Mathúna 2009: 128-157).

Enhancing human beings also involves an attempt at changing the human psyche. Of course, we can expect that replacing genes will affect the human psyche as a side effect, but then we have very limited control over it. What is needed is a set of more direct interventions such as those already in use. There are a good number of various drugs that influence the human psyche, such as performance-enhancing drugs and mood- or attention-altering agents. Moreover, Julian Savulescu notes that our human psyche and mental attitude can be substantially affected through the employment of the fruits of neurosciences and computing technology. His reasoning is as follows:

neuroscience, together with computing technology, offers radical opportunities for enhancing cognitive performance. Already, chips have been introduced into human beings for purposes of tracking and computer-assisted control of biological functions. Minds are connected through the internet and there may be no barrier in principle to direct mind-reading and thought-sharing across human minds. Uploading of human minds to artificially intelligent systems represents one of the most radical possibilities for human development. (Savulescu 2009: 214)<sup>2</sup>

An enhanced person—as it is predicted by adherents of the human enhancement project—will live longer and be healthier and more advanced in her mental and personality characteristics. We can easily imagine, for example, someone who lives longer and in better health because we are witnesses to such constant medicinal improvements even within our lifetime. It is harder to imagine someone who is much more advanced in psychological and personality traits. However, we may borrow some examples from the world of computers or robots to visualize such changes. Insofar as Ray Kurzweil presents his idea of uploading of the person, he assumes that the latter can be made first into a large bulk of information, and second, recorded to a computer hard drive, then refined and improved. Recognizing that new and improved generations of computers appear continuously,<sup>3</sup> we may imagine this bulk of information undergoing a consequent and continual refinement and perfection. This process can be greatly aided through the presence of artificial devices and chips in the human body. Replacing natural organs (e.g. the parts responsible for higher brain functioning) with artificial ones—which transhumanists consider both a natural and inevitable process—will result in a greater availability of information. Artificial organs, especially the brain, are easier to scan, and so the resultant creature-cyborg, made up of many such elements, is made more conducive to scientific investigation.

Finally, when the processing and perfecting of this human information reaches a level millions of times higher than the intelligence of present humans, it will be downloaded into a new vessel such as a silicon body. Such a creature is so far advanced that it must be considered to belong to an entirely different species. Kurzweil tries to show the gulf that separates *Homo sapiens* from those new posthuman creatures. He claims that it can be compared to the gulf between presently living humans and bacteria. Inasmuch as the latter are unable to understand us, neither can we comprehend the character of posthuman persons (Kurzweil 2006: 297ff).

The views presented above, however, are problematic not only from a scientific point of view but also from a philosophical standpoint. First, in this scenario there are

many strong claims which are difficult to verify. For instance, we do not know whether the sciences will ever allow us to go so far as to radically improve the functioning of our bodies. We do not know whether a switching-off of genes responsible for aging processes will ever be possible and, if so, whether it will guarantee the longevity of the somatic cells.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, doubt exists regarding the possibility of scanning the richness and complexity of personal life into a set of information. Even if we succeeded in scanning particular somatic cells (including neural cells), it would be much harder to acquire information concerning the more complex systems of our body, e.g. systems responsible for social subconsciousness (see Tonn 2011: 25-34).

Second, from a philosophical point of view, identifying the person with a bundle of information, regardless of its complexity, remains highly controversial. Information can be obtained about any entity, but information by itself does not constitute that entity. Scanned information on the human being can be stored on a huge hard-drive as a kind of data, yet this data may not by itself constitute a human person. Even a highly advanced computer cannot make it into a person, let alone a silicon body, by itself. There must be another factor, which organizes information, makes it into a certain configuration, and consequently sustains its functioning. Once we are aware of the complexity of the bundle of personal information, we also begin to realize that the factor governing this set must be even more complex. What is important to notice here is that such a factor must amount to a kind of dynamic structure acting either from the outside or inside of that bundle. The set of information itself does not possess such a structure, and it is hard to imagine what external reality does. In some philosophical traditions, such a dynamic structure has been identified with the soul. However, in transhumanism there is no place for the latter.

### **Towards Making Better Persons**

When we concentrate on personhood from within the context of enhancement, we must take into account its varied conceptions. I will limit my investigation to two such ideas. First, I will inquire into the significance of enhancement from the naturalist concept of the person. Second, I will do the same from the perspective of the personalist project.

