

## THE "NORMAL" PURSUIT OF EUDAIMONIA, AND THE POTENTIAL OBSTACLE POSED BY GENETIC MANIPULATION

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Some of the prospective outcomes for genetic manipulations of human persons that are envisioned in clinical medicine are "happier" than others. Putative improvement in the human condition cannot be gauged solely by technical, practical successes. Other criteria obtain.

Human gene alteration is proposed for two reasons: to treat diseases and for "genetic enhancement."<sup>1</sup> Genetic enhancement refers to any alteration of "normal" genetic material related to our physical and cognitive capacities, and to the adjustment of human behaviors

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<sup>1</sup> Laura Palazzani describes genetic enhancements as a class of "what might be termed 'alterative genetics' or eugenics; the constructive or innovative genetic intervention in the already existing 'normal' or 'healthy'-i.e. non-pathological-genetic heritage." Among the interventions of alterative genetics, she distinguishes: "a) interventions which remedy deficits which, without being specifically diseases, nevertheless leave the subject in a condition of inferiority in relation to the statistic average" and "b) interventions to strengthen one or more qualities above the average, in the subject and in his/her descendants (this is the case with ameliorative genetics)": see her "Genetic engineering and human nature," in *Man-made Man: Ethical and Legal Issues in Genetics*, eds. Peter Doherty and Agatha Sutton (Dublin: Open Air, 1997), p. 47 and n. 4.

Maxwell J. Mehlman recognizes the ambiguities surrounding the concepts of the "normal" and "normalcy" taken in both quantitative and qualitative senses. "Functionality" and "normal function" criteria reflect aspects of both statistical and qualitative approaches to human life, but "normalcy" is often translated from its physiological and ontological senses to a political connotation; "normalcy" here becomes an "opportunity range" that is as much external as it is intrinsic to the individual: see his "How will we regulate genetic enhancement?," in *Wake Forest Law Review* 34, no 3 (1999): 671-714; cf. Eric T. Juengst, "What does *enhancement* mean?" in *Enhancing Human Traits: Ethical and Social Implications*, ed. Erik Parens (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), pp. 29-47, a work in the Hastings Center Studies for Ethics, ed. Mark J. Hanson and Daniel Callahan.

connected with these capacities.<sup>2</sup> In this essay, I go further than merely anticipating unfortunate consequences for some genetic manipulations. My stronger claim is that genetic procedures that impinge upon persons whose lives are already genetically or functionally "normal," are inherently, morally objectionable.

In contrast to the sort of utopian "democratization" of human capacities and excellences that is insinuated with a unilateral pro-genetic manipulation agenda, I retrieve a more classical and more comprehensive view of human nature. I proceed by three steps, examining: (1) the necessity of moral virtue as a foundation for human friendship, (2) the proper meaning of the concept of the humanly "normal," and (3) their mutual application in political society relevant to proposed genetic interventions. Understandings of normality and moral virtue inform human friendship and political participation, and correlate with the human life well-lived.

Humans cannot truly know themselves without the help of other persons. However, the affirmation of common biological species identity—verified either by genetic or functional criteria, or in common experience—is not sufficient to guarantee that moral respect for human dignity will be tendered among persons. Human friendship and the broader contribution of political society are necessary in order for human achievement and the realization of *eudaimonia* to occur. *Eudaimonia* is the ultimate *telos* of human life. *Eudaimonia* is often

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<sup>2</sup> Within the genus of gene enhancements, Roberta M. Berry identifies alterations of the genetic constitution of humans whose "purpose is to enhance appearance or functions that fall within the *normal* range for the human species" (emphasis mine): Roberta M. Berry, "From involuntary sterilization to genetic enhancement: the unsettled legacy of 'Buck vs. Bell,'" in *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics, and Public Policy* 12, no. 2 (1998): 401-48, 439 n. 111. She delineates three categories of these "genetic enhancements": (1) "cosmetic enhancements—altering aspects of physical appearance such as height, eye color, facial features, and so on"; (2) "capabilities enhancement—altering faculties such as intelligence, strength, agility, and so on"; and (3) "behavioral enhancement—altering predispositions to display traits such as kindness, empathy, gentleness, or a particular sexual orientation" (pp. 439-40); cf. Maxwell Mehlman, *op. cit.*, p. 675.

translated as “happiness,” “blessedness,” or “flourishing,” but here Robert Spaemann’s formulation of the “life that turns out well” is the basis of my treatment.<sup>3</sup>

My conclusion is that only those procedures that implicitly affirm the good of human existence in its normal state, and that promote virtuous striving and choice, will enable the achievement of *eudaimonia*, the life well-lived. Concepts of the normal and the virtuous represent criteria for evaluating prospective genetic alterations of human individuals in their pre- and post-natal states. Genetic manipulations that seek to enhance persons, absent present or future indications of disease, instead portend “unhappy” and “unfriendly” results based on their deleterious impact upon human associations at the personal and political levels.

### I Genuine versus domesticated friendship

Jacques Maritain maintains that “Friendship is the animating form of society. Society depends on the perpetual gift and surplus derived from persons.”<sup>4</sup> Human friendship reveals us to ourselves and

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<sup>3</sup> See Jeremiah Alberg’s Preface to Robert Spaemann’s *Happiness and Benevolence* (with an afterword by Arthur Madigan), trans. Jeremiah Alberg (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. xi, from the original: *Glück und Wohlwollen* (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta’sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger GmbH, 1989); cf. Henry B. Veatch, “Modern ethics, teleology, and love of self, *The Monist* 75, no. 1 (January 1992): 52-70, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Maritain characterizes the reciprocal relation of human person to society as one of “whole to whole”; see Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John J. Fitzgerald (South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), pp. 47-89, originally published in New York by Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1947. “The political task,” says Maritain, “is essentially a task of civilization and culture”: see Jacques Maritain, *The Rights of Man and Natural Law*, trans. Doris C. Anson (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1949), p. 44. The necessity of friendship, the family and the polis for *eudaimonia* is articulated by the Millers in Aristotelian terms. They state, “The directly learned *hexeis* (such as ethical virtues, *technai* and *epistemêmai*) are themselves organized into the overall *entelecheia* of the whole psyche as its ‘selfhood’ by means of *phronesis* as well as by *philia* [cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.5-8]. Both these levels of organization continue to be influenced by social

intensifies the kind of persons and society that we are. In the Aristotelian understanding of friendship, says Spaemann, "the subjective and objective perspectives of one's own life fuse with one another."<sup>5</sup> The one who is friend in the most authentic sense "possesses human virtues which make the person lovable for his own sake."<sup>6</sup> We

motivations and pressures exerted by social institutions (family, polis, culture, etc.), which have self-perpetuating mechanisms of their own at the societal level of integration. In addition, individual personal inter-actions (*philia*) influence the goals of behavior by means of mutual reinforcement": Alfred E. Miller and Maria G. Miller, "Aristotle's *entelecheia* as a paradigm for today's health problems: ontological explanation of the psyche as grounded in *Metaphysics H*," in *Philosophy and Medicine*, Vol. 1, ed. K.J. Boudouris (Alimos, Greece: Ionia Publications, 1998), 123-44, p. 130.

