# A CRITICISM OF TRANSHUMANISM FROM THE SOCIETY 5.0 PERSPECTIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL VALUES

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## Abstract

From the standpoint of Society 5.0, the transhumanist perspective, which advances along the trajectory of technological singularity, appears to pose certain challenges, particularly in relation to its treatment of social values. Consequently, it is essential to critically examine and compare these two perspectives. The primary objective of this research is to offer a conceptual contribution aimed at mitigating potential complexities associated with social design projects developed for the future of humanity.

As part of the literature review, data pertaining to the perspectives of Society 5.0 and transhumanism on social values were gathered and

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systematically analyzed. The findings of the study indicate that while transhumanist objectives may encompass certain positive elements, they are inadequate to achieve a content and flourishing society. Given that the social values that lend meaning to human existence are contingent upon cultural norms, it becomes necessary to reevaluate transhumanist goals in alignment with the principles of Society 5.0. This is because neglecting spiritual well-being can adversely affect goal achievement and may trigger social crises.

*Keywords:* Society 5.0, transhumanism, social values, technological singularization

## Introduction

Countless thinkers, seers, and ordinary people throughout history have glorified happiness rather than life as the supreme value because the absolute quest of humanity is to attain permanent happiness.[1] Based on personal experiences and observations, it is possible to agree with these claims to some extent. Human beings suffer in different dimensions in their quest to satisfy their instincts, which inevitably leads them to seek happiness.[2] The literature suggests that in this search, people are directed to different goals in accordance with their styles of belief. It is possible to divide these beliefs into two main branches that focus on the world or the hereafter. Views that focus on the world include capitalism, socialism, and Marxism. They aim for happiness through material and spiritual wealth in the world. In contrast, hereafter-oriented religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity aim for absolute happiness, which is expressed in the afterlife in concepts such as heaven. While there are also views that put people and nature in the center, such as far-eastern mystical beliefs that are closer to worldly life, technological approaches have now been added to these pursuits of happiness. Society 5.0 and transhumanism are the most popular of these technological approaches. In line with the transhumanist view, it is important to remember the following words of Harari:

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1 Yuval Noah Harari, Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow (New York: Harper Perennial, 2018), 27.

2 Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, 1930), 21.

> Now that we have reduced deaths from hunger, disease, and violence, we can now try to overcome aging, even death itself. Now that we have freed people from humiliating misery, we can now aim to make them happy. We have carried humanity higher in the struggle for survival. Now we can work to elevate humans to god status and turn Homo Sapiens into Homo Deus. "If famine, epidemics and wars are over, if humanity has entered a period of unprecedented prosperity and peace, if life expectancy is rising rapidly, people should be happy with it, right?[3]

Harari cites Epicurus with regard to this question and states that such a thing is not possible. Harari, who expressed this view that is at the center of the goals of transhumanism, also expressed a handicap to the same question. Given the views of predecessors such as Epicurus and Freud, known for their pleasure-oriented thought,[4] one wonders about the bases of the transhumanist perspective that reduces happiness to eliminating diseases and extending life. For this reason, an answer to the same question is sought within the scope of this research by utilizing sources on transhumanism.

Aligned with the vision initiated under the leadership of the United Nations to address chronic global issues,[5] the Society 5.0 policy proposed by Japan as a national project presents a future-oriented plan for technological society developed through design.[6] This document suggests utilizing technology not as a threat but as a tool to address humanity's challenges. Society 5.0, positioned as a "value-oriented society centered on the individual", promises the creation of a welfare society by harnessing all technological possibilities and encouraging the active participation of academia, the business world, and citizens. The document extensively addresses broader solutions to humanity's issues, including those emphasized in transhumanist goals. However, one may question how the transhumanist perspective on social values will be received in the future era known as "Society 5.0", which refers to the four periods of social development based on technological

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3 Harari, *Homo Deus*, 20.

4 Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

5 UN, *Society 5.0 for SDGs*, Final Declaration, B20 Tokyo Summit Joint Recommendations (Tokyo: United National, 2019).

6 Yuko Harayama, "Society 5.0: Aiming for a New Human-Centered Society Japan's Science and Technology Policies for Addressing Global Social Challenges", *Hitachi Review* 66/6 (2017), 554-559.

advancements. The approach of social design, rooted in societal "goodness", toward "value" is significant for achieving social harmony. Therefore, it is crucial to critically evaluate the transhumanist concept of "value" in light of the principles outlined in the Society 5.0 project.

Transhumanism, with its goal of enhancing human capabilities through technology to transcend limitations and achieve a superhuman state, and the Society 5.0 project, which aims to improve people's lives by addressing chronic problems through technology, can be seen as converging in their pursuit of the human "good" However, divergent views on the social and cultural practices that are considered "valuable" may introduce flaws in the design of a technological society that incorporates transhumanism. The implications of transhumanist perspectives on gender equality, driven by the axis of technological singularity, remain uncertain within the future envisioned by Society 5.0. Nevertheless, it is important to critically analyze transhumanism in accordance with the recommendations of Society 5.0 to mitigate potential social crises. Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of social design projects for the future of humanity and offer insights to prevent potential complications.

Within the scope of the literature review, which is a qualitative research method, data documenting the perspective of Society 5.0 and transhumanism on social value were systematically collected and analyzed. First, historical findings on social designs that focus on solving the chronic problems of humanity were identified, and examples of the use of technology in the solution of social problems were found. In the second stage, from the perspective of Society 5.0, transhumanism was viewed from the point of criticism in the triangle of the individual, society, and social value. Thus, the attitude of transhumanism toward social "value" was clarified, and a unique finding was obtained that can contribute to the fields of both communication and sociology.

## The Concept of Social Value and the Problem of the Design of Societies

Ethics,[7] defined as a set of principles and codes of conduct that guide individuals in various situations, plays a significant role in shaping societal character. Ethical values, influenced by human and economic classifications, are associated with individuals who are considered "moral, possessing a well-developed personality, self-confident, and beneficial to both their society and the world".[8] The presence of moral principles nurtured by ethical awareness serves as a precondition for evaluating personal activities or actions as human.[9] Adhering to these rules, which are expected to be followed by different social classes to the best of their abilities, also contributes to harmonious relations between classes. An individual's morality is often evaluated based on his or her adherence to these rules.[10] According to Argu, the impact of moral values and sanctions acquired during socialization can extend into individuals' private sphere, with society exerting control over their actions. In other words, even in their private lives away from public scrutiny, individuals may still be held accountable using these conscientious elements. Scientific and economic advancements, along with processes such as rationalization, democratization, individualization, secularization, and technological progress in modernization, have weakened traditional values and their control mechanisms, potentially leading to an increase in crime rates.[11] Technology can serve as an example of this negative effect: an individual who may find stealing incompatible with his or her moral

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7 Stanley J. Baran, *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004), 215.