### **The Naturalist Approach**

Discussions concerning the naturalist concept of the person are very advanced. I will only sketch this pattern of thinking, which we need for our inquiry. In the naturalist approach to the person, the classical concept of substance is rejected. Consequently, no trans-empirical ground for personhood is accepted; rather, an examination of personhood in terms of substance must be considered from within the naturalist concept of the bundle.<sup>5</sup> Philosophers point to various sets of personal characteristics, which make a given entity a person. Some of them (e.g. Peter Singer), following John Locke's analyses concerning human identity,<sup>6</sup> concentrate on basic features like thinking, intelligence, and consciousness. Others, like Michael Tooley, John Harris, and Mary A. Warren, emphasize further psychological traits, which constitute the mature human personality. Joseph Fletcher presents a very advanced set of such factors pointing to intelligence, self-awareness, self-control, sense of time, sense of futurity, sense of the past, capacity to relate to others, concern for others, communication

with other persons, control of existence, curiosity, change and changeability, balance of rationality and feeling, idiosyncrasy, and neocortical function (Fletcher 1979: 11nn). Thus we can point either to a minimal set of personal characteristics or a maximal one. Discussions concerning which set adequately describes the person is far from settled. One potential solution is that the minimal set amounts to a necessary condition of personhood, while the maximal one to a sufficient condition.

What is central to the naturalist approach is the conviction that only these characteristics matter. This means that while the characteristics do not appear in a void and must possess a kind of vessel, naturalists tend to focus on the bundle which gathers these personal traits together. A good example of this position is expressed by Robert Nozick, who writes that

if the basic moral characteristic is shared by everyone, then it does not seem to have anything special to do with you. Your value would consist in being a bearer of this characteristic (for instance, rationality, ability to revere the moral law); you would not be valued for being yourself. . . . There then is the sense that any other bearer of the characteristic can equally well replace you, so that you are not valued or respected for being the particular person you are. . . . You are valued for your self but not for yourself. (Nozick 1981: 453-454)

From such an approach, it is relatively easy to separate the person from the human being and credit the former with a special importance and value. As Nozick put it, these personal characteristics are factors, which are of interest for ethicists. Thus the concept of personhood becomes also an ethical category.<sup>7</sup>

Enhancing the person as she is understood from the naturalist position will concern changing her personal characteristics. We can consider this from two aspects: empirical and philosophical. On the one hand, it consists in looking for the natural and empirical factors that condition her functioning and then a corresponding attempt to upgrade them. As we mentioned above, the latter can start with corrections brought about by psycho-stimulants. But it can also employ more radical interventions like regenerative medicine, nano-medicine, and finally, genetic manipulations. By strengthening certain somatic structures and processes, we bring about higher quality of resulting psychological traits. Of course, this way of reasoning leads us to the project of emergence (non-reductive naturalism). Thus the posthuman person in naturalism is understood in strict connection with the appearance of the creature that is in possession of higher quality emergent properties.

On the other hand, to enhance the person is to increase the quality of her expressions in every respect. Thus, we cannot confine these expressions to the realm of the physical or generally the material. They are multidimensional, which means that they cannot be fully identified with purely psychological processes. Rather, the latter should be considered as vessels, though what they contain—in many aspects—transcends the realm of the material and empirical. Thus, such traits as self-awareness and sense of time cannot be investigated with only empirical tools. They include reference to abstract realities, and in order to grasp them, we need methods different from those offered by naturalism. We can see these abstract realities emphasized in almost all of the characteristics presented by Fletcher (abstract ideas, intentions, projects). This brings about a serious problem: we do not know how to enhance this non-empirical content with empirical tools; it clearly goes beyond a simple issue of

measurement and thus is not an easy subject of manipulation. Unless we subscribe to the view that they are fully products of material reality (and we have good reasons not to), we cannot sustain a thesis that, for instance, any upgrading of abstract intention (e.g. a resolve to be more just and tolerant) can be obtained with the application of regenerative medicine, nano-medicine, or genetic enhancement.

