INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF
PHILOSOPHY AND COSMOLOGY

PHILOSOPHY & COSMOLOGY

Volume 30



Kyiv, 2023

Philosophy and Cosmology, Volume 30
Academic Journal
ISSN 2518-1866 (Online), ISSN 2307-3705 (Print)
The State Registration Certificate of the print media KB No. 20780-10580P, June 25, 2014.
http://ispcjournal.org/
E-mail: bazaluk@ispcjournal.org

It was printed in the manner of scientific-theoretical digest "Philosophy & Cosmology" since 2004.
It was printed as the Academic Yearbook of Philosophy and Science "Философия и космология/ Philosophy & Cosmology" since 2011.
It was printed as the Academic Journal "Philosophy & Cosmology" since Volume 12, 2014.

Printed according to the resolution of the Scientific Board of the International Society of Philosophy and Cosmology (Minutes of meeting No 4 from January 25, 2023)

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Section Two
NATURE AND CIVILIZATION

The Discourse of Humanism in the Context of the Civilizational Process in the 21st century

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Akopian, Valerii and Viktoriya Timashova (2023) The Discourse of Humanism in the Context of the Civilizational Process in the 21st century. *Philosophy and Cosmology*, Volume 30, 24-32. https://doi.org/10.29202/phil-cosm/30/2

The article explores the concept of humanism both in modern discourse and in historical retrospective. Human has always been at the center of philosophy, regardless of what spheres of being were studied. Anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, philosophy, and many other sciences explore various manifestations of a person, all of which are ultimately designed to answer perhaps one of the most critical questions – what makes us human? However, this discourse significantly changed over the course of two thousand years. For example, Martin Heidegger points out an important nuance of the emergence of the concept of humanism, namely, as a kind of chauvinism – the division into humans (Romans) and non-humans (barbarians). This point of view is often overlooked, but it is critical to

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understanding the essence of this phenomenon. In the subsequent era of the Middle Ages, human was understood as the opposite of the divine, but in such realities, there were humanistic ideals and values. Already in the Renaissance, a return to the traditions of antiquity was announced, but the understanding of a person acquired a romantic character. Humanism clearly saw something more in a person than a person himself could demonstrate. It is for this metaphysical image that many critics of humanism have criticized this phenomenon. However, where there is criticism, there is progress, which is why this concept has gained a new round of discourse, which is why new trends have appeared that have brought the concept of humanism to a new theoretical level. As a historical phenomenon, humanism is faced with certain difficulties of new eras; because of these collisions, humanism is modified and adapted. Among humanism's problems are multiculturalism, technological breakthroughs, and the need to search for new theories. In its development, the course of humanism takes on various forms and iterations. It is worth mentioning transhumanism (the idea of becoming someone more than just a human), posthumanism (philosophical views on human nature as a posthuman), and global humanism.

Keywords: the discourse of humanism, human, person, civilization process, transhumanism, posthumanism, global humanism.

Received: 14 October 2022 / Accepted: 21 December 2022 / Published: 5 February 2023

Introduction

It can be said without any exaggeration that the question of human essence has always been the key to philosophy; human has always been at the center of philosophizing. It can be argued that the key themes of philosophy are the problems of being, the nature of reality, eternal and unchanging essence. The question is justifiably fair, but it is worth remembering that the inquiring mind of a person asked all kinds of questions not for the sake of the outside world. It would be more accurate to say that human of all ages has asked questions about the outside world with the aim, in the end, to know themselves. This was the essence of the ancient turn from nature to human. This was not so much a change in the research subject as a clarification of the ultimate goal of the question itself. In addition, no matter whether it was the study of the world of abstract and absolute ideas or the doctrine of the goodness of God, the binding factor has always been human thinking. If, in antiquity, human was perceived as an integral part of nature, and in the Middle Ages – as part of the world created by God, then in the Renaissance, there were some significant changes in the worldview. Therefore, it is not surprising that such a worldview and ideological trend arose in the Renaissance for the first time. It was one of the most significant cultural and historical eras in the history of Europe between the Middle Ages and the New Age. This era laid the foundations of a new European culture and marked a return to ancient values. In addition, the concept of humanism arose in antiquity.

