

## TRANSCENDING THE CONCEPT OF MORALITY FROM HUMAN TO THE POSTHUMAN

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The world of 21st century is full of different transformations. Among the sociological, political, cultural, moral changes, technological revolution creates a great impact in the present world order. This technological shift brings a lot of changing as well as new dimensions within human beings. Along with technological developments, medical science finds its new ground on biotechnology and its other areas, i.e. genetic engineering, stem cells and cloning. Although it is largely based on the biological science and mainly associated with different medical diagnostics, like- production of insulin, hormones, drugs and medicines of any disease, cell and reproductive cloning, pathological tests, but equally it is related with diverse areas, like- modification of crops, bioconversion of organic waste, stem cell research, gene therapy, use of bacteria and viruses for food, water and medicinal research and advancements. So as a hot ground of research, biotechnology is applied uninterruptedly in the industry, agriculture and medicine and biology. Another important improvement of recent era is the progress of molecular nanotechnology. It is anticipation that, a complex three-dimensional atomic structure can be made possible using synchronized atoms having a precise bonding with each other and chemical reactions of non-biological machineries. So, it is a Nano-machine which could be made possible by rearranging the atoms in a special operative manner. This unique assemble of atoms enable the researchers to transform coal into diamonds, sand into computers, can remove pollution from air and water, tumor from healthy tissues, diseases from the body. With the handful of such developments one significant enhancement has been placed in recent period, which makes itself highlighted by its enormous changing roles. This enhancement is nothing but the intense development of human body using highly advanced technology. Human beings have changed their identity from only a 'biological being' to a 'technological posthuman'. It is really an issue about which every single person, whether a general public or a scholar, shows an interest and these raising interests in return bring up various investigations, through which it seems possible to know the influences of such interventions on human life and wellbeing. But when we convert human condition with the help of technology or biotechnology, it necessarily requires similar change in the nature of being human. However, can it be really possible to change the whole nature and identity of being a human for the technological impulsions on the body? More particularly it is said by some persons that, are the resulting posthuman creatures really considered as a human being or as anything else? Are they the very part of our human ethics? And here through such questions, the ethical issues and values of 'more developed posthumans'

### **Towards the Enhancement Processes of Human Beings:**

Human advancements find its highest position gradually from both negative and positive sense. Negatively, bodily improvement faces its necessity for curing various diseases, like- diabetes, cancer, heart dysfunction, organ failure, nerve problem and so on, and human inabilities, like- eliminating blindness, deafness and armlessness, while positively; it tries to improve the biological functions of a human organism by the admixing of machines. So, negatively enhancing technology attempts to improve the bad situation of a human towards good, and positively good situation to an even better position. Thus, normal body functioning is engrossed in both of the cases by enhancing interventions and human beings in return become technologically upgraded creatures, known by the name, cyborg, transhuman and posthuman.

Transhumanism is a cultural, intellectual and moreover a technological movement, which has been improved and popularized progressively from past two decades. Through the extensive use of advanced technology, it not only provides potential tendency to humans for overcoming and improving their fundamental conditions of desires and limitations, but by heightening the intellectual, physical, emotional and psychological capacities, human organisms are opened up in a new dimension. Human biology evaluates every opportunity for its highest enrichment on the basis of both recent technology, i.e. the genetic engineering and information technology and the future technology, i.e. the molecular nanotechnology, artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Transhumanist project actually gives emphasis on the positive extension of human life-span by eliminating unnecessary bodily sufferings. Being an interdisciplinary research, it not only bounded with medicine, body enhancement and electronic gadgets, but it also embraces the socio-political, cultural, economic and institutional schemes, enlarges marketing and consumerism, as well as manages psychological issues, by disseminating its own skills and techniques into these fields. As a revolutionary movement, transhumanism attempts to convey an evolution in the sphere of human life and perceives human nature as a work-place, where with the application of accurate science and technology human beings can be remolded in the desirable fashion. This scientific and technological transformation brings humanity to a phase of aposthuman, who carries more skills, capacities,

intelligence and healthier lifestyle than a normal human being. Whereas, even now some traditional theories give a conservative attitude towards technology, transhumanism makes a closer relation to technology and practices science and technology proactively in every approach. This close relation with technology works upon human body and nature, as well as provides an opportunity to live a longer and healthier life, sharpen up memory power, upgrade intellectual capabilities, improve emotional understandings, increase subjective value and security, and more particularly gives a chance to control over human's mental state, mood and life. This theory can be mentioned as a partial extension of humanism, because it found its ground in secular humanist thinking (Bostrom, 2005b, p.4) and does not deprive itself from rational humanism.