8 Ayşegül Büyükbingöl Yağcı, *Değerler Eğitimi Bağlamında Yusuf ile Züleyha Kıssası* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2012), 41.

9 Emel Koç, "Bilim ve Teknoloji Çağında İnsan Olma Sorumluluğu (Etik Bilinç)", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 17/2 (2013), 11.

10 Halil İbrahim Gürcan, "İnternet Haberciliğinde Etik Değerler", *İstanbul Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi* 22 (2005), 40.

11 Hüseyin Cinoğlu, "Suç, Küreselleşme ve Gelecek", in *Suç Önleme Sempozyumu*, ed. Sekine Bozdemir - Uğur Argun (Bursa: Bursa Emniyet Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2011), 255-256.

values and social standing in daily life might engage in various forms of online theft or harmful behavior in the digital environment.[12]

Rousseau's perspective associates moral behavior with the transition into society. According to Rousseau, as human beings transitioned from their natural state of existence to living in society, they replaced instinct with justice, thereby imbuing their actions with the concept of morality, which was previously absent.[13] In this regard, a social contract can be viewed as a fundamental document of social design. These agreed-upon rules, whether written or unwritten, between social engineers such as opinion leaders, powerful figures, and citizens both define and reflect the collective character of societies. Thus, the creation of social contracts by human communities as they transitioned into settled societies can be seen as a form of social design. This viewpoint is supported by the understanding that contemporary design seeks sustainability and encompasses economic, social, environmental, and ethical dimensions in addition to technological aspects. The aim is to create sustainable[14] systems and structures that reflect the principles of a well-designed social contract and that take into account[15] the holistic well-being of individuals and communities.

It can be argued that every revolution, whether secular or theological, aims to create an idealized society. The notion of design can be traced back to theological sources, where design work is believed to have commenced with the first human. Efforts toward guidance, such as teaching Adam the names of things to facilitate knowledge acquisition,[16] establishing limits on what to eat and what not to eat,[17] and introducing cultural dimensions, can be seen as early examples of design initiatives communicated directly by the Almighty Creator.[18] Furthermore, theological sources suggest that all prophets

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12 Oğuz Kara - Üzeyir Aydın - Ahmet Oğuz, "Ağ Ekonomisinin Karanlık Yüzü: Siber Terör", *5. Uluslararası Bilgi, Ekonomi ve Yönetim Kongresi Bildiriler Kitabı* (İstanbul: n.p., 2006), 2/162.

13 Jean. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (New York: London - Toronto, 1923), 18-19.

14 Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1985).

15 Enzio Manzini, "Design, Ethics and Sustainability: Guidelines for a Transition Phase", in *Cumulus Working Papers: Nantes* 16/06, ed. Eija Salmi - Lotta Anusionwu (Helsinki: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 2006), 2.

16 Q 2:31.

17 Q 7:19.

18 Gen. 1.

were sent to design their own society.[19] When analyzing religious and philosophical teachings ranging from Zeus to Buddha and from Socrates to Marx, it becomes apparent that the majority of them are focused on the development and transformation of societies. The establishment of laws through appropriate means of communication during the early empires, the understanding of political administration, and the formulation of rules concerning economic relations can also be associated with the concept of social design.[20] Marx's statement that the social infrastructure determines the superstructure and the link between the determination of social, political, and intellectual life[21] processes and the mode of material life production echoes the idea of specific design. Innis' (2006) ideas on using communication tools as a means for empires to shape and control their subjects also support this notion of design within the social realm.

When examining concrete examples from the history of design, a rich list of revolutions emerges.[22] One notable example is the reforms implemented by King Urukagina, who ruled in the 24th century BC. Recognizing the injustice in temple administration, he instigated the first revolution among the Sumerians, marking the earliest revolution in human history. Another significant example is the rape of Lucretia, a noblewoman, by the son of the last king, Tarquinius Superbus, in ancient Rome around 753 BC. Lucretia's subsequent suicide sparked a popular political revolution in the city against the king, ultimately leading to the adoption of a republican form of government in Ancient Rome in 510 BC. The French Revolution of 1789, often regarded as the most influential sociopolitical revolution in modern history, is another notable example. It was driven by the rise of the bourgeoisie, the downfall of the aristocracy, and the establishment of modern society. Numerous other examples, such as the Code of Hammurabi and the Magna Carta, can be cited in this context. However, it is particularly relevant to mention the series of revolutions that occurred with the

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19 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Fakhr al-Rāzī al-mushtahir bi-l-Tafsīr al-kabīr wa-Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 1/74.

20 Harold A. Innis, *Empire and Communications*. (Canada: Press Porcépic, 1986), 1.

21 Karl New York: Palgrave Macmillan, "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", in *Marx Today: Selected Works and Recent Debates*, ed. J. F. Sitton, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 92.

22 *Wikipedia*, "Devrimler ve Ayaklanmalar Listesi" (Accessed March 19, 2023).

collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. This example is significant because it took place in recent history and provides a concrete case study. Each of these examples illustrates how long-standing chronic problems were resolved through revolutionary approaches. The Sumerian and Turkish examples represent political revolutions where change occurred from top to bottom. In contrast, the establishment of the Roman Republic and the pressure exerted by the French Revolution reflect transformative changes that influenced society from the bottom to the top.

In human development, the evolution of societies has been closely intertwined with the control of nature, the modes of production, and the utilization of tools. Different forms of society have emerged based on the tools and technologies employed by human beings. For instance, societies that utilized cutting and piercing tools exhibited a nomadic characteristic during the hunting and gathering period. However, societies that learned to cultivate and employed tools for sowing and reaping transitioned into settled communities and displayed the characteristics of moral societies, as noted by Rousseau. During the industrial period, proximity to factories became necessary, leading to urban settlements and cities. As we observe contemporary societies, the influence of mass media has given rise to mass societies.[23] Moreover, with the advent of computerization and the widespread availability of information, we witness the emergence of network societies.[24] This view presents an image that is gradually entering the spiral of technology, and this progression reflects the gradual integration of technology into our lives. Considering this trajectory, it can be seen as a natural evolution for human beings to embrace technology as a means to address social problems. The increasing reliance on technology can be viewed as a response to the challenges and complexities of modern societies. As societies continue to evolve, it is only natural for individuals to consider using technology as a tool to aid in solving social issues.

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[23] Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology* (New York: Harvard University Press, 1988), 21-22.

[24] Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 21.