According to the definition of the ancient Roman philosopher Cicero, humanism is the highest cultural and moral development of human abilities into an aesthetically complete form, combined with softness and humanity. The growing secularization of European life contributed to the recognition of the value of earthly existence, the awareness of the significance of humans as a being, not only spiritual but also bodily, and the importance of their physical existence. Humanism's ideological and cultural sources were ancient culture, early Christian heritage, and medieval writings. After many centuries, the ideas of humanism do not lose their relevance but, on the contrary, become more critical. Like many phenomena of modernity, humanism acquires features characteristic of postmodernity it

becomes branched and contradictory. One thing remains without a doubt, over the centuries, the tradition of philosophizing has undergone significant changes, human has not changed, and therefore there is a need to study the status of humanism in the civilizational processes of our time.

Axiological dimension of a human in the theory of humanism

In his critique of traditional humanism, the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) criticizes the senseless exaltation of humans for all their imperfect actions. The philosopher objects to the fact that the image of humanism, which arose during the time of the Roman Republic, was applicable to other eras. In his philosophy, Martin Heidegger was meticulous in his choice of words, paying great attention to their origin. Thus, the etymology of the word gives, according to the German philosopher, the true meaning of this or that statement. In antiquity, the concept of humanitas was opposed to barbarities, this dichotomy meant that there are Romans – people, but there are other tribes – they are not people, but barbarians. The philosopher describes this not-quite-familiar point of view as follows: "Humanitas, explicitly so called, was first considered and striven for in the age of the Roman Republic. Homo humanus was opposed to homo barbarus. Homo humanus here means the Romans, who exalted and honored Roman virtus through the 'embodiment' of the paideia [education] taken over from the Greeks. These were the Greeks of the Hellenistic age, whose culture was acquired in the schools of philosophy. It was concerned with eruditio et institutio in bonas artes [scholarship and training in good conduct]. Paideia, thus understood, was translated as humanitas. The genuine romanitas of homo romanus consisted in such humanitas. We encounter the first humanism in Rome: it therefore remains in essence a specifically Roman phenomenon which emerges from the encounter of Roman civilization with the culture of late Greek civilization" (Heidegger, 1977: 200-201).

Katrine Smiet also speaks about the contradictory nature of the concept of "humanism" in her article *Rethinking or delinking? Said and Mignolo on humanism and the question of the human* (2022): "The track record of 'humanism' as an ethical and political framework is deeply fraught. On the one hand, 'humanism' could be credited with developing noble ideas and ideals about human equality, human dignity and human rights. From the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen to the twentieth-century Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humanism stands for the idea that 'being human' carries a certain worth and given rights. However, who is considered (fully) human is then a crucial question. Historically, many have been actively excluded from this supposedly common humanity" (Smiet, 2022: 73).

The Italian Renaissance is the revival of Roman virtue, which was based on the Greek *paideia*. Therefore, studium humanitatis always refers to humanism in its historiographical understanding, which refers in all senses to antiquity. Nevertheless, in all types of humanism, according to Martin Heidegger, there is something in common: the understanding of human as rational being or animal rationale. In the Middle Ages, humanitas was opposed to divinitas. This, in turn, meant that everything human is perishable, that a person can be a person as much as he is with God. In his chapter for *The Oxford Handbook of Humanism* (2021), John Shook devotes much attention to the question of humanism in the Middle Ages. In his understanding, these were not the dark ages, as they have been described since the time of that very humanism. The Dark Ages are called so not because of the absence of light or hope but because there are so many unknowns. Christian humanism and humanitarianism defended the moral value and dignity of people. Humanistic thought, which has achieved a certain

degree of independence from Christian doctrine, can be divided into four main categories: "the human ability to reason without the following religion; the human competence to understand the world without religion; the human aptitude for virtue and morality without religion; and the human facility for political organization without religion" (Shook, 2021).

The meaning of the term "humanism" in the Renaissance was significantly different from modern understanding. Renaissance "humanism" is not a defense of human rights; it is the study of human as one is. The study of ancient literature – a turn towards the past was to determine the essence of human nature. From the point of view of the famous humanist Petrarch (1304-1374) and other philosophers, humanism meant that a person is placed in the center of the world. Humanism largely determined the formation of the Renaissance. Humanism was the cause of a cultural transformation that radically changed the arts and sciences of Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. The spread of the ideas of humanism opened the door to new ideas about human, which were developed in the period to future eras. The Renaissance marked a new way of perceiving the world and comprehending the role of human in it, replacing medieval theocentrism with relative anthropocentrism. In fact, all these changes anticipated the rediscovery of individualism, which manifested itself in philosophical ideas, art, and scientific methodology.

