

RESUMO - BIOÉTICA

TRANSHUMANISM IN LIGHT OF PERSONALIST BIOETHICS: ETHICAL LIMITS OF HUMAN ENHANCEMENT

Lucas Bernardes Lima (lucasbl2810@gmail.com)

Introduction: Transhumanism is a movement that advocates the use of advanced technologies to enhance human beings and bring them to a “post-human” stage, including the expansion of their capacities and the extension of life. This perspective assumes that humans are incomplete and must be perfected through Scientism, focusing solely on the material dimension. In contrast, Personalist Bioethics, founded by Elio Sgreccia, understands the human being in an integral way, also considering psychological, social, moral, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, this work proposes a critical analysis the limitations of transhumanism and its incompatibility with the principles of Personalist Bioethics.Objective:To analyze the intrinsic problems of transhumanist thought from the perspective of Personalist Bioethics.Methodology: Critical analysis of transhumanism based on Personalist Bioethics, using academic articles and documents from the Catholic Church.Discussion:Transhumanism is a byproduct of intellectual currents such as the Enlightenment, Positivism, and Nihilism, all of which share a tendency to reduce the human being to purely biological terms. Personalist Bioethics asserts

that human life begins at fertilization, when a new individual with its own identity and intrinsic dignity comes into existence. This dignity is understood as an absolute value, requiring unconditional respect at all stages of human development. Therefore, any intervention that treats the embryo as a means to other ends is considered ethically inadmissible. In contrast, Nick Bostrom (transhumanist thinkers) defends the possibility of genetic enhancement in embryos to prevent diseases or enhance capacities. Although often justified by individual and social benefits, this approach raises serious problems. By allowing the selection or modification of traits, there is a risk of reducing human value to performance, efficiency, or conformity to specific standards. In this sense, the individual may be seen as a product subject to optimization rather than a being endowed with intrinsic dignity. Human freedom, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, is an essential capacity of the person, rooted in reason and will, which enables conscious and deliberate action. Freedom is not understood merely as the ability to choose but as a faculty oriented toward the good, the true, and the full realization of the human being, reaching its perfection when directed toward a transcendent ultimate end. However, transhumanist philosophy presents a potential risk to this conception of freedom. Certain authors, such as Julian Savulescu, propose the use of biopharmaceuticals to condition humans to certain behaviors, aiming to reduce potential conflicts in social relationships. Although transhumanists pursue positive goals, such as minimizing conflicts, the means they employ raise ethical concerns. By using such substances, an individual's freedom is compromised, as their decisions are no longer fully conscious and deliberate but are influenced by external biological interventions. Conclusion: Transhumanism seeks to redefine the human condition based on a materialistic and technoscientific perspective, aiming to overcome natural limitations and eliminate suffering. Despite its intention to improve human quality of life, the methods employed pose serious risks to human dignity and freedom. Personalist Bioethics, developed by Elio Sgreccia, also aims at human well-being, but does so without abandoning a holistic understanding of human nature, thus respecting dignity and autonomy.

Palavras-chave: transhumanism; personalist bioethics; ethical limits; human dignity; materialism.