However, in its revolutionary manner, it not only embraces more on advanced medical science and technology as an essential means of overcoming human's fundamental biological limits, but at the same time does not disrespect traditional education and socio-cultural activity as an effective way of human development. Being an open theory, it is not in agreement with any kind of values that are externally imposed on human condition. It believes that, progress in the field of human nature would occur only when people can participate spontaneously and actively for their own sake. Through this kind of open and active participation it will be possible for them to reshape their lives, behaviors and the ways they relate to others. More importantly this progression finds its intense peak, when the capacities of external and internal part of human biological bodies are becoming more powerful, limitless and even more perfect, in accordance with their own deepest values. Thus, the acceptance of human's profound values makes this theory a free theory, where every human being is free and have an ability and right to plan as well as to choose a life of their own thinking and values.

The term 'posthuman' as an extension of transhumanist thought discusses the notion of the human body. In 'Posthumanism', the suffix 'post' lights upon a free thought, a thought which is in a negative sense, without domination, decentralized from reason only, breaking down from all modern systems of hierarchy, capitalism, colonialism, slavery and human-centric assumptions for instance, and in a positive sense, like postmodernism, it is mutable, nomadic, ephemeral, pluralistic,

discontinuous, multilayered and most importantly all-inclusive. Although posthumanism deconstructed human primacy over all, yet it does not mean that it gives a new kind of primacy to technologies as it regulates advanced technologies in a regular manner. It can be signified as post-centralized not because it decentralized itself from modern views centering on reason alone, rather actually it recognizes many specific centers of interest instead of a single one only. In the sphere of postmodernism speciesism unfolds all new integral aspect in a more critical way.

### **The Application of Morality in the Sphere of Science and Technology:**

Science, technology and medical research are parts of larger human culture, yet they proved themselves essential for human life by saving people from the savage and cruel sides of nature. With the practice of all these aspects, human beings gradually become civilized, rational and enlightened from the uncivilized and inhuman stage. In spite of all their helpings to humankind, it is in return necessary and important too to evaluate the impact of science and technology over human culture, society and environment. As far as science, technology and medical research goes in a successive position, the necessity of moral evaluation is needed, and have to fix a guiding principle for betterment of human lives and situations, also at the same time, to protect the human goals, socio-cultural relationships, communications, and mostly our living world and environment. Nowadays, the main aim of medical science, medicine and technology is to enhance the power of a human from the basic ground of biological organism to technological creature. Thus, the ethical view which seems predominant for moral analysis in the bio-technological area, can be named as 'bioethics'. Bioethics provides a broader sense than medical and clinical ethics, research ethics, and public health ethics (Sass, p.9). It is not only associated with particular human and his own life, rather with his family, neighbours, socio-political institutions, cultures, rituals, interaction with others and lots more, in a single word, it actually covers the entire world of life (Sass, p.10).

The transhumanist philosophy does not come under an exact moral theory. Likewise, the ethical concern regarding posthumanity is still in a debated state. Being a postmodern in its very core, posthumanism believes in fragmentation and non-original ways of thinking. So, the rules of normative ethics are quite tough to settle down over transhumanistic as well as posthumanistic approaches. Even, there

are some supporters of both of the approaches who totally rejects the conception of morality within human enhancement project. They hold the view that, whenever we attempt to control the enhancement policy through any moral code, we basically manage it with the help of universalized, categorized norm-based systems, which traces its origin from human rationality and subjectivity, about which they confront purely oppositional thought. However, Posthumanism is not free from moral criticism and faces many moral quarries against them. But, they do not set any specific code of conduct, they just provide suitable answers about the moral questions raised against them. By means of answering such criticisms, thinkers engaged themselves to discuss about the extended capacity of human's moral enhancement along with bodily improvement through science and technology.

### **Criticisms against Transhumanity and Posthumanity and Possible Replies:**

There are so many objections against Posthuman enhancement. Some thinkers say, making a posthuman is impossible, rather it is a utopia as well as a pseudo idea. It has no real ground. Not only that, transforming into a posthuman is costly, difficult, risky and brings psychological disturbance. But some crucial objections in the way of posthuman success are the following

1. Posthuman position is very bad for the society. It gives a negative impact on the human society and brings social inequality, conflicts, discrimination, and fragmentation among social relationships.
2. The life of posthumans will be worse than human lives, because scientific enhancement breaks the values, rules and regulations of the society. Again through technological breakthrough we can never become benefited, because in the process of becoming a posthuman, humans eventually loss their humanity (Bostrom, 2008, p.109).

