12. Partiality for Humanity and Enhancement

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We consider a strategy for justifying bio-conservative opposition to enhancement according to which we should resist radical departures from human nature, not because human nature possesses any intrinsic value, but because it is *our* nature. The idea is that we can be *partial* to humanity in the same way that common sense morality allows us to be partial to self, family, lovers, friends or our country. Whilst a similar idea was suggested by Bernard Williams and Jerry Cohen, it was not fully developed, and their arguments fail to mount a serious challenge to many forms of enhancement. We explore a better approach, drawing on recent literature about the nature and grounds of partiality, and attempt to elucidate what partiality for humanity might plausibly involve. We argue, however, that even if such partiality for humanity is defensible, it can at most only set limits on enhancement.

A common strategy that bioconservatives employ in their objections to human enhancement technologies is to appeal to the intrinsic value of human nature, and to object that the use of enhancement technologies might lead us to radically alter this nature. For instance, The President's Council on Bioethics (2003, p. 295) claims that a danger with using such technologies is that in using them we will " … achieve superior results only by compromising our humanity", whilst Fukuyama, (2002, p. 172) similarly warns us against disrupting "… the unity or continuity of human nature" with their use. [1] However, these arguments have been met with scepticism; for instance, critics have pointed out that the concept of human nature that these arguments invoke is ambiguous (and perhaps even indeterminate), and that it is far from clear that changing human nature (if such a thing were possible) must necessarily involve a change for the worse (Buchanan, 2009; 2011, chapter 4; Harris, 2007; Chapter 3; Fenton, 2006; Nielsen, 2011; McConnell, 2010; Pugh, 2014). More generally, the standard problem faced by those who appeal to the concept of human nature in their objections to enhancement technologies is to explain why the relatively contingent and arbitrary features of the human species, selected by blind evolutionary processes, should be taken to bear intrinsic value.

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1 See also Annas (2009); Habermas (2003)

In this chapter, we shall consider a more plausible strategy for justifying bio-conservative opposition to human enhancement that draws on considerations of reasonable partiality. It is commonly claimed that a plausible account of morality must allow for the permissibility[2] of prioritizing certain individuals in one's moral deliberations if one bears a certain kind of special relationship to those individuals (Keller, 2013). Perhaps more controversially, one might go further and claim that we might also permissibly prioritize in our moral deliberations certain groups to which we belong, even if we do not individually know all members of that group. For instance, some philosophers have argued that we may have reasons to be partial towards our co-nationals in this way (Hurka, 1997; Miller, 2005; Nathanson, 2009).

To extend these considerations of partiality to the human enhancement debate, it might be possible to form a partiality-based objection to enhancement technologies by arguing that we should resist radical departures from human nature, not because human nature possesses intrinsic value, but because it is *our* nature, and because we can understand ourselves as having reasons of partiality to preserve our own nature. We shall begin by suggesting that a similar idea can be found in the writings of Bernard Williams and Jerry Cohen, before claiming that their arguments cannot ground powerful objections to many forms of enhancement. We shall then go on to explain the nature of reasonable partiality in more detail, before sketching an account of what partiality for humanity might plausibly involve.

I. The Human Prejudice, Conservative Valuing, and Human Enhancement

Both Bernard Williams (2009) and G.A Cohen (2011) have defended the claim that the fact that *we* are human beings gives rise to certain sorts of moral reasons. We shall briefly delineate each of their arguments in this regard before going on to consider the implications of these arguments for the enhancement debate.

Williams claims that the fact that we are human beings gives us reason to favour human beings in our moral deliberation, even over other species that might share comparably valuable capacities. He starts his defence of this 'human prejudice' by observing that it is possible to trace a humanist tradition throughout history that is based on the fundamental assumption that " … in cosmic terms human beings had a definite measure of importance"(Williams, 2009, p. 78). However, Williams himself rejects this tradition in view of the fact that it relies on there being a 'cosmic point of view', or more prosaically, on there being a way in which things can matter absolutely in the universe.[3] Whilst he denies the existence of a cosmic point of view, he goes on to highlight that this does not entail that there is *no* point of view from which human beings are important. He writes:

> There is certainly one point of view from which they are important, namely ours: unsurprisingly so, since the "we" in question, the "we" who raise this question and discuss with others who we hope will listen and reply, are indeed human beings. It is just as unsurprising that this "we" often shows up within the *content* of our values. Whether a creature is a human being or not makes a large difference, a lot of the time, to the ways in which we treat that creature or at least think that we should treat it (Williams, 2009, p. 80).

