

# Dilemmas Related to the Implementation of Technologies and the Human Bio-Improvement

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## **Abstract**

*In this paper we set out to identify a number of issues related to the human bio-improvement. The subject of the paper is all the more controversial as the bio-improvement represents the intervention of new technologies in the biological sphere of man. This is a prospective idea for the time being as these technologies are not accessible to all individuals. What we want to emphasize is that the paper is intended to be theoretical, as the ideas that we will bring to the fore are prospective. There are therefore a number of reasons for concern, reasons that lead us to rethink the ontological and social condition of man.*

**Keywords:** *Bioenhancement; new technologies; barbarian; responsibility; co-responsibility;*

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## 1. Introduction

Given the development of new technologies, today we are faced with ethical dilemmas related to the survival of the human species, but also to the unlimited prolongation of life. We are entitled to say that with the accelerated development of biotechnology, man, from being a creation of God, becomes a pseudo-creator. The idea of prolonging life comes on the path of religions which state that with death man will have eternal life. What is to be brought to the fore is the fact that man makes decisions based on his fears and the greatest fear of man being the fear of death. However, the research on new technologies is supported by government programs with investments amounting to millions of euros. Nevertheless, we would like to point out that there are a number of dangers to which we are exposed as a species and also at the individual level. Next, we will bring to the fore a series of risks that concern the human being.

The first aspect we encounter is to define barbarism (Colang, 2018) in the context of bio-enhanced man. The idea of barbarism can be defined only in the conditions of the unimproved man and on whom this type of technology did not intervene. If currently man (as a bio-psycho-social being can be differentiated from other species by the fact that he is aware of his finitude and feels anguish in the face of death) (Heidegger, 2019) is a being endowed with morality (or moral conscience), articulate language, and so on. The bio-enhanced man (is supposed to have a much longer and higher quality life than the current human species) to whom they have made significant improvements at the genetic level could have a different morality than we have today as individuals of the present human species. Under these conditions, we cannot know if barbarism – in the case of the bio-enhanced humanoid individuals – could not mean an increased level of morality, because they could be programmed in a different way, especially if we talk about gene-level interventions. So, the idea of barbarism as we understand it today could mean a different morality of the bio-enhanced man.

Morality depends upon the society we live in. On the one hand, the socio-cultural context shapes our personality, our mode of action, and if in a community of bio-enhanced people it is customary for people who have not improved to be excluded, marginalized or even killed, then these so-called crimes will become a habit and could no longer be considered reprehensible. On the other hand, we cannot know how we could categorize an action of a bio-enhanced person who does not live in the same community as the non-improved

people, because everything that means the universality of certain ethical imperatives is valid only for the unimproved individuals.

We might come across the same dilemma when talking about mind uploading. If the digitized consciousness will pass into a digital device, then the virtual environment will become its new reality. Under these conditions, how can we know if the virtual environment is not non-ethical or unethical compared to the physical reality in which we live? Could we state that the above-mentioned consciousness is human given that it is not yet known if the feelings and emotions could be digitized?

Last but not least, another issue that raises serious questions is related to the human rights, because of the ambiguities they may encounter in the national and international law. Concerning a number of international documents, there are a number of ambiguities about the concept of person and the concept of life, and here we are referring to the fact that the genetic engineering could manipulate embryos (which are not people, but which represent life) in order to create more moral, better, more aggressive individuals, and so on. In the literature, an individual is considered to be a person only after his or her umbilical cord is cut (Moise (Rotaru), n.d.). What is an ethical dilemma for us refers to the sacredness of the life of the human species and how far the manipulation or the intervention on the life of the future person between the moment of birth and the cutting of the umbilical cord could go.

Certainly, these are just some of the possible problems/dilemmas we might face when talking about the human bio-improvement (Vlad, 2019). It is very well known that this means changing the ontological condition of man, and we believe this to be of paramount importance.