- <sup>5</sup> Robert Spaemann, op. cit., p. 55; cf. Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* (cited hereafter as *EN*) 3.4 1112b25, 8.9-9.11. Spaemann elaborates the self-discovery that occurs in the face of the humanly other: "We become really ourselves only in the face of the claim made by the irreducibly real." We move out of the centrality of our living, and thereby "discover the reality of the other, insofar as the other is not merely a correlate of our intentional situations. This discovery cannot be purely theoretical. Theoretically we press ahead to objects. Being oneself becomes possible only in free affirmation, in an act of acceptance. This act, however, in which life transcends itself and in this self-transcendence comes to a whole which examines its various states, is only possible through the highest powers of life. This self-transcendence of life is the rational: in its most elementary form we speak of justice; in its highest, of love" (pp. 90 and 91).
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97; cf. p. 100. Martha C. Nussbaum explicates the dynamic of particularity affirmed in the Aristotelian doctrine of friendship in her *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*, Vol. 2 (new series), Martin Classical Lectures (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 67-68; cf. pp. 91-95 and 508-09, and also Aristotle, *Politics* 2.4 1262b22-24. "Love," comments Nussbaum, "is a profound attachment to another separate life, which must remain as a separate center of movement and choice, not being engulfed or fused, in order for the relationship of love to be possible at all. And in the loves Aristotle values most highly, the participants view one another as good characters, therefore as fully independent choosers of the good; if one controlled the other, even to the extent that a parent does a child, the love would apparently be less good as love" (p. 91).

are an occasion for another to act toward us as an end, and we are given the same opportunity to act on his or her behalf, thereby contributing to our individual good and the common good.<sup>7</sup>

Not all the affections evoked in the context of human friendship are pleasant. Judith Barad discusses the place of justified anger connatural to friendship in the context of Aquinas' doctrine.<sup>8</sup> "According to Aquinas," she states, "each person is this expanded self, comprised of other things and individuals we love and thereby with which we identify. By punishing a person who has injured those with whom we identify, we demonstrate that we are not simply isolated individuals, each pursuing his own egoistic concerns."<sup>9</sup> In other words, angry responses can be marks of virtuous character when they follow upon injustices visited upon those whom we love.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For insightful discussions of the Thomistic appropriation and development of Aristotle's doctrine on the love of friendship, see David M. Gallagher's "Person and ethics in Thomas Aquinas," *Acta Philosophica* 4, no. 1 (1995): 51-71; "Desire for beatitude and love of friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Medieval Studies* 58 (1996): 1-47; and "Moral virtue and contemplation: a note on the unity of the moral life," *Sapientia* 51, no. 200 (1996): 385-92; see, also, Louis B. Geiger, *Le problème de l'amour chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Conférence Albert-le-Grand (Montreal: L'Institut d'Etudes Médiévales, 1952).

<sup>8</sup> Barad develops Aquinas's definition of anger as a "desire to punish another by way of just revenge": Judith Barad, "Aquinas and the role of anger in social reform," *Logos* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 124-44, p. 124; see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (cited hereafter as *ST*), I-II, q. 47, a. 1. In Thomas's doctrine, anger corresponds with the virtue of justice. "It is essential to justice that judgment be accompanied by a strong feeling. It is inappropriate to judge merely dispassionately that some horrific act has occurred unless we are also angry. Anger should rely not only on correct rational judgments, but should also involve a desire to inflict just punishment for suffering. Justice is demanded by an angry, morally indignant person, who seeks to relieve anger by injuring the cause of his or her pain. The purpose of revenge is to relieve that anger and thereby promote justice": Judith Barad, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136: "Zealous anger is a desire of vengeance insofar as it is really just. If we identify with someone we love, zeal may become aroused when that

In some quarters, there is call for genetic modification even of normal, aggressive instincts in humans. LeRoy Walters and Julie Palmer rehearse arguments for and against gene enhancements used to moderate and reduce aggressive tendencies in human beings. They consider cases both of identifiable sociopathology, and of the more general, "normal," aggressive tendencies found as part of the human condition.<sup>11</sup> While their recommendations for "normal" persons eschew coercive means of pacifying individuals, they incline toward a utopian, formalist program of diminished social aggression that in fact mitigates individual autonomy—and, I propose, threatens to destroy the irascible part of nature that fosters human inclinations to survival, to practice courage in the face of hostile objects, and to strive for justice in human relations.

While agenda such as those proposed by Walters and Palmer may indeed produce a "new world," such a world would be anything but brave or truly friendly. Healthy friendships between persons of virtue include situations where anger will be the appropriate response. When the genes that dispose individuals toward normal aggression are altered or deleted, the bodily substrate for experiencing anger is removed. The rationally-informed desire for justice will be correspondingly diminished. In effect, enhancement practices aimed at

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thing is harmed.... Accordingly, zealous anger has its source in love, wanting good for someone else"; cf. Thomas Aquinas, *ST I-II*, q. 28, a. 4.

<sup>11</sup> See LeRoy Walters and Julie Gage Palmer *The Ethics of Gene Therapy*, Illustrations by Natalie C. Johnson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 101 and 123-28; cf. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Human nature technologically revisited," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1990): 180-91, pp. 186-89. Walters' and Palmer's utopian premises are evident in their statements: "We assume that treated individuals would continue to be free to choose their own acts but would be more likely than the average 20th-century human to behave in a friendly manner"; "In our view, moral enhancement by genetic means would be a useful adjunct to other important programs like social and economic reform and education about ethnic, racial, and national groups that are different from one's own"; "We hasten to add that our goal would not be to achieve perfection in human nature but merely to moderate the influence of the violently aggressive tendencies that are clearly part of human nature as it has been transmitted to us" (p. 127).

pacifying normal persons excavate the foundations for noble friendship and for polities where justice, rather than raw power, predominates.<sup>12</sup>

## II Human nature and normality, and an alternative view

Our organism with all its appetites coincides with our cognitive power in a distinctively human, analogous sense of "nature." Along with this more robust sense of human nature, there is a corresponding concept of human "normality" that admits the integration of biology and reason. To sustain the argument against the prospective genetically-induced diminution of friendship and political cooperation aimed at the common good, I draw from Georges Canguilhem's construal of the organically and ontologically "normal" as the dynamically self-sustaining, well-functioning, norm-issuing state of human engagement with the environment.<sup>13</sup> Normal, healthy human beings are unencumbered by biological self-consciousness introduced by some form of pathology.