On this view, human beings are not understood to have importance in some cosmic, absolute sense; rather they simply have importance *for human beings*.

Williams seems to believe that the mere fact that a creature is a human being can operate as a foundational moral reason to privilege that creature in our moral deliberations, when a foundational moral reason is

2 One might advance the stronger claim that morality might even oblige us to be partial to certain individuals in our moral deliberations.

3 For criticism of Williams's claims about cosmic importance see Kahane (2014).

understood to refer to a reason that neither admits of or requires further justification; it is simply something that we care about in a fundamental way. According to Williams:

> A central idea involved in the supposed human prejudice is that there are certain respects in which creatures are treated in one way rather than another simply because they belong to a certain category, the human species. We do not, at this basic initial level, need to know any more about them. Told that there are human beings trapped in a burning building, on the strength of that fact alone we mobilize as many resources as we can to rescue them (Williams, 2009, pp. 84–84).

According to Williams, the foundational nature of the moral reason we have to save the human beings in this 'burning building case' suggests that the human prejudice is structurally different from morally reprehensible prejudices such as racism and sexism (Williams, 2009, pp. 83–84).

We shall consider the strength of this account, and how it might be used in an objection to human enhancement technologies below. Prior to doing so, it should be acknowledged that Williams' claims seem broadly compatible with some of Jerry Cohen's arguments in defence of conservative forms of valuing, as we shall now outline.

In a posthumously published essay, Cohen sought to defend the conservative attitude of having a ' … bias in favour of retaining what is of value, even in the face of replacing it by something of greater value" (Cohen, 2011, p. 203). On this attitude, the fact that a bearer of value *exists* can be understood to confer value to that entity in abstraction from the value that it otherwise bears. More specifically, Cohen defends two modes of conservative valuing, which he terms 'particular valuing' and 'personal valuing'. In the case of particular valuing, the object of value in question is understood to bear *intrinsic* value; for example, consider a beautiful landmark such as the Great Pyramid of Giza. By "particular valuing", Cohen suggests that the value of the extant particular intrinsically valuable object is not exhausted by the intrinsic value which it instantiates; we also value the existing *particular* object that instantiates that value itself, over and above the fact that it possess a certain degree of intrinsic value. To illustrate this distinction, suppose that we could build a grand new version of the Great Pyramid that would bear even more intrinsic value than the original, but that we could only do so by destroying the original (because we had to build the new pyramid on exactly the same spot to ensure the highest possible aesthetic value). On Cohen's view, the particular value of the extant original pyramid might give us sufficient reason to refrain from creating the new version, even though it would be better.[4]

In contrast, in the case of personal valuing, the object of such valuing may bear either very little intrinsic value or even no intrinsic value at all; rather the value of the object lies mainly in its specific relation to the evaluator. To illustrate, suppose that a family had an old dining table that was only just still serviceable. Even though the table might lack intrinsic value, the family might choose to retain the table even if they could easily replace it with a new one because of their specific relationship to that table, that is, because of its personal value *to them*. For instance, the table may have been the scene of memorable discussions, or it may have been built by a much loved, departed relative. Although Cohen himself does not point this out, we have suggested elsewhere that in the case of personal valuing, it seems plausible to claim that the relationship of the evaluator to the valued item that grounds personal value are often based in part upon a shared personal history with that item (Pugh, Kahane and Savulescu, 2013, p. 334 and 337).

Both particular and personal valuing can undergird the conservative bias that Cohen seeks to defend. However, it should be acknowledged that Cohen concedes that the conservative bias is defeasible. If the value of the new objects that replace existing value is of a sufficient magnitude, it may still be correct to bring them about on

4 Cohen often writes in a way that gives the impression that when we value particulars in this way, we are responding to a special kind of value that goes beyond the intrinsic value they possess. But the claim is better understood as a claim about *how* we should properly respond to the intrinsic value possessed by particular things.

