

# Editorial

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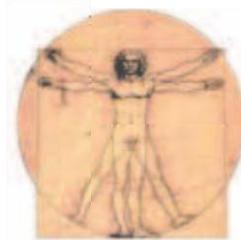
Even if one considers bioethics plural and open to multiple conceptualizations and perspectives, it is worrying that, in many cases, it is used as a tool to legitimize the *status quo*, to serve the coercive interests of the market through the authority conferred to the biomedical area. This alarming statement about the direction the field is taking this reflections, particularly in the Northern Hemisphere, can be seen even in major international bioethics events, in which conferences and lectures adopt a supposedly pragmatic position, but slip into insensibility and disrespect to human beings.

Considering placebo is not only acceptable but indeed legitimate, even when there are drugs approved for treatment, as ratified by the 2008 amendment of the *Declaration of Helsinki* that established the practice of the *double standard* for research in multiple centers, which fractions humanity even more consolidating the lack of access to basic human rights – to life, health and education – for most people in almost all countries, who are already living under adverse economic and social conditions. Such a position, covered by philosophical concepts relevant to Western societies, such as *freedom and autonomy*, mark circumstances genuinely hostile to people and populations. In such situations, these concepts are used, for example, to legitimize the personal option to participate in studies with placebos of those who have no other choice of treatment.

The disrespect for life, societies and human groups, identified in research undertaken in these forums with vulnerable populations, is not confined to the use of people as things to ensure the phase III drug trials. Several other examples, such as the proposed purchase and sale of organs for transplantation and uterus rental of vulnerable women in poor countries, show that bioethics has been used to ensure the unequal *status quo* in the economic, political and social dimensions. This division configures in the sectioning of humanity into consumers and subhumans, whose “best” possible fate should be to submit to the interests of the market in order to subsist on its scraps. As a side effect, this situation also consolidates the imbalance and environmental non-sustainability, since one cannot restrict the harmful consequences for the entire planet of unbridled consumption, which are spread by air, land and water.

The ideological axis under which the reflections are balanced, masquerading as bioethics, that are observed in these forums, and their consequent repercussions on health policies in the global and local dimensions, puts people and societies as objects of capital – that understands the hysterical legacy of unequal power and access among human beings, as a rare opportunity to maintain an order that is in its favor. Through symbolic conceptions and public policies rooted on inequality among human beings, the market's perspective is to divide and conquer: install the most fortunate as consumers and encourages them to require medical technologies that meet their delusions and hallucinations regarding eternal youth, immortality and total abolition of

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suffering by therapeutic, surgical or medical means. The dark side of this process is shown to those who cannot even guarantee the existence or pay for their health, they become servants of this system, noted as mere objects designed to test the possibilities that respond to the interests of profitable companies, aimed at the first group.

Even making an effort to avoid proselytizing, one can classify this sort of bioethics as spurious, given the meanings of the term that defines it as *that which is not in accordance with ethics; dishonest, illegitimate* 1. This downright pejorative classification is maintained by the recent and successive economic crises, which have been shown to be dangerous (if not anachronistic) to stimulate the desire for always growing profit of conglomerates and corporations, especially because the Earth is characterized as a closed system, whose capacity for self-reproduction of “resources” is temporally limited.

The assumption of the biomedical paradigm consorting with market interests reveals an alarming situation that pertains to Latin American social bioethics to confront. Facing this challenge will consolidate the possibilities of using categories derived from human rights instruments for reflection on health in the social dimension, in an emancipated and libertarian perspective, which will raise human beings to the status of agents and their own lives and history. It will be dissociating philosophical concepts and categories of the condition as elements of coercion, which stem from their combination to the biomedical paradigm, which is the market’s primary interest. To render this association explicit and to disseminate this knowledge to the whole of society (especially to health professionals) will not allow them to become easy prey of strategies presented under the support of professional ethics, but actually aimed to spread the phenomenon of medicalization proposed by the market . This will enable the fundamental achievement of human beings in the twentieth century – human rights – to be fruitful in building more egalitarian societies.

To stimulate this awareness and promote this struggle, the *Bioethics Magazine* will be launching soon, as part of the celebrations for its 20 years, the book *Bioethics: powers and injustices – 10 years later*, which will portray some of the most thought-provoking lectures delivered at the IX Brazilian Congress of Bioethics, occurred in 2011 in Brasilia, and yet an unpublished work by the chairman of the Brazilian Bioethics Society (SBB). Based on the notion of equal value among humans and equity of access granted to human condition, the works selected are intended for the consideration of all those who want to collaborate in building a fair existence for all humanity, as we and the readers of our magazine believe.

The editors

### Reference

1. Houaiss Portuguese Language Electronic Dictionary 3.0. ‘*espurio*’(spurious).
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