Multiculturalism, scientific and technological progress and global humanism as critical factors for modern humanism

The ideas of humanism are closely related to issues of identity, this is a certain property of the human psyche to have an idea of one's belonging to various social, economic, national, cultural, gender, and other groups. Identification of oneself with another person on the principle of having common qualities is one of the properties of human nature (Bugental, 1976). Identities can be different, natural, not requiring participation for belonging (ethnos, territorial community, etc.), and artificial, needing organized maintenance (nation, profession, etc.). Identities such as gender are mixed. In the modern world, the issue of identity is acute, because, a person no longer belongs to a certain place, a certain country due to the processes of globalization. In the modern world, a person can change the country, culture, or nation in connection with business, military service, religious beliefs, and so on. A new type of society is emerging, which is characterized by multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a worldview aimed at preserving and developing cultural differences. Multiculturalism is opposed to the "melting pot" concept, a model of ethnic development promoted in American culture in the 20· century. The term itself originated from the title of a play by British journalist and playwright Israel Zangwill (1864-1926) *The Melting Pot* (1908). In this cauldron, according to the theoreticians, there is a natural fusion of various peoples into one nation. This concept has traditionally been proclaimed in the United States of America. Now it is more politically correct to speak not of a mixture of cultures, since this levels out their identity, peculiarity, and value, but as a mosaic of cultures, where each element, like a piece of glass, retains its color in a common ornament. Canada is such an example; it cultivates an approach to different cultures as partmosaic. One of the aspects of modern multiculturalism is tolerance and tolerance, the conditions for the parallel existence of cultures for the purpose of their mutual enrichment and development. All this happens in line with popular culture.

Andrew Collier, in his interview, emphasizes how little the phenomenon of multiculturalism has been studied and that it is necessary, in addition to striving for unity, not to forget about

individual cultures: "Now multiculturalism is a more complex issue. It is unclear whether multiculturalism is the right answer to the oppression of cultural minorities. Obviously, a socialist would be committed to abolishing the oppression of cultural minorities, but the question is how that is done. There is a certain form of multiculturalism which has been satirised, presumably from the liberal end of the spectrum, as 'liberalism for the liberals and cannibalism for the cannibals' – which I think is probably not acceptable" (Collier & Calder, 2009: 85). A professor from the University of Southampton asks a very logical question what will happen to most cultures in the context of multiculturalism. Are people trying to preserve, say, English culture? He emphasizes that sometimes such reasoning can be misinterpreted; but he is convinced that any culture in the world can be threatened by the domination of another culture, as in the case of the United States and other countries: "But one could argue that English culture is just as threatened as any culture worldwide by the domination of American culture, and that therefore multiculturalism should preserve it. In fact it is almost gone" (Ibid.).

In the modern world with its many cultures, advanced technologies play one of the most important roles in the "new" humanism. Technological breakthroughs were supposed to help people free themselves from routine work, heal diseases, and extend their lives, which could be devoted to creative activity. However, as you know, in technological development, profit always goes hand in hand with danger. In the article *Post-humanism, or the cultural logic of global capitalism* (2004), Frederic Vandenberghe writes: "Looking back at a tradition of its own making and desperately searching for some kind of stability, different forms of fundamentalism – from ecological to theological – are willing to pay the price of the cultural and structural de-differentiation of modern societies to obtain some illusory security. The second way to destroy civilisation is systemic. Modern societies cannot only destroy themselves through de-differentiation, but also through the exacerbation of the differentiation of its subsystems. Systematically uncoupled from the communicative structures of the life-world, the reifying logic of the economic, legal, scientific, technological subsystems can enter the life-world, with the result that the subjects start to behave as if they and the others in their environment were some kind of mini-systems themselves" (Vandenberghe, 2004: 56).

Technological breakthroughs give humanity a positive sense of hope, but there are critics of this optimistic approach. It is necessary to recall the ideas of well-known critics Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 2002) and Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 2003), who showed the possible use of modern technologies to improve human nature can turn into a problem. The danger of the ideas of transhumanism lies in the similarity with the goals of eugenics. It causes heated discussions about the potential return within the framework of such studies to racist doctrines. This creates the threat of a return to inhumane practices; it can give rise to a huge number of ethical problems. In addition, not only in the sphere of ethics but difficulties will inevitably arise in the socio-political sphere. The question of social inequality between posthumans and people will appear, and this will manifest in the form of biological inequality as a new kind of separation of people. In any case, critics of the ideas of transhumanism have good reasons for doubts, their fears are not groundless. Transhumanism can become an extremely dangerous experiment since people's knowledge in this area is insignificant, and the consequences of such studies are unpredictable.