Cohen's view. However, in such cases, whilst the conservative may celebrate the new value that has been created, it is also fitting that they should lament the value that we have lost in doing so.

Cohen makes some remarks that suggest that his views regarding conservatism are congruous with the sentiments expressed in Williams' human prejudice regarding the value of human beings. For instance, Cohen writes that we have reason to maintain human beings as they currently exist, because they are " … creatures that exhibit a certain form of value", but also (and more pertinently for our purposes here) that we have an additional reason to do so, which is "that they are *us*" (Cohen, 2011, p. 209).

Interestingly, Cohen makes these claims after describing an example that suggests that his views can be readily applied to the enhancement debate:

> If I want us to continue as we are, do I want us to retain our negative features? What if a genetic manipulation could, for example, eliminate envy … I would not want to eliminate all of our bad features. I conjecture that that is partly because the negative traits are part of the package that makes human beings the particular valuable creatures that we personally cherish, and are therefore worth preserving as part of that package (Cohen, 2011, p. 209).

He then suggests that this example suggests that the particular and personal modes of valuing delineated above correspond to a distinction (alluded to above) between:

> … *the* reason to preserve human beings—that they are creatures that exhibit a certain form of value, and *our* (additional) reason to do so, which is that they are *us* (Cohen, 2011, p. 209).

The first reason that Cohen highlights above is grounded by an appeal to particular valuing. Cohen does not explain the content of the 'certain form of value' that he understands human beings to bear (as the above quote intimates), and there are different ways in which this could be cashed out. For instance, it could be argued that human beings bear intrinsic value by virtue of our shared human characteristics or nature. Whichever way we interpret Cohen's claim here though, the argument that is implicit in his remarks is that even if we could improve human beings in a manner that would increase their intrinsic value, we have reasons to refrain from doing so because human beings as they currently exist have particular value in abstraction from the intrinsic value that they bear (in the same way that the Great Pyramid does). We call this the argument from particular value (Pugh, Kahane and Savulescu., 2013, p. 340).

The second reason that Cohen highlights particularly echoes Williams' claims regarding the human prejudice. In his concluding remarks, Williams claims:

> Hopes for self-improvement can lie dangerously close to the risk of self-hatred… . The self-hatred, in this case, is a hatred of humanity (Williams, 2009, pp. 95–96).

For Williams then, to seek to improve human beings in ways that amount to eradicating the inherent flaws of humankind is to risk expressing a 'hatred of humanity', and to potentially overlook the foundational reason that we have to privilege our (flawed) selves in our moral deliberations. Although Williams does not directly discuss radical forms of enhancement that aim to eradicate flaws inherent in human nature—moral enhancement being a clear example—it seems eminently plausible to expect that he would regard such a project as falling within the scope of his critical remark. Notice, however, an important difference here between Williams and Cohen. For Cohen, the reason to preserve human beings 'because they are us' is not strictly foundational, but rather should be understood to correspond to the act of personal valuing. As we explained above, on Cohen's account, the

value involved in personal valuing is grounded by the evaluator's relationship to the evaluator, or their shared personal history.

With this in mind, we have suggested elsewhere that there are two ways in which one might argue in favour of preserving human beings as they are by appealing to Cohen's concept of personal valuing. On the individual level, it seems plausible to claim that we each have a relationship to our own features that may be understood as a basis for each of us placing personal value on ourselves. However, to broaden the scope of the argument beyond the individual to the collective level, one would have to claim that humans *as a species* have developed their shared characteristics over the course of a shared biological history. One might then argue that to seek to improve ourselves by using enhancement technologies would be to fail to recognise the significance of our collective relationship to our own shared biological history, and the personal value that we, as a collective, place on it (Pugh, Kahane and Savulescu, 2013, p. 341).

