

Transhumanism As An Ethical Worldview Model: Prospects For Development*

Tereziia POPOVYCH, Viktor ZABOROVSKYY, Sibilla BULETSA
And Olesya CHEPYS

Uzhhorod National University, Uzhhorod, Ukraine

Correspondence should be addressed to: Tereziia POPOVYCH; tereziia.popovych@uzhnu.edu.ua

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Abstract

In this article, the authors consider the phenomenon of transhumanism in the context of its relationship with the process of globalization. It has been established that the concept of transhumanism is usually understood as a trend that uses the achievements of science and technology for the development of a human being's physical and mental abilities, and yet the talk is even about the transformation of human nature. Based on the results of the study, the authors consider transhumanism to be only one of the vectors for the embodiment of globalization. In addition, the study zeroes in on the concept of humanism, which, obviously, has received its modification at the present stage in the form of the concept of transhumanism and posthumanism. The authors argue that humanism and transhumanism proceed from the recognition of a person as the highest value in the natural world and in the world of culture, however, transhumanism is more radical, since it contributes not only to traditional means of improving human nature, but also to immediate application of medicine and technology to overcome some of our limitations. The authors also note that it is difficult to clearly identify its status in the contemporary society. With regard to this, the article highlights the challenges and threats facing humanity as a result of the development of science and technology, considering which, it is necessary to establish «acceptable limits» for their application in order to protect human nature and identity.

Keywords: transhumanism; humanism; posthumanism; globalization

Introduction

The rapid development of scientific and technological advances affect all spheres of public life, posing new challenges to humankind. All of these have an impact on us, on the one hand, forcing us to adapt to new realities, on the other hand, transform our outlook, forming an updated system of priorities, – in fact, values. In the context of the above-mentioned, the issues of «transhumanism», which become global in nature, are of particular scientific interest.

It is obvious that the question arises whether it is appropriate to achieve the outlined aims of the present direction, interfering with the natural development of things. Someone might point to religious or moral-ethical aspects (although among participants of international congresses devoted to transhumanist themes, religious leaders of different confessions have been repeatedly noticed). Others are actively opposing or will oppose, referring to the probable, negative repercussions projected by them, or (this scares even more!) to the inability to predict the character, nature of the results of the transhumanist movement, which may inevitably affect the future social development. Definitely, these thoughts and opinions have the right to exist and they further actualize the chosen research problem at the national, international and supranational levels. Indeed, we can get closer to the point of recognizing the truth only through scientific discourse. Moreover, the main purpose of science lies not so much in the formation of abstract concepts or theories (which are, as a rule, understood by few people, except for the

scientists themselves), but in applying the theoretical achievements to improve Our life. Science must primarily serve the public interest. It should be underlined that, in a unified form, the ideological views of transhumanism are confined to the improvement of the life of all mankind and, consequently, are gaining more support from members of society at the conscious and subconscious levels.

Let us consider a simple example. Several centuries or even millennia ago the average life expectancy was low compared to the current statistics. At present people aged 60 and over (certainly, the talk is about citizens of economically advanced countries) are reluctant to think about completing their life path, on the contrary, they lead an active way of life. It means that they are engaged in self-development, self-improvement, and truly enjoy life (as a rule, they have appropriate time resources available for this due to the weakening of their professional / business activity and transform their own system of values, taking into account a posteriori (experiential) knowledge). This example and similar ones further indicate the acute need for the thorough doctrinal study of the issues of transhumanism.

Research Methods

A system of general scientific and special legal methods is the methodological basis employed in this study. Each of these methods plays a specific and important role.

Thus, there were used the methods of induction and deduction, as well as analysis and synthesis, which enabled us to draw certain conclusions based on the studied material. In particular, the method of analysis was involved in considering individual constituent aspects of the subject of study, which in turn allowed the further generalization of the results by means of the synthesis method. In the process of considering the phenomena of humanism, transhumanism and posthumanism, the method of dialectics was applied, with whose help it was possible to consider humanism in the context of its qualitative changes during the historical development of human society, which led to its transformation into transhumanism and posthumanism. In addition, the dialectical approach has become one of the most significant within the framework of the study, taking into account its topic and focus on studying the phenomena of globalization and transformation of human society.

