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Research Article

Posthuman Mummification: Examining the Philosophical Implications of Post-biological Existence and Virtual Immortality

Dr Piyush Kumar

Assistant Professor, Amity School of Languages, Amity University, Lucknow Campus, India; pkumar@lko.amity.edu

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Abstract: The freedom to innovate for humanity's future primarily centers on technological speculation and philosophical discourse. The exploration of new forms of existence, alongside the ancient aspiration for immortality—living beyond human confines—has emerged as a pressing concern. At the core of the posthumanist perspective is the dilemma surrounding the complex nature of human existence and the challenge of transcending our species. While some contend that this engineered way of being will safeguard humanity and mitigate the risk of extinction, others advocate preserving society's vital status quo. However, the prospects of virtual immortality and post-biological existence remain distant realities. Nonetheless, these concepts provoke both symbolic dangers and reassurances from a philosophical viewpoint. A vital question in the current discourse on posthuman existence is how the evolution of humanity's identity relates to the pursuit of immortality. The next evolutionary step for humanity may involve a transformation of both spirit and body. Thus, the journey into the future as potentially immortal beings, moving beyond biological constraints, highlights groundbreaking ideas. In this paper, I contend that posthumanism and philosophy intersect and present a forward-looking model for redesigning and transcending human limitations. The radical notion of achieving immortality and extending life into a virtual realm is gaining traction in contemporary discourse. This situation necessitates the incorporation of preventive measures, the examination of biases toward technological outcomes, and the establishment of fundamental responsibilities concerning the implications of technological experimentation and the related philosophical dilemmas. Therefore, this paper offers a fresh perspective on the implications of post-biological existence within the context of posthuman discourse.

Keywords: Posthuman Mummification; Immortality; Postbiological Existence

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Every technological innovation is accompanied by practical considerations, in which the advantages and disadvantages of the applications are weighed against the costs. Concurrently, a social and cultural discussion of the merits and effects of the new technology begins. This process is heterogeneous and dynamic, involving a variety of highly contentious opinions that develop over time and are subject to further change. Over thirty years ago, roboticist Hans Moravec shared his vision of immortality as the ultimate goal of human progress in his renowned book *Mind Children*. Recently, concepts of posthumanism and transhumanism have permeated film, literature, and media. Works such as *Transcendence* and *Altered Carbon* present scenarios of potential postbiological existence and virtual immortality for the human species. In this paper, I aim to explain and understand how possible posthuman scenarios and immortality emerge in a new era of human existence and lead to a strange philosophical paradigm. Researchers quote Zizek: "We live in a society of coffee without caffeine, chocolate without sugar, and virtuality as reality without reality." The shifting meaning of existence and the impact of technology redefine our understanding of life, death, and human identity. This redefinition leads to a form of immortality not as traditionally conceived but in a posthuman sense. As a result, we must begin to perceive ourselves not in a conventional manner but as having the potential to evolve into something else.

The concept of achieving immortality through technology emerged around the end of the 19th century. The connection between life, death, and the longing for immortality has persisted throughout human history and culture. Upon studying ancient Egyptian culture, we discover their pursuit of immortality through sculpture, stone buildings, and mummification. Their aspiration for immortality is evident throughout history. The inscriptions on Egyptian tomb graves immortalize the deceased's lives, overcoming the passage of time by preserving their memories through language and technology. Humans have come a long way from living in harmony with nature. They have created an artificial world and have significantly altered human existence with the concept of posthumanism. Humans seem unable to live without the hope of achieving immortality. Therefore, we can say, as Florian Rotzer writes across history, from ancient Egyptian civilization with its mummies and grand structures to the recording of text and images on various media, people have wrestled with the anxiety surrounding the finite nature of physical bodies, resources, and knowledge, leading to the pursuit of everlasting existence. The longing for virtualization, in harmony with progress in biotechnology, mirrors the timeless quest for immortality. The human species has the potential to transcend its current state entirely. This new belief system could be termed posthumanism, as it represents the realization of new possibilities for human nature. Humanity stands on the threshold of a new kind of existence that will be markedly different from what we experience today.

In his book *The Prospect of Immortality*, C.W. Ettinger explores the concept of overcoming death. He posits that humans have moved beyond natural, unintelligent evolution towards a state of superhumanity and transhumanism. Recent times have seen significant advances in repair work and prostheses, leading to substantial

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enhancements such as eyeglasses and birth control pills that have transcended the apparent limitations of our design. Despite these advancements, the basic human design has not significantly improved. He believes that human beings and all other biological creations have inherited many imperfections over the course of evolution. As a result, he advocates healing these imperfections and evolving into posthumans. We stand on the brink of a technological revolution that could lead to unparalleled advancements. As we contemplate the possibilities, we glimpse the potential for digital immortality or cryonic immortality. This posthuman transformation represents a pivotal shift, propelling us from life in aquaria to terrarium and perhaps to a cybernetic existence in Cyberia. Our journey towards the heart of the cybernetic world is underway, with cybernetics shaping the fabric of our reality.