Whilst objections to human enhancement technologies that appeal to conservative modes of valuing or the human prejudice have some advantages over bioconservative objections that appeal to the much contested concept of human nature, they are not without their own limitations. We have argued elsewhere that Cohen's arguments concerning conservatism cannot be used to ground a strong sweeping objection to enhancement (Pugh, Kahane and Savulescu, 2013). One reason for this is that, by Cohen's own lights, the conservative bias is defeasible, and we may have reasons to carry out certain enhancements that outweigh the reasons provided by particular or personal value. Furthermore, many attractive enhancements such as life-extending enhancements can be understood as potentially preserving valuable features of human beings in a manner that is compatible with the conservative bias. Indeed, it seems that similar arguments can plausibly be raised against the scope of an objection based on Williams' defence of the human prejudice. As we claimed in our analysis of the application of Cohen's conservatism to the enhancement debate,

> … in seeking to change certain aspects of human nature through the use of enhancement technologies, it seems more accurate to say that we are seeking to improve human nature rather than to simply replace it wholesale; and it is not clear why merely seeking to improve ourselves must indicate a hatred of what we now are (Pugh, Kahane and Savulescu, 2013, p. 352).

The limited scope of the objections to enhancement that can be grounded by Williams' and Cohen's arguments is not their only flaw. Another problem is that the strength of these objections is dependent on the plausibility of Williams' and Cohen's respective accounts of the human prejudice and conservative modes of valuing. Yet it seems that there are problems with both accounts. First, Cohen himself conceded that his account of conservatism faces important objections (Cohen, 2011, pp. 214–221); in particular, it is not clear that Cohen's conservatism is not simply a manifestation of status quo bias.(Savulescu, 2009, pp. 216–235).[5] Furthermore, elsewhere one of us has challenged Williams' defence of the human prejudice, by arguing that, despite his claims to the contrary, Williams fails to establish that the human prejudice is morally distinct from other morally deplorable prejudices such as sexism and racism [6] The piece also includes a defence of the competing 'personism' view that Williams attacks, according to which 'personhood' rather than membership of the human species is what matters morally; we shall elaborate on this below in our discussion of partiality.

Rather than attempt to supplement Williams' or Cohen's accounts in order to defend them from these objections here, we shall in the next section explore a potential approach to human enhancement that shares in the spirit of Williams' and Cohen's comments, but that is not vulnerable to the objections that have been raised here against their theories. More specifically, we shall explore the nature and grounds of reasonable partiality in morality, and

5 See also (Bostrom and Ord, 2006) However, see Nebel (2015) for an argument that the status quo bias can be rational on conservative theories.

6 See also (Singer, 2009)

suggest that this represents a promising way in which bioconservatives might develop Williams' and Cohen's line of argument.

II. Introducing Partiality

A 'reason of partiality' is a distinctive kind of moral reason that has its source in a non-instrumentally valued attachment; in the absence of the attachment in question, these reasons would not obtain (Keller, 2013, p. 3; Miller, 2005, p. 66; Scheffler, 2010, Section Three). Common sense morality suggests that it can be permissible for agents to incorporate reasons of partiality in their moral deliberations. To illustrate, suppose that you are told that you have only enough time to save either two people who are drowning on the left side of a pier, or one person drowning on the right. If you were told that the one person drowning on the right is your brother, this fact might plausibly be understood to make it morally permissible for you to save him rather than the two strangers, even though we would normally claim that you have an obligation to save two people rather than one in such a situation, *ceteris paribus*.

In view of the above, we might claim that we can have (defeasible) reasons of partiality to favour our friends and family in our moral deliberations. However, whilst this seems intuitively plausible, it raises the question of why certain relationships, projects and group memberships (which we shall henceforth refer to collectively as 'attachments') can plausibly generate reasons of partiality whilst others cannot. In the case of family and close friends, this question does not seem to be overly problematic; the close ties that we have forged with these individuals may easily be understood to give rise to a non-instrumentally valuable relationship, and this sort of value can ground reasonable partiality towards our friends and family in our moral deliberations. However, the question is more problematic when we consider partiality towards members of groups to which we belong, because we often lack close ties to all members of the groups to which we belong. For instance, even if we believe that co-nationality can ground reasonable partiality, it is clearly not the case that we have a close individual tie with every co-national of ours who exists. Furthermore, we surely cannot be morally justified in being partial towards members of certain groups, such as members of our own sex or race, in our moral deliberations. To illustrate, it would be no moral justification of your saving the one instead of the two in the above pier example if you were to point out that the person on the right was the same sex or race as you, whilst the two on the left were not. Call this the 'discriminatory partiality' objection to reasonable partiality towards groups.[7]