## The Relationship Between Technology and Social Values

The relationship between technology and social structure is significant because the development of technology often shapes and influences the structure of societies. An illustrative example is the transformation of urban societies that emerged alongside industrialization, when workers migrated to areas near factories. This led to the development of a distinct type of urban community that communicated and interacted within this context. According to Ferdinand Tönnies, the emergence of community is closely related to the advancement of social culture, technology, and economic accumulation.[25] As these factors progress, social life can manifest in various forms, such as economic, profit-oriented, exchange, or civil societies. As a characteristic form of modern society, the city features a large urban center and emphasizes intellectual pursuits. It differs from the village, which is typically based on an agrarian economy and the utilization of appropriate technology. These distinct organizational structures highlight how different technologies can shape the social fabric and structures of communities.

Bell (2012) explains the effect of mass media on the creation of the city type dominated by mass culture:

> Revolutions in transport and communication have brought people closer together and connected them in new ways. The division of labour has made people more dependent on each other, and the tremors in one part of society have also affected other parts. However, despite this growing dependence, individuals have become more alienated from each other. The old basic family ties and local communities have disintegrated and old narrow-minded beliefs have been questioned. Only a few unifying values have emerged. Above all, the critical standards of the educated elite no longer shape opinion or taste.[26]

According to Bell's perspective (2012), interpersonal relationships tend to remain shallow and incomplete in a constantly evolving society due to continuous changes in moral rules, customs, and traditions. Increased mobility, both spatially and socially, directs attention toward

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[25] Mehmet Fikret Gezgin, "Cemaat-Cemiyet Ayırımı ve Ferdinand Tönnies", *Sosyoloji Konferansları* 22 (1988), 199.

[26] Bell, *The End of Ideology*, 21.

social status. Instead of having a recognized status, individuals are required to prove themselves in various roles and adapt to ever-changing conditions. As a result, the unifying beliefs that once existed within mass society are eroded, making room for the emergence of charismatic leaders who demand compulsory respect. In this context, with the pursuit of individual privileges and the transformation of values into economic calculations, the world becomes one of lonely crowds. This leads to a situation where extreme forms of horror surpass the boundaries of shame and consciousness. Bell argues that the theory of mass society provides a powerful and realistic description of modern society and accurately reflects the quality and inner world of contemporary life. The constant transformation of values and the focus on individual pursuits contribute to the fragmentation of interpersonal connections and the rise of charismatic leadership in a society characterized by the lonely crowd phenomenon.[27]

Advocates of technological determinism argue that certain technologies, such as writing, have profound effects on various aspects of society. They believe that writing technology creates a conducive environment for the development of phenomena such as codified law, monotheism, abstract science, deduction, objective history, and individualism.[28] According to McLuhan (2014), who explores the impact of media, the discovery of electromagnetic technology has essentially created a simultaneous and interconnected "field" in all human relations. This has led to the emergence of a global village where individuals live in a condensed space resonating with tribal drums.[29] McLuhan draws parallels between the total and instant cause-effect interaction and interdependence observed in oral societies and the Soviet Union's interest in media in recent history. He likens Soviet society to a tribal society and suggests that since the advent of electric media, a new dimension of global interdependence has emerged that resembles the characteristics of oral culture. Advertisers and public relations professionals, who are adept at understanding this new dimension, utilize media for product-oriented purposes rather than

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27 Bell, *The End of Ideology*, 222.

28 Robert Logan, "Writing and the Alphabet Effect", in *Communication in History: Stone Age Symbols to Social Media*, ed. Paul Heyer - Peter Urquhart (New York: Routledge, 2019), 51.

29 Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 31.

personal ones. Similarly, Soviet bureaucrats, driven by national interests, would not consider using public media for personal gain. McLuhan's perspective highlights the transformative power of media technologies and their influence on the interplay of global interdependence, societal structures, and cultural dynamics. The concept of the global village underscores the idea that electronic media has connected people across vast distances and created a sense of global unity reminiscent of the tribal communities of the past.[30]

In addition to proponents of technological determinism, such as Innis (2006) and McLuhan (2014), some critics offer alternative perspectives. Bijker (2010) and Sismondo (2010) argue that technological determinism adopts a narrow and one-sided approach to development characterized by theological, linear, and unidirectional views.[31] Sismondo further contends that for technologies to be considered genuine driving forces of history, their impact must extend beyond their specific social and material contexts.[32] This perspective emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between technology and society, highlighting the influence they have on one another and how they shape the formation of social institutions. It posits that a comprehensive understanding of the social order in modern society necessitates acknowledging the role of technology. Castells also questions the validity of technological determinism and asserts that it presents a false dilemma. He contends that technology and society are inseparable because technology is an integral part of society. According to Castells, society cannot be comprehended or depicted without considering its technological dimensions.[33]

Both proponents and opponents of technological determinism acknowledge the strong link between technology and social change. Consequently, it becomes apparent that social values cannot be separated from technology and its utilization.

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30 McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaksisi*, 21.

31 Wiebe E. Bijker, "How is Technology Made-That is the Question?", *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010), 71.

32 Sergio Sismondo, *An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 83.

33 Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, 6.

## Overview of Transhumanist Thought

The philosophers of the 17th century, including Bacon, Descartes, Kepler, Newton, and Galileo, are often credited with laying the groundwork for the emergence of a materialist-rationalist scientific worldview that contributed to humanism. According to Dağ (2017), these influential figures of the Renaissance humanism movement also played a role in shaping a well-rounded individual who is intellectually, morally, culturally, and spiritually developed. The shift of Christianity toward humanism can be traced to the influence of Patristic theology, where the focus shifted from God to Jesus and emphasized the importance of humanity. Erasmus' Humanism, in particular, contributed to the rise of Renaissance humanism by integrating Christian virtues with classical ideals and promoting Christian education. However, transhumanism, which can be traced back to ancient texts such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, goes beyond the boundaries of traditional humanism. It seeks to extend human life and achieve immortality through the advancements and possibilities offered by modern science and technology. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, the metaverse, and deep learning have become pervasive in various sectors, with social media and smartphones playing significant roles.[34] The concept of a metaverse, along with advancements in deep learning and the potential to transcend physical boundaries through cyberspace, is among the factors that contribute to the promotion of transhumanist ideas.