### A Personalist Approach

The personalist approach to the person does not concentrate on particular personal characteristics. Rather, it has at the center of attention a whole personal reality. There are various personalisms and hence various approaches to the person. I am going to limit my presentation to one version of this position, namely to the so-called ontological personalism. Within this approach, it is assumed that the person exists as a multidimensional being and should be investigated accordingly. Following the personalist analysis advanced by Karol Wojtyła, we can describe the person as a subject who can be characterized by a metaphysical and personal subjectivity. The former is called *suppositum* and is understood as the metaphysical subject of existence and action, while the latter is a richer reality where human interiority and experience play vital roles. Of course, one is strictly connected with the other, and so, accordingly, we must treat them as one personal reality.<sup>8</sup>

Stressing the importance of the metaphysical subject, personalist philosophers aim to demonstrate that the human person constitutes something greater than a mere set of personal traits. The subject goes before its traits in the logical sense, and we cannot acquire an adequate understanding of the latter without the former. This is demonstrated in Thomas Reid, who critically discussed personal identity with John Locke. Reid emphasized that I am not this or that personal characteristic, e.g. I am not thought or action, but I think and undertake this or that action as a *self* or an *I*.<sup>9</sup> All personal activities must be possessed by and carried out by a doer or an agent.<sup>10</sup> Thus if John Locke inspired naturalist thinkers, so Thomas Reid strengthened the cause of personalist philosophers.

An analysis of personal characteristics, which are so important to the naturalist's apprehension of the person, can reveal two distinct aspects between these traits: exterior and interior. The former consists in a set of empirical processes that make manifest a given characteristic, thereafter available for observation. The latter, in turn, concerns the content, which transcends the realm of the natural and its set of epistemological tools. From the personalist perspective, these distinctions must be made with reference to the entirety of the whole person. Thus we can characterize the person as the entity who possesses both exteriority and interiority, each of which complements the other. As Wojtyła puts it, "I myself am for me not only interiority but also exteriority. At the same time I remain a subject of both experiences, namely from inside and from outside" (Wojtyła 1994: 55).

That the subject possesses a first-person perspective "I" is crucial to the personalist understanding of the person. Within the context of ontological personalism, this perspective cannot be identified with an extra-worldly reality (*res cogitans*) that is made manifest merely through the exteriority of the person, namely the body. Neither can it be comprehended as an epiphenomenon (or emergent) of material reality as may be the case in naturalism. Rather it is strictly connected with personhood understood

as a way of existence.<sup>11</sup> As Roger Scruton rightly states, “Personhood is not a property that I possess, but my way of being me” (Scruton 2012: 62). Thus, although it is manifest in personal acts such as cognition, volition, or experience, the “I” is in a sense anchored in the whole personal being (in its existence). In the philosophy of the person as espoused by Karol Wojtyła, the subject with its first-person perspective also encompasses these aspects of the human being, which seem to represent pure objectivity (e.g. physiological states). And this is possible due to the fact that I, the person, have a reference to them and they belong to me, in a special way (i.e. not as pure objects), and co-constitute me as a complex subject.

Enhancing the person as understood in this way is rather difficult. When we take into account solely those personal characteristics, we can argue at most for enhancing some of her aspects. This is because these characteristics are not treated in the personalist position as a person’s constituent parts but as modes of her expressions; they are given on the level of the personal subject. A strictly personal way of existence cannot be a subject of empirical improvements. Changing some aspects of the personal being does not amount to changing her fundamental existence; thus, we cannot modify *suppositum* itself. And because the latter is present in the personal subject (as its core), also this one cannot be radically altered. Thus improving consciousness or ability to communicate we only upgrade channels through which the person makes herself manifest, and this can be done only in a limited degree, as we mentioned above.<sup>12</sup> This, of course, can increase the quality of personal life, but it cannot make her into a higher-level creature.

### **Ethics of Enhancement**

Having examined both the naturalist as well as personalist positions, we can delve now into the ethical aspect of enhancement. Both perspectives of the human person are connected with specific conceptions of ethics and thus generate differing moral assessments of enhancement interventions. Naturalism is usually associated with utilitarian ethics, while personalism includes its own personalist ethics.

Even a general understanding of utilitarianism will allow us to understand that most enhancement interventions will be considered morally praiseworthy. They promise to increase a general wellbeing of groups and societies and specifically good consequences of various kinds.<sup>13</sup> Thus—according to Tännsjö’s typology—*negative* interventions that aim at the elimination of dispositions towards illness will be positive, at least in principle. They will eliminate all those factors which constitute sources of pain and suffering. Also, *positive* interventions will gain a positive ethical assessment, because they seek to intensify happiness and, consequently, increase a level of personal fulfillment. Thus “weaker” individuals will be given a chance to conduct their lives on a higher level. Finally, strictly *enhancing* interventions will be welcome because they bring with them the promise of the reduction or eradication of human limitations in many respects. A portrait of the posthuman person may summarize within itself all the positive consequences of enhancing interventions.

