

Analysis Of Transhumanism In The Cultural And Religious Context

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Annotation: This paper explores the concept of transhumanism within a cultural and religious framework, examining how advancements in technology intersect with traditional beliefs and cultural practices. Transhumanism, which seeks to enhance human capabilities through technological means, raises significant questions regarding its compatibility with cultural and religious values. The paper investigates whether the goals of transhumanism align with or challenge the moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects of various religious and cultural ideologies. By analyzing different perspectives, the research highlights the potential conflicts, challenges, and opportunities that arise when transhumanism is applied in cultural and religious contexts. The study also considers the implications of transhumanist advancements on the future of humanity from a philosophical standpoint, emphasizing the importance of balancing technological progress with respect for human dignity and cultural identity.

Key words: transhumanism, cultural context, religious beliefs, technology, ethics, human enhancement, moral dilemmas, cultural identity, spirituality, philosophical implications.

Transhumanism has become one of the central ideas of contemporary culture as a new stage in the development of humanity. This movement is aimed at rediscovering human nature. In a cultural context, transhumanism raises epistemological issues, as it proposes to free humanity from its biological limits. At the same time, transhumanism attempts to reshape aesthetic and axiological values. It strives to create a new post-human. According to transhumanist advocates, the post-human is imagined as a hypothetical being, radically superior in terms of capabilities to humans as representatives of the Homo sapiens species. Moreover, post-humans do not necessarily have to be descendants of the biological human species. They could be “chimera-like” entities, genetically modified or cybernetic organisms (i.e., beings enhanced with technical gadgets).[1]

According to transhumanist ideas, today’s human being possesses much broader capabilities than their ancestors. Thanks to current technological advancements, we can create the “post-human.” In this future being, the flaws of the present human condition are expected to be completely eradicated. The “post-human” will have the ability to fully program itself. It is predicted that the existing technological advancements will allow it to correct its shortcomings. Transhumanist philosopher Nick Bostrom believes, “It’s time for us to recognize our growing capabilities and take responsibility for them. We have very little time left because, in many areas of our lives, we’ve already begun to equate ourselves with gods”.[2]

The post-human, within the framework of philosophical categories, is interpreted as a new being that has overcome the biological and spiritual boundaries of humanity. Through technological and genetic advancements, it represents not the evolutionary continuation of Homo sapiens but a qualitatively new form. The post-human signifies a rethinking of human essence, with its nature being defined through a dialectical relationship with technology. Moreover, this concept necessitates a reevaluation of the moral and axiological principles of humanity.

Transhumanism is aimed at transcending the physical and spiritual boundaries of humanity. Its role in the cultural paradigm is clear: it necessitates the dialectical integration of traditional values and future technologies. In the context of post-industrial development, the philosophical analysis of transhumanism calls for a reconsideration of human essence and the breaking down of the boundaries between subject and object.

This process, based on the synthesis of cultural paradigms, shapes new axiological directions. “Culture interests us as the objectification, materialization, and reification of human creativity and its outcomes. Culture means the embodiment of the spiritual and physical life of humans and society in the natural-cosmic life material. Creating culture is about creating a special virtual space or constructing a virtual body for

humanity”.[3] Studying transhumanism in the cultural context involves not only anthropological issues but also axiological and existential questions. In the scope of transhumanism, human nature is not limited to biological concepts. Instead, it is enriched with technological and artificial elements. This process opens up opportunities to explore new forms of culture. However, along with this, it also brings forth new problems and contradictions.

The core of human culture has traditionally been linked with religion. From the early stages of development, progressive scientific and philosophical views have not been able to avoid addressing the emergence of religion, religious values, their formation in human consciousness, and the essence of religion. For example, in Farabi’s work *The City of Virtuous People*, religion, like philosophy, serves to study existence. Philosophy studies existence through sensory and rational knowledge, dialectical relationships of cause and effect, while religion expresses existence through symbolic, metaphorical, and comparative representations, calling for belief. Therefore, religion begins interpreting existence without studying the material basis of cause-and-effect connections.

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, in his work *The Monuments of Ancient Peoples*, emphasizes that religion is also a form of knowledge. This kind of knowledge is applied in areas where phenomena cannot be explained through empirical evidence or reasoned proof. Thus, great thinkers have adhered to the principles of “Two truths” and “Dual truth” in their creative works, leading to a harmonious development of both scientific and religious views, ultimately enriching culture.

However, the relationship between transhumanism and religion is becoming increasingly complex. As a result, representatives of religious traditions assess transhumanism as a decline in humanity’s future. While transhumanism aims to expand human capabilities on a technological basis, religion advocates for ideas related to the spiritual development of humans. Consequently, the tension between these two directions necessitates cultural analysis.

Transhumanism, with its technological approach, seeks to free humans from diseases, aging, and even death. Religions, on the other hand, link human life and death with divine will. This stands in direct opposition to the goals of transhumanism. For example, the idea of enhancing humans through technologies is perceived in some religious viewpoints as a violation of belief in divine creation.

The contradictions between transhumanism and religion extend to deep existential and axiological issues. Transhumanism’s view of humanity as an independent entity from divinity, striving to control its fate through technology, contradicts certain religious perspectives. For instance, attempts to overcome death could be seen as opposing divine will and the natural order. Additionally, technological advancements may exacerbate social inequalities and pose a threat to the weakening of moral values.

The religious context of transhumanism involves evaluating the processes of human development and transformation from a divine perspective. Transhumanism advocates seek to free human capabilities from limitations through scientific and technological means. These views can sometimes align with religious principles, while at other times, they may present contradictions.

1. Consciousness transfer (the shifting of consciousness to artificial platforms) is one of the most significant aspects of transhumanism. This idea is often criticized by many religious traditions, as they perceive the soul and consciousness as divine gifts or mercies from the Creator. For example, in Christianity and Islam, consciousness and the soul are considered integral aspects of the human being. These traditions argue that it is not possible to transfer or alter them using technology, as they are seen as part of the divine design.

2. The idea of enhancing human physical and mental abilities through genetic modifications, cybernetic implants, or artificial intelligence is also viewed from various religious perspectives. Some religions regard this as interfering with divine destiny, while others may interpret it as a positive reflection of humanity’s creative potential. For instance, in Buddhism, such alterations are believed to potentially disrupt the process of self-realization and spiritual development.

3. The concept of experiencing new realities through virtual reality and interactive technologies is often used to expand one’s worldview and enrich emotional experiences. However, this process may be perceived by some religions as a form of detachment from reality or as a threat to the loss of spiritual values.

The exploration of transhumanism in cultural and religious contexts reveals complex interactions between technology, ethics, and human values. While transhumanism promises significant advancements in human capabilities, it also raises profound questions about the preservation of cultural identities and spiritual

beliefs. It is crucial to approach the integration of technology into human life with sensitivity to these values, ensuring that progress does not come at the cost of ethical considerations and respect for diverse cultural perspectives. As technology continues to evolve, finding a balance between scientific innovation and the preservation of human dignity will be essential for ensuring a harmonious future.

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