UDC 101.1 **DOI: 10.34670/AR.2025.45.92.006**

From Humanism to Posthumanism: Human in Humanistic Science Projects

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Abstract

The article "From Humanism to Posthumanism: Man in the Humanistic Projects of Science" analyzes the evolution of ideas about humanity in scientific and philosophical contexts. The author examines how philosophical and scientific movements from the Renaissance to posthumanism and transhumanism sought to understand the essence of humans and their future in the context of scientific discoveries. Special attention is paid to the interaction between the humanistic idea of humans as rational beings and the challenges posed by technological development. The article explores the philosophical, ethical, and cultural consequences of scientific changes, as well as the transformation of human conceptions in the era of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and biotechnology. The author emphasizes that the future of Homo Humanus includes not only bodily evolution but also moral and social changes affecting human identity. The novelty of the article lies in integrating scientific, cultural, and ethical aspects of the changing perceptions of humanity.

For citation

Izmailova D.I. (2025) From humanism to posthumanism: Human in humanistic science projects. *Kontekst i refleksiya: filosofiya o mire i cheloveke* [Context and Reflection: Philosophy of the World and Human Being], 14 (10A), pp. 35-44. DOI: 10.34670/AR.2025.45.92.006

Keywords

Humanism, neo-humanism, transhumanism, posthumanism, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, humanitarian expertise, Homo Humanus, philosophical anthropology, bioethics.

Introduction

Modern science is actively transforming our understanding of humans, their capabilities, and their place in the world. The question of humanity's future is particularly relevant in light of the rapid development of technologies and philosophical concepts that reinterpret traditional humanistic ideas.

Today, representatives of all scientific disciplines are remarkably unanimous in their belief in the possibility of a cultural, social, and moral crisis for humanity, which could result in the disappearance of humans as a biological species. Scientists rightly attribute the cause of this crisis to an anti-human-centered worldview, aimed at mastering all achievements of the scientific and technological process and asserting human dominance over nature. For example, the uncontrolled development of artificial intelligence and biotechnology threatens traditional notions of human identity and morality. There is concern that autonomous algorithms may make ethical decisions that exceed established moral norms.

From this perspective, the question of humanity's survival is not only on the agenda but is becoming increasingly urgent. Consequently, there is a logical call for the global humanization of all fields of scientific knowledge, prioritizing education and the humanistic orientation of social progress and scientific and creative activity [Измайлова, 2023, с. 47-54].

Main Body

Understanding the conceptual foundations of humanism from the standpoint of socio-philosophical analysis requires clarifying the term "humanism," analyzing its evolution, and studying both traditional and contemporary conceptions of humans. This necessitates examining humanistic ideas in their historical context, their transformation under socio-cultural influences, and identifying key principles that determine humanity's place within societal and moral values. In this context, it is important to define the boundaries of the concept of "humanism."

As noted by Zhelobov A.A., the ambiguity and multiplicity of the term reduce its scientific precision and content, although humanism can serve as a criterion for evaluating human activity [Желобов, 2008, с. 23].

Let us consider the main interpretations of this concept. According to the Roman philosopher Cicero, humanism represents the highest degree of cultural and moral development of human capacities, expressed in aesthetically perfected form and combined with gentleness and humanity [Звиревич, 2016, с. 255].

The encyclopedic definition treats humanism as a system for organizing society, in which human life is the highest value and all resources are directed toward ensuring its comfort and safety[Захаренко и др., 2008, с. 560]. However, this approach lacks a moral dimension, making it purely utilitarian.

The American Humanist Association defines humanism as "a progressive life stance that, without reliance on supernatural beliefs, asserts our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives for self-fulfillment and the benefit of humanity" [Захаренко и др., 2008, с. 560].

Similarly, the Charter of the International Humanist and Ethical Union characterizes humanism as "a democratic ethical stance affirming the right and duty of humans to determine the meaning of their own lives. Humanism is oriented toward creating a more humane society through ethics based on natural human values, reason, and free inquiry" [International Humanist and Ethical Union, www...].