## **2. Scientific discoveries and the eternal life**

The scientific discoveries have brought many changes to the human life, and some of them refer directly to the prolongation of life and immortality (Terec-Vlad, 2015). Many investments in science aim at the unlimited prolongation of life through state-of-the-art technologies or, why not, through technologies for the digitization of the human mind and this is a very well-known fact. Although this idea is prospective for the time being, the researchers in the field have already opened the Pandora's Box, and the risks to which the human race is subjected are major.

This is the reason why the concern for the increasingly accelerated development of new technologies and the creation of

half-human, half-machine individuals has divided the scientific world into two groups. On the one hand there are the techno-optimists and on the other hand there are the techno-pessimists. A possible solution could come in the field of biolaw or bioethics, in order to solve the possible problems that may arise. On the other hand, the prolongation of life indefinitely would transform the current man who feels anguish at the horizon of death into a fearless individual, and from here we are not far from creating the barbarian (Colang, 2018; Colang & Vlad, 2020).

From this standpoint, scientists have proposed a series of anti-aging technologies that consist of organ restoration, digitization of the mind, drugs that slow down the aging process, and so forth. Once these technologies are accessible to a larger number of people, it is considered that the Nietzschean idea of masters and slaves (Nietzsche, 2012) could be brought back to the present. In this context, we also talk about the power relations (Foucault, 2005) that could be established between the technologically improved people and the unimproved people.

At the same time, from a religious perspective, it is stated that scientists are playing God, because prolonging life artificially would build rather barbarians. So we are not just talking about masters and slaves, but also about a possible totalitarianism. Even the author Hannah Arendt brings to the fore the concept of the banality of evil in the work "Eichman in Jerusalem" (2008).

In order to see how technology can cause harm, it is enough to provide as an argument the two atomic bombs that killed thousands of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and from this viewpoint, we believe that the designers of new technologies need to be kept under close scrutiny and every scientist should be responsible for what he or she creates.

### **3. The individual responsibility and the co-responsibility**

Each individual is responsible (Apel, 1992) for how he or she uses new technologies: in order to do well or in order to do evil. We believe that the creation and development of new technologies should be a responsibility, not only for the present time but also in the future, given that the future generations may no longer have a planet to live on (Terec-Vlad, 2016). Before we talk about colonizing other planets, we believe it is better to keep the current planet clean.

Here we are not only talking about an environmental ethics, but also about the respect for the otherness, for the other. The responsibility implies first of all the consciousness. "The

consciousness exists in each of us and it is a complex and individualized structure. It is difficult to specify when consciousness occurs in the ontogenetic process of the human being. No less difficult is the capture of the moment of affirmation of the moral sense, within this process” (Maxim, 2000). For Levinas, the moral responsibility is “the essential structure of subjectivity” because being responsible presupposes being responsible for the Other, and subjectivity “is being built in the very movement by which it is responsible for another that goes as far as substituting for the other” (Levinas, 1982).

Therefore, the responsible subjectivity is articulated in the openness to the other, as responsibility is not a virtue that is imposed on someone voluntarily (Maxim, 2000). Responsibility, as Hans Jonas points out, is the foundation of an ethics whose exigency is the obligation to the future: “The definitively unleashed Prometheus, to which science provides a force never before known and the economy of his unbridled impulse demands an ethics that, through freely agreed barriers, prevents human power from becoming a curse closed the fundamental ontology” (Jonas, 1993).

The responsibility concerning the new technologies is a great challenge for each of us due to the fact that some artifacts are available to us all. To be responsible in this context means to be aware of every action taken whether it is good or bad, whether it aims to do well or whether it harms the other.

#### **4. Conclusions**

We believe that the topic of the new human bio-improvement technologies is more than controversial and that ethics and bioethics should keep the pace with the new discoveries in neuroscience, genetics or genetic engineering and other related fields. These three dilemmas are just some of the possibilities we might encounter in our research, but which we wanted to bring to the fore.

The fact that man’s choice is to ignore the divinity as Creator of everything that is presupposes the fact that man could consider himself a creator or rather a pseudo-creator. The prolongation of life and the elimination of the anxiety in the face of death will determine us to become individuals without fear, but to some extent also we might become individuals without axiological and moral values.

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