This understanding of human normality is compatible with Aristotle's notion of hypothetical necessity; on the one hand, it admits material necessity and the determinate appetites that are part of our organic existence. On the other hand, however, human normality also indicates the presence of an analogous "second nature" achieved through the inculcation of cultural mores and customs, coupled with

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. James G. Lennox, "Aristotle on the biological roots of virtue: the natural history of natural virtue," in *Biology and the Foundation of Ethics*, eds. Jane Maienschein and Michael Ruse (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 14; Aristotle, *EN* 2.6 1106b16-24; Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I-II, q. 47, a. 1.

<sup>13</sup> See Georges Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*, Introduction by Michael Foucault, trans. Carolyn R. Fawcett and Robert S. Cohen (Dordrecht, Netherlands: D. Reidel, 1978; reprint, New York: Urzone, 1991), pp. 174-75 and 261, from the original edition (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1966); and *A Vital Rationalist: Selected Writings from Georges Canguilhem*, Introduction by Paul Rabinow with a critical bibliography by Camille Limoges, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Zone Books, 1994), pp. 35 and 137.

virtuous mastery over one's own inclinations. The second nature is posterior in experience and knowledge, though it is prior in being.<sup>14</sup>

The acquired, virtuous nature enables the directed expression—and not unilateral suppression—of bodily appetites within a greater scheme of human goods.<sup>15</sup> It is actualized in culture, but it is not arbitrarily determined by culture as a force that transcends and opposes human nature.<sup>16</sup> Vital meaning accompanies normality. *Nomos* expresses and enforces the humanly normal. We might say that the normal is truly an oblique notion of the humanly good.

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<sup>14</sup> Spaemann distinguishes the "first" and "second" natures: "The happiness of one's own life remains unthematic as long as traditional, religious and social horizons retain their unquestionable validity so that the habits, through which these horizons are interiorized, have the character of being second nature. Only when their coercive force is loosened can our "first nature" assert itself against the second. And when this happens in a reflective manner, questions about the conditions for a happy life emerge, especially insofar as these conditions may or may not be fulfilled through our own action": Robert Spaemann, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> "We can come to have rational desires for some things and mere appetites for others," observes Douglas Rasmussen. "Our appetites and desires can be revamped or reshaped into rational dispositions by our intelligence so that what we ought to desire and what we in fact do desire can be in harmony. Moral virtue and practical wisdom are mutually interdependent, because the compossibility they seek is one of thought and feeling, not mere abstract goods": Douglas B. Rasmussen, "Human flourishing and the appeal to human nature," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 1-43, pp. 42-43.

<sup>16</sup> Yves R. Simon speaks of an obvious difference between human and other animal species, with whom we share some inclinations. He says, "Man's instincts let loose desires connected with the conservation and expansion of individual life and social life, but they do not suffice to direct those desires. If instinct is left to itself, the desires to which it has given birth will fail of their object, produce discord, and arrest life": Yves R. Simon, *Freedom and Community*, ed. Charles P. O'Connell (New York: Fordham University Press, 1968), p. 153. In regard to manipulation of embryos, genetic interventions, and the willingness to alter children for the sake of fulfilling parental desires, we submit, one might understand the "arrest" of life in the most deliberate and most ultimate sense.



Virtuous development allows the person to participate in a more sublime aspect of human dignity: moral dignity.<sup>17</sup> This moral dignity is compatible with human necessity and human vulnerability. Humans experience a sort of “earth-bound” gravitational dynamic of necessity and need coupled with our transcendent aspirations. There is a fundamental metaphysical tension immanent to human persons that affects the relation of the humanly “normal” to *eudaimonia*. We want to retain and reinforce our “selves,” even as we desire to enrich, expand, and transcend ourselves.

Reason’s appetitive impulse carries with it a self-annihilating tendency when it disregards the necessities of biological being. The powers of deliberation and choice presume the bodily matrix that is present in every human action. The radical, Platonic emancipation of human reason in the service of utopian, rationalist projects aspires to leave aside the human condition.<sup>18</sup> Reason unhinged from natural

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<sup>17</sup> Josef Seifert cites Gabriel Marcel when he describes this level of moral dignity as a “conquest and not a possession”: Josef Seifert, *What is Life? On the Originality, Irreducibility, and Value of Life*, Value Inquiry Book Series (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), p. 105. Human moral dignity, says Seifert, “depends on the good use of freedom. This dignity is not inalienable nor does it automatically belong to us as persons.... This dignity differs from the purely ontological dignity of persons in that it knows opposites” (ibid.).

<sup>18</sup> Robert Spaemann, op. cit., p. 53. Cf. Robert Spaemann, “Genetic manipulation of human nature in the context of human personality,” in *Human Genome, Human Person, and the Society of the Future*, eds. Juan de Dios Vial Correa and Elio Segreccia, Proceedings of the Fourth Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life, February 23-25, 1998 (Vatican City: Libreria Vaticana, 1999), 340-50, pp. 341 and 345-48. Leon Kass analyzes this “ecstatic yearning” of the human soul proceeding from the “promise” of life: “That so many cultures speak of a promise of immortality and eternity suggests, first of all, a certain truth about the human soul: the human soul yearns for, longs for, some condition or goal toward which our earthly activities are directed but which cannot be attained during our earthly life. Our soul’s reach exceeds our grasp; it seeks more continuance; it reaches for something beyond us, something that for the most part eludes us. True happiness, a genuine fulfillment of the deepest longings of our soul, is not in our power, and cannot be fully attained, much less commanded. Our distress with mortality derives from the conflict between the transcendent longings of the

necessity results in corrosion of the "normal" capacity for humans to achieve a kind of "this-worldly" happiness.