The diversity of definitions of humanism not only complicates its understanding but often results in excessive formulations. Analysis of various interpretations highlights its multifaceted nature, emphasizing the need for further clarification and deepening of the term within the context of science

and social progress. The most substantiated definition appears to be humanism as anthropocentrism or human-centeredness, emphasizing its key principle – recognition of humans as the highest value.

In this regard, the most appropriate definition for our purposes is that underlying Albert Schweitzer's philosophical and ethical concept, whose core principle is expressed as "reverence for life." In his works, Schweitzer argued that any spiritual existence is connected to natural life; that is, reverence for life applies both to spiritual and natural phenomena, and respect for natural life entails respect for spiritual life as well[Швейцер, 1992, с. 572]. In this context, humanism is not only a worldview paradigm but also a system of values in which the priority is the human being.

As a system of spiritual values, humanism becomes not only a central concept in philosophy and a principle for the development of contemporary society but also an axiological dominant of modern science.

Humanism, which originated during the Renaissance, promoted the ideas of individual freedom, scientific and technological development for the benefit of humanity. These ideas, adapted to modern conditions, formed the basis of transhumanism. The term "transhumanism" first appeared in 1957 in the work of the British biologist and philosopher Julian Huxley. Huxley used it in his essay Transhumanism (1957), defining transhumanism as the next stage in human evolution, in which scientific and technological achievements would allow humans to overcome their biological limitations. He described transhumanism as "humanity in the process of self-improvement," advancing to a higher form of existence through science and technology. "Man remains man, yet transcends himself, realizing new possibilities for his existence. This is transhumanism" [Хаксли, 1964].

Transhumanism can be regarded as a logical continuation of the humanistic tradition, aimed at using scientific achievements to expand human capabilities. For example, Enlightenment-era humanists advocated the development of education and science, seeing them as key to improving society. Modern transhumanists continue this line of thought, asserting that technology can not only enhance social conditions but also overcome the biological limitations of the human body and mind.

Contemporary bioethics represents a more advanced version of classical humanism, adapted to the realities of the 21st century, and is more closely related to the ideology of transhumanism. Transhumanism is a philosophical and scientific movement focused on the radical enhancement of human capacities through technology. Its proponents suggest that the development of biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and cybernetics will allow humans to surpass the biological limitations of *Homo sapiens*.

The ideas of transhumanism were actively developed in the 20th century by futurists such as F. Tipler and H. Moravec, who emphasized artificial intelligence and cyborgization. In the 1990s, Max More provided a modern philosophical foundation for transhumanism, linking it to radical life extension, mind uploading, and a posthuman future. Only in the 2000s did Nick Bostrom establish the academic basis of transhumanism, encompassing biotechnology, genetic modifications, and digital immortality. Bostrom laid the philosophical foundations of transhumanism in his works *Superintelligence* and *Transhumanist Values[Бостром, 2005]*. Futurist Ray Kurzweil, in his book *The Singularity Is Near*, describes the prospects of technological singularity and the potential integration of human minds with machine intelligence [Курцвейл, 2005, с. 652].

The main principles of transhumanism include:

– Elimination of diseases and aging through genetic engineering and nanomedicine;
– Enhancement of cognitive abilities via neural interfaces and artificial intelligence;
– Integration of humans with machines, leading to the emergence of cyborgs;
– Possibility of mind uploading and the creation of digital immortality.

Despite the utopian nature of some ideas, transhumanism is already finding practical applications: bioprosthetics and neural interfaces are used in medicine, and artificial intelligence research explores consciousness modeling.

The modern development of biomedical technologies has dramatically expanded the horizon of human understanding, and, consequently, the potential for manipulating human nature. This often leads to a conflict between the ethical principles of classical science and the practical application of new biomedical technologies, such as transplantation, euthanasia, and assisted reproductive technologies. The unprecedented achievements in contemporary biomedical technology carry potentially catastrophic consequences for the improvement of human nature–not only its physical and physiological aspects but also its cultural and intellectual organization.

At some point, sometimes imperceptibly, humans begin to be perceived as projects of biomedicine, making the creation of a "posthuman" conceivable, often following entirely unprecedented plans and scenarios. Critics of transhumanism, such as Francis Fukuyama, point to ethical issues related to potential social inequality and risks to human identity [Фукуяма, 2004, с. 320].

