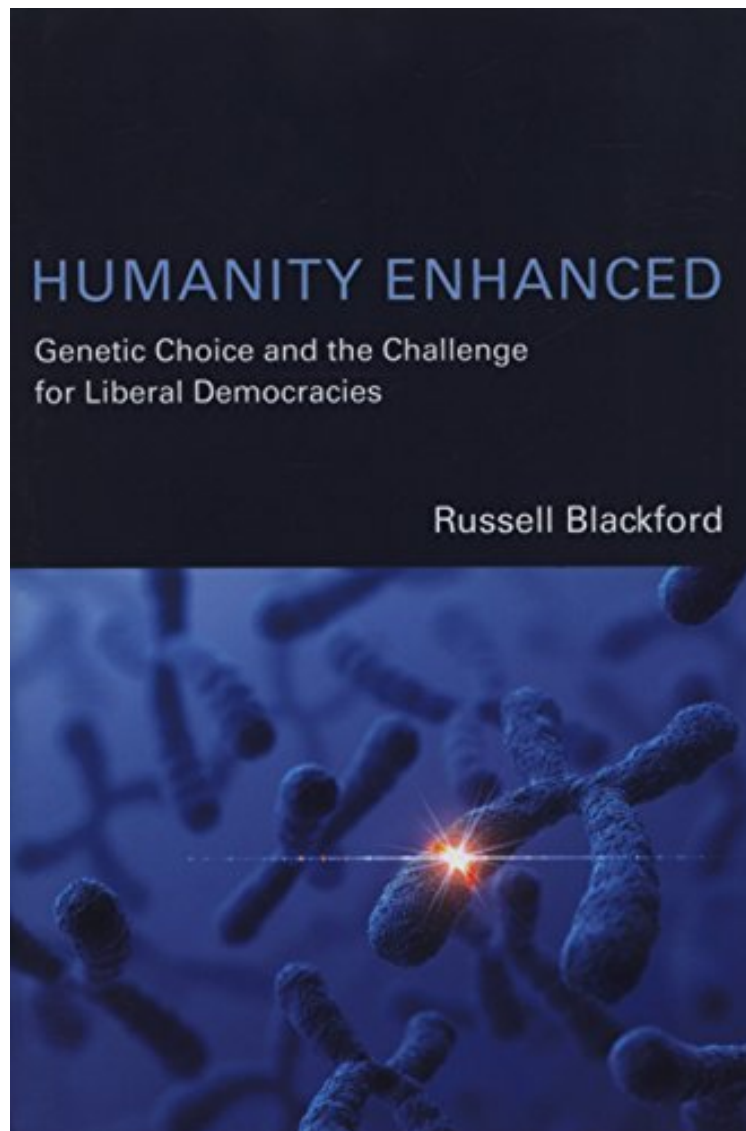


(Online library) Humanity Enhanced: Genetic Choice and the Challenge for Liberal Democracies (Basic Bioethics)

Humanity Enhanced: Genetic Choice and the Challenge for Liberal Democracies (Basic Bioethics)

Russell Blackford

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Russell Blackford : Humanity Enhanced: Genetic Choice and the Challenge for Liberal Democracies (Basic Bioethics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Humanity Enhanced: Genetic Choice and the Challenge for Liberal Democracies (Basic Bioethics):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A sensible review of an area prone to sensationalismBy Charles

Taylor This book argues that less rather than more government regulation be applied to the field of genetic modification. It argues, for example, that the more likely limited benefits of eliminating particular genetic disorders hugely outweigh the speculative risks of creating dystopian societies of the sort imagined in, say, the film *Gattaca*. It is hard to disagree with Russell Blackford's conclusions after following his readable and measured presentation of the arguments both for and against the need for laws to limit research in this area. I imagine that other books presenting one sided sensationalised accounts of the field will prove better sellers given the polarising nature of the topic. However, for the person wishing not just to have their prejudices confirmed, but rather to be informed, this is the book to get.

An argument that modern liberal democracies should tolerate human enhancement technologies, answering key objections by critics of these practices. Emerging biotechnologies that manipulate human genetic material have drawn a chorus of objections from politicians, pundits, and scholars. In *Humanity Enhanced*, Russell Blackford eschews the heated rhetoric that surrounds genetic enhancement technologies to examine them in the context of liberal thought, discussing the public policy issues they raise from legal and political perspectives. Some see the possibility of genetic choice as challenging the values of liberal democracy. Blackford argues that the challenge is not, as commonly supposed, the urgent need for a strict regulatory action. Rather, the challenge is that fear of these technologies has created an atmosphere in which liberal tolerance itself is threatened. Focusing on reproductive cloning, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis of embryos, and genetic engineering, Blackford takes on objections to enhancement technologies (raised by Jürgen Habermas and others) based on such concerns as individual autonomy and distributive justice. He argues that some enhancements would be genuinely beneficial, and that it would be justified in some circumstances even to exert pressure on parents to undertake genetic modification of embryos. Blackford argues against draconian suppression of human enhancement, although he acknowledges that some specific and limited regulation may be required in the future. More generally, he argues, liberal democracies would demonstrate liberal values by tolerating and accepting the emerging technologies of genetic choice.

This book provides a refreshing contribution to the debates about enhancement and offers a much-needed analysis of the relationship between emerging technologies and liberal tolerance--or the lack of it--in some well-rehearsed arguments. This is essential reading for anyone interested in not only enhancement but also emerging technologies in general. (Ruth Chadwick, Distinguished Research Professor, Cardiff University) Blackford brilliantly demolishes the philosophical and ethical confusions of fearful opponents of emerging reproductive and genetic technologies and succinctly explains why it is moral for people to radically increase their healthy lifespans and to enhance their physical, emotional, and intellectual capacities. (Ronald Bailey, author of *Liberation Biology: The Scientific and Moral Case of the Biotech Revolution*) About the Author Russell Blackford is Conjoint Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Science at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and is editor in chief of *The Journal of Evolution and Technology*. He is the author of *Freedom of Religion and the Secular State* as well as several science fiction novels.