To give an answer of these objections, it might be replied that, undoubtedly both human and posthuman have some moral values, nonetheless, it is difficult too to maintain that, are these values similar or not to both of them? Values are context-based; the situation always makes to feel people that, the values of their life 'will be good or bad?' or 'will be positive or negative'? Values of life signify the wellbeing of an individual and well surviving strategy of a subject. Sometimes we can see that, life

of a person is worst, who lives with intense pain and sufferings, health hazards, isolated from his family, friends and society than of a person who is leading his life by grasping all the good conditions of his life, family, friends and society. So, there is no such values which can be depicted as fixed, values are interchangeable depending on the human situation. If we want a moral value, which would remain unchangeable in any situation, then it will be necessary to maintain the characteristics of being intrinsic value, and a value, whether it is moral value or not, will be signified as an intrinsic value only when it provides goodness to all humans in every situation. Thus, if moral values cross the stage of being intrinsic in nature, then no 'posthuman', can ever spoils the basic grounds of humanity. Hence, it can be suggested now, the critics are more concerned about changeable values of human society, not with unchangeable intrinsic values. If they consider moral values as intrinsic, and then there would remain no problem, if a posthuman lives in the same world with a biological man.

Bioethicists give an objectionable view that, the transhumanist project of turning humans into an another personality, which they are not, actually dehumanizes the human dignity. Bioethicists in support of humanity assert, instead of using advanced technology as means of human enhancement, it would be better ever to improve the nature of a human by means of values that have been given by the nature. Though nature gifts us with so many opportunities for improving ourselves, at the same time in this recent era, we need something more for improvement than the natural ones only. In that very essence, Transhumanists puts importance on personal aspiration, values as well as advanced science and technology in accordance with natural order for reforming our natures. As there are so many erroneous systems in the human sphere, such as, capitalism, torture against weak, tendency of differentiating among peoples, patriarchic society, uncontrolled power of rich persons and so forth, this situations categorically lead people as the 'brave new worlders' (Bostrom, 2005a, p.206). These persons are dehumanized and inappropriate for the well-being of the society on behalf of their own egoistic nature. But, criticizers are putting blames to these types of worlds as the results of transhumanistic approach. But in favour of enhancement technology it could be remarked that, enhancement technology has become uncontrolled and as a consequence the *Brave New World*

(Bostrom, 2005a, p.206) has opened up. However, it is really a misfortune for advanced technology and social engineering that, humans used information technology aimlessly and unsystematic usage makes technology dangerous. The moral and intellectual capacities are eventually depriving its efficiency by this de-organized usage.

Moral questions are often raised by the bio-liberal thinkers, against transhumanism. Bio-liberals are those bio-ethicists, who supports human enhancement by means of advanced medical science and technology, but they does not depict themselves as transhumanist thinkers. Some thinkers like, John Harris, Julian Savulescu, Nicholas Agar or Allen Buchanan, who can be given the status of bio-liberals(Ranisch, p.150). Bio-liberalism mixes liberty and (state) neutrality (Ranisch, p.151) by the use of advanced technology. According to bio-liberalism, humans are definitely free to use advanced technologies in their everyday life for augmenting their possible capacities, only until other persons or animals or the environment is not harmed by their technological activity. Technological improvements are loosely used by people to qualify their lives from a good life to a much better life, but the using technology itself necessarily traces a responsibility towards every aspect of human as well as non-human life. Though both of the theories, bio-liberalism and transhumanism, talk about the use of technology in human's everyday life, their position of moral assumption is quite different. Bio-liberalists want a (state) neutrality, while transhumanists struggle continuously with advanced technology with a desired aim of achieving posthumanistic phase by transcending the human biological limitations (Ranisch, p.151). Bio liberalist is associated with individual human beings and depending on their value of liberty claims that, individuals are free to choose any improved technology, which seems good for their own life. For them, individuals are their own controller over their choice of good life and it is essential for them to lead a life which they considered best among all. So, for bio-liberalists, individual matters more than the humankind. They again in their support claim that, human possible capacity could be enhanced more perfectly through state neutrality and liberty by the use of technology. While on the other hand, Transhumanists puts emphasis on advanced medical science and technology for enhancing perfections within the biological human beings and at the