Moreover, this "ecstatic" type of *eudaimonia* that aspires to set aside the human condition must be contrasted with the Aristotelian exposition of a more "middle-class," "normal" sense of "lives which turn out well."<sup>19</sup> The uniqueness of human existence consists in the association of the "normality" of human life with the *telos* of a qualified *eudaimonia*. This is the *eudaimonia* of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where one aspires to the sort of happiness in life that is "the best that one can hope for" as human.<sup>20</sup> Spaemann states, "Normal, in its proper meaning, human happiness, is the leading of a life which turns out well."<sup>21</sup>

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soul and the all-too-finite powers and fleshly concerns of the body": Leon Kass, "Mortality," in *Powers That Make Us Human: The Foundations of Medical Ethics*, ed. Kenneth Vaux (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 7-28, p. 20.

<sup>19</sup> See Aristotle, *Politics* 4.9 1295a25-1295b3. There is a "paradoxical situation," says Spaemann, "that the thinking on a life which turns out well, which appears together with the very emergence of thought, has the character of 'Utopia'. It anticipates a kind of happiness which, at the same time, it acknowledges is unrealizable for human beings.... For Aristotle the polis is the place which, as compensation for the 'no place,' the *utopia*, of absolute turning out well, allows for 'happiness which is humanly possible'": Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 74.

<sup>20</sup> See Aristotle, *EN* 1.6 1096b33-35 and 1.10 1101a14-21. I take issue with many of Nussbaum's ethical conclusions regarding disputed topics in contemporary genetic and reproductive medicine: see Martha C. Nussbaum and Cass R. Sunstein, eds., *Clones and Clones: Facts and Fantasies About Human Cloning* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998). However, I agree with her where she enjoins "abandoning the zeal for absolute perfection as inappropriate to the life of a finite being, abandoning the thirst for punishment and self-punishment that so frequently accompanies that zeal," so that we may compassionately regard "the ambivalent excellence and passion of a human life": Martha Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, p. 510.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 54. Rasmussen expresses the essence of a distinctively human perfection: "To 'perfect', to 'realize', or to 'actualize' oneself is not to become God-like, immune to degeneration, or

Hence, there is an intrinsic "antinomy of happiness" where theoretical and practical reason are in tension bordering on opposition if the "Aristotelian compromise" does not prevail in the lives of individual persons and in the life of the *polis*.<sup>22</sup> The contingency and vulnerability of the normal human condition can be overwhelmed by a rationalism that seeks to cancel human finitude. A new, artificial vulnerability is introduced, where life "metamorphoses" solely into reason, since organic life then becomes an instrumental infrastructure, subject to arbitrary manipulation and reorganization.<sup>23</sup> A spirit of rational revolution against the boundaries of normality discerned in human nature produces an abstracted, absolutized autonomy over oneself and others—pitted against all.<sup>24</sup>

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incapable of harm, but it is to fulfill those potentialities and capacities that make one human. This is to achieve one's natural end or perform one's natural function": David Rasmussen, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>22</sup> See James G. Lennox, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; cf. Aristotle, *EN* 6.8 1141b23-24.

<sup>23</sup> We compare this metaphorical, pathological "metamorphosis" with the salutary impulse of *amor benevolentiae*, described by Spaemann: "If we understand love in the sense of *amor benevolentiae* as the becoming real of the real for us, then the same conclusion emerges. The measure of this becoming real is not a mean lying between two extremes, but is itself an extreme: the spanning of an infinite space between the negativity of reflection and the positivity of being. For the being awakened to reason, the metamorphosis of life through the Logos and the fulfillment of rationality with life is a process without end": Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 113 (cf. *ibid.* 63).

<sup>24</sup> Engelhardt explicitly endorses the prospect that the power of reason will not only discern the meaning of our human personhood, but will be technologically equipped to *determine* and *refashion* our nature; he asserts, "Thus human persons are cast into a moral predicament. No longer can they turn to an understanding of their nature qua biological species for a source of moral values. Instead, their destiny is to create and invent their own values. It will never be possible simply to discover the good for humans. Reason, in short, creates our destiny as humans. We must choose, for example, the extent to which we will pursue capacities that outstrip what has even been part of our nature or the nature of other animals": H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Reason," in *Powers That Make Us Human*, p. 88.

I compare one view of human nature that opposes the understanding of human identity I have advanced so far. The evolutionist anthropology proposed by philosopher Michael Ruse establishes a threshold for unlimited genetic intervention and individual eugenic choice to move forward.<sup>25</sup> Our evolved instinct to perpetuate our genes, and to ensure the best possible survival among our progeny, animates our attitudes toward prospective children. Our "salvation" lies in our biological succession. We desire that our children flourish and not only adapt to society, but excel in the social setting. And we are willing to go to great lengths, perhaps even to alter the genome of our potential progeny, in order to ensure these outcomes.

But our desires regarding our children, according to Ruse's model, are not so much for the sake of the child, but for our own sake. Our desire for personal preservation and satisfaction is the source and end for the coupling and the cooperation that generates our children. We might even risk our lives for our children and for others whom we embrace as essential to our genetic welfare, but we are both predetermined and self-interested in doing so.

It should be noted that Ruse's determinist, evolutionist ideology encompasses not just the practices of molecular science and of

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<sup>25</sup> "All things considered," Ruse comments, "humans are in pretty good shape. The human plan does not call for drastic redesign.... Nor am I saying that humans are perfect. I started this essay by pressing the value of eliminating genetic disease; and, within limits, I would allow that healthy humans could stand some genetic fine-tuning. If I could live, reasonably active, for 150 years, I would jump at the chance": Michael Ruse, "Genesis Revisited: Can we do better than God?" *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 19, no. 3 (September 1984): 297-316, p. 314; cf. Michael Ruse's *Taking Darwin Seriously* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); "Knowledge in human genetics: some epistemological questions," in *Genes and Human Self-Knowledge: Historical and Philosophical Reflections on Modern Genetics*, eds. Robert F. Weir, Susan C. Lawrence, and Evan Fales (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1994), pp. 34-45; *Monad to Man: The Concept of Progress in Evolutionary Biology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996); "Evolutionary Ethics in the Twentieth Century: Julian Sorell Huxley and George Gaylord Simpson," in *Foundation of Ethics*, pp. 184-224; and *Mystery of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

parenting, but extends beyond these practices to the larger society. To Ruse, scientific education and research are practices of indoctrination. He observes,

The successful scientist is precisely the person who is, at some level, morally and culturally insensitive, if not dead. If this does not come about through self-selection, then it is a function of the training, especially the long years spent in graduate and postdoctoral study. The sanctification of the great scientists of the past is part of the indoctrination—the ideology that science stands beyond ideology.<sup>26</sup>

Ruse regards this phenomenon with respect rather than with reproach. In contrast, I claim that this mode of doing science is not truly ascetic but “ecstatic” in a corrupt sense. The moral aspect of persons is disregarded—both in the human object under study and in the one who does research. Scientists shed their regard for ethical good and evil. The neutrality of knowledge is joined to the “canonization” of predecessors and colleagues. Science is seen to be superior to all other disciplines. Ethics and politics are subordinated to the aspirations of “hard” scientists, whose projects extend far beyond their theoretical object.<sup>27</sup>

Hence, rationalism and evolutionist materialism combined conduce to an overt constructionism that is both biologic and cultural in character. There arises an artificial vulnerability of human life whose *telos* is extrinsically imposed as idea and precept rather than as freely-sought achievement.

