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## **Naming the Beast: Using Hengstenberg's Body to Identify the Nature of Man/Animal Chimeras**

### **Abstract**

Recent developments in stem-cell technology have allowed scientists to combine the genetic material of humans and other animals to create a living embryo. This has led to fervent discussion as to the nature of the human body and what constitutes "man." Are man and animal as separable as once thought? Is it possible for there to be some sort of transitory creature who is in some ways man and in other ways animal? These questions and others of a similar kind ultimately call into question the phenomenological and metaphysical nature of this new creature and, by extension, the phenomenological and metaphysical nature of man. These doubts require an answer that provides a wholistic response to the issue of the nature of the body of man.

The thought of Hans Eduard Hengstenberg presents such an answer. In his work *Phenomenology and Metaphysics of the Human Body*, Hengstenberg creates an analysis of the nature of the body of man that specifically describes both its unique elements and nature. Using the arguments found in this work, this article aims to use the phenomenology and metaphysics of Hengstenberg to confront the afore mentioned questions and create a description of the body of man that firmly places these man – animal chimeras soundly in the domain of the animal. In doing so this article investigates the nature, goals, purpose, and underlying factors of the physiological and spiritual elements of the body of man and confronts the nature of the body of the chimera.

**Keywords:** *Metaphysical Anthropology, Chimeras, Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg, Stem Cells, The Body*

### Abstrakt

Najnowsze osiągnięcia w technologii komórek macierzystych umożliwiły naukowcom połączenie materiału genetycznego ludzi i innych zwierząt w celu stworzenia żywego zarodka. Doprowadziło to do zażartej dyskusji na temat natury ludzkiego ciała i tego, co konstytuuje „człowieka”. Czy człowiek i zwierzę są rozłączne, jak kiedyś sądzono? Czy możliwe jest istnienie jakiegoś przejściowego stworzenia, które w pewnym aspekcie jest człowiekiem, a w inny sposób zwierzęcym? Te i inne podobne pytania ostatecznie podważają fenomenologiczną i metafizyczną naturę tego nowego stworzenia, a przez to także fenomenologiczną i metafizyczną naturę człowieka. Wątpliwości te wymagają odpowiedzi, która całościowo podejmuje problem natury ciała ludzkiego.

Myśl Hansa Eduarda Hengstenberga przedstawia taką odpowiedź. W swojej pracy *Phenomenology and Metaphysics of the Human Body* Hengstenberg analizuje naturę ciała ludzkiego, która dostarcza dokładnego opisu zarówno jego unikalnych elementów, jak i natury. Posługując się argumentami zawartymi w tej pracy, artykuł ten ma na celu wykorzystanie fenomenologii i metafizyki Hengstenberga do stawienia czoła wyżej wymienionym pytaniom i stworzenia opisu ciała ludzkiego, które wyraźnie umieszcza te ludzko-zwierzęce chimery w domenę zwierzęcia. W ten sposób ten artykuł bada naturę, cele i podstawowe czynniki fizjologicznych i duchowych elementów ciała ludzkiego i konfrontuje z nimi naturę ciała chimery.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *antropologia metafizyczna, chimera, Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg, komórki macierzyste, ciało*

In his work, *Phenomenology and Metaphysics of the Human Body*, Hans-Eduard Hengstenberg presents a philosophical investigation into the human body that attempts to provide both a metaphysical and a phenomenological explanation of the nature of the human body in its totality. In achieving his goal, Hengstenberg also creates a clear division between the aspects that separate the natures of the bodies of animals from that of humans, thus giving the reader a positive phenomenology and metaphysics of the body of man. This phenomenology and metaphysics of the body of man can be placed in clear opposition to the body of the animal. This clear distinction is made through specific points of philosophical reference including investigations into the nature, purpose, goals, and underlying factors of the physiological and spiritual elements of the body of organisms.

Modern science presents the contemporary reader of this work with a conundrum. Through recent developments in stem cell research, researches at

the Department of Advanced Biology in Kinki University, Japan have been able to inseminate a swine ovum with the stem cells of a human male and successfully bring forth a viable living zygote (Wu, 2017). Simply put, through genetic engineering, researches have been able to create a chimera<sup>1</sup> that has a genetic makeup of both human and animal origin.

This multiplicity of origins brings about questions of nomenclature. In which domain do we place this creature? Is it human, animal, or somewhere in between? Through the use of the phenomenology and metaphysics found in *Phenomenology and Metaphysics of the Human Body*, a definite classification can be made of this creature that strictly places the chimera in the realm of the animal. When one looks at the human-animal chimera's nature, goals, purpose, and physiological and spiritual elements through the lens of Hengstenberg, one can easily begin to dismiss the chimera as simply another animal; albeit one with the unique circumstance of sharing human genes.