There were also applied systemic-structural and comparative methods. Throughout the entire study, the comparative method was engaged in order to establish differences and similarities between the concepts that were the subject of research. We are talking, in particular, about the value content of the concepts of humanism, transhumanism and posthumanism. The systemic-structural method enabled the consideration of the studied processes in their unity and interaction, specifically, the tracing of the mutual influence of transhumanism and globalization.

Literature Review

The issue of transhumanism has become an important research area for many scientists. Thus, J. Huxley, M. Minsky, R. Kurzweil, M. More, F. M. Esfandiari (FM-2030) and others are considered the founders of transhumanism as a new concept in understanding a human being. In addition, R. Ettinger, N. Bostrom, D. Haraway and a number of other scientists made a significant contribution to the study of this problem.

The term «transhumanism» was introduced by the English evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley, who in his work «New Bottles for New Wine» calls it a kind of new faith related to the possibilities of self-transformation of the human race: «a person who remained a human being, but surpassed himself / herself because of and for the sake of seizing the new potential of its nature» (Huxley, 1957).

Shortly afterwards, the philosophers F. Esfandiari and M. More to a greater extent formalized the transhumanist concept, which was based on the postulate of improving the human race through genetic engineering, robotics (development in the field of artificial intelligence), nanotechnology, biotechnology, cryonics, etc. Thus, in 1998, N. Bostrom and D. Pearce founded the World Transhumanist Association and published the Transhumanist Declaration, which, in particular, deals with the prospects of reforming human nature through science and advanced technology. Transhumanists advocate the moral right of those who wish to use technology to expand their physical (including reproductive) and mental capabilities. A person's personal growth must take place outside of biological constraints (The Transhumanist Declaration).

Globalization As An Indicator Of The Development Of Transhumanism

During the 20th-21st centuries, in the course of rapid development of science, advanced technologies (including information technology), we have witnessed the strengthening of globalization and the formation of transhumanism as one of types of worldview; yet globalization and transhumanism are generally interconnected and interdependent processes. Let's try to draw parallels between these phenomena.

Transhumanism can be defined as the latest scientific movement, which claims the possibility of transforming the human condition, given the development of nanotechnologies, scientific and technological advancement in general. At the same time this transformation envisages the enhancement of the physical, intellectual capabilities of the person, as well as improvement of the human psyche, which will result in perpetuating deadly diseases, aging, death, etcetera.

Transhumanism is also understood as the cultural and intellectual movement that uses the achievements of science and technology to develop human physical and mental abilities. Transhumanism is believed to affect some aspects of human biological conditions, such as disability, physical suffering, diseases, aging. With regard to this, death is viewed as the undesirable and useless result of biological life. In this context, transhumanist thinkers rely on advances in biotechnology and other advances in high-tech intellectual culture. The advantages and disadvantages of detailed transformations of human nature also belong to the interests of transhumanism (Baryshnikov, 2014). As for globalization, it can be defined as an objective process in which humanity is becoming aware of itself as a whole. This process includes the dialogue of peoples and cultures, the formation of universal values and norms of behaviour «in order to build a single global society» (Gadzhiev, 2014). Globalization also encompasses the technological movement that extends to all beings, all generations, and all species (Fujimoto, 2013). People are getting closer to each other despite borders, distances, and so on. A few centuries ago mankind used to be seen as numerous peoples, cultures being quite separate from one another; today we can speak with confidence not only about strengthening ties between such «local» units, but also about the increasing interdependence between them. To a greater or lesser extent, this gradually leads to the fact that different spheres of society (political, economic, cultural and others) are homogenized, i. e. become homogeneous, similar in their tendencies. Thus, there are formed certain integrated lines for developing public life, which are increasingly permeating modern states and peoples. Accordingly, this process influences the «erasure» of differences between cultures and the formation of the so-called «homo globalis standard», which is fully consistent with the ideas of the transhumanist worldview.

