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ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL MEASUREMENTS OF MODERN TECHNOSCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of the XX century considerable high-quality changes take place in science. A number of revolutionary discoveries in the field of physics, biology, information sciences and psychology is made, which become an integral part of reality, significantly transforming natural and social habitat of people. The problem is that introduction of fantastic scientific results in our life happens without deep judgment of an essence and consequences of these changes.

The prospects of human enhancement cause both fears concerning possible risks and adverse effects and desire for active developing enhancement technologies. Genetic technologies that can change not only an individual, but also radically transform humanity are the main point of the intersection and collision of different moral viewpoints.

Keywords Philosophy of Science; human enhancement; techno science; convergence technologies; social risks.

1. Introduction

The desire of the proponents of human enhancement to switch the discussions concerning the possibilities and prospects of technological change of an individual into the area of moral obligation encounters not only the arguments of active opponents, but less radical arguments of those who adhere an idea of a balance between techno-optimism of modernity and radical forms of conservatism, including bioethical discourse.

In light of the promises to change medicine and refocus it, as it is supposed, on rather economically costly models more attention is paid to the issues of social justice. In this case, not only the existing possibilities, but the promising areas of research are questionable, because it definitely raises the question of funding and further development of such projects. Actually, is it fair to invest funds in human enhancement projects, if many people do not have access to basic health care resources? Isn't it better to direct more finances for studying and treatment of diseases (e.g., Alzheimer's disease, AIDS, etc.), thereby improving population health and reducing government expenses on life support of sick people.

Another approach according to the logic of techno-optimism is based on the so-called inevitability thesis. In this case the distinction between therapy and enhancement

becomes important, because it is this distinction that marks the transition of medicine beyond *restitutio ad integrum*. Starting from the advances in medicine, many researchers claim that the needs of solving therapeutic problems will push forward further the development of health care practices which will gradually go beyond the purely therapeutic objectives. In addition, the very interpretation of the term 'enhancement' in relation to a person and his health is problematic in many cases. R. Chadwick speaks about four categories of human enhancement: using certain techniques developed for therapy but in a way that goes 'beyond therapy' (the 'beyond the therapy view'), quantitative (the additional view), qualitative (the improvement view), an umbrella term for a number of particular potential changes (the umbrella view) (Chadwick, 2008).

The first approach is, in fact, a working definition of the US President's Council on Bioethics, which is explicitly expressed in its basic documents. However, in the discussions there is a kind of difficulty in understanding the distinction between therapy and enhancement in some cases. Namely, is IVF counted as therapy or enhancement? Can we consider preventive measures of protecting human body a therapy? An illustrative example of this kind is preventive mastectomy, which is difficult to consider as therapy, even if the confidence and calmness of the patient is viewed as a therapeutic effect (Eisinger, 2007). Understanding 'enhancement' in terms of 'the quantitative approach' is also represented in the report of the US President's Council. According to it, 'to enhance something' means to add, to exaggerate or to increase something in some respect. It is this interpretation that sometimes is revealed in Russian discussions, when 'enhancement' is defined as increasing the functionality of an individual. However, the qualitative approach does not overcome the difficulty in the situation with the mastectomy: it is not possible to assess the removal of the part of a body as an increase or an addition; moreover, it is also difficult to interpret any reduction in risk in terms of increase.

The third perspective 'enhancement', according to R. Chadwick, must start from the basic conditions – the goals and the objectives of an individual. For example, the intervention can make a person more attractive. However, a qualitative assessment is vulnerable to the views of its opponents, because it is not always possible to find consensus concerning desirability or undesirability of a change.

The umbrella approach actually covers a wide range of changes related to cosmetic surgery, pharmacology, genetic engineering, cybernetics, nanotechnology, extending the human life span, etc. In this case the particular situations are based on case-analysis, rather than judgments and moral assessments of human enhancement in general. The advantage of this interpretation lies in the fact that it makes it possible to avoid disagreements in understanding certain types of interventions that can be assessed both as improvement and as harm (e.g., amputation).