### The Question of Nature

Beginning this investigation, one must ask as to the metaphysical and phenomenological nature of the body of this organism, what exactly is the nature of its physical form? In order to answer this, we must first generally describe the nature of the body of man. To begin, Hengstenberg clearly argues that man "has a body" while animals "are organisms" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 167). Simply put, man has different elements which have relationships with each other, with the physical human body being one element of many. The animal, on the other hand, is defined by this physical element and as such "is" a body. This is coupled with and made manifest by the fact that in animals the "*anima* is submerged" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 167) in the body and that "the animal, through its limbs and organs, cannot "notice," and through its activity cannot intend, anything that would not be predetermined [by its body]"<sup>2</sup> (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 168). As such, man's nature not being equated to the body gives him the freedom from animals' inability to "achieve anything that is not in function of the *whole* organism *within* the whole organism. An animal is "stuck within itself" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 168).

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<sup>1</sup>The term "chimera" is the scientific word used to describe these man-animal hybrids. The etymology of this word is found in the mythology of ancient Greece. The irony that the monsters of the ancient world are the science of today is apparent.

<sup>2</sup>A small difficulty arises here in that we are already beginning to hint at the purposes of the body. The purposes and orientations of the body of man and animals will be properly discussed in the next section of this work.

While looking at the chimera these distinctions can be easily identified. The chimera would be properly defined by the physical elements that differentiate it from man. For the sake of the argument let's say this chimera is similar to a human in all aspects except that it has a pig's nose and a pig's ability to sniff out truffles. The very definition that it is a chimera would come from that fact that it has the nose of a pig. If it was completely like a man, we would call it a man, and in doing so recognize its other aspects, but, due to a bodily extremity, its very nature is determined by the physical body, with this specific bodily element submerging the creature's identity into itself and thus making the chimera an animal.

This submerged identity would also contribute to the predestined activity of the Chimera. Due to the fact that this identity is submerged and is one in the same with this truffle sniffing pig's nose, this nose would do just that, sniff for truffles. It could never not do this, with the creature being unable to achieve anything of the *whole* organism *within* the organism. There would be nothing this chimera could do to affirm itself that would involve the whole organism acting within itself, it could only affirm its identity by sniffing out truffles, if it did not, the chimera would not be seen as accomplishing its *purpose*.<sup>3</sup> This restriction of self-affirming ability and lack of a "unified vital process" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 168) begins to show how a chimera would not be a human.

Additionally, according to Hengstenberg, man's limbs and organs are ordered toward a "twofold serviceability" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 169) in that they can do things for the sake of something non-vegetative. For example, the lungs can provide us with the vegetative necessity for breathing or can be used in producing song and the human nose can vegetatively help us identify food or it can be used to enjoy the scent of a flower or perfume.<sup>4</sup> The chimera, and particularly our hypothetical pig nosed chimera, would not be of this nature in that its nose could only perform the vegetative functions of the pig<sup>5</sup> and this would order its whole being towards the sniffing out of truffles, thus limiting the chimera to the realm of the animal.

This discussion of actions and their nature does not directly give us a specific metaphysics of the body, neither the human or the animal. Rather, Hengstenberg uses the term "chthonic" to refer to the nature of the bo-

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<sup>3</sup>This entire system of thought applies to any other physical anomalies that would appear in a chimera, the nose of a pig is only an example, but the logic and meaning stays the same in all cases.

<sup>4</sup>In Hengstenberg's mind this allows for there be "dialectical interdependence" between the vegetative and "objective" in man and allows the whole spirit of man to be contained in the actions of one non-vegetatively acting limb or organ.

<sup>5</sup>Which would be to sniff out truffles.

dy of man. The chthonic element of the body of man is, in Hengstenberg's mind, "something through which the spirit appears immediately, it's ontological expression preceding any consciousness and volition" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 186). As such, in man, there are moments in which the spiritual element of the body of man presents itself "in the sphere of psychic reality, such as appears in the particular quality of experiences that come through a sympathetic harmony with other living beings (vital contact) or with the resonances of a landscape" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 186). As such, the spirit of man is made manifest through the body and the physiological experiences thereof, with the spirit made apparent both in and above the body. In a way, the physical body and the functions thereof then become a doorway for the existential<sup>6</sup> moments in which the spirit can express itself and show its nature both to an individual man and the world around him.

Continuing with the example of the chimera with a pig's nose this would not be possible. The pig's nose and it's ordering towards the sniffing out of truffles would restrict this beast from having a chthonic nature in its body. This would be due to the fact that it's sniffing of truffles would not allow it to make its spirit present in powerful moments of experience. The creature would only be fulfilling the function of the particular limb being used and would not be affirming the totality of itself within itself through its experiential moment. Therefore, the nature of both the body and the soul of this chimera is different from that of a man and as such the chimera is not a man.