Max More's philosophy of transhumanism advocates nurturing a mindset that awakens society to the vast potential of the future and stimulates humanity's intellectual growth. Technology is poised to bring transformative change to humanity, presenting opportunities to redefine the human experience. This includes the prospect of overcoming aging, transcending limitations on human and artificial intelligence, alleviating involuntary psychological suffering, and expanding beyond the confines of our existence on Earth.

The potential for humans to achieve postbiological existence and virtual immortality is vast. This could involve transferring a person's consciousness and mental structure from a biological matrix to an electronic or informational matrix, a concept often called mind uploading. Alternatively, some believe that approaching the issue of death from a rational, scientific standpoint could lead to a solution. Another idea involves preserving the human body through cryonics and reviving it later. Posthuman futurology envisions a significant merging of humans and machines to create cyborgs, particularly through the development of neural interfaces connecting the human brain to computers or the Internet. One notable example is Kevin Warwick, who garnered attention by conducting experiments on himself, effectively becoming the first cyborg in human history. Warwick achieved this by implanting a computer chip in his body that emitted a signal to control the lights and doors of his university. Warwick posits that, in addition to enhancing physical sensations, neuro implants hold the potential to cure ailments such as cancer and depression and could serve as a means to regulate moods and emotions artificially. He is intrigued by the concept of an interface implanted between the human brain and a computer, allowing for direct information exchange and communication between brains without the need for language. According to Warwick, the utilization of advanced brain implants is humanity's best chance to keep pace with the rapidly advancing intelligent machines of the future and to prevent the potential degradation of humankind into a lower, oppressed class. The profound concept of cyborgization forms the cornerstone of achieving posthuman immortality.

The core concept of posthumanism revolves around achieving human immortality, which serves as a crucial link in the chain of posthumanist augmentation. Without this element, the fundamental desire of posthumanism to transcend human

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limitations becomes meaningless. The ultimate sacrifice of humankind, willingly embracing extinction for the sake of its future artificial descendants, requires the promise of a higher status: eternal life. Other aspects, such as humanity merging with a universal superintelligence, achieving intergalactic omnipresence, or even preserving the cosmos from heat death, remain peripheral to posthumanist thought.

Posthumanism delves into two fundamental inquiries concerning immortality. The first is how humans can recreate their flawless simulation within a computer's memory. The second is how we might access this promising future. Many ontological and anthropological questions are employed to bolster the concept of humanity's technological immortalization. What is life? What is the essence of a human being? What defines an individual's core? The foundation for all posthumanist visions lies in the cybernetic comprehension of the world and of humanity, in which humans are viewed as machines before their technical alteration. The notion of a human simulation within a computer can be considered only under this premise. Our interest lies in how posthumanism establishes the technical possibility of immortality through computers. This is equivalent to simulating a real human being on a computer. It also leads us to the philosophical premises of the posthumanist vision of immortality. So, what are the conditions for the union between human beings and technology? We can trace and understand the argumentative structures of a normative posthumanist discourse through the work of philosophers such as Gunther Anders and Katherine Hayles. Posthumanist authors differ significantly in how they call for the replacement of the human being by posthuman lifeforms and in their visions for the further development of humankind. However, none demands the complete abolition of humanity. Instead, the human body is seen as something to be transcended. Even Hans Moravec and Frank Tipler's extreme visions of the imminent evolutionary extinction of humankind still involve preserving modern human beings in a sanctuary, with the hope of their virtual resurrection.

The visions of providing humans with technical implants and of creating biological-machine hybrid cyborg beings both share the goal of maximizing the mechanization of the human body, ultimately leading to the possibility of uploading the human mind into a computer. This vision entails replacing the biological body with a superior mechanical form, enhancing physical and mental attributes to the extent that humans become machines. Anders and Hayles have compellingly demonstrated that a human-machine hybrid is not just the end goal but a prerequisite for posthumanist aspirations. Posthumanists argue that humans have long since transcended the human state. The concept and purpose of Homo sapiens have undergone such a transformation that they can aptly be referred to as posthuman. Anders discusses humanity's voluntary descent into a mere instrument, portraying flawed machines as acts of self-objectification and dehumanization in the era of robotics.

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