In order to avoid the discriminatory partiality objection, it seems that one must claim that partiality is only morally justifiable towards attachments that are in some way *valuable*. For instance, John Cottingham (1986, pp. 370–371) suggests that morally justifiable partialities are those in which a plausible case can be made for claiming that the partiality in question must find a place in all or most plausible blueprints for human flourishing. He goes on to claim that partiality to one's own race or sex is not justified on his view, since the available empirical evidence suggests that abandoning partiality to one's race or sex allows members of society greater opportunity to flourish (Cottingham, 1986, p. 371).

Whilst Cottingham's account suggests a way in which an account of partiality might avoid the discriminatory partiality problem, the way in which it does so relies heavily on the contingent empirical claim that abandoning partiality to one's race or sex allows members of society greater opportunity to flourish. However, suppose that conditions were otherwise; Cottingham's account seems to suggest that racial and sexual discrimination would be morally acceptable in circumstances in which it did allow members of society greater opportunities to flourish. This seems to weaken this form of response to the discriminatory partiality problem.

In order to strengthen this sort of account, one would need to establish that there is a non-contingent relationship between human flourishing and the abandonment of racist and sexist attitudes; on such a view, holding such attitudes would simply be inimical to human flourishing. Alternatively one could adopt a view with

7 Caney (1996) calls this sort of objection the 'obnoxious identity' problem.

somewhat broader scope by claiming that partialities are justified as long as they are grounded by a relationship that has final value (Kolodny, 2003; Scheffler, 1997). On such an account, partialities may be justified by valuable relationships that are finally valuable for non-welfare based reasons.

III. Partiality for Humanity and Human Enhancement

With this discussion of the grounds of reasonable partiality in mind, we can begin to provide a sketch of what partiality for humanity might involve and the implications that it might have for the enhancement debate. We shall first suggest an account of partiality for humanity as being grounded by membership-dependent reasons, that is, by reasons that flow from our non-instrumentally valuing our membership of the human species. Whether or not it makes sense to speak of 'reasonable partiality for humanity' in this sense depends on there being a plausible basis for non-instrumentally valuing 'being human'. If not, then partiality for humanity might be discriminatory.

As we highlighted in the first section, Williams suggests that his burning building case speaks in favour of the human prejudice. However, as one of us has argued elsewhere, deeper consideration of this case suggests that it is not sufficient for establishing the claim that we value human beings *per se*, in abstraction from the valuable capabilities that they tend to instantiate, and which demarcate personhood from non-personhood. To see why, consider an analogue of the claim Williams makes on the basis of his burning building case:

> Told that there are *permanently unconscious* human beings trapped in a burning building, on the strength of that fact alone we mobilise as many resources as we can to rescue them (Savulescu, 2009, p. 228).

We believe that this claim has far less intuitive plausibility, precisely because the human beings in question are not persons. Similarly, what seems to be doing the moral work in Williams' original burning building case is the fact that the beings in question are persons.[8]

Consider now two further cases. In the first, we must compare the reasons we have to save a human non-person with the reasons we have to save a non-human person:

> *Case One*: A permanently unconscious human being is trapped in one room of a burning building. A benevolent extra-terrestrial who exhibits all the capacities associated with personhood is trapped in another. You only have time to save one.

Ceteris paribus, we believe that you have a moral obligation to save the non-human person in case one. The fact that one of the endangered individuals in case one is a person and the other is not gives us a sufficient reason to save that individual at the expense of saving the other.

Crucially though, it is not clear that it is best to construe our moral reason here as a reason of partiality. As we suggested above, we can understand a reason of partiality to be a distinctive kind of reason that has its source in a non-instrumentally valued attachment. However, when we choose to save the person in case one, our reason to do so does not seem to stem (at least not primarily) from the fact that we value our membership of the group that contains all and only persons; rather, in this case, our reason to save the person stems directly from the value of the person herself. The same, it seems, can be said of Williams' original burning building case.