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<sup>26</sup> Michael Ruse, *Mystery of Mysteries*, p. 461.

<sup>27</sup> Proctor concludes, “The principle of neutral science, together with the doctrine of subjective value, constitutes the fundamental political ideology of modern science.” Further, “Science is no longer a marginal phenomenon fighting for the right to exist. It has, in some sense, become the ethos of an age.... In this context, science has become a political force in its own right, neutrality serves to camouflage interests, to remove the moral and political from the realm of discourse itself”: Robert N. Proctor, *Value-free Science? Purity and Power in Modern Knowledge* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 269 and 270.

Against this trend, I argue that if the immanent *telos* of nature is not embraced as measure and goal for the trajectory of human reason and human striving, then the relation of *entelechy* and *eudaimonia* is severed. The task confronting all humans is to reverse the estrangement characteristic of modernity that "pries off" human purposes from the ultimate human *telos*, and instead attempts literally to "incorporate" rational choices within the comprehensive practical contingencies that characterize human life.

One either accepts that one's existence is conditioned by nature, or one ends by canceling the very conditions of human existence itself, let alone the possibility of fulfilling that existence.<sup>28</sup> In the latter case, genetic manipulation abets a speculative project that reduces human life to a ruse, a counterfeit—a Hitchcockian "McGuffin" intended to distract, amuse, and mislead, rather than a remedy that helps display the human and guide us to our ultimate human end.

The net result in genetic enhancement scenarios is that the bond between individuals revolves around self-preservation instincts, power transactions, and the cultivation of pleasure. The exercise of political power contingent upon the consent of the many makes for a very fragile alliance indeed.

### III Actual enhancement in the realm of the personal and the political

There is a manner of helping other individuals that respects their humanity, and there are other ways of intervening that distort or deny both the nature of patients and the medical end.<sup>29</sup> There are intrusive

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 160.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Grant Gillett, "Virtue and truth in clinical science," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (June 1995): 285-98, pp. 297-98; and William A. Galston, "Liberal democracy and the problem of technology," in *Technology in the Western Political Tradition*, eds. Arthur M. Melzer, Jerry Weinberger, and M. Richard Zinman (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 229-52, p. 238. Spaemann proposes, "Help is neither a spontaneous expression of life, nor is it *poiesis*, making, creative activity.... It always presupposes a tendency, which is supported by it and which needs its support. All specifically ethical action is of this kind. It distinguishes itself from the immediateness of spontaneous expressions of life and also from technical or

or coercive acts that are actually antithetical to nature. The body ceases to be seen as an integral good of the human person whose sense of wholeness and health—periodically and perhaps, chronically—becomes an issue.<sup>30</sup> Medicine is successful when persons are helped to recover physical and mental health.<sup>31</sup> It cannot be judged successful when it seeks to change normal human persons into a different nature than they were first presented or anticipated to be.<sup>32</sup>

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artificial actions, even when it is only a certain modification of these actions”: Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, pp. 104-05; cf. *ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>30</sup> Gerald P. McKenny, “Enhancements and the ethical significance of vulnerability,” in *Enhancing Human Traits*, p. 230; Robert Sokolowski, “The art and science of medicine,” in *Catholic Perspectives on Medicine and Morals*, Vol. 34, Philosophy and Medicine, eds. Edmund D. Pellegrino, John Langan, and John Collins Harvey (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Press, 1989), pp. 263-75, p. 265; cf. Kass, who comments, “The technological triumphs are held to validate their scientific foundations. Here, perhaps, is the most pernicious result of technological progress—more dehumanizing than any actual manipulation or technique, present or future. We are witnessing the erosion, perhaps the final erosion, of the idea of man as something splendid or divine, and its replacement with a view that sees man, no less than nature, simply as more raw material for manipulation and homogenization”: Leon Kass, *Toward a More Natural Science* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), p. 37 (originally published in 1985).

<sup>31</sup> Against the positivist concept of “normal,” Spaemann asserts that in the *Corpus hippocraticum* [sic] the concept of *phusis* “serves to distinguish the healthy as the normal from the sick as the abnormal. Here normality is not, however, a statistical concept. If 90 percent of all people were to have headaches, they would not therefore be the healthy by which the other 10 percent had to measure themselves, but the reverse. For headaches are opposed to that natural tendency to self-preservation and well-being, which is characteristic of all natural beings”: Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 163; cf. Georges Canguilhem, *Ideology and Rationality*, p. 129; and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., “Germ-line genetic engineering and moral diversity: moral controversies in a post-Christian world,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1996): 47-62, pp. 61-62.

<sup>32</sup> Engelhardt comments, “Human nature, which is still a relatively unalterable given, would become a cardinal point in the human refashioning of the

Human life achieves *eudaimonia* to the degree that it sustains itself in the face of life's contingencies—even as persons seek to transcend themselves. Human reason allows us to see the necessary aspect of human life, and to recognize that the moment we affirm "livingness," we also affirm that we are in the presence of the normal, the natural, *phusis*, soul—the ultimate principle by which our lives and our happiness are measured, perfected.

Human beings enter by reason into a "reality-space" that is limitless; hence, they are never fully satisfied in this world. We are challenged to accept that our lives bear contingency and insufficiency that can only be obviated by extinguishing the possibility that our lives will turn out well—or that they will be identifiable to us as real human lives when all is said and done.