same time sets certain objective values, depending on which transformation can take place. Instead of being individualistic, it includes whole human region and in an enthusiastic manner provides sufficient opportunity to humankind for participating into this revolutionary enhancement mission. They emphasise that, everybody is free to use of technology as per their own necessity but in the eyes of Bostrom, “it could be good for most human beings to become posthuman” (Ranisch, p.151). So, Achieving the position of Posthumanism through the specific use of developed technology in an evolutionary manner, is the goal of transhumanism. While, transhumanism tries to open a huge opportunity towards humankind and takes them to a long range of human surviving strategy, bio-liberalism, in contrast, it give efforts to bring the benefits from technology for themselves and their descendants. Bio-liberalists reject transhumanity by arguing that, although technological progression is important and desirable from a long period to human beings and it opens up a new region of information and communication technology between individuals and their family, friends, relatives, yet enlarged technology terminates the common values of human society, culture and relationship, which continuing as a negative result will be the foremost cause of loss of humanity.

It is definitely true that, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century we are facing tremendous problems regarding human behavior. But, as the prime worker of moderate technology, transhumanism never claims that, over usage of technology always brings a positive outcome. Hence, it does not hold an optimistic view about progressive science and technology. This system always tries to practice science and technology in a precise manner. As we all know every action has both the positive and negative sides, it also has some negative sides too. But from its negative results, some other theorists think that, transhumanists are less concerned about the technological failure. Even they are conscious about the technological disaster and comment that, though technological advancements have lots of potentialities of beneficial developments, yet these achievements can be a reason for bringing massive harm in human sphere. The technological achievements instead of providing a longer life, can make inactive the valuable intelligent life, essential human qualities and it may even take away human existence. Further possible negative outcome tends to bring wide socio-political and cultural inequalities, loss of valuable human



relationships and ecological uniformity. So, as a sensitive thinker, a transhumanist will acknowledge these risky issues and constantly work better for overcoming the negativity as well as tries to give more positive outcome.

In the process of criticizing we seem to forget that, whether it is transhumanism or posthumanism, both are revolutionary movement inspired by human hopes, desires and dreams of accruing a unique personality by means of advanced technology. As a human ideology in its core essence, there are no such transhumans or posthumans who could be designated as aliens, rather they are the human beings belongs to the same human race and human moral ideals. The difference only is, they are transformed themselves to achieve more possible perfections and capacities than normal human lives. So, when we talk about transhuman or posthuman morality, we actually indicate human morality of those persons who have motivated and dreamed themselves as a technologically flourished creature. But as transhumanism and posthumanism is associated with the very use of technology, we naturally assume higher-minded moral ideal for them through which they can be successful to lead a healthy life. Humans occupied a unique role both in the World and in the Universe. It is because, humans are highly rational than non-human animals and desire to become more perfect than what natural biology has given them. As a social being, humans live within a society. The very society generates some moral conditions and values and under these conditions people can flourish their lives. But, when a person technologically enlarges his categories of understanding and makes himself believed that, he is a mixed species of a medical science and biotechnological evolution, and then would he be fallen in the very domain of the same moral conditions and values, that has been already given by the society and culture? This is a crucial question about the morality of 21<sup>st</sup> century, because in this era, both human and posthuman is living together in a same planet. It is so true that; human being is covered by some phenomena, which are created by their own thinking, feelings and social activities. When individuals experienced something, they experienced by means of these phenomena, which in turn motivated them to perform their duties and responsibilities towards the society. However, sometimes this long termed phenomenon guided by the so called powerful capitalists creates marginalized people's lives more complex, isolated, ignorant and insecure.

This is really a major problem of our so called civilized and educated society, where less important peoples, the marginalized, the uneducated, the economic backward classes, are treated not properly by the upper classes. But, Transhumanist approach never treated any person as different from the other. For them all are equal and all possess the same possibility of both qualitative and quantitative (Gatti, p.446) improvement, whether through knowledge or science and technology. Again, it must have to admit that, humans continuously try to come out from their failure, dissatisfaction, frustration, unnecessary pain and suffering both in realm of body and mind, weakness, shortage of time, life and ultimately death, anxiety, powerlessness, insecurity. And they finally find their path for overcoming all these problems and attain pleasure, relief, satisfaction, happiness, freedom, by the successive practice of enhancing technology.