Russian scholar P.D. Tishchenko suggests that the loss of humanity can be traced precisely to new biomedical technologies, which fall within the field of bioethics. He argues that as medical technologies evolve–initially intended for the high purposes of saving lives and preserving the body–all medical manipulations of human nature (including the deconstruction of human sexuality) inevitably lead to the total destruction of the human element within humans [Тищенко, 2009, с. 236]. O.V. Letov asserts that the ideas of transhumanism are implicitly present in many biotechnological projects aimed at "enhancing" humans as a biological species [Летов, 2009, с. 54-102].

Transhumanism and humanism, despite differences in approach, share common ideas and values aimed at improving human existence. Both movements strive to develop human potential, protect human dignity, and ensure the best living conditions. Humanism has traditionally focused on the ethical self-improvement of individuals and society, emphasizing moral principles and human rights. Transhumanism, in turn, proposes the technological enhancement of human capabilities, including life extension, improved cognitive abilities, and physical endurance. In other words, the contrast between "humanism vs. transhumanism" lies in the fact that humanists seek to improve the surrounding world through rationality and universal values, while transhumanists aim to change human nature itself.

Thus, transhumanism preserves humanistic ideals but interprets them in a new key, proposing the use of science and technology for the further development of humanity. The crucial question is where to draw the line between enhancing human nature and the risks associated with losing its essential characteristics. It is important that the process of human transformation remains ethically justified and that the modernization of human nature does not lead to the loss of fundamental humanistic principles.

Neo-humanism is a philosophical and cultural movement that developed in the 20th century as a response to the extremes of modernism, postmodernism, and other philosophical trends. It is based on the ideas of humanism but in a more contemporary interpretation, focusing on preserving the value of human personality, freedom, and dignity while taking into account the features and challenges of the modern era. In Russia, interest in neo-humanism emerged in the early 20th century, particularly in the context of neo-Kantianism.

This term is also associated with the philosophy of the Indian thinker P.R. Sarkar, who proposed the concept of neo-humanism as a way to expand love, empathy, and respect for all beings. Unlike classical humanism, which is centered on humans, Sarkar's neo-humanism extends moral and spiritual respect to all living beings and even inanimate objects. He emphasized that love and respect should apply not only to humans but also to animals, plants, and the environment [Саркар, 1982, с. 188].

Neo-humanism offers a renewed perspective on humanism, adapting it to the challenges of contemporary science and technology. It preserves traditional humanistic values, such as freedom, equality, and dignity, while striving to account for the new challenges of the digital era.

The main ideas of neo-humanism include:

– Forming ethical norms in the context of technological progress;

– Promoting harmonious coexistence between humans and technology;

– Developing education and culture to prepare society for new challenges;

– Establishing principles for the responsible use of scientific achievements.

If transhumanism aims to transform humans into posthumans through technology, P.R. Sarkar's neo-humanism leads to a posthuman existence in a different sense–through spiritual, ethical, and intellectual development. Such a being can be described as a "global human," a "cosmic being," or an "ethico-spiritual human." While transhumanism seeks to change humans via cybernetics, genetic engineering, and artificial intelligence, neo-humanism emphasizes that humans should expand their consciousness, free themselves from dogma, and develop empathy and responsibility toward all living things. While the ultimate goal of transhumanism is the creation of a so-called "posthuman," in neo-humanist philosophy the "posthuman" is a bio-spiritual being capable of perceiving value in the entire surrounding world.

Neo-humanism seeks to establish ethical regulations for the use of biotechnologies. This includes issues such as cloning, the application of bioengineering in medicine, and patient rights. One of the key researchers in neo-humanism, Jürgen Habermas, in his works The Future of Human Nature and Between Facts and Norms, analyzes the impact of technology on social values and moral norms. He writes: "If we begin to apply bioengineering methods to alter human nature, we will face the problem of losing self-understanding as morally autonomous beings" [Хабермас, 2004, с. 144].