Methodological basis of this article is the broad interdisciplinary synthesis of works on philosophy, bioethics and sociology directed on the complex research of bioethical measurements of the modern science development. Along with it critical reconsideration strong and weaknesses of the concepts and approaches of anthropology, bioethics which are focused on a biotechnological component of development of a tehnoscience is supposed (Arshinov & Budanov). The chosen methodology allows to philosophically estimate in a complex so difficult object of research as the person and try to answer a question: *Can technological human enhancement become "our moral obligation"?*

2. Arguments of opponents of genetic modification of human technology

Considering the development of technologies in Genetics area, F.Baylis and J.S.Robert talk about inevitability of their further development and use for the purposes which have not only therapeutic, but also enhancement effects. Inevitability is not exposed either a technological imperative or a slippery slope, but rather something more akin to ‘resilient to (moral) argument and resultant from particular conceptions of contemporary humanity’ (Baylis and Robert, 2004). According to these authors, the following progression of the development of human genetic enhancement technologies is anticipated: first, condemnation; then, understanding of ambiguousness, clash of opinions and limited acceptance, and, at last, absolute acceptance due to a change in public perceptions. As examples of changing attitudes they point to organ and tissue transplantation, cosmetic procedures, and gender reassignment.

However, the moral arguments against the development of human genetic enhancement technologies are diverse: 1. Religious taboos considering such manipulations as ‘playing God’. A person cannot take a mission and act as God giving and taking away life. 2. Breaking natural laws is a contradiction to the nature. According to A. Gorz, we can talk about the situation, from which there will be no way out. Fatal biological incidents protect us from human abuse. We are the fruits of incidents, and not of someone else’s will. If heredity will be prescribed by a man, we will be biologically predetermined by someone else’s will. It does not matter whether this predetermination is based on good or despotic intentions, the result is the same: genetic engineering penetrates into the depths of our self-perception. No one will be able to claim that he is his own master and he is a self-made man. Genetic engineering breaks the beliefs of human singularity, autonomy and responsibility. Thus, by so doing, everything that prevents programming or selecting people in the interests of public or any class or caste is destroyed. Even the faith in the effectiveness of genetic modification is able to create new forms of slavery and provide a justification and legitimization of a new caste system, even if this effectiveness is purely imaginary (Gorz, 2008, p. 28). 3. Special danger of genetic experiments which are fraught with unpredictable consequences for the future of humanity. 4. The threat to genetic diversity. 5. Risk disrupt the gene pool of humanity (Kamensky and Shapovalova, 2015, p. 2887). According to Article 1 of the “Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1997) the human genome is a common human heritage and it guarantees human inherent dignity and diversity. Even a joke concerning the creation of a new species – Homo Glaxo Wellcomus causes a kind of worries. 6. Paradoxical counter-productivity. For example Ivan Illich paid attention at the contradictions between the activities of some of social institutions and the purposes they were intended to serve. One of the reasons for the ‘counter-productivity’ I. Illich saw in ‘time-consuming acceleration’ which, in the case of the newest technologies, is even a more significant factor. In this context, the most illustrative example is that which concerns the changes in the social order through the intervention in the processes of ageing and extending life span. As a result, the social proportions of working and retired population may change, health care expenditures as well as population density may increase, etc. 7. A misuse of social resources. The first possibilities of human genetic enhancement may be an exclusive social resource, which will be available only for the very rich people, so the social advantage can be converted