Analyzing the contemporary process of globalization, we can come to the following conclusions: 1) globalization as a growing interconnectedness of all components of humanity and the necessary constituent of the evolution of humanity, being self-organizing, cannot exhaust itself, it is an imperative process; 2) globalization is predominantly spontaneous in nature, but it can be managed through world institutions and certain state functions as well as through many complementary controls; 3) globalization as the strengthening of integration along with maintaining differences is accompanied by the emergence of new inequalities and new opportunities for their regulating; 4) globalization, as a non-alternative process, is variable: either non-efficient globalization or globalization, based on the principles of equal differences of its all participants (Cheshkov, 2000).

Such conclusions, in our opinion, are important for understanding the trends of transhumanism: firstly, transhumanism, just like globalization, provides an idea of a new stage in the evolution of mankind, which, owing to the achievements of science and technology, acquires its inexhaustibility and wide differentiation; secondly, one can speak simultaneously both about the spontaneous nature of transhumanistic ideas and about their «controllability» by the international community, individual states of the world, etc.; thirdly, similarly to globalization, transhumanism presupposes new opportunities and entails the formation of new inequalities (for example, due to the absence of the factor of equal accessibility to using the results of science and technology); fourthly, despite the fact that today it is impossible to predict the development of transhumanism, the latter, just like globalization, will occur either through the «erasure» of differences between people, or through the adoption of the principle of equal differences between them.

In addition, the similarity between globalization and transhumanism can be traced in the following aspects: 1. The growing role of individualization in people's lives, which is explained by the fact that the «human «Self» becomes a kind of central reality», ... «around which there are focused the efforts, aimed at meeting individual needs,... instead of the subject that is oriented on the outside world; the external world, which is focused on the individual, comes to the fore» (Ruchka, 2012) 2. The weakening of the role of traditional values that have been formed over a long period. This is due to the fact that in essence, science and technology are innovative things. Moreover, today they are the main «catalysts» for the development of civilization. Therefore, the logical conclusion is: where innovativeness multiplies, traditionality diminishes.

With respect to this, taking into account the aforementioned tendencies, as researchers note, modern man has become more worried about his cultural identity, since a specific individual as a representative of a particular sociocultural environment begins to feel that he is «losing» himself, homogenizing with the global humanity. This reinforces the opposite reaction in him – to preserve «his Self», distinct from others. As a consequence, the global community can in the future be formed on the basis of respect for the diversity of peoples and cultures, and be designated as unity in pluralism (Wang, 2007).

It is also worth emphasizing that globalization causes the emergence of new identities that are formed through the synthesis of biology and technology. Due to the accumulation of technological ingenuity, such a combination gradually reaches an advanced level. Transhumanism is only one of the vectors of the embodiment of the processes

of globalization, which leads to what some researchers call the «hyperhybridization» of the individual and the group.

In the era of globalization hyperhybridization represents an ever-growing desire for individualism which results in the ousting of collectivism (Banji 2018). As it has been previously stressed, globalization and transhumanism are manifestations of a person's individualistic orientation. At their core, a new type of «survival» (and hence a new stage of evolution) is focused not on strength or stability in natural selection, but on the possibility and availability of the results of science and technology. Accordingly, the new stage of evolution is largely concentrated on the products of human thinking and activity, in which, «artificial» elements will undoubtedly play an increasing role.

The prism of values: humanism and transhumanism.

Based on the subheading itself, it becomes clear that transhumanism is one of the modern ways of shaping the ideas of humanism, which were implemented during the Renaissance. Renaissance humanism offered an anthropocentric picture of the world as opposed to the cosmocentric world picture of Antiquity and the theocentric picture of the world in the Middle Ages.