Of course, all attempts of betterment will be judged differently if they run a disproportioned risk for the present state of individuals (e.g. for their health). Thus risk assessment will be a necessary ingredient of such ethical considerations. What is interesting in the utilitarian approach is that very often we cannot determine with

precision the consequences of our actions, especially in the case of pure enhancement. As a result we often deal with hypothetical consequences and hence various, and sometimes contradicting, ethical judgments.

In contrast to the naturalist position, the ethics of the personalist approach will be more restrictive. Only few interventions in the realm of improvement and enhancement will be judged morally praiseworthy. On the one hand, this is a result of the assumed concept of the person. As we mentioned above, the person is a reality who goes well beyond the realm of empirical and natural, and so employing the tools of the latter cannot bring about a radical change in the former. On the other hand, such a radical modification has a strictly ethical barrier as well. With personalism of any variety, the person is always considered as an end in itself and as such should never be treated as a means to an end (Kant 2002: ch. II, no. 32; Wojtyła 1981: 28). In Kant's thinking, which was partly undertaken by Wojtyła, to be an end in itself, the personal entity must be objective, that is, "valid for all rational beings irrespective of their inclinations" (Wood 2008: 86). Recognizing and respecting the person-end-in-itself presupposes that he precedes all desires and intentions associated with him, and in fact the former generates the latter, not the other way round. Furthermore, we can introduce a further distinction between the essential good of the person and goods for the person insofar as it appears in works of Wojtyła (e.g. Wojtyła 1981: 122). The former is associated with the fundamental structure of the person, and we can call it the ontological good. The latter concern various factors, which the person needs for her development, wellbeing, and fulfillment. Goods for the person cannot be identified with the essential good of the person, although they remain in a close connection.

Thus from within the personalist position we can easily justify negative interventions. They tend to remove those impediments which prevent the development of a person's potential. Unless they pose too great a risk to the person, particularly undesirable and illness-related characteristics should be the subjects of improvement. Ultimately, such an activity will amount to medical treatment that draws upon new discoveries in genetics and genetic engineering. One criterion for this negative intervention will be the traditional concept of human health, which includes freedom from disease and other maladies.<sup>14</sup> At any rate, we can rightly claim that goods for the person should be subjected to the essential good of the person, and moreover the former should strengthen the latter.

The problem arises when we consider positive interventions. They tend to upgrade the strength and the level of performance of personal characteristics but without an attempt to transgress what is yet available in the human family (e.g. a level of intelligence). Taking into account all prudential requirements, we can wonder whether such a move will serve the person herself, or—in other words—whether by upgrading certain goods for the person, we also promote the essential good of the person, or at least we do not diminish it. One possible response is that in strengthening goods for the person, we directly create more space for her expression, and hence we promote her ontological good (the essential good). The problem with such a solution is that only all relevant goods for the person bring with them a vital support for the essential good of the person, but not selective ones. However, it often happens that intervention to one personal trait occurs at the expense of others (Hauskeller 2014), and consequently promotion of one particular good happens at the expense of

other goods. Imagine an increase of a person's intelligence without a corresponding improvement in her disposition to justice. This one-sidedness can be dangerous for the person and even more so for society. Thus, we need to promote all important goods for the person simultaneously in order to provide a better space for the essential good of the person, and how to do that exactly still remains unclear.

Pure enhancement, from the personalist perspective, brings with it serious moral controversies. For example, if such enhancement leads to a new state of existence, it means that the present state is unsatisfactory and even undesirable. The essential good of the person is then considered as something that must be bettered. Because we do not know now how to transform our entire ontological condition, we change what is within the range of our present abilities. Thus, instead of upgrading the fundamental value of our existence (the essential good of the person), we try to modify particular goods. But, as mentioned, we can modify only some of them, and because we do not possess perfect tools, even expected effects in this respect will be limited. If, however, we were able to modify all relevant goods for the person, would the latter substantially influence the fundamental good of personal existence? I venture that the personalist position is inclined to respond in the negative. Insofar as the person is not considered a mere bundle of personal characteristics, neither is she a bundle of personal goods. These goods are important but still secondary. The essential good of the person is strictly associated with her ontological structure and with her existence. Thus, if it is highly controversial whether we can change the human entity, it is equally doubtful whether we can upgrade its fundamental good. Moreover, it is clearly impossible to move from goods for the person to the essential good of the person, or to put it differently, even a radical enhancement of the former cannot substantially better the latter.

