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Original article

Bioethical perspective of ontologically-based personalism

La perspectiva bioética del personalismo con fundamentación ontológica

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Abstract

This article presents a bioethical perspective of ontologically-based personalism. The aim of this model applied to bioethics is to provide a suitable framework for moral issues that arise from biomedical applications to human beings. Firstly, an explanation is offered on how the ethical model it proposes has an ontological foundation, with a view to associating human dignity and rights – most notably at the beginning and at the end of life – with the substantial reality of the person, as opposed to associating it with a set of capacities that an individual may or may not exhibit. The reader is then introduced to a case analysis method that links empirical data, anthropological dimensions, and ethical assessment, as well as a set of four practical principles aimed at guiding decisions in a biomedical context.

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Finally, it outlines the key components of a personalist, ontologically based, model, by comparing its theoretical setting and its main implications with those of some current bioethical trends.

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Keywords: Person; Ethical theory; Personalism; Ethical principles; Human being

Resumen

Este artículo presenta la perspectiva bioética del personalismo con fundamentación ontológica. El objetivo de este modelo aplicado a la bioética es proponer un marco adecuado para las cuestiones morales que surgen de las aplicaciones biomédicas a los seres humanos. En primer lugar, se explica que este modelo ético se basa en un fundamento ontológico, con el fin de conectar la dignidad y los derechos de los individuos implicados en cuestiones de bioética —por ejemplo, al principio y al final de la vida— con la realidad sustancial de la persona y no con un conjunto de capacidades que un determinado individuo puede exhibir o puede no exhibir. Después, se presenta el método de análisis de casos propuesto por este modelo, que relaciona los datos empíricos, las dimensiones antropológicas y la valoración ética, y un conjunto de 4 principios prácticos destinado a guiar las decisiones éticas en el contexto biomédico. Los puntos claves del modelo personalista con fundamentación ontológica serán ilustrados también mediante la comparación de su valor teórico y sus principales implicaciones con las de algunas tendencias actuales en el debate bioético.

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Palabras clave: Persona; Teoría ética; Personalismo; Principios éticos; Ser humano

Introduction

My first aim in this essay is to present a personalist perspective which is ontologically founded, namely a bioethical approach rooted in the metaphysical tradition of Western philosophy that is well suited to address old and new problems arising from bio-medical developments.

My presentation consists of two parts. In the first part, I will introduce the theoretical framework of personalism, where the notion of person plays a crucial role. I

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