Building on this, Russian bioethicists such as Boris Yudin and Natalia Reutova discuss the need for strict control over human genome experiments, emphasizing the balance between scientific progress and moral principles. To address these challenges, it is important to develop clear methodological approaches that include, first and foremost, mechanisms of humanitarian and ethical expertise, involve independent experts, and consider the perspectives of various stakeholders. Humanitarian expertise of biotechnological projects is an essential component to ensure the balanced development of new technologies. It helps create conditions in which biotechnological innovations can be safely integrated into society while respecting the rights and interests of all stakeholders. As the complexity and diversity of biotechnological solutions increase, the role of humanitarian expertise will continue to grow, requiring specialists to possess deep knowledge and broad perspectives [Юдин, 2006, с. 187-194].

Among the cultural challenges of neo-humanism are adapting social institutions to new realities, the potential expansion of digital control over individuals, and conflicts between traditional and modernist values.

Thus, neo-humanism seeks to renew the humanistic idea, emphasizing how to preserve the core values of human life in the face of new challenges and changes.

In contrast to the ideas of neo-humanism and as a continuation of transhumanist philosophy, another movement emerges – posthumanism. Posthumanism is a philosophical approach that critiques traditional notions of the human being, developed during the eras of humanism and modernity. It argues that the boundaries between humans, technology, animals, and the environment are becoming blurred, and proposes to abandon the notion of humans as the center of the world. Unlike transhumanists, who seek to improve humans, posthumanists view humans as a temporary stage in evolution, emphasizing the importance of other forms of life and artificial intelligence.

The term "posthumanism" was first used in 1977 by the American literary scholar and philosopher Ihab Hassan in his essay Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture? Hassan analyzed changes in culture and science, predicting a transition from traditional humanism to a new phase in which technology, cybernetics, and biological discoveries would begin to blur the boundaries between humans and machines. He viewed posthumanism as a philosophy that reinterprets the status of humans in the world, abandoning classical anthropocentrism. Its key ideas include the assertion that humans are no longer the center of the universe as technology, artificial intelligence, and genetic modifications create new forms of life; the future of humanity represents a hybrid of biological and technological elements; and humanistic values are becoming outdated as traditional notions of subjectivity and identity are dissolved [Хассан, 2007, с. 160].

In Russia, posthumanism is studied in the context of philosophy of science, biopolitics, ecology, cybernetics, and cultural studies. Prominent Russian scholars in this field include A.V. Pavlenko, A.V. Shestakov, E.Yu. Artamonova, V.A. Podoroga, and N.V. Smirnova. Central ideas in Russian posthumanist research primarily involve the critique of classical humanism. For example, A.V. Pavlenko notes that traditional humanism places humans at the center of the cosmos, but in the 21st century, technology, artificial intelligence, and bioengineering make this concept obsolete. Humans are now considered not as autonomous subjects but as part of a complex network of relations with technology, nature, and other species [Павленко, 2018, с. 256].

Other researchers highlight key posthumanist ideas, such as the deconstruction of anthropocentrism and the technological enhancement of humans. A.V. Shestakov analyzes how posthumanism blurs the boundaries between humans and inanimate objects, proposing "nonhuman perspectives"–ways of thinking that go beyond purely human perception [Шестаков, 2019, с. 248]. These ideas resonate with N.V. Smirnova's work, which views posthumanism through the lens of the ecology of mind and critiques the consumerist attitude toward nature [Смирнов, 2017, с. 220]. In E.Yu. Artamonova's research, posthumanism is connected with transhumanist ideas: how technology, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering change the very nature of humans. However, unlike transhumanism, posthumanism does not treat humans as unique; rather, it studies their interaction with techno-biological environments [Артамонова, 2019, с. 280] . V.A. Podoroga links posthumanism to biopolitics and the governance of bodies, showing that modern technologies create new forms of control over human life (e.g., digital surveillance, biometrics, genetic engineering) [Подорога, 2020, с. 324].

Russian posthumanist philosophy offers a multilayered understanding of the "posthuman":

– as a networked being integrated into ecosystems of technology, nature, and society;
– as a subject of biopolitics influenced by power structures and digital technologies;
– as a hybrid entity in which boundaries between humans, animals, machines, and the environment become increasingly blurred.

Thus, Russian posthumanist studies show that the human of the future is not merely an "improved version of oneself," but part of a new complex ecosystem where technology, nature, and society merge into a unified whole. Regarding the axiological aspect of the humanization of science, posthumanism emphasizes value-laden relationships not only within society and between humans and society, but also between humans and nature, and between society and nature.

