Transhumanism and Human Enhancement Technologies

Transhumanismo y Tecnologías de Mejoramiento Humano

Alfredo Jose Bajetti Bermudez*
Atizapán General Hospital, Mexico

Alan Uriel Olivarez Torreblanca**
Ángeles Lindavista Hospital, Mexico

Linares J. E., Tafoya, E. *Transhumanismo y Tecnologías de Mejoramiento Humano.* UNAM; 2020.

Transhumanismo y Tecnologías de Mejoramiento Humano (2020), coordinated by Jorge Enrique Linares Salgado and Edgar Tafoya Ledesma, is a work published by the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Both coordinators are distinguished academics in the fields of philosophy, sociology, and science and technology studies at UNAM.

Linares Salgado is a professor at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at UNAM, with 25 years of experience, specializing in bio-

* Email: ajbajetti@gmail.com https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0366-8006
** Email: alanu.ot@gmail.com https://orcid.org/0009-0000-8213-9775

ethics and the philosophy of technology, making him a key contributor to this text. Tafoya Ledesma is a professor and researcher at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, which focuses on contemporary sociology and the social implications of technology.

Transhumanism is the central theme of the book. This is a movement that promotes the use of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, gene editing, and advanced prosthetics, to enhance human capabilities. This, of course, raises many philosophical, ethical, and social questions about human identity, technological progress, and social justice. The book is set in a global context where technologies are advancing rapidly, along with marked inequality in access to and distribution among consumers.

Abstract

The book is structured in three parts: the first addresses the epistemological, ontological, and phenomenological issues of transhumanism; the second addresses the controversies surrounding the ethics and politics of human enhancement technologies; and the last focuses on the cultural impacts of human enhancement.

The first part examines the philosophical foundations and criticisms of transhumanism. Both authors explore whether this movement truly leads to human enhancement, or whether it could be a threat to it, as has been feared.

A key chapter is that of Javier Echeverría, who critiques the literary work "Homo Deus" written by Yuval Noah Harari. This chapter highlights that transhumanist promises of immortality and perpetual happiness, rather than a solution, pose social and political dangers. This section also discusses how transhumanism is not humanism and how it breaks with western philosophical traditions.

The second part delves deeper into the ethical and political controversies surrounding the use of human enhancement technologies. The authors raise the possibility of a new form of social

exclusion, where only an elite, that is, a small portion of the entire population, has access to enhanced technologies.

Highlights include work by Ricardo Bernal, who explores the problems that transhumanism poses for political justice, such as the creation of "cyborgs" with different rights than non-enhanced humans. These chapters emphasize that, although these technologies are not yet fully developed, it is crucial to begin designing inclusive policies that regulate their access and use.

The third part analyzes the cultural effects of these advanced technologies. Liliana Valladares argues that transhumanist technologies can radically alter education, while Francisco Castro addresses how cognitive enhancement could affect our narrative identity, that is, the way we understand ourselves as individuals.

Edgar Tafoya describes how technological life forms, such as cyborgs, could profoundly alter our society, while Elena Arriaga and Melina Gastélum examine the risks and vulnerabilities associated with gene editing and artificial intelligence.

Review

The book Transhumanism and Human Enhancement Technologies is a comprehensive work and offers a multidisciplinary perspective on transhumanism. Among the disciplines involved are philosophy, sociology, and cultural and technological studies. One of its greatest achievements is its ability to approach transhumanism from different angles and perspectives. It does not simply examine scientific advances but also delves into the social implications, as well as the cultural and ethical consequences these technologies have for humanity.

Another positive aspect is the inclusion of renowned authors in their fields, which brings academic rigor and diverse perspectives to the debate. The book has a unique way of showing how human enhancement technologies (gene editing or artificial intelligence) cannot be viewed solely from a scientific perspective. The impact they

have on social, political, and cultural structures is quite profound, and the authors make sure to present a complete picture of the potential effects, both short and long term.

One criticism that can be leveled at the book is its predominantly theoretical approach. The work offers an in-depth analysis of the ethical problems and dilemmas posed by transhumanism; however, there is a lack of practical examples or concrete case studies, which may make it difficult for readers to understand how these problems are already manifesting in today's society.

In some chapters, the language used is somewhat technical for readers unfamiliar with or unfamiliar with philosophical and sociological debates, which may limit the book's reach to a non-specialist audience.

Finally, although the book does an excellent job of presenting the risks of transhumanism, it feels like it lacks greater discussion of possible solutions. The authors warn of the inequalities and conflicts that could arise from the implementation of these technologies, but they do not offer many clear proposals on how to mitigate or manage these problems.