In general, humanism is viewed as «a system of worldviews, where man and his Self, high purpose and the right to free self-realization are in the spotlight». From a narrow point of view, humanism is referred to as a cultural movement of the Renaissance, whose representatives, among other things, «asserted a new worldview, characterized by faith in man and his abilities; by perception of nature as an object of aesthetic pleasure, on the one hand, and on the other hand, as its use for practical purposes» (Humanizm. Filosofskiy entsyklopedychnyi slovnyk, 2002). The humanistic concept is based on the idea of man as the highest value, due to which all material and non-material resources should be aimed at achieving his maximum well-being in all areas of life. A person begins to be perceived as a separate special substance that is not reduced to a combination of different essences (the divine and natural, spiritual and bodily) (Kovba, Hrybovod, 2019).

It can be claimed that before the development of transhumanism, globalization processes were based on humanistic orientation, which was expressed through democratizing social processes, determining and protecting human rights at the level of the international community as the ones being fundamental for human development, as well as through the variety of manifestations of human freedom in different spheres of her / his individual and social life, orientation of scientific and technological advances on human needs. As noted above, humanism, in the wake of globalization, has brought about an intensification of individualistic tendencies, due to which man concentrates mainly on his needs and interests, and, with respect to this, increasingly moves away from «concerns» for the collective whole and public good. Thus, it is not so much about the value of man as part of the collective, but about the value of an individualized man. Gradually under the influence of various factors (including globalization), humanism was «supplemented» or received a new vector of its development, i. e. transhumanism.

The fact that transhumanism is one of the modern transformations of humanism is evidenced by the manifestos of the transhumanist movement. Thus, «The Russian Transhumanist Movement Manifesto» defines transhumanism as «the new humanistic worldview» based on the value of human life, as well as the possibilities of unlimited personal development (Manifest Rossiyskogo Transgumanisticheskogo Dvizheniya). The Transhumanist Declaration, adopted by the World Transhumanist Association, emphasizes that transhumanism «embraces many of the principles of modern humanism». We are talking, in particular, about personal growth outside the existing human biological limitations, using the latest technologies (The Transhumanist Declaration).

In addition to transhumanism, more and more researchers point to the formation of posthumanism as an even newer worldview of global humanity. There is a fundamental difference between transhumanism and posthumanism. The first concept is based on the dominance of man over other living beings, who can be rescued through the development of science and technology and the exploitation of the planet. The second rejects the anthropocentrism of humanistic philosophy, one of whose negative results appeared to be the global environmental crisis (Çavuş, 2021). In continuation of posthumanism ideas, let us add: first of all, we are talking about returning to the pre-Socratic period of philosophy, when the studies of man and nature were united (Valera, 2014). Posthumanism is based on the position that there is a multitude of human and inhuman nature. Nature in this system is more of a culture than a predetermined being. From this perspective different cultures and civilizations give rise to different intelligent beings (Sapeňko, Trocha, 2020). The most common definition of posthumanism is a worldview replacing humanism, as the future of humanism in the «post» era. This definition clearly shows that the main attention of its supporters is not focused on the development of conceptual and worldview principles of posthumanism, but on denial, protest against the traditions of humanistic thought. Therefore, posthumanism is seen as a worldview that replaces the boundless faith in the progress of humanism, in the civilizational mission of man on Earth (Ozadovska).

In general, characterizing the values of the humanist, transhumanist and posthumanist worldviews, we can outline the following features. Humanism and transhumanism are based on recognizing man as the highest value in the world of nature and the world of culture. That means that all areas of natural and social development should focus on meeting the needs and interests of man, ensuring his well-being. Yet these types of worldview are focused on the idea of unlimited possibilities for a person's development. Admittedly, transhumanism introduces something special into humanism. First, scientific and technological advancement of mankind cannot be but mentioned, owing to which the most favorable conditions for human development will be created. In particular, due to the elimination of factors of suffering, disease, strengthening the comfort of life, immortality and others. Secondly, the expansionist factor is intensifying, i. e. the promotion of man's development occurs through the active (and often unrestrained in his needs) use of the planet's natural resources. In contrast, humanism is more restraint in its orientations. Transhumanism is clearly more radical, as it contributes not only to traditional means of improving human nature, such as education and cultural improvement, but also to the direct application of medicine and technology for overcoming some of our limitations (psychological, physiological, mental).