Digital technologies have advanced to a point where they can extend and enhance various human capabilities, even to the extent of integrating microchips into different parts of the body. This development goes beyond simple human communication and interaction. Ray Kurzweil's perspective on the inevitability of technological singularity, where the boundaries between the biological body and the mind gradually disappear, suggests that a technological entity could potentially replace human beings. According to Kurzweil, through technology, human beings can overcome limitations such as disease, aging, and memory constraints,

[34] Ahmet Dağ, "Transhumanism as a Radicalization of Humanism", *Felsefi Düşün* 9 (2017), 51.

leading to a transition into an upgraded version of humanity. This vision aligns with the concept of Humanity 2.0, which envisions a future shaped by the technological revolution in genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics.[35] These technologies will play a crucial role in enhancing intelligence, which is regarded as the highest value on the transhumanist scale; it encompasses both human and machine intelligence and elevates it to a level capable of self-replication. The aim of these three technologies –genetics, nanotechnology, and robotics– will be to enhance intelligence and push it to new heights, enabling it to reproduce itself and proliferate. This vision of a future where technology augments human intelligence and capabilities is at the core of transhumanist aspirations.[36]

Transhumanists advocate for the use of technology as a means to transcend human limitations and achieve a posthuman state. The journey toward becoming posthuman involves a progression from human to semihuman, ultimately leading to the point of Nirvana where the human consciousness becomes free from the constraints of the physical body and transitions into a purely machine existence, attaining disembodiment and immortality.[37] Transhumanists believe that technology can be harnessed to address the weaknesses, ailments, and mortality associated with the human body. By embracing transhumanism, they envision unlocking new possibilities for human nature that can catalyze the self-transcendence of humanity. They anticipate that the posthuman state achieved through the fulfillment of transhumanist goals will significantly differ from present-day humans, just as contemporary individuals differ from their ancient counterparts. In essence, transhumanists perceive technology as a transformative force that can propel humanity beyond its current limitations, enabling

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35 Ray Kurzweil, "Human Body Version 2.0", In *The Ray Kurzweil Reader*, ed. Ray Kurzweil (2003), 3.

36 Ted Peters, "Boarding the Transhumanist Train: How Far Should the Christian Ride?", in *The Transhumanism Handbook*, ed. Newton Lee (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 798.

37 Cengiz Dağdelen, *Post-Hüman: Transhümanizm Hareketi'nden Posthümanizm'e* (Konya: Tılsım Yayınevi, 2021), 34.

the emergence of a posthuman[38] condition characterized by enhanced capabilities, longevity, and a fundamentally altered existence.[39]

While studies on human history generally focus on the ongoing evolution of Homo sapiens, transhumanism introduces a new perspective on the human condition from philosophical and sociocultural standpoints.[40] In this context, "transhuman" does not imply a mere transition but rather a transcendence of the current human state and perception. Another perspective that aligns with this notion is rooted in the concept of "extropy", which encompasses the pursuit of greater intelligence, wisdom, an indefinite lifespan, and the elimination of political, cultural, biological, and psychological limitations on continuous development. The goal of transhumanism is to progress in unlimited and beneficial directions by surpassing the constraints that hinder overall human advancement. This is achieved through self-transformation, practical optimism, the establishment of an open society, democratic knowledge, self-governance, and rational thinking. The aim is to imagine scenarios that facilitate the creation of highly advanced human conditions, utilizing the largely untapped potential of human beings. Transhumanism envisions a future where human capabilities are fully realized, allowing for extensive growth and development.[41]

Another view, which offers an egalitarian representation of transhumanism by comparing it with Christian teachings and practices, argues that heaven, seen as a mythical place, can, in fact, be reconstructed on earth. According to this view, heaven was man's first home, but over the centuries, the concept of heaven has been distorted, and the perception of the person of God and His oneness with humans has been altered. Traditional religious institutions have used fear as a means of suppressing the mind for centuries. Christianity is therefore molded as a religion of death, slavery, and fear. Now, with

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38 Ted Peters, "Boarding the Transhumanist Train: How Far Should the Christian Ride?".

39 Newton Lee, "Brave New World of Transhumanism", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 3.

40 Natasha Vita-More, "Introduction to "H+: Transhumanism Answers Its Critics", *metanexus.net* (2009).

41 José Luis Cordeiro, "The Boundaries of the Human: From Humanism to Transhumanism", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 70.

the help of science and technology, we can regain paradise by achieving socioeconomic equality and eliminating human exploitation. The automation of labor will also create more time to pray to God and go to churches. In the opinion of Lee, who has focused on creating a paradise on earth with this method, the realization of transhumanism depends on the achievement of 4 goals:[42]

a) establishing socioeconomic equality

b) achieving physical immortality

c) cleaning the environment

d) developing Christian transhumanist consciousness

The manifesto prepared within the scope of these goals, which bear the traces of a socialist approach, sets out seven steps:[43]

1. State-owned means of production, lands, and enterprises; the abolition of inherited property, including intellectual property.

2. The elimination of human exploitation through the full automation of labor.

3. The active use of digital democracy to expand and enhance democratic practice.

4. The replacement of governments with supercomputers until the Kingdom of God is restored.

5. The establishment of a centrally planned economy run by artificial intelligence.

6. The elimination of money with the help of advanced technology.

7. Free health care and education for all people.

Bostrom (2005) states that another transhumanist priority is attaining the wisdom necessary to make wise choices about the future. According to him, this can be achieved at the individual level through education, critical thinking, open-mindedness, study techniques, information technology, and perhaps memory-enhancing drugs and other cognitive enhancement technologies. With this ability, the rule of law and democracy can be promoted and developed on an international level. Once artificial intelligence, especially its human

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[42] Inessa Lee, "Equalism: Paradise Regained", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 49-53.

[43] Lee, "Equalism: Paradise Regained", 54-57.

equivalent, is achieved, great leaps in knowledge and wisdom can also be achieved.[44]

In summary, transhumanism is seen as a work in progress that advocates the reshaping of human nature as desired on the basis of global security, technological progress, and broad connectivity.[45] Transhumanists, who do not see the current human being as the end point of evolution, believe that with the appropriate use of science, technology, and other rational tools, much greater capacities than those of today's human beings can eventually be possessed by the posthuman.[46]

**Transhumanists' Thought on Social Values**

The analysis of existing data clearly demonstrates that transhumanism aims to address social issues through the utilization of technology. However, the unique nature of transhumanism as a social concept raises questions about the proposed sociocultural structure. It is a matter of curiosity how morality will be shaped in the context of artificial intelligence and the envisioned posthumanism. Todorova offers a speculative response to the question of artificial intelligence,[47] suggesting that it may lead to a new synthesis of traditional moral values. Todorova gives an estimated answer to the question of artificial intelligence as "probably a new synthesis of our traditional moral values". Because posthumanism encompasses not only human beings but also other species,[48] it is expected that a new moral code will emerge that is influenced by evolutionary and game theories, economics, cognitive sciences, cultural anthropology, religions, and biases. Each society can create a new system of rules to adapt to new circumstances. Additionally, transhumanism promotes the well-being of all sentient beings, including nonhuman animals, artificial intelligence, humans, and potentially extraterrestrial species, if they exist. Therefore, racism, sexism, speciesism, aggressive nationalism,

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44 Nick Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values", *Nickbostrom.com* (2005).