There are, nonetheless, two alternatives in which human contingency is validly reduced without negating the alternatives to which we have already averted to. In an analogous, non-pejorative sense, both alternatives actually "enhance" human life. The first form is the already discussed acquisition of virtue. The indeterminacy of human nature, wherein human potencies may be determined to either act well or badly, is conditioned through the habitual use of personal freedom for the sake of human goods. Actual deeds are prior to the realization of virtuous potential.<sup>33</sup> Human ends and human purposes are brought into consistent alignment in the person of virtuous character. The challenge for humans is to achieve personal self-mastery and not to seek to exercise moral domination over other persons, as occurs in non-therapeutic genetic manipulation.<sup>34</sup>

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human condition. Whether understood as the gift of God or merely as the deliverance of spontaneous mutations, random selection, genetic drift, cosmic happenstance, and biochemical constraints, human nature has until now been regarded as placing constraints on human freedom": H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Germ-line," p. 51.

<sup>33</sup> Robert, Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p. 57; cf. *ibid.*, 44.

<sup>34</sup> Seifert recalls Aristotle's axiom that the human person "is lord over the existence or non-existence of his actions": Josef Seifert, *What is Life?* pp. 45-46; cf. Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 1223a.



Virtuous persons demonstrate a greater degree of determination over their individual actions and over their whole lives. Virtuous persons diminish chance's dominion over happiness. Virtuous persons acquire a habitual, natural autonomy in lives that still include human contingency.

For us, obviously, as in the Aristotelian worldview, virtue alone is insufficient for achieving *eudaimonia*; the apparent obstacles and accidental forces we confront in fact play a necessary part in the rounding out of a complete life.<sup>35</sup> Persons who are virtuously inclined to their own flourishing ultimately actually welcome numerous elements of life beyond their control, even if they do not concede the responsibility for life's turning out well to extrinsic forces.

Persons of good character are more acute in their perception of the facts of life and illness. They are able to distinguish between misfortune and disease, and restrict their solicitations of medical assistance to instances where disease is suspected or known to be present.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Nussbaum describes the dynamic of virtuous constancy and chance affirmed by Aristotle: "A life containing only (the state of) virtue, but no action from it out in the world (where the agent's efforts encounter the buffetings of chance), will not be judged by a reasonable person to be complete and lacking in nothing. In fact, says Aristotle, nobody would hold the view that the state of virtue is sufficient for *eudaimonia*, 'unless he were defending a theoretical position at all costs' [EN 7.12 1153b16-21; cf. 1.5 1096a1-2]": Martha Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, p. 63; see EN 1.7 1097a15-b21.

<sup>36</sup> P.S. Greenspan illustrates the reductive attitude implied in recourse to genetic alteration by drawing an analogy with a presently available medical procedure: "Self-control via genetic engineering might be said to involve treating *oneself* as an object on the model of current strategies regarding more mundane self-control issues that depend on medical intervention. Consider weight loss via liposuction: the sort of control one exercises by signing up for the operation is not an exercise of 'willpower' such as that involved in dieting. Nor is it admirable in quite the same terms. It may be a sign of *courage*, but it does not involve the sort of self-training in temperance as a new trait of character that we have on the Aristotelian account of virtue. It involves giving up on virtue in at least one area": "Free will and the genome project": P.S. Greenspan, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 31-43, p. 42.

Misfortune may be grounds for social and political remedies, but it is not a legitimate reason to solicit clinical intervention—to medicalize social injustice. Actual or projected social disadvantages are not acceptable moral grounds for the genetic manipulation of otherwise normal, healthy humans.

The second salutary reduction of contingency in human life is provided through the aforementioned role of the *polis*. Like Aristotle, Spaemann associates "normal" *eudaimonia* with the normal citizen. A humanly qualified form of fulfillment is available to the many, and not just the few:

The happiness of the citizen is normal, human happiness. The polis founds and makes possible normality.... The reduction of contingency of virtue, i.e., the habitualization of reasonableness, is made possible and strengthened by the reduction of contingency by normality which is guaranteed by the polis. The ethics of Aristotle is a hermeneutic of this normality.<sup>37</sup>

We have earlier linked the natural and the normal. Normality is also significant for politics. There is a good sense in which someone may "politicize" human necessity, incorporating it into reasoned deliberation and decision.<sup>38</sup>

Culture enfolds natural ends in different layers of human meaning. Our awareness that there is variation among different cultures does not

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<sup>37</sup> Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>38</sup> David O'Connor discusses Aristotle's thesis of the contingent character of the common good, depending on the virtues and vices of individual citizens. Some persons manifest a kind of "teleological misdirectedness" that affects both the individual's participation in the community and the realization of the common good. O'Connor states, "The obstacles to and limitations of community life are to be found in the same sorts of misorientation that account for simple vice. Virtue serves the community primarily by orienting individuals toward the end of virtuous activity, an end that can really be common and shared": David O'Connor, "The aetiology of justice," in *Essays on the Foundations of Aristotelian Political Science*, eds. Carnes Lord and David K. O'Connor (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 153, 163, and 164.

compulsorily relativize the humanly natural.<sup>39</sup> To the contrary, says Spaemann, awareness of variation elicits the generic concept of “that which is right by nature” and allows cultures to be compared.<sup>40</sup>

The concept of human personhood offers a means to evaluate disparate doctrines of society, culture, and human self-understanding. The priority of the concept of person is a criterion of good moral order within a particular culture. Alternatively, the modern imposition of the social whole upon the atomized individual makes him a subordinate part, valued only for his contribution to the larger structure.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Engelhardt, Jr., makes the opposing claim, and so concludes, “There is an obligation to tolerate numerous different approaches to caring for the human genome and respecting generations”: H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., “Human nature genetically re-engineered: moral responsibilities to future generations,” in *Germline Intervention and Our Responsibilities to Future Generations*, ed. Emmanuel Agius, et. al, Vol. 55, *Philosophy and Medicine*, eds. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., and Stuart F. Spicker (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), pp. 51-63, pp. 61-63; cf. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., “Human reproductive technology: why all the fuss?,” in *The Beginning of Human Life*, eds. F.K. Beller and R. F. Weir (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), pp. 89-100, pp. 89-91; and H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr, “Germ-line,” p. 47. But, in this account, the toleration of different approaches makes the construal of “respect” tendentious and conventional.

<sup>40</sup> Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, p, 163.

