

The Ethical Validity of Human Enhancement: A Preliminary Framework for Objective Ethics

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Abstract

The allocation of resources in the field of biomedical engineering is largely determined by the consensus ethical paradigms of the time, which have been to date largely subjective and unscientific, prone to many of the illogical cognitive biases common to human reasoning [1]. This research proposes a solution in the form of an objective, scientifically based system of ethical valuation, placing consciousness and consciousness-conducive complexity as the fundamental units of value. The implications of this ethic, if adopted, would be a more rational and scientifically grounded basis for action selection, evaluation, and resource allocation to that which aids the survival of consciousnesses, such as biomedical engineering, without appealing to biopolitics. This research presents a preliminary conceptual and mathematical framework for bridging the gap between the moral and scientific to create a meta-ethical system utilising systems theory, memetics, meta-optimisation and optimisation theory, universal darwinism, evolutionary theory, Bayesian statistics and non-equilibrium thermodynamic theory. As well as presenting a novel framework, this is a call for further research into scientific and objective meta-ethics, a claim that this is theoretically possible, and that this is of particular import to future advances, particularly in biomedical engineering which is in the middle of substantial ethical debate.

References

[1] Greene J. D., Sommerville B. R., Nystrom L. E., Darley J. M., Cohen J. D. (2001) An fMRI Investigation of Emotional Engagement in Moral Judgment. *Science*, 293, pp. 2105–2108