45 Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values" (2005).

46 Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values" (2005).

47 Mariana Todorova, "Philosophical, Moral, and Ethical Rationalization of Artificial Intelligence", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 264.

48 Cordeiro, "The Boundaries of the Human: From Humanism to Transhumanism", 72.

and religious intolerance are incompatible with transhumanist ideals. To prepare for the future development of the human species in various directions, it is recommended to actively foster the development of a comprehensive moral framework that addresses a wide range of concerns.[49] However, it remains uncertain to what extent transhumanism will continue prioritizing the concept of the "moral human being".

It is not possible to know at this stage whether the handicaps of posthumanism can be overcome since they are related to the envisioning of a future society. However, if it can be determined what kind of a society is desired to the extent that it is expressed in the theoretical framework, a critical framework can be created. When considering transhumanism in terms of helping to sketch a picture of the society in question, the phenomena that can be accepted as social values are mainly included under the following headings:

a. Social intelligence and social health

b. Gender equality

c. The individual's freedom, well-being, and relationship with God

Understanding the transhumanist perspective on these topics will also help to criticize the perspective of Society 5.0, which includes the same topics.

**The Transhumanist Future of Intelligence and Health**

In the transhumanist perspective, intelligence is regarded as the utmost "value" on the scale. Consequently, the focus is placed on gene, nano, and robotic technologies to enhance both human and machine intelligence to a level where it can self-replicate. This notion implies that the more intelligent individuals will thrive while the less intelligent ones may be left behind.[50] The ultimate objective of transhumanism is to attain the post-human state. Peters (2019) suggests that transhumanists address the ethical dilemma associated with this goal through the lens of social Darwinism within neoliberal thought, encapsulated by the phrase "let them do it". Within this framework, there is an aspiration to exert control over the human mind and body through specific codes and, if necessary, replace them with

[49] Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values" (2005).

[50] Peters, "Boarding the Transhumanist Train: How Far Should the Christian Ride?", 798.

technologically advanced replicas. Through this process, the aim is to achieve higher levels of intelligence and advancement.

Transhumanism is rooted in advancing and enhancing human beings in all aspects. Its goal is to create individuals who are exceptionally healthy, possess extended lifespans, and exhibit superior intelligence and abilities. Through increased knowledge and improved decision-making, it envisions individuals living significantly longer lives in a state of "perfection" and attaining heightened self-awareness and understanding of interpersonal relationships. The aim is for people to experience greater happiness by transcending cultural, psychological, and mimetic biases and acquiring the ability to navigate change and progress through the development of intelligence in all its forms.[51] This pursuit is facilitated by emerging technologies that enable the genetic enhancement of mental and physical capacities, disease prevention, control over desires, moods, and mental states, and the integration of artificial intelligence with interface technology, molecular biology, and nanotechnology.[52] The advent of anti-aging medicine offers the possibility of eliminating the complications associated with aging and radically extending the period of active health rather than simply prolonging the final stages of life supported by medical devices.[53]

**Transhumanism's Perspective on Gender Equality**

Transhumanism places great emphasis on gender equality as one of its core values. Scholars such as Kahane and Savulescu argue that transhumanists actively support a post-gender ideal and advocate for the dissolution of traditional gender identities. They believe that as development technologies progress, it will eventually become possible for individuals to possess both male and female characteristics or neither. Gender will become a matter of personal choice, while motherhood may be viewed as a limiting option.[54] However, there are contrasting perspectives that suggest that motherhood could potentially be surpassed in the era of posthumanism. These views aim

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51 Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, "Engaging Transhumanism", *H± Transhumanism and Its Critics* (Philadelphia: Metanexus, 2010), 38.

52 Tirosh-Samuelson, "Engaging Transhumanism", 19.

53 Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values" (2005).

54 Gay Kahane - Julian Savulescu, "The Value of Sex in Procreative Reasons", *The American Journal of Bioethics* 10/7 (2010), 22.

to free human beings from primitive instincts driven by evolutionary biology's eugenic principles.[55] The argument posits that evolutionary biology has created disparities among living beings, including gender differences, which have led to conflicts. Transhumanism, in this context, seeks to liberate the body from gender distinctions just as it facilitates the construction of a forest within the mentioned pyramid. This perspective, which views the posthuman as a machine, suggests that the mechanized body would no longer require gender. Additionally, as genetic research and medical advancements enable the birth of individuals without genetic issues, alternative methods of reproduction will supplement traditional means, leading people to strive for the superiority of the posthuman.

Another perspective provides a more nuanced understanding of the differences between transhumanism and posthumanism in terms of their content and the envisioned characteristics of the future human. This viewpoint offers a softer interpretation compared to Dağdelen's (2021) assertions. According to this view, transhumanism, which originated primarily from Anglo-Saxon sources, is driven by biological and economic arguments. In contrast, posthumanism, rooted in continental European thought, draws inspiration from feminist theories within the framework of postmodernism and gender literature. While both concepts share a positive vision of the future human, they possess distinct and, at times, even opposing philosophical and intellectual foundations. However, due to the relatively new nature of the literature, this aspect has not been extensively explored. It is suggested that although transhumanism does not explicitly reject species differences, the emphasis placed by posthumanism on eliminating these differences is a notable divergence. Nonetheless, it is possible to overlook this differentiation.[56]

It seems that in transhumanism, the emphasis is on gender equality as a value, the elimination of social and cultural gender distinctions and inequality, whereas in posthumanism, the emphasis is on eliminating the biological body by transcending biological limitations.

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[55] Dağdelen, *Post-Hüman*, 43.

[56] Muhammet Özdemir - Nevin Başaran, "Transhümanizm, Posthümanizm ve İnsan Bilincinin Yeni Kapsamı", *İslâmî Araştırmalar* 32/1 (2021), 47.