Transhumanists are correct that the development of technology can contribute to an active discussion of issues related to self-knowledge. All our attempts to comprehend our essence encourage a revision of the prevailing ideas on many aspects of human existence. Indeed, to improve something, it is necessary to know the shortcomings, in other words, to improve a

person, it is essential not only to know the person but also to know his weaknesses, bad sides, and shortcomings. How can a person know his essence and his shortcomings, only becoming an object of study for himself? Man as an object is expressed in the essence of his activity, in the results of his activity. For example, in studying the possibility of creating artificial intelligence, Ray Kurzweil saw the possibility of human self-knowledge and the expansion of ideas about one's own essence (Kurzweil, 2012). Research on this problem, in his opinion, makes it necessary to comprehend the mechanisms of the work of one of the most poorly understood human organs – the brain. Such an attitude to understand the question of the essence of human nature repeatedly slips in the public speeches and works of Ray Kurzweil.

Future challenges and difficulties in the face of humanism: transhumanism, posthumanism, global humanism

Humanism, being a historical phenomenon, is changing. This is primarily due to changes in society, culture, politics, philosophy, etc. With the advent of new conditions, new worldview guidelines also arise. For example, technology has been present in culture since ancient times, but with the complication of technology, the relationship between human and technology becomes more complicated. An attempt to give an answer to the question "who is a human?" necessarily collides with the need to define the features of the modern world. If the world is striving for globalism, postmodern discourse blurs boundaries, language skills become the norm, and technologies make it possible to reduce the world, not in physical parameters, but in terms of the possibility of transportation, then a person must be understood in accordance with all these conditions.

In the essay *The Philosophy of Transhumanism* (2013), Max More described the problem of transhumanism: "'Trans-human' emphasizes the way transhumanism goes well beyond humanism in both means and ends. Humanism tends to rely exclusively on educational and cultural refinement to improve human nature, whereas transhumanists want to apply technology to overcome limits imposed by our biological and genetic heritage. Transhumanists regard human nature not as an end in itself, not as perfect, and not as having any claim on our allegiance. Rather, it is just one point along an evolutionary pathway and we can learn to reshape our own nature in ways we deem desirable and valuable. By thoughtfully, carefully, and yet boldly applying technology to ourselves, we can become something no longer accurately described as human – we can become posthuman" (More, 2013: 4). The author tried to give the most accurate idea of the philosophy of transhumanism. In another work, Max More gives the following definition of "transhumanism": "Humanism is a eupraxophy or philosophy of life that rejects deities, faith, and worship, instead basing a view of values and meaningfulness on the nature and potentials of humans within a rational and scientific framework. Transhumanism is a class of philosophies that seek to guide us towards a posthuman condition. Transhumanism shares many elements of humanism, including a respect for reason and science, a commitment to progress, and a valuing of human (or transhuman) existence in this life rather than in some supernatural "afterlife". Transhumanism differs from humanism in recognizing and anticipating the radical alterations in the nature and possibilities of our lives resulting from various sciences and technologies such as neuroscience and neuropharmacology, life extension, nanotechnology, artificial ultraintelligence, and space habitation, combined with a rational philosophy and value system" (More, 1990). Despite the many varieties and interpretations of "transhumanism", there are similar central themes and issues that make it possible to define the essence of this phenomenon.

According to transhumanists' ideas, posthumans will have much greater cognitive abilities than they do now. The emphasis on rationality will also affect the emotions of the posthuman, a person will be able to experience more pleasant emotions, and will be able to rid himself of unpleasant or traumatic emotions. The main goal of transhumanism is the endless improvement of human, based on the latest achievements of scientific and technological development. According to transhumanists, it is necessary to support technical development in every possible way. Only thanks to science and technology, humanity will be able to timely prevent existential dangers that may hinder the achievement of goals. Thanks to science and technology, it is possible to expand the limits of human freedom. However, transhumanists in their views meet worthy rivals in the face of environmentalists who call for the rejection of the achievements of science and technology in favor of nature. This is not the only form of anti-modernism that opposes the emergence of the posthuman; among such currents, one can recall religious fundamentalism and anti-progressivism. Transhumanists consider information technologies, nanotechnology, and biotechnology to be very promising, and special attention is paid to developments in the field of artificial intelligence. In this direction, a certain metaphysical attitude is felt, because by creating artificial intelligence, the human intellect becomes especially creative.