Transhumanists are convinced that modern humanity should not be the end point of evolution, hoping that through the responsible use of science, technology and other rational means, we will eventually be able to become posthuman beings with much greater potential than today's humans. Attention is paid to both modern technologies, such as genetic engineering and information technology, and the expected future technologies, such as molecular nanotechnology and artificial intelligence (Bostrom).

Transhumanists believe that the free individual has every right to interfere with nature. In their opinion, there should be no specific moral or ethical taboos that prohibit individuals from changing nature at their own discretion. They see nothing wrong in people's desire to live as long as possible, in their natural desire to work, study, and generally live much longer than is currently possible. Individuals, in transhumanists' understanding, have the right to form and develop themselves much longer than the limited life span allotted to them by the evolutionary past (Dieniezhnikov, 2018).

The posthumanist worldview, in turn, emphasizes the need to change a person's attitude to himself/herself, to society, the environment and the rapid development of technology. Moreover, given the individualistic orientation of humanism and the expansionist nature of transhumanism, posthumanism, being concerned of the situation with global environmental issues, not only aligns the position of a human being with other living creatures, but also underlines that a human being does not differ from other living creatures, and therefore cannot claim to «status privileges» in nature. Scientific and technological advancement remains a significant development factor here, however, it should focus not on providing and accomplishing opportunities exclusively for humans, but on the proper functioning of all living things. The talk is about science and technologies that should «work» for the sake of meeting the needs of all living beings as an integral organism and the biosphere of the planet.

However, it should be stressed that there is still no clear distinction between trans- and posthumanism and it causes a huge amount of discussion (in particular, there are researchers who identify transhumanism with posthumanism, while others often perceive transhumanism as a transitional phenomenon on the way to posthumanism). This is exacerbated by a number of factors. They highlight the issue of continuous improvement of the human body in search of better forms of existence. Posthumanism is also defined as a worldview based on the idea that human evolution is incomplete and can be continued in the future. Evolutionary development should lead to the formation of a posthuman – a hypothetical stage of evolution of the human species (genus), whose structure and capabilities would be different from modern ones, inherent in man, as a result of active use of advanced technologies for human transformation (Transhumanist FAQ).

Conclusion

Thus, based on the analysis of certain aspects of transhumanism in its relation to globalization as well as in its correlation with humanist and posthumanist worldviews, it becomes clear why there is the increased research interest in this phenomenon in contemporary context. However, given the contradictions and ambiguities of the nature of transhumanism, it is currently difficult to clearly identify its status and perception in today's society. With regard to this, taking into consideration the inconsistency and ambiguity of the nature of transhumanism, it is difficult to clearly identify its status and perception in the current society. The main pending question is whether this philosophical movement is aimed at ensuring a decent future for humanity, or, on the contrary, poses real threats to it? In the near future a clear answer to this question is scarcely to be given. Nevertheless, transhumanism has become one of the mainstreams of modern research discourse, as evidenced by a high level of interest for the part of researchers from the leading world universities, founding organizations (the World Organization of Transhumanism) and holding various symposia, congresses, including those supported and funded by UNESCO. Yet, from our perspective, provided we move away from the most controversial transhumanist positions (overcoming death, reproductive cloning or virtual modeling), some of their ideas (the achievements of genetic engineering in the treatment of deadly diseases, therapeutic cloning, moderate use of artificial intelligence and

virtual reality) deserve in-depth study, analysis and perception based on a practical dimension (Popovych, Telep, Ilchenko, 2021). It is essential though to outline certain «permissible limits» for applying the achievements of science and technology, which, while fulfilling their «mission» for humanity, would not pose a threat lying in the loss of universal human values, first of all, human dignity and spirituality, radically transforming human nature and destroying human identity (Popovych, 2019).

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