**Free Individual, Happy Man, and Taming God**

In terms of social ethics, transhumanists are often associated with a perspective influenced by evolutionary Darwinism and a "let them do it" neoliberal ideology.[57] This approach reflects a commitment to individual freedom, prosperity, and a sense of God-consciousness. It can be argued that transhumanists value individual freedom and choice as important social values.[58] According to this viewpoint, people may have diverse conceptions of personal development, and it is morally unacceptable to impose a uniform standard if individual choices do not significantly harm others. Additionally, it is deemed inappropriate to express disgust or moral humiliation when individuals utilize technology to modify themselves. The freedom of individual morphological transformation should not be hindered by others in the pursuit of individual preferences within the realm of genetic freedom and the use of developmental technologies aimed at personal "healing".[59]

The pursuit of materialist/rationalist human beings, which originated with humanism,[60] has evolved into the quest for happiness in transhumanism. Happiness, according to transhumanists, is achieved through long and healthy lives as well as equality. By attaining these three goals, individuals can experience happiness by alleviating material suffering and other concerns. Transhumanism, which aims to surpass biological and physical limitations and places humans on a path toward cyborgization and deification, is not regarded[61] as a bleak or pessimistic ideology. Instead, it is seen as a philosophy embraced by strong, happy, and ambitious individuals who envision better possibilities, know what they desire in life, and strive to attain it. For them, transhumanism represents a perspective that does not concern itself with the fate of their souls once their bodies turn to ashes.[62]

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57 Peters, "Boarding the Transhumanist Train: How Far Should the Christian Ride?", 798.

58 Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values" (2005).

59 Dağdelen, *Post-Hüman*, 74.

60 Dağ, "Transhumanism as a Radicalization of Humanism", 51.

61 Dağ, "Transhumanism as a Radicalization of Humanism", 46.

62 Kate Levchuk, "How Transhumanism Will Get Us Through the Third Millennium", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 77.

Levchuk's statement suggests that transhumanists, who seek immortality and focus on the present life, do not hold a belief in an afterlife. Adolson-Gavrieli's definition of God supports this perspective by suggesting that the concept of God is a constructed consciousness aimed at introducing an all-powerful, omnipresent entity responsible for resource distribution. Initially, there were multiple gods, but monotheism emerged as the complexities of celestial and earthly existence became difficult to manage. To solidify these claims, God was proclaimed as both unknown and unknowable, erecting a barrier against change that they deemed a harbinger of the apocalypse.[63]

In contrast to the abovementioned definition of God by believers, transhumanists consider the limitations of current wisdom and argue that assumptions can change as more knowledge is obtained.[64] Accordingly, they also propose a new definition of God, recognizing that old habits and beliefs may not suffice in new circumstances:[65]

> The time has come. We are in the process of creating a transhumanist God. As our myths, aspirations and technologies mate, humanity and the machine give birth to a material God. This God is not a metaphysical, untouchable, unattainable projection. The God we are creating is as real as you and I are, or at least as real as we will be in the future. This God is necessarily material. It exists in space and time, because we exist in space and time. This God must be plural, otherwise we recreate the one God who is tyrannical. This God is dynamic and intelligent. This God is developing, changing and growing, perhaps exponentially. God's development and growth depend on us as we are eternal with God.

In this definition, which turns the relationship between God and humans into the opposite of historical epistemological knowledge, God is now made dependent on humans. This definition of God also coincides with the goal of transhumanists to create a God-human in line with the goal of posthumanism.

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63 Michele Adelson-Gavrieli, "Transhumanism: Variety Is the Ultimate Hack", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 766.

64 Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values" (2005).

65 Blaire Ostler, "A Transhumanist God", in *The Transhumanism Handbook*, ed. Newton Lee (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 825.

**Value Emphasis in Society 5.0 Principles**

Society 5.0 is a societal design that aims to create a "super smart society" by leveraging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things.[66] It was introduced by the Japanese government to enhance the manageability of human life through technology. Society 5.0 is supported by the humanities and emphasizes the importance of balancing the application of technology.[67] It also addresses concerns about the replacement of human labor and decreasing employment opportunities brought about by Industry 4.0. The concept of Society 5.0 offers a solution to bridge the gap between societal and economic challenges, and it is expected that progress in this direction will occur in the next decade or slightly longer, depending on the goals set.[68] Suryadi expects that the gap between society and economic problems can be reduced in the next decade or slightly longer depending on the goals of Society 5.0.

The Society 5.0 report highlights that as technology continues to impact various aspects of society, including private life, public spaces, industries, and employment, it becomes crucial to consider how these technologies are utilized. Society 5.0 envisions a future where people actively use their creative imagination and ideas to transform the world. Digital technology and data are proposed to be employed in creating a society where individuals can pursue happiness according to their unique lifestyles. The ultimate goal is to establish a society where everyone can create value anytime, anywhere, in harmony with nature, free from restrictions, and in a safe and secure manner.[69]

In a nutshell, this society has the following characteristics:

a. Creating value for problem solving.

b. Talents are evaluated regardless of religion, language, race, and education.

c. Opportunities can be seized by everyone and everywhere.

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66 Abdulkadir Büyükbingöl, *Toplum 5.0: Süper Akıllı Toplumun İnşası* (İstanbul: Astana Yayınları, 2021), 24.

67 Suryadi Suryadi, "Challenges and Opportunities for Community Empowerment in the Era of Society 5.0", *Prosperity: Journal of Society and Empowerment* 2/2 (2022), 78.

68 Suryadi, "Challenges and Opportunities for Community Empowerment in the Era of Society 5.0", 78.

69 Hiroaki Nakanishi - Hiroaki Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future* (Tokyo: Keidanren, 2018), 1-20

d. Problems are dealt with safely.

e. The society is in harmony with nature and the achievement of a sustainable life.[70]

Society 5.0 theorists, who oppose the perception of technology as a threat to improve people's quality of life by proposing the slogan "technology is not a threat, it is an aid", also take into account ethical, social, and cultural consequences in the principles that determine the road map.[71] Accordingly, the following values stand out in Society 5.0.

*The strong individual:* In Society 5.0, the individual is the most important value. Technology should be designed and used to meet the needs of people. Improving people's quality of life and well-being is a priority. Every individual, including elderly individuals, can achieve a lifestyle that is safe and healthy and that allows them to realize their individual lives.[72]

*Social diversity:* Kitano and Nakanishi emphasize that in Society 5.0, all differences should be seen as assets. Society 5.0, which is a society of imagination, is a sustainable society created by design. It is based on the idea of defining the ideal society based on combining forces.[73]

*Geopolitical position:* It is considered an asset that it neighbors China, a large and growing market, and has positive relations with India and other nearby countries.[74]

*Nature and Cultural Traditions:* Nakanishi and Kitano, who consider cultural concepts such as "sampo-yoshi" (three-party satisfaction) and "mottai-nai" (embracing the spirit of symbiosis with nature, disliking waste) to be assets, state that it is included in this cultural perspective in terms of promoting desirable lifestyles and self-realization, making life more meaningful, vibrant and enjoyable.[75]

*Cooperation and Imagination:* Society 5.0 is considered a society of imagination where the full cooperation of the public, business world, and academia is realized. Here, dreams are considered a source of inspiration to solve various problems.[76]

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70 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future*, 5.