## **Conclusions**

Discussions on human enhancement are inevitable in contemporary philosophy and bioethics. We as human beings are in possession of ever better and more powerful tools, and we want to use them to improve our human condition, provided they are safe. These claims seem to be shared by almost all the participants of these discussions. Nevertheless, there are also many contentious issues, which ultimately concern particular aspects of such interventions and their scope. Depending on how we understand the person and her good, approaches to human enhancement differ. The version of personalism I have been drawing on—which can also be called realist personalism—sustains that not all enhancing interventions are permissible because of the essential good of the person. One thing here is certain: the personalist position rejects radical enhancements and thus questions the possibility of transforming the human beings into posthuman persons. A different conclusion may be drawn from the utilitarian position. It will favor almost any type of enhancement, including radical ones. From this latter perspective, each and every enhancement must be assessed in the light of future consequences or general wellbeing. Thus, this position seems to be more open for further developments in enhancement debates, including a discussion on posthuman personhood.

However, even if we accept haphazardly the utilitarian approach, some requirements should be stressed here. First, many participants of human enhancement

discussions tend to concentrate on positive and desirable consequences, playing down those negative and undesirable ones. Their voices thus amount to a utopian-oriented point of view. However, because of the many unknown factors, it is necessary to be realistic and even a bit skeptical in planning these activities. All in all, it is better to err on the side of caution.<sup>15</sup> Second, when we try to determine possible consequences, we ought to be prepared for unintended ones. Generally they will consist in negative side-effects and even negative after-effects. Finally, we should ask ourselves whether the awareness of the consequences is a sufficient guide for undertaking such a serious enterprise. Frances Kamm and other critical commentators draw our attention to what must be considered at the very beginning of enhancing activities, apart from consequences. That is, we should know at the very outset “whom we want to become” and “what constitutes a set of goods necessary for personal and postpersonal fulfillment.”<sup>16</sup> At any rate, we are far from that.

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## Notes

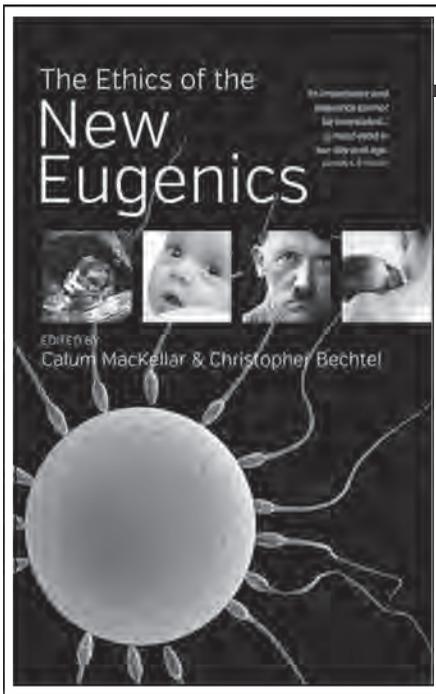
1. There are authors who point to interventions where a medical treatment, say within a preventive medicine, is also a kind of enhancement, e.g. vaccines (see Menuz, et. al 2013: 167; Holub 2010:

725-726).