Douglas V. Porpora in the article *Dehumanization in theory: anti-humanism, non-humanism, post-humanism, and trans-humanism* (2017) describes the emergence of posthumanism: "It is thus for humanity to extend its fellow-feeling beyond its own species that posthumanism is in part meant to call. But this post-humanist call arises largely within the discourse of poststructuralism" (Porpora, 2017: 3). The identification of human value with rationality is most evident in the non-poststructuralist form of posthumanism associated with the transhuman movement. "The situation is similar, I think, with post-humanism. Post-humanism makes up for its analytical mistakes – specifically its conflation of causal and human agency – with its appealing ecological affect. It is hard to beat the emotional allure of an emerging pan-psychism that sees elements of mind in all matter down to elementary particles; since it bespeaks cosmic community" (Porpora, 2017: 4).

Becoming posthuman means transcending the limitations of the human condition. Posthuman beings will no longer age and suffer from diseases, minimizing the risks of death, which is likely to lead in turn to new problems. Posthumans will have significantly greater physical capabilities and freedom of form, often called morphological freedom. Anders Sandberg states: "Morphological freedom implies a subject that is also the object of its own change. Humans are ends in themselves, but that does not rule out the use of oneself as a tool to achieve oneself. In fact, one of the best ways of preventing humans from being used as means rather than ends is to give them the freedom to change and grow. The inherent subjecthood of humans is expressed among other ways through self-transformation" (Sandberg, 2013: 63).

Rosi Braidotti repeatedly emphasizes that her book *The Posthuman* (2013) aims to develop a positive form of posthumanist critical theory. In her vision, the theory of posthumanism will make it possible to confront better various modern socio-political challenges: "The debates in mainstream culture range from hard-nosed business discussions of robotics, prosthetic technologies, neuroscience and bio-genetic capital to fuzzier new age visions of trans-humanism and techno-transcendence. Human enhancement is at the core of these debates. In academic culture, on the other hand, the posthuman is alternatively celebrated as the next frontier in critical and cultural theory or shunned as the latest in a series of annoying 'post' fads" (Braidotti, 2013: 2). Michiel van Ingen doubts the positive vision offered by the transhumanists, he offers a constructive critique of the ideas of Rosi Braidotti: "This review

essay argues, however, that the philosophical position which Braidotti's book develops is unsustainable, and that it does not provide us with the kind of basis for affirmative forms of critical theory and political practice which she suggests it does. Specifically, it argues that her philosophical framework results in persistent theory/praxis inconsistencies and is therefore lacking in 'seriousness'" (van Ingen, 2016: 530).

In the context of globalization, a change in the mentality of people is inevitable. This influences the formation of the ideology of global humanism; various concepts of the future development of society go to the global level. The basis of these concepts is the knowledge of man. For global humanism, cognitive, value, and evaluative criteria are subject to revealing the meaning of human existence in the global world. A person has to preserve one's ethnic roots, define oneself in various cultural worlds, correlate one's individual and societal goals, and implement them in his activities. In the global community, each person feels even more strongly involved in all the events that take place. This can be seen in the example of The Russo-Ukrainian War; the events in Ukraine did not leave anyone in the world indifferent. This can be seen in social networks, media, and personal contacts.

Conclusions

Humanism faces all these crises, namely multiculturalism, scientific and technological breakthroughs, and social and political crises, forcing scientists to develop new theories and concepts. This is a natural process, like for any historical phenomenon that develops depending on socio-historical conditions. Fortunately, the problems that a human faces can, in turn be the solution to these same problems. Therefore, for example, in the conditions of multiculturalism, if uniqueness is preserved in unity, this unity will be more productive on the way to solving urgent problems. As for scientific and technological progress, it carries both a threat, sometimes an existential one, but also a solution to many problems of humankind. Science can solve and prevent many of the troubles that humanity faces. The development of medicine contributes to the emergence of new drugs, improving people's health and their longevity. The development of computer engineering gives people incredible opportunities. If not so long ago, people were geographically distant from each other, then social space has become much more critical thanks to digital technologies. The world is getting smaller, not in geography but in the human ability to travel, communicate, and engage in scientific research.

Technologies are gradually taking over the daily work of a human, freeing one for creative and heuristic activities aimed at the good. The ethical aspect of humanism remains essential; it is crucial in the context of the development of humanism. With the advent of transhumanism, which symbolizes going beyond the human, and posthumanism, which symbolizes the emergence of a new person in a new era, new challenges arise. Future ethical issues are brewing, and the task of transhumanists is to be ahead of the times and have time to provide answers to emerging questions. Today, in the context of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, scientists from different fields of science and practice are united in the search for solutions to these issues.

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