71 Harayama, "Society 5.0".

72 Carlos Miguel Ferreira - Sandro Serpa, "Society 5.0 and Social Development", *Preprints.org* (2018).

73 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future*, Introduction Page.

74 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future*, 3.

75 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future*, 3.

76 Harayama, "Society 5.0", 11-12.

*Innovation and Sustainability*: In Society 5.0, where technological developments should be carried out in line with the principle of sustainability, innovation should be continuous.[77]

*Equality and Justice:* In Society 5.0, it is argued that ensuring equal access and use of technology to all segments of society is necessary to establish equality of opportunity and social justice.[78]

## Criticism of the Transhumanist Approach in the Triangle of Individual, Society, and Social Values from the Perspective of Society 5.0

The goals of transhumanism, which include freedom, equality, and happiness, may initially appear compatible with the objectives of Society 5.0, which aims to enhance social welfare through the beneficial use of technology. However, from the perspective of Society 5.0, certain points of criticism can be identified. One area of potential conflict arises from the different approaches to social values and how they shape the concept of a "happy person". Society 5.0 emphasizes strong individuals, equality, and a prosperous society, with differences in the interpretation of what constitutes a happy individual. It is important to note that the concept of value discussed here is not limited to economic value, as categorized by Smith into exchange value and use value. Instead, it encompasses social values that contribute to the production of meaning in various social structures, such as the economy, family, politics, morality, property, and production relations.[79] According to Habermas' perspective, these social structures shape individuals' capacity for explanation.[80] Therefore, the criticism presented in this study is specifically focused on the perception of happiness through the lenses of the individual, equality, and cultural value rather than solely economic considerations.

*a. Criticism through the individual:* In Society 5.0, the individual himself/herself is seen as a value. A strong individual is perceived through the value he or she produces. In this context, the individual

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77 Ferreira - Serpa, "Society 5.0 and Social Development" (2018).

78 Keidanren, *Society 5.0 -Co-Creating the Future*, 1-20.

79 Adam Smith, *Ulusların Zenginliği* (Ankara: Palma Yayıncılık, 2009), 27.

80 Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action Volume One: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 71-72.

should be able to share his or her knowledge and dreams over the network within the framework of the sharing culture. From this perspective, the individual is not seen as separate from society but is part of the whole that plays an important role in social welfare. Here, collective thinking is in question rather than individualism. The talents and dreams of individuals serve social wisdom around a culture of sharing. Although the free individual determines his or her own path to happiness, he or she accepts full cooperation with other individuals for social welfare. Social intelligence is equivalent to the ability of individuals to inspire others with their knowledge, talents, and dreams within this culture of sharing. Technology plays a supporting role in sharing and utilizing these capabilities.[81]

In Society 5.0, wisdom is seen as a result of collective action, and individualization is understood in line with Bauman's approach. This form of individuality allows individuals to make their own decisions within the framework of social structures and cultural values.[82] However, the expectation in the transhumanist perspective that individuals should be free from all limitations, including God, appears to contradict the goal of establishing full cooperation within Society 5.0. Unlike the individualistic perspective of transhumanism, which places intelligence at the highest point on the scale, Society 5.0 aims for collective intelligence and equal progress for society as a whole. The focus on individual intelligence in transhumanism can potentially lead to individual selfishness, as noted by Peters, with the possibility of a selection process favoring the survival of the smartest individuals[83] while leaving behind less intelligent ones. On the other hand, the individuals envisioned in Society 5.0 are characterized by their ability to share their talents and dreams within the framework of cooperation. This distinguishes them from the egoistic individual of transhumanism. In accordance with the approach of Society 5.0, viewing technology as an "assistant" rather than an object and recognizing its role as a subject can help bridge these differences and achieve the goal of a happy human being through cooperation. The emphasis in Society 5.0 is on providing individuals with choices to construct their own lives.

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81 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-creating the Future*, 1-20.

82 Zygmunt Bauman, *The Individualized Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press , 2008), 62.

83 Peters, "Boarding the Transhumanist Train: How Far Should the Christian Ride?", 798.

Moreover, Society 5.0 promotes the use of techniques to enhance memory, concentration, and mental energy and explores possibilities for life extension and other advancements. These approaches align with the goal of improving the well-being of individuals within the context of cooperation.

*b. Criticism based on the principle of equality:* In Society 5.0, the concept of equality is treated in two ways. The first is to achieve a "super smart society" that will be built with the participation of everyone regardless of language, religion, color, and class. The second is to achieve a welfare society where all members of society can benefit from all kinds of services regardless of whether they are near or far from the center. A super-smart society is a welfare society where everyone's talents and dreams are utilized and where the public, academia, and the business world work in full cooperation to find solutions to problems. The aim is to ensure that women, children, and elderly individuals can fully participate in social activities without any restrictions and that all individuals are capable of meeting all their needs themselves, especially health services.[84]

The principle of equality as addressed by transhumanism in relation to gender differs from the concept of equality expressed within the framework of Society 5.0. Transhumanism aims to design a society that gradually becomes genderless, eliminating biological distinctions between males and females. By eliminating gender discrimination, transhumanists envision achieving equality among individuals. However, this perspective appears to contradict the goal of Society 5.0, which seeks to advance and preserve human superiority. From an anthropological perspective, new species have historically joined human society through either cooperation or assistance. In the context of Society 5.0, artificial intelligence (AI) is also considered within this framework with the aim of finding ways to integrate it into society while maintaining human superiority. According to Cordeiro, transhumanists advocate for the well-being of all emotions, including humans, animals, future AIs, and modified life forms.[85] However, the desexing approach proposed by transhumanism, which seeks to

[84] Harayama, "Society 5.0", 8-9.

[85] José Luis Cordeiro, "The Boundaries of the Human: From Humanism to Transhumanism", *The Transhumanism Handbook* (Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG, 2019), 72.

eliminate gender-related emotions, seems to overlook the inherent value of these emotions and the individual experiences associated with each gender. In contrast, Society 5.0 embraces social diversity and opposes the idea of degendering. Society 5.0 recognizes the importance of diversity, including gender diversity, in creating a vibrant and inclusive society. It acknowledges the value of different perspectives and experiences in shaping a better future. Rather than seeking to eliminate gender, Society 5.0 promotes the idea of harnessing the strengths and contributions of diverse individuals and entities, including humans and AI, to foster social progress while preserving human superiority.