into a genetic advantage, which may further increase the gap between 'optimized and 'wild people'. As a result, a very important for social solidarity principle of equality according to which each person can achieve success through equality of opportunities is eliminated. J. Habermas also points to possible asymmetry of social relations. He gives the following example. When growing up, a child learns about an idea due to which another person modified his genetic life cycle, the feeling of self-affection can block the feeling of natural embodied existence. Thereby blurring the distinction out between naturally grown and 'made' penetrates into person's own existence. This can cause dizzying awareness of the fact that because of genetic intervention that preceded somebody's birth, somebody's own nature which a person got used to feeling at the disposal was a result of the instrumentation of a fragment of external nature. Due to genetic programming the asymmetric in many respects relationships arise – a kind of paternalism. In the framework of applying eugenics such kinds of actions create social relations, abolishing the usual 'mutuality' between equals (Habermas, 2001). 8. The threat to genetic diversity for the sake of political or cultural stereotypes. For example, in Japan, there is a spreading fashion for 'European' eyes or skin lightening and straightening hair technologies. Such possibilities push to social complexes and destroy national identity. 9. Violation of free moral choice, when a person is gradually taught to use new technologies; the situations are create which provoke him, for example, to buy more and more new gadgets. 10. The means play a moral role. Different means of human genetic enhancement can have different moral dimensions and can be evaluated not only in the framework of the general objective but in the context of the direct consequences they have. 11. The problem of keeping the genetic information confident and using it legally can be placed on the social level, if we speak about the accessibility of personal information to insurance agencies, employers, court, educational institutions, adoption agencies, military organizations and special services (Aseeva, 2013, p. 1351).

3. The logic of the moral inevitability of technological improvement of human

Despite all the arguments of the opponents of genetic enhancement, according to F.Baylis and J.S.Robert it will continue developing. The authors see the first reason of this in the economic structure of modern society, which is full of consumerism and the desire to get as much profit as possible. Another considered reason is competition not only at the level of individual economic agents, but also at the level of state economic structures. Due to this reason the attempts of one national state to prohibit some kinds of enhancements will only encourage others who have not introduced these prohibitions. Moreover, the strong influence of multinational corporations promoting their commercial interests will affect the policy and practice of decision-making in this sphere. One more reason of the inevitability of genetic enhancement the theorists of this principle associate with liberal values. Respect for freedom of choice leads to cultural relativism and may contribute to the recognition of individual moral choice, which may gradually become common. 'Fascination' of modern society with technology stimulates and will stimulate in future all kinds of technological enhancements among which genetic enhancements will take their own place. Moreover, freedom of scientific research and the assumption that scientific knowledge can be value-free can also contribute to further development of these technologies. In turn, the argument that acquired knowledge can be used in the wrong way is unlikely to be serious grounds for

scientific research termination. An attempt to connect inevitability with social, political and economic factors should also take into account the factors of psychology of people who are by their nature prone to competition. Therefore, if there is an opportunity to maximize their personal, social and economic benefits it will be used (Baylis and Robert, 2004, p. 18-25). Summarizing various arguments F.Baylis and J.S.Robert emphasize the necessity of forming a new understanding of technological innovations in the overall development of techno-science, which is able to initiate a new approach of moral evaluation of their potential and possible ways of dealing with problems that arise.

John Harris develops his ideas in the form of moral inevitability logics, which takes the form of obligation. According to his opinion, the objectives of therapy and enhancement are the improvement of human health, which allows not making differences in their moral evaluation. "The overwhelming moral imperative for both therapy and enhancement is to prevent harm and confer benefit. Bathed in that moral light, it is unimportant whether the protection or benefit conferred is classified as enhancement or improvement, protection or therapy" (Harris, 2007, p. 58). J. Savulescu presents this idea more clearly: there is health value which determines the moral obligation of disease treatment and prevention. To be healthy means to live well. But health is not inherent value. It has instrumental value as a resource providing high living standards, in terms of biological and psychological possibilities. And if contemporary science can extend these possibilities then it is obliged to do this providing a better life for people (Savulescu, 2005, p. 37-38).