<sup>41</sup> Anita Silvers criticizes Norman Daniels for mixing certain political presuppositions with assessment of clinical needs: Anita Silvers, “A fatal attraction to normalizing: treating disabilities as deviations from ‘species-typical’ functioning,” in *Enhancing Human Traits*, pp. 95-123, p. 103. Against Silvers, we find that Daniels explicitly rejects the medicalization of individual differences in normal capabilities. However, we also think that Daniels has a very “thin” ontology; he says, “It is important to note that I am not trying to save the appeal to a natural baseline here because there is something magical or metaphysically basic about it... Rather, the natural baseline both facilitates and reflects moral agreement about the urgency of medical care”: Norman Daniels, “The genome project, individual differences, and health care,” in *Justice and the Human Genome Project*, eds. Timothy F.

Constructionism locates the concept of person among cultural conventions rather than as a given kind of individual rational life meriting respectful attention. The person whose nature is construed as mere convention is more susceptible to technical manipulation.<sup>42</sup> These manipulations ignore individual boundaries present in a distinct subject with unique powers linked by relationships extending into the present, past and future. The person is one who is normally capable of attentive presence, of friendship, of endurance in love.

Genuine human dignity demands and directs development toward virtuous excellence for the sake of others and oneself. With genetic enhancements, instead of moving toward intrinsic completion, perfection, *entelechy*, we settle for constricted notions of what it means to be human, whole, capable. We strive to alter our appearance or our capacities, and yet, in effect, we arrest our development. We settle for mere seeming rather than affirming the human form we already are,

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Murphy and Marc A. Lappé (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 110-32, pp. 126-27.

<sup>42</sup> Engelhardt articulates a moral distinction made in constructionist anthropology between respect for life *qua* life versus respect for persons *qua* persons. The distinction raises the issue of whether there is such an entity as a "human non-person," which is beyond the scope of our investigation, though it should be apparent that we think there is no such entity. Engelhardt says, "Some initial sense of the respect due to life can be advanced as reflecting a regard for important values. The first involves respect for life as an affirmation of life's value, the second involves valuing the diversity of life, the third recognizes a dignity in life that should not be violated, and the fourth a concern to respect life out of sympathy with living organisms, disposing us not to cause unnecessary suffering": H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Respect for life and the foundations of bioethics," in *The Ethics of Life*, eds. Denis Noble and Jean-Didier Vincent, trans. Noel Castelino, UNESCO Ethics Series (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1997), pp. 21-36, p. 26; cf. H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., "Persons and Humans," and Tom L. Beauchamp, "The failure of theories of personhood," *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal* 9, no. 4 (1999): 309-24; for an opposing position defending the personhood of all individual human lives, see Robert Spaemann, "Is every human being a person?" trans. Richard Schenk, *The Thomist* 60, no. 3 (July 1996): 463-74.

let alone the other humanly excellent qualities that have nothing to do with attractiveness or "personality" in the popular sense.<sup>43</sup>

Human species identity and human personhood do not possess degrees. Human dignity is not contingent on the level of functioning or on an individual's state of health.<sup>44</sup> The dignity of human freedom, conscience, achievements, and love follow from the foundational dignity of human life and the *telos* immanent to human personhood. The virtuous coordination of all the varied human inclinations in voluntary actions composes the pursuit of the ultimate end for human persons, the "life that turns out well."

Some elective forms of cosmetic surgery, steroid use, and other extrinsically induced enhancement practices by contemporary athletes are well-documented, and testify to the medically enabled exercise of personal autonomy turned against oneself or another.<sup>45</sup> We can confuse

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<sup>43</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre speaks of the systematic errors that occur in our own practical reasoning when we rely uncritically on the dominant norms of our social environment. These errors are exposed in our attitude toward the disabled. He says, "If we are unable to free ourselves from these sources of error, we will continue to obscure what it is in both ourselves and others to which we ought to be responding in different contexts and we ourselves will continue to lead distorted lives. Note that this does not mean that we ought not to distinguish what is pleasing in appearance from what is displeasing and both from what is horrifying, or that we should not continue to recognize that a handsome appearance and an engaging manner are good things to possess. But we will be mistaken as to the nature and limits of their goodness, if we allow ourselves to be seduced by their attractiveness into undervaluing those qualities and arguments that have to make themselves known through disfigurement and disablement": Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need The Virtues*, The Paul Carus Lecture Series, no. 20 (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1999), pp. 137-38.

<sup>44</sup> See Josef Seifert, *What is Life*, p. 387: "The life of a person is of a value that infinitely transcends just that of health."

<sup>45</sup> Whitehouse, Juengst, Mehlman and Murray analyze the issues surrounding cognitive enhancement delivered by non-genetic means (namely, by drugs) from a moral and metaphysical perspective. They state, "Increased memory, new insights and better reasoning could all lead to new values, new perspectives on one's relationships, and new sources of pleasure and

our transcendent inclinations for a life well-lived with the happiness that is achievable in this world. Once we are aware of the distinction between the theoretical satisfaction of all desires and the state of wholeness and fulfillment that is commensurate with our normal human condition, the ability to evaluate proposed genetic alteration procedures as being in accord with nature or opposed to it follows.

Every intervention or manipulation involving any part of an individual's genetic material (whether chromosomal or mitochondrial) is an action performed upon the whole person.<sup>46</sup> Procedures that interfere with the integrity of an individual genome absent therapeutic need encroach upon the dignity of persons. Non-therapeutic interventions invariably reflect human purposes directed to moral objects other than human health, and regard persons as means rather than as moral ends. Enhancement interventions insult human dignity; they are morally deficient and therefore objectionable.<sup>47</sup>

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irritation. That does not mean the enhanced will literally lose their identities and become different people, any more than someone with disease does. But in the figurative sense intended by caregivers of people with this disease, it may be that after some point the cognitively enhanced will no longer be recognizable by those who knew them before their enhancement": Peter Whitehouse Jr., Eric Juengst, Maxwell Mehlmann, and Thomas H. Murray, "Enhancing cognition in the intellectually intact," *Hastings Center Report* 27, no. 3. (May- June 1997): 14-22, p. 26; cf. Leon Kass, "The moral meaning of genetic technology," *Commentary* (September 1999): 32-38, p. 36.