Within the scope of the phenomenon of technological singularity, which sees the merging of human beings with technology as an inevitable aspect, "according to the new form of morality proposed by transhumanism, legal studies are also expected to respond to the search for equality within the scope of animal rights, ecology, and gender roles".[86] Braidotti criticizes this view, which seems to take the issue beyond the desexualization of human beings in terms of animal rights, in two ways. First, he argues that the extension of the already hegemonic category of human to include others affirms the binary distinction between human and animal in favor of the human, contrary to the principle of equality. Second, this unification denies animals as a species in their own right.[87] On the other hand, the singularity has also been criticized as a form of domination based on the assumption of inequality between humans.[88] It can be argued that the idea of equality is threatened in some of the poorest countries in the world, such as Zimbabwe, where biotechnology is out of reach.[89] Therefore, when viewed from the perspective of Society 5.0, which advocates social diversity and sees every difference as wealth, handicaps can be experienced with regard to the global implementation of goals.[90] The sociological and geographical conditions in different parts of the world make it difficult to understand the aim of educating individuals at the

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[86] Hüseyin Köksal, "2023 Education Vision Document, Singularıty and Transhumanism", *Eğitim ve Toplum Araştırmaları Dergisi* 6/1 (2019), 150.

[87] Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 76.

[88] Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Picador, 2002), 105.

[89] Francis Fukuyama, "Transhumanism", *Foreign Policy* 144 (2004), 42.

[90] Büyükbingöl, *Toplum 5.0: Süper Akıllı Toplumun İnşası*, 47-53.

same level and cooperating for the same purpose.[91] However, it is not possible to accept an unequal future where collectivism is ignored and may result from it.

*c. Criticism of cultural values and happy people:* In contrast to the understanding of welfare that has focused on production and efficiency since the first industrial era, an understanding of welfare that focuses on the individual is targeted for Society 5.0. As a human-oriented approach, the desire to design technology in accordance with the needs of people, not efficiency, requires this design to include cultural values. The fact that the presence of cultural concepts such as "sampo-yoshi" and "mottai-nai" is seen as a richness and the desire to make use of cultural codes to make lives more meaningful, vibrant, and enjoyable indicates that this requirement[92] is taken into consideration. Similarly, it is possible to say that cultural values will be reshaped from the focus of pragmatism in the human-centered Transhumanist perspective. The prolongation of life and even the promise of immortality with the power and possibilities of modern science and technology and the sanctification of human endeavors instead of a transcendent sacred being can be considered[93] a sign of developing a new culture in the adventure of transhumanism. This new worldview aims to create a secular religion. The transhumanist view toward this is expressed as follows:[94]

> I find meaning in God, not just any God, but a transhumanist God born of material theism. This God exists in space and time, unlike the God of the metaphysician who hangs aimlessly in an immaterial abyss of nothingness. I find meaning in what I can know, understand and be... Replace 'God' with'superhuman' or 'posthuman' and the message will still get through.

It is possible to see here that Transhumanists have not completely eliminated meaning but that they are trying to produce a new meaning. Baba argues that the elements that will reshape the world in this new religion will be pragmatism instead of mercy and compassion.[95]

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91 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future*, 15.
92 Nakanishi - Kitano, *Society 5.0 - Co-Creating the Future*, 3.
93 Dağ, "Transhumanism as a Radicalization of Humanism", 52.
94 Ostler, "A Transhumanist God", 825.
95 Dorin Baba, "Transhumanism, Evolution and Limits", *Hermeneia* 24 (2020), 26.

Yuval Noah Harari, in line with the Epicurean approach, highlights the challenging nature of achieving happiness. According to Epicurus, the pursuit of money, fame, and sensual pleasures does not lead to lasting happiness but rather leaves individuals more helpless. Harari supports this view by arguing that the material gains of recent years have not necessarily made people happier than their ancestors despite the higher levels of prosperity, security, and peace experienced in developed societies. To substantiate this argument, Harari notes that suicide rates in developed societies are often higher than those in traditional societies. This observation suggests that factors beyond material well-being, such as social connections, meaning, and psychological well-being, play crucial roles in overall happiness and fulfillment. Harari's perspective challenges the notion that material prosperity alone is sufficient for attaining happiness and suggests that a deeper understanding of human well-being is necessary.[96]

The skepticism toward the idea of technologically enhancing the human mind and pursuing immortality is valid and raises important concerns. The potential control and elimination of individuality in the pursuit of superhuman capabilities are valid considerations within the transhumanist perspective. While Society 5.0 also emphasizes collective thinking, it does not necessarily imply the control and direction of individual thought by others. Harari's argument about the shaping of the future economy, society, and politics in the quest to defeat death does not guarantee that humans will achieve immortality in the coming centuries. The concept of thermodynamic equilibrium and the possibility of "heat death" in the universe indicate that humans will ultimately succumb to entropy.[97] Therefore, achieving the level of immortality envisioned by transhumanism seems unlikely. This realization leads to the understanding that absolute happiness, at a philosophical level, may manifest as an ongoing search rather than a final destination. In this regard, Society 5.0's recommendation to use technology as an auxiliary rather than a substitute for human beings in finding solutions to human problems offers a corrective perspective compared to the transhumanist approach. It acknowledges the importance of human agency and the limitations of technological solutions.

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[96] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 5.

[97] Fatih Özgökman, "Entropi, Şans ve Tanrı", *Felsefe Dünyası* 59 (2014), 86-87.

## Conclusion

Progressive approaches employ social design models to prepare societies for the future. Based on the gathered data, it is evident that among these models, Society 5.0 and transhumanism prioritize the individual and consider both individual and social development equally. Both approaches generally adopt a pragmatic attitude. Society 5.0, similar to transhumanism, adopts a constructive and problem-solving approach when faced with challenges. However, Society 5.0 and transhumanism differ in their perspectives on individual and social values. Transhumanism seeks to establish freedom by excluding God and obstructive social values and aiming to evoke a "god-human" model through machines. This contradicts Society 5.0's ideal of upholding human supremacy. Society 5.0 advocates transitioning to a new stage while preserving both biological and cultural human superiority. Therefore, individuals who are relieved of material suffering should not be deprived of meaning.

Consequently, social values, which provide significance to people and serve as the primary sources of meaning production, are dependent on cultural codes. As a result, transhumanist goals need to be reconsidered in line with the principles of Society 5.0. It is essential to ensure that societies are not deprived of meaning in this new stage. Additionally, the realization that deeper spiritual pain can trigger social crises may negatively impact the attainment of these goals. For these reasons, it can be argued that the claim that transhumanist goals can lead to a happy and prosperous society, despite containing some positive aspects, does not accurately reflect the truth at this stage.

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