'The argument of moral continuum' (Erik Malmqvist) became the object of criticism in bioethics, but the prospects for further development of genetic technologies and reproductive practices cause a new range of problems. According to J. Harris and J. Savulescu, parents shall use new opportunities of reproduction to make a contribution to the well-being of their future children. However, they are for a free reproductive choice of parents who do not have to feel the pressure from the state. But who and how will ensure the independence of such a choice? And why the proponents of human genetic enhancement forget about the costs of 'dictatorship of birth' as it was termed by I. Kant. Until now the moral position of the opponents is more convincing. As A. Gorz noted: ... modification of genome is a choice of people themselves; it should be noted that it is in any case not a choice that mankind can do by every person individually. *Those who want to re-create humanity or individuals again are not those who re-create (or want to be re-created.)* Those who are re-created have no choice – they are to be re-created before their birth due to someone else's choice and according to the criteria about which they cannot judge themselves. And, indeed, whatever the degree of effectiveness of genetic engineering is, there is always a third party who wants to decide in advance how an unborn individual will look. The presupposed genetic predetermination will play its role even if its causal effectiveness is zero. ... A child will always feel someone else's power inscribed in his genes. If genetic engineering obeys the wishes of parents, then a market of (allegedly) genetic characteristics also emerges. ... If genetic engineering is socialized, it will become an instrument of normalization and standardization wherever it will be applied, citizens will always have to deal with the state which impregnated them or participated in impregnation (Gorz, 2008, p.26-28).

The question also is in the problem of possible changing in the attitude to people with disabilities in the state institutions and in the society as a whole. The burden of care for people with different health problems lies with the last. The promises to open

the way to a society in which there will be no disabled people can be an instrument of social policy, which can become not only a stage on the way of new eugenics programs, but also a means of discrimination of those people who already have health problems. Social attitudes, even if they are related to the prospects and forecasts, can have a significant impact on the current values and life-purpose guidelines. For example, according to some researchers, the expansion of 'euthanasia tourism' channels from the UK to Switzerland and other countries is becoming an important factor in the transformation of the attitude to the value of human life.

4. CONCLUSION. The risks and uncertainties of genetic improvement of people

Another perspective of the problematisation of moral imperatives of human enhancement is connected with risks and uncertainties which the prospects of human genetic enhancement have. J. Harris's statement that the application of new technologies for human enhancement will be possible only when the potential benefits will prevail over alleged risks is not only the object of criticism, but also the starting point for discussing the problems of risk communication in this sphere (Harris, 2007). The most cautious approach indicates not only the alleged complexity, but also the danger of reaching the point of no return, which may lead to a gradual multiplication of risks. The answer to the latter can be preventive caution. According to A. Grunwald, guided by the precautionary principle, we must understand that there are no 'standard situations' both in terms of morality and epistemology in risk assessment; and as the German researcher concludes, the current state 'existence of harm is not proved' should not be interpreted as 'absence of proof that it is harmless' (Grunwald, 2010). One more argument that, in fact, has become iteration in bioethical discussions indicates the uncertainty of the time that may be required to associate the consequences with a source of risk (Grebenshchikova, 2016). At one time B. Latour gave a good illustration of this situation considering the changes in the assessment of asbestos: "The case of asbestos can serve as a model, since it is probably one of the last objects that can be called modernist. It was a perfect substance (was it not called a magic material?), at once inert, effective, and profitable. It took decades before the public health consequences of its diffusion were finally attributed to it, before asbestos and its inventors, manufacturers, proponents, and inspectors were called into question; it took dozens of alerts and scandals before work-related illnesses, cancers, and the difficulties of asbestos removal ended up being traced back to their cause and counted among the properties of asbestos, whose status shifted gradually: once an ideal inert material, it became a nightmarish imbroglio of law, hygiene, and risk" (Latour, 2004). The consequences of human genetic enhancement are not obvious yet, but the established in the broad continuum viewpoints from moral obligation to different variations of precautions determine the necessity of using fine instruments of moral analytics for the analysis of new human projects'.

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