## Purpose

Continuing from questions of nature one must consider the separate purposes of both man and the chimera and the ordering of the creature towards this purpose. Through the use of the limbs and organs, one can begin to understand the purposes that these limbs and organisms serve in the world and their experience thereof. By giving a summary of the purposes of the limbs and body of animals and then of man, one will be able to identify the genus in which a chimera would be placed, with this genus naturally being the former.

The body and limbs of the animal are ordered to one specific purpose, with the very physiology of these limbs identifying this fact.<sup>7</sup> Hengstenberg

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<sup>6</sup>Existential is not used in the purely philosophical way it is commonly used. Here it means more of the data of experience, more of the phenomenological contents of experience.

<sup>7</sup>This is one in the same with a biological "niche."

affirms this, claiming that animals lack the "twofold serviceability" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 169) previously mentioned. As such, the limbs and body of an animal are ordered to specific purposes in the environment. This comes as no surprise, as we all know an ant-eater's tongue allows it to easily consume ants from an ant-hill, the ears of a bat allow it to hear prey in a dark environment, the antlers of a male deer allow it to defend itself and fend off other males, and the dent on the stomach of a male tortoise allows it to mount its mate with ease. As such, the nature of the animal is trapped in the way the limbs of specific creatures are used in service to the needs of the environment around the creature and the bodily needs of the creature itself.

Man is quite the opposite in the mind of Hengstenberg. In his mind, the body of man has no ordered purpose in the environment around it. In fact, man lacks any specific organ that strictly helps him in one particular function in the environment of the outside world.<sup>8</sup> In fact Hengstenberg claims that man is, "not "specialized" in function of the environment as is, for example, the prehensile hand of an ape" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 173) and that "man is not specialized in function of any environment in the animal sense" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 178). "Man's purpose is therefore not ordered to a specific function within the material environment and we could, albeit incorrectly, even go as far as to say that man, in this particular regard, is a "defective" being" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 180).<sup>9</sup>

This clearly gives one a justification for the placement of the chimera in the realm of the animal. The chimera, with its animal organs which are ordered to a specific use, has a limb or organ which is used for a particular function in the environment. As per the example previously provided, the pig's nose of the chimera would be used for the finding of nutritious truffles. As such, the chimera is not a human.

## Goals

From the point of purpose, one can proceed to the ultimate goals of the body of both the animal and the man. This is quite logical, as the purpose itself suggests that there are goals that must be fulfilled. Hengstenberg

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<sup>8</sup>Man lacks anything comparable to an organ that specifically benefits him in combat (antlers, fangs, or spikes), that specifically benefits him in movement (webbed feet, wings, or fins), or that specifically benefits him in mating (powerful pheromones, eggs, or the "love darts" of snails).

<sup>9</sup>Hengstenberg sees the idea that man is somehow a "subtraction" from animal biology as being erroneous for reasons later presented. The statement included is used only to further the preceding point.

classes the goals, quite naturally, together with the purposes, and as such, for the sake of brevity, this section will be short as to not repeat the concepts stated in the previous section. Nonetheless, the difference between the goals of both the animal and of the man provide a template by which the chimera can be specified as an animal.

The goal which the body of the animal pursues is to fulfill the object of the purpose of the limb or organ. As such the objects of the actions that are "possessed by an animal are never objects "in themselves" and thus cannot give rise to objective positioning" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 172). As such the goal of the animal is simply to fulfill the purpose of the organ, with the nature of the animal submerged in this (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 169). Simply put, the ant-eater uses its special tongue to eat ants, the dolphin uses its fins to swim, and the bird uses its wings to fly. The goal of any animal is to complete the purposes of the special limbs that contribute to its very nature and identity.

According to Hengstenberg, the human and its body have a completely different goal to that of the animal. The human body's goal is ultimately to the "objective." By "objective" Hengstenberg means things that "transcend the biological purpose of this organism" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 168) and "the attitude of a subject that turns toward an object for the sake of the object irrespective of any practical utility" (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 170).<sup>10</sup> Man is capable of both appreciating and undertaking things outside of the necessities of the body. This is where the emergence of true language, art, and culture is found. This is best exemplified by the human hand. While the human hand serves little with regards to the service of an environmental function it does allow man to create things for the sake of creating them, with even the purposeful creation of tools used to support the vegetative aspects of the body serving this objective end in that these tools have an objective purpose outside of man (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 174). The spoon is not a bodily appendage that brings food to the mouth and instinctually does this, it is rather a tool created by human hands and has the permanent moment of being something used to achieve the support of a vegetative goal. A spoon is a moment of permeance and an idea outside the body, thus making it objective and supporting the objective goal of the body of man.