2. Ray Kurzweil sets out an elaborated version of the idea of uploading of human mind and the human being in his book, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (Kurzweil 2006). The acute critique of the idea of uploading was advanced by Nicholas Agar (Agar 2010: ch. 3).
3. Kurzweil considers this process within a so-called law of accelerating returns.
4. The ongoing research tends to prevent the shortening of cell telomeres. The latter are thought to cause the aging process. How far we can go in this direction is now an open question.
5. Even if we accept the concept of substance in the naturalistic approach, its understanding is given by pointing to specific natural elements. Thus, the substance is here a bundle of such factors, and they can be investigated via empirical methods only. The person understood as a kind of substance does not possess any element, which goes beyond the scope of scientific explanation and, what is important here, “there is no enduring self or soul of any kind” (Goetz, Taliaferro 2008: 13).
6. Locke said that the person “is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking, and as it seems to me essential to it” (Locke 1996: Book II, chap. XXVII, sect. 9). Although he was not to define the reality of the person, he nevertheless suggested some characteristics as person constituents.
7. For instance, Helga Kuhse declares as follows, “if one takes this approach, then one is not saying that human life has sanctity, but rather that rationality, the capacity to be self-aware, moral or purposeful, and so on, have ‘sanctity.’” (Kuhse 1987: 212).
8. Wojtyła presented how one is connected with the other. And thus, on one hand, “the *suppositum humanum* must manifest itself as a human self: metaphysical subjectivity must manifest itself as personal subjectivity” (Wojtyła 1993: 225). On the other, the metaphysical subject does not exhaust a richness and complexity of the personal one. The latter must complete the former. He put it this way, “(...) the Boethian definition mainly marked out the “metaphysical terrain”—the dimension of being—in which personal human subjectivity is realized, creating, in a sense, a condition for “building upon” this terrain on the basis of experience” (Wojtyła 1993a: 212). For the concept of the metaphysics of the person in Wojtyła’s thought see Holub 2015.
9. Reid’s thinking goes as follows, “My personal identity, therefore, implies the continued existence of that indivisible thing which I call *myself*. Whatever this self may be, it is something which thinks, and deliberates, and resolves, and acts, and suffers. I am not thought, I am not action, I am not feeling; I am something that thinks, and acts, and suffers. My thoughts, and actions, and feelings, change every moment; they have no continued, but a successive existence; but that *self* or *I*, to which they belong, is permanent, and has the same relation to all the succeeding thoughts, actions and feelings, which I call mine” (Reid 1998: 341).
10. The subject also plays a role of the unifying principle of all personal activities, both within a particular activity and within a set of such elements. Richard Sorabji observes that, for instance, “if there is unity in one’s self-awareness, the unity is supplied by the single owner of that awareness, not by the owner’s using a single faculty” (Sorabji 2006: 260).
11. Gilber Meilaender writes about this complexity in an interesting way: “Human beings are strange, “in-between” sorts of creatures—lower than the gods, higher than the beasts. Not simply body, but also not simply mind or spirit; rather, the place where body and spirit meet and are united (...)” (Meilaender 2009: 4).
12. If we distinguish a moderate enhancement from a radical one, the former may be acceptable from the personalist standpoint. It can include boosting someone’s IQ, say from 90 to 100 points, and extending his life span by a small number of years (see e.g. Agar 2014: 343ff).
13. There are very advanced discussions on versions of utilitarianism in contemporary philosophy (see e.g. Mulgan 2007), and I am not going to delve into them. A larger perspective of utilitarian thinking directs out attention at such important topics like social justice and wellbeing. Although human enhancement should be considered in this broader approach, in this paper I limit my remarks to a more restricted approach. Some philosophers claim that looking at two basic versions of this ethical stance, namely rule utilitarianism and act utilitarianism, we can point to a common thread. Thus, in opinion of John Smart, act utilitarianism can be viewed as “the doctrine that states that the rightness or wrongness of action is determined by the goodness and badness of

their consequences,” whereas rule utilitarianism “considers the consequences of adopting some general rule” (Smart 2006: 603). Thus, what they have in common is the notion of the outcome of a given action, which makes that action good or bad. In my reference to utilitarianism, I primarily concentrate on consequences.

14. This is a minimalist notion of human health. It seems to accord with a common sense perception. There are also other definitions. We can point, for instance, to a maximalist notion provided by World Health Organization: a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing. The latter is in tune with more radical interventions.
15. Scholars who promote human enhancement to a larger extent would incline to advocate a different rule. A good example is given by Ingmar Persson and Julian Savulescu, who claim that “it is probably better to err on the optimistic than on the pessimistic side” (Persson, Savulescu 2014: 3).
16. Kamm warns us, saying that “most people’s conception of the variety of goods is very limited, and if they designed people their improvements would likely conform to limited, predictable types (...). In seeking enhancement people will focus on too simple and basic a set of goods” (Kamm 2005: 13). Jonathan Glover argues in a similar way (Glover 2006: 54).



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## THE ETHICS OF THE NEW EUGENICS

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