The ideologies of transhumanism and posthumanism promise radical changes in human life, based on the application of high-tech innovations such as genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, neurotechnologies, cyborgization, and bionics. However, these prospects are associated with significant socio-cultural challenges and risks, which could fundamentally alter social structures, morality, and identity.

Some of these challenges include:

1. Ethical and moral issues.

One of the main risks is the blurring of moral and ethical norms that traditionally define the boundaries between humans and their technological augmentations. This raises questions such as: Who will have access to these technologies, and how will their use be regulated? Where is the line between human enhancement and alteration of human essence? What will be the consequences of creating "enhanced" humans or artificial intelligence surpassing human intellect?

2. Social inequality and digital divide.

Technologies associated with transhumanism and posthumanism may exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities, particularly regarding access to enhancements. Limited access could divide society into "enhanced" and "unenhanced" humans, creating a new form of social inequality and discrimination.

3. Threat to human identity.

One of the deepest challenges for transhumanism and posthumanism is the potential loss of human identity. With the enhancement of humans through technology, questions arise about the meaning and value of life. If humans can modify their minds, alter their physical characteristics, or upload consciousness into digital environments, who are they? How can their identity be defined if both their biology and consciousness can be transformed?

Despite their revolutionary potential to improve life, transhumanism and posthumanism carry significant risks for society, ecology, and human identity. Issues of inequality, moral erosion, technological dependency, and security threats require a cautious approach and strict regulation. Ensuring the safe integration of these technologies into society demands not only scientific and technological efforts but also deep philosophical, ethical, and social reflection.

Conclusions

The search for Homo Humanus is not merely a scientific endeavor but a profound philosophical reflection on the future of humanity. Martin Heidegger, in Letter on Humanism, noted that all forms of humanism, though differing in purpose, justification, methods, and teachings, converge on the idea that Humanitas – the desired Homo Humanus – is defined against the backdrop of an already established interpretation of nature, history, and the world as a whole [Хайдеггер, 1993, 451].

Transhumanism aims for the radical expansion of human capabilities; neo-humanism focuses on ethics and values; posthumanism moves beyond traditional conceptions of human essence. The integration of bioethics and biomedical technologies into these frameworks raises complex questions about the limits of scientific intervention, morality, and responsibility. These debates continue to shape visions of the future, where technology can serve not only as a tool for development but also as a challenge to traditional notions of humanity.

The grand challenge lies in preserving humanity in an era of change. Humanism, combined with scientific and technological progress, offers the potential for harmonious societal development while maintaining a balance between new possibilities and traditional ethical norms.

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От гуманизма к постгуманизму: человек в гуманитарных научных проектах

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Аннотация

Статья «From Humanism to Posthumanism: Human in the Humanistic Projects of Science» анализирует эволюцию представлений о человеке в научных и философских контекстах. Автор рассматривает, как философские и научные течения от эпохи Возрождения до постгуманизма и трансгуманизма стремились понять сущность человека и его будущее в контексте научных открытий. Особое внимание уделяется взаимодействию между гуманистической идеей человека как разумного существа и вызовами, которые ставит технологическое развитие. В статье исследуются философские, этические и культурные последствия научных изменений, а также трансформация представлений о человеке в эпоху новых технологий, таких как искусственный интеллект и биотехнологии. Автор подчеркивает, что будущее Homo Humanus включает не только телесную эволюцию, но и моральные и социальные изменения, затрагивающие человеческую идентичность. Новизна статьи заключается в интеграции научных, культурных и этических аспектов меняющихся представлений о человеке.

Для цитирования в научных исследованиях

Измайлова Д.И. From Humanism to Posthumanism: Human in Humanistic Science Projects // Контекст и рефлексия: философия о мире и человеке. 2025. Том 14. № 10А. С. 35-44. DOI: 10.34670/AR.2025.45.92.006

Ключевые слова

Гуманизм, неогуманизм, трансгуманизм, постгуманизм, биотехнологии, искусственный интеллект, гуманитарная экспертиза, Homo Humanus, философская антропология, биоэтика.

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