8 Some would hold that even if we shouldn't mobilise as *many* resources as we can to save a human in such a case, we should still mobilise *some* resources. But this point just brings out the way Williams' example fails to distinguish these two rather different considerations. And as the examples we discuss below show, it is the moral significance of personhood seems to vastly outweigh the possible further significance of being human, once personhood is set aside.

However, the fact that our moral reasons in these cases are not grounded by reasons of partiality to humanity does not entail that such reasons cannot ever obtain. To see why, consider a case in which we must compare the reason we have to save a human person with the reason we have to save a non-human person.

> *Case Two*: A human person is trapped in one room of a burning building. A benevolent extra-terrestrial who exhibits all the capacities associated with personhood is trapped in another. You only have time to save one.

In this case, it at least seems plausible to claim that one might permissibly choose to save the human person rather than the non-human person. Suppose that this is so. Assuming this is the case, this example suggests that there may yet be scope for a reasonable partiality for humanity that goes beyond the moral reasons that we have to treat persons in certain ways. Case one shows that we have strong moral reasons that, as McMahan (2002, p. 218) notes, "derive from a consideration of the intrinsic properties of other beings who might be affected by our action". However, in case two, in so far as we might justifiably choose to save the human person rather than the non-human person, the moral reason to do so is not derived from the same set of considerations. Rather, our reason to do so seems to derive from extrinsic relational factors, or from what we are calling a reason of partiality for humanity.

Our discussion of Cohen's argument from personal value suggests that one possible argument in favour of the view that our membership of the human species is non-instrumentally valuable could be formed by appealing to the fact that humans as a species have developed their shared characteristics, including those that demarcate them as persons rather than non-persons, over the course of a shared biological history.[9] In justifying our choice in case two above, we might claim that this relationship between you and the human person is a morally relevant factor which, since all else is, *ex hypothesi*, equal, gives you a sufficient moral reason to save the human person rather than the non-human person. On this account, it is not membership of a species *per se* that in non-instrumentally valuable; as McMahan, (2002) also argues, it is difficult to see how this could be morally significant in any way. Rather, what may be understood to ground the non-instrumental value of our membership of the human species is the contingent fact that we as a species have shared a common cultural and biological history with (and crucially *only* with) other members of our species in developing the valuable capabilities that humans instantiate. Although we share parts of our biological history with other species (such as chimpanzees), what makes our shared history with other humans special is that only other humans have shared in the part of our history over the course of which we have developed and exercised the very capacities that separate us from other animals.

If this is coherent, then there may be some basis for reasonable partiality to humanity that might provide us with sufficient moral justification to save a human person rather than a human non-person in a situation where we have to choose between saving one or the other. However, this partiality provides only very weak reasons; indeed it might be claimed that moral reasons that derive from a consideration of the intrinsic properties of other beings might be understood to take lexical priority over our reasons of partiality that are grounded on the non-instrumental value of our attachments. McMahan seems to endorse this sort of view. Although he is sceptical about whether membership of the human species can be non-instrumentally valuable, he writes that even if this were the case, it would only justify our doing 'marginally more' for them than non-members, and that the baseline for the moral treatment of other species would not be affected by the fact that we have reasonable partiality to human beings (McMahan, 2002, p. 227).

The view of reasonable partiality for humanity that we have outlined here is influenced by the arguments of Williams and Cohen that we explored in section I. However, we believe that it represents a stronger theoretical basis for an objection to human enhancement than the arguments found in Williams' and Cohen's work. First,

9 Notice that Hurka (1997, pp. 149–156) appeals to the value of shared history in his defence of nationalism.

reasons of partiality are a familiar element of many plausible moral theories; as such, in appealing to such reasons, we do not need to appeal to a novel and controversial form of valuing as Cohen does. Second, on the account that we have outlined above, reasons of partiality are weaker than the reasons that the human prejudice gives on Williams' account. Whilst they give us moral reasons to favour human beings in our moral deliberations, these reasons only obtain if we have already met our more stringent moral duties to non-human persons that are generated by the value of personhood.