The chimera thus spoken of would be restricted to the animal purposes stated earlier. The truffle sniffing pig nose would have the goal of sniffing out truffles and would easily undertake this goal. The pig nose of the chimera

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<sup>10</sup>This does not mean that the human body does not partake in some more vegetative functions, but Hengstenberg argues that even these lower, vegetative, and animalistic functions ultimately serve the purpose of promoting the objective activities of man.

would in no way be ordered to objectivity. This would be the case in any other non-human limb or organ that would be part of the chimera and this restricts the goals of the chimera to that of the animal, thus making the chimera an animal.

### **Possible Rebuttals**

There are some rebuttals that can be made against the claim that through the use of Hengsternberg, one can place chimeras in the realm of the animal. Some specific rebuttals are listed in the following with counterpoints given to argue against the points raised. These rebuttals naturally deal with the nature of the body of man, the animal, and the relationship thereof.

The primary objection to the ideas presented would be that even though there are perhaps some limbs and organs not ordered towards objectivity in a chimera, there would also be organs and limbs ordered towards the objective, thus calling the previous points into question. This would perhaps be true, but to counter this one must investigate the purpose of the creation of the creature. The chimera would be the work of human hands, and as such the purpose could be clearly defined. At best the chimera is a creation made to glorify the cleverness of man, and at worst the chimera is a creation used to serve a specific function (slave labor, organ harvesting, etc). As such, the creation of a chimera entails a specific non-objective purpose. The chimera is not created for objectivity. This means that this creature does not have an objective set of goals and as such would remain an animal. Hengsternberg tackles this when he says that the utility of a species, "leads the mind back the Creator, not the behavior of the individual animal" (Hengsternberg, 1963, p. 172).<sup>11</sup>

A second objection can be made with regards to the possible intelligence of a chimera. What would be the case if a chimera had an intellectual capacity comparable to a human's? This would arguably raise some additional questions as to the nature of the chimera. The response would be once again that this intelligence is not aimed at the objective due to the recently mentioned issues regarding the creation of the chimera. Additionally, intelligence can be seen as a chthonic function within man that works with the spirit to create moments of understanding, creation, and knowledge within and above a human creature. If the chimera lacks any element previously mentioned,<sup>12</sup> this chthonic moment would be impossible, again making the chimera in no way a man.

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<sup>11</sup>In this case the creator of the chimera is not the Creator of man.

<sup>12</sup>The argument saying that the chimera would lack some of these elements has been stated previously.

The final rebuttal would be that the chimera would be a new kind of genus of organism, a creature somewhere between animal and man, having a sort of mixed nature placed between these two domains. This argument would say that the chimera is not an animal or a man, but rather a transitory creature. This is impossible due to the fact that Hengstenberg claims that transitional creatures are impossible and, "that there is no middle ground between being-in-an-environment and being-in-the-world," (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 180) with this resting on the claim that the nature of the human is a "jump" from the animal that necessitates a complete change of purpose and goals (Hengstenberg, 1963, p. 178). Essentially, man is a complete, albeit objective, whole that excludes the animal sense of purpose or goals. The fact that the chimera has some of these animal elements excludes it from the nature of man, which is a bordered and objective totality.

## Conclusion

Using the thought of Hengstenberg presented in *Phenomenology and Metaphysics of the Human Body* one can tackle the issue of the nature of man-animal chimeras and other issues regarding the nature of the creatures created using the contemporary edge of genetics and stem-cell research. Through an investigation of the creatures' nature, purpose, goals, and physiological and spiritual elements that uses the lens of Hengstenberg, one can easily identify whether a creature is an animal or a man. With chimeras being placed soundly in the realm of the animal.

This need for a sound system of metaphysics with regards to modern genetics and stem-cell research will only increase. With the modern cusp of genetic engineering creating situations that were beyond fantasy until very recently, philosophy needs catch up with modern science. Without a sound metaphysics to support it, science will only slowly seep into the realms of utilitarianism and materialism. The philosophers of today truly have a herculean responsibility.

After completing this investigation into the nature of chimeras several additional questions can be brought up for the stimulation of further investigation. Are there any metaphysical issues with regards to the implantation of animal organs in humans? Are there any metaphysical issues with regards to the implantation of mechanical organs in humans? What is the nature of human clones? What is the nature of a man created from purely synthetic genetic material? Further metaphysical investigation must tackle these questions, with Hengstenberg invariably providing an indispensable source

in these investigations. Without further metaphysical investigation, the gap between science and philosophy will only grow larger.

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