<sup>46</sup> Seifert enlists the concept of "participation" to describe the dignity of the human genome: "The human genome possesses a unique value which we may call a dignity by participation (in the dignity of persons). This dignity of the human genome derives from its intimate linkage to the dignity of the human person himself. In man the content of 'this admirable linguistic document of the genome' possesses an entirely new and sublime dignity through its connection to human nature and to a human person": Josef Seifert, "Respect for the nature and responsibility of the person in acquiring knowledge about the human genome and in the application of human biotechnology," in *Human Genome, Human Person*, pp. 351-94, p. 374.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Glenn McGee, who foresees that as genetic tests and therapies will move into the realm of improvement, "parents will make choices about the best means and *appropriate ends* of enhancement": Glenn McGee, "Genetic

Enhancement procedures digress from the traditional end of medical practice—the good of healing.<sup>48</sup> More significantly, gene enhancements neglect or deny the ultimate human *telos*, *eudaimonia*.<sup>49</sup> Enhancement imposes a degree of fixity and formality that nature itself does not contribute. Non-therapeutic gene interventions are a precocious, constructed determination rather than a naturally, morally achieved one. Paradoxically, enhancements are ontologically restrictive and not liberating. Therapeutic manipulations respect the ontological priority of human ends. Enhancements instead favor *poiesis* over medical *praxis*, giving priority to imposed purposes.

Genetic enhancement schemes in themselves add traits or supplement traits only by subtracting or suppressing others whose expression may be considered within the realm of the humanly

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enhancement of families,” in *Pragmatic Bioethics*, ed. Glenn McGee (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1999), pp. 168-80, p. 169.

<sup>48</sup> Comparing genetic enhancement to cosmetic surgery, Agneta Sutton says, “Cosmetic surgery sometimes serves a medical end by promoting the physical or mental health of the patient. But enhancement interventions intended to improve a child’s intellectual or physical abilities would not serve the traditional ends of medicine. Enhancement genetic engineering intended to produce designer children would tend to cater to the demands of parents or society rather than be tailored to the best interests of manipulated individuals.... Interventions involving children would inevitably be serving ends external to the healing profession”: Agneta Sutton, “The new genetics and traditional Hippocratic medicine,” in *Man-made Man*, pp. 46-57, p. 68.

<sup>49</sup> For example, Whitehouse et al. speculate whether one of the major concerns with “cognitive enhancers is that they may promote a hypertrophy or overvaluation of our cognitive abilities, to the detriment of other human capacities such as empathy, emotional depth, visual creativity, or perceptiveness. Whether cognitive enhancement would necessarily come at the price of a reduction or eclipse of other capacities is uncertain. As with the concern about treating the body as a machine to be manipulated, turning an empirical claim into a moral one requires an argument showing that such treatment, on the whole, harms rather than furthers human flourishing”: Peter J. Whitehouse et al., “Enhancing cognition,” p. 20.

"normal."<sup>50</sup> Acts of enhancement intentionally disregard and deform the dignity of human persons, regarding the value of the whole person on the basis of particular traits or genetic "parts." Enhancement interventions introduce a moral deficit in the actions of the genetic manipulators where an organic or mental deficit may or may not already exist. Genetic enhancements, therefore, are intrinsically bad actions.

Nature and personal vulnerability are not opposed; the form of appearances and human limits in relationships are part of nature. In our human interactions, our own nature as well as that of other persons comes forth. Our moral obligation as citizens within the polis is to minimize the effects of chance in individual human lives only insofar as we provide "normal" conditions that will promote the general pursuit of happiness.<sup>51</sup> We cannot take upon ourselves the primary responsibility for *producing* happiness or fulfillment for others. *Eudaimonia* is not an extrinsic product wrought by thoroughly

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<sup>50</sup> Michael Shapiro identifies the radical novelty of "enhancement" *in se* consistent with a "disorder model" for medical intervention; he states, "Enhancement does more than 'nullify' or 'cancel out' the disorder. It replaces it with a state that is not 'natural' for the subject being altered.... Think, for example, of someone who has been afflicted with some physical or mental disorder from birth and has thus never known another state. For her, amelioration or cure may well be viewed as enhancement—yet the intervention seems fairly unproblematic because of its 'location' within a disorder model for justifying intervention": Michael H. Shapiro, 1999, "The impact of genetic enhancement on equality," *Wake Forest Law Review* 34, no. 3: 561-638, p. 574.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Spaemann, *Happiness and Benevolence*, pp. 110-11, 169-70. Daniels contests society's putative obligation to provide enhancement technologies—genetic and otherwise—to further human happiness. He states, "We have obligations to provide services whenever someone desires that a medical need be met.... Enhancement does not meet a medical need even where the service may correct for a competitive disadvantage that does not result from prior choices. Accordingly, medicine has the role of making people *normal* competitors, not *equal* competitors": Norman Daniels, "The genome project," pp. 121-22; cf. Michael H. Shapiro, "Impact," pp. 604-05.



egalitarian social conditions; it is a personal achievement.<sup>52</sup> The “life that turns out well” is a *telos* that we must individually, voluntarily, consistently pursue.

The accommodation of the “human condition” in the well-ordered soul and in the good *polis* is essential for human flourishing. In contrast to a Hobbesian view of human existence, the anthropology I have proposed here maintains that human life is not inherently inimical to those who live it, whether we consider the lives of individual persons or the community of human relationships at large. The formation of human lives so that they will acquire the virtuous dispositions that make flourishing possible in the first place is a task that is usually contingent upon having virtuous parents. It also depends upon a larger social order where human vulnerability is met by prudent choices of means to assist, but not eradicate, vulnerable persons.

Gene therapy, delivered within the appropriate ethical guidelines, is consistent with this possible prudent assistance. In contrast, gene enhancement, a form of manipulation that ignores normal human capacities and the inclinations natural to life in favor of some speculative purpose proposed by parents, clinicians, politicians, or other entrepreneurs, is morally objectionable.

Human contingency may be felicitously moderated by the development and exercise of virtue within a political community. Persons who are active in, and supported by, a political culture that

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<sup>52</sup> Berry opines, “The connection between a person’s ability to lead a good life—as measured by happiness, success, or any other conception—and a set of capabilities—such as intelligence, memory, strength, or agility—is anything but obvious. Only if we limit our conception of the good life to a life lived with enhanced capabilities or a life lived with an abundance of that which enhanced capabilities enables us to attain, whatever that might be, must we conclude that the connection is secure. It is true that, intuitively, we believe there must be a connection. But this is likely because we now associate high-status jobs and social position with certain capabilities or with that which these capabilities enable their bearers to attain. But, for example, athletes have not always been so well paid and widely admired. Just as with personal appearance, the value we attach to capabilities is, at least in part, a matter of passing fancy”: Roberta M. Berry, “From involuntary sterilization,” p. 444.

elicits the virtuous excellences of its individual citizens not only are more likely to have their basic life necessities met. They are better equipped to lead human lives that will turn out well—lives considered both “worthy” and “happy,” because they know themselves and have a better grasp of the genuine conditions for *eudaimonia*.