#### **Position of Technologically Enhanced Being in the Human-world:**

The concept of transition to a posthuman, at its foremost step, seems quite stressful to the researchers. Technology based evolutionary formulation leads masses to a negative position and transformation to a posthuman might be degrading in itself and as a result might harm ourselves. Again, posthuman might threatens normal human beings. But after further researches, researchers come to the decision that, posthuman as a purely enhanced being will not harm humans or threat the position of a human being in the world. Posthumans are biology and technology based organisms, cyborgs, which are equipped with a long range of human survival. According to transhumanism and as a succeeding stage of transhumanism, posthumanism, argues that, lots of negative vibes exist in the natural worlds, which continuously are harming people in different conditions. There are many body-health issues, like, malaria, dengue, cancer and damage of organs, brain difficulty, cognitive problems, unnecessary suffering and so on. All of these problems are not been accepted by us and all of us really want to get rid from these difficult circumstances. Even, our society is full of such people, who practices immoral rationality, who planned murder, rape, robbery, torture, genocide, cheating, human trafficking and so on. So, the world of 21<sup>st</sup> century appears more negative than positive one. Hence, some researchers came forward to overcome these negativities by means of technology. They are enhancing people with posthuman health span, cognitivity and

capacities. Through this type of transmission humans improved their health and they become much stronger, energetic, curious, young, elastic, and active and are in a possession of positive as well as balanced mind, which in return helps humans to engage with more difficult situations easily. They can experience matters and things more realistically with the help of strong, disease free, healthy, proactive body and sharp mind. So, technological expansion of body makes humans more active, healthy, and productive and as mind makes humans more sensitive, rational and positive the world will be blessed with improved cognitive being.

When we shift to the discussion of human society from human body, we find that, there are some wrong ideals still present in the society. Human society is totalitarian, static, imposed values extrinsically, class, creed and race bounded, capitalized, intolerant suppress the weakens and no opportunity of development of the marginalized. With all such social characteristics, its cultures make itself a wasteland (Bostrom, 2005a, p.206). Sometimes it will look difficult by its appearance, to know persons as posthuman, because their life and physique may be same, but their capacity of thinking, intellect, emotions, moralities and spiritualities may surely surprise us.

### **Conclusion:**

In the concluding section it may be remarked that, we want only those kinds of values, with which we are well-known, clear and well acquainted. By our own nature we can never accept such values that cannot convince our human thinking, decisions and actions. But, there are immense numbers of values that are evolving gradually by way of new technological transmutations. These growing values may be acquired as the trendy values, which may in turn become a purposeful virtue for both humans and posthumans. But, our limited human capacities fall down to accept the posthuman values, because these values and virtues require full acquaintance with our capabilities of understanding and rationality. While producing new values, posthumanism or enhancing technology never tries to devalue human values. Philosophers of Transformation just wanted to put up new and innovative values, which can accommodate with changing moralities of posthumanism trend. Undoubtedly, in this random changing world, posthuman virtues also can take an important role in the changing society.

Transhumanism is not an anti-humanistic approach; rather human beings are the main pillars to this theory. It never wants us to believe posthuman persons over biological human beings and lay significance for understanding the human ideology more perfectly. What human enhancement theory highlights, like utilitarianism, is to highlight the highest possible well-beings for the masses and the society and definitely a large number of good consequences from every enhancement. As human beings are more powerful and intelligent than other non-human animals, so the agenda of enhancement researchers and philosophers, is to give a new path of different opportunities to develop the human conditions, both bodily and cognitively through enhancement. The best part of enhancement is to provide a disease free personality and in its very course of research ultimately tries to transcend human mortality stage.

Posthumans are not out of this world, they are the very much part of our society. Posthumans play the role of a medium between the organism and technology, real world and virtual world, social relations and cyber relations. Thus, biology, technology and social nature all are the part of a posthuman. But we have to admit it strongly that, as an independent creature, though not purely natural but scientifically developed, like humans, posthumans also have their own reality, ideology, experience, morality, virtue, values of life and responsibility towards the society. Last of all, it may be remarked that nowadays all achievements are largely coming up through technological intervention, and human beings are customized with all intermediations whether consciously or not. Nevertheless, all kind of developments directly affect their everyday life, body, culture and, society as well. Hence, as technological transformation in every field has been evolving day by day with a fresh hope and energy by different experimental ventures, so the thinking of getting rid of its enthusiastic features of enhancement would be absolutely a hopeless thought.

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