It seems that a suitably developed account of this sketch of reasonable partiality for humanity could provide a theoretical foundation for an objection to human enhancement technologies that would be superior to many existing bioconservative objections that appeal to the concept of human nature. An objection grounded in partiality for humanity offers bioconservatives a way of providing a determinate account of what we have reasons to preserve about human beings, without facing the standard problem of explaining how certain relatively contingent and arbitrary features of the human species, selected as they were by a blind evolutionary process, can generate such reasons. On an objection based on the account of partiality illustrated above, the human features that we have reasons to preserve are not understood to be intrinsically valuable in the somewhat implausible manner that other bioconservative objections have claimed; rather, we are understood to have reasons to preserve certain features by virtue of the non-instrumental but *extrinsic* value that these features bear. The extrinsic value they bear is grounded by the fact that these features are the product of our shared biological and cultural history.

Moreover, unlike other objections to human enhancement that appeal to the intrinsic value of human nature, the objection from reasonable partiality is not committed to the claim that changing human nature must necessarily involve a change for the worse. The thrust of the objection is that even if changing human nature might in some ways be a change for the better, we can nonetheless have reasons to refrain from making such changes. On the account of partiality outlined above, the reasons at work here are reasons of partiality for humanity grounded in the non-instrumental value of the characteristics that we as a species have developed over a shared cultural and biological history.

However, even if we assume that reasonable partiality for humanity is a plausible position, there are some remaining concerns about whether it can be developed into a successful anti-enhancement argument. The first problem is that on the account outlined above, reasons of partiality are relatively weak, and are lexically inferior to the moral reasons generated by the value of personhood. As such, if it can be argued that certain enhancements are necessary to safeguard the moral value of persons, reasons of partiality to humanity would not be sufficiently strong to rule out the moral permissibility of enhancement. Indeed, one of us has argued elsewhere that as our technological capabilities continue to expand, there is an increasing probability that a small group of individuals could destroy the human race, and that the only way to prevent this from happening may be to use technological means to morally enhance the species (Persson and Savulescu, 2012).

A second problem with a partiality-based objection to enhancement technologies is that it is not clear that reasons of partiality to humanity can ground a strong objection to forms of enhancement that seek to preserve what is valuable about human beings. For example, we have already argued elsewhere (when considering the the application of Cohen's conservatism to human enhancement debate) that life-extension technologies don't seem vulnerable to this sort of objection because normal ageing brings about the loss of cognitive, sensory, emotional and motor capacities that we value. Life-extension technologies thus seem to preserve much of what we value in being human rather than replace it with something else. It should therefore be supported by Cohen's conservative bias, and more generally by partiality to humanity (Pugh, Kahane and Savulescu, 2013, p. 345).

IV. Conclusion

We have suggested that an appeal to reasonable partiality could ground a limited form of objection to human enhancement technologies. We have provided a brief sketch of what a plausible value-based account of

reasonable partiality for humanity might involve, suggesting that reasonable partiality for humanity could be grounded by the non-instrumental extrinsic value of the, cultural and biological history that we share with all and only other members of the species *Homo Sapiens*. We suggested that an objection to human enhancement based on these accounts of partiality has several advantages over common bioconservative objections to human enhancement that appeal to the value of human nature, and the objections that can be drawn from the arguments of Williams and Cohen. Having said this, since reasons of partiality can ground only weak moral reasons, there are some remaining concerns about whether a view of partiality for humanity can be developed into a successful anti enhancement argument.

We have provided only a brief sketch of how one might give an account of the non-instrumental value of being a member of the human species by appealing to the shared cultural and biological history of our species. However, such an account requires further defence than we can provide here. Indeed, it is telling that both Cottingham and Scheffler are sceptical of whether we can make sense of reasonable partiality for humanity on their value-based account. This in turn raises the worry about whether partiality for humanity may just be 'speciesism' of the sort that Peter Singer, (1979) famously attacks by another name. If an account of partiality for humanity cannot stand up to critical scrutiny, even the weak objections to enhancement that we discussed above may simply amount to conclusions that follow from an irrational and morally despicable bias for humanity that is on par with sexism and racism. Nonetheless, we tentatively suggest that an account of reasonable partiality for humanity represents the most plausible way of developing a bioconservative objection to enhancement based around the significance of human nature, and that it is the most promising way of developing the sentiments expressed in Cohen's and Williams' works, and thus deserves further discussion.

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