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*Zhuangzi against Liberal Eugenics: Treasuring the Ineluctable Self*

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### **Abstract**

What would a Daoist ethics of human enhancement entail? Would Daoism even entertain such a question? In light of the ongoing advancement of biotechnology, the ontological threat awaiting us is all too real. Indeed, the debate surrounding chance versus choice, natural versus artificial, has long been entrenched in the minds of theologians and philosophers alike; in recent years, however, it has been swept up in the commotion surrounding liberal eugenics. This movement has prompted several prominent philosophers, namely Jurgen Habermas and Ronald Dworkin, to interject on the grounds that genetic manipulation erases the distinction between chance and choice, natural and artificial. Daoism, in principle, would agree, but for different reasons. This paper will show wherein Daoism can contribute to Habermas’ social-political opposition to liberal eugenics by offering an onto-cosmological line of defense as seen in the long story on illness in chapter six of the *Zhuangzi*. While not speaking to liberal eugenics per se, this story argues, as does Habermas, that humans have a beginning to life that is ultimately beyond their control and to alter this origin is to recast the meaning of selfhood and freedom.