How should Human Beings Exist?——Some Criticisms of Transhumanism

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Abstract

Transhumanism banishes the body from being, which leads to the separation of technology and virtue. In the Confucian view, the body is the symbiosis of technology and virtue, human relations and politics. We can use the notions of “benevolence” and Tao in Confucian ethics to criticize transhumanism. The fundamental problem involved in the debate between Confucianism and transhumanism concerns how
human beings define themselves. Confucianists believe that human beings cannot and should not violate certain fundamental restrictions and principles presented by the universe. We should continue to think about what these fundamental restrictions and principles should be, and whether they are likely to be breached with technological progress.

Read the essay by Professor Wang (Wang 2021), which has been translated into English. The essay discusses the relationship between science and technology, focusing on the ethical implications of scientific advancements. The essay argues that while scientific progress can bring about significant benefits, there are also potential risks and ethical concerns that must be addressed.

First, the essay acknowledges the increasing reliance on technology in modern society, highlighting the need for a robust ethical framework to guide its development. The essay also examines the role of government and international organizations in ensuring that technological advancements are implemented in a responsible manner.

Second, the essay discusses the potential consequences of technological progress, including the impact on employment, privacy, and the environment. It calls for a collaborative approach between scientists, policymakers, and the public to address these challenges.

Overall, the essay provides a comprehensive overview of the ethical considerations surrounding technological advancements, calling for a balanced approach that considers both the benefits and challenges.

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當我們羨慕西方的“身體”在技術領域攻城掠地、飛速發展的時候，應看到其付出的代價是沉重的，這種代價所導致的終極後果是存在意義的消逝。由於身體一開始就遭到了“存在”無情的放逐，而超人類主義的解決路徑是試圖用技術的不斷進步來填充先天被放逐的存在意義，或說其試圖用技術的進步來建構存在意義。但超人類主義的這一壯舉即便不是徒勞無功，也是將人類前景拉入憂慮與不確定的深淵。借用儒家的話語，脫離天人合一視域的身體，最終會成為何種樣態？平心而論，筆者認為，技術可以促進身體的進化，可以為找尋意義提供一定的力量，但對存在意義的體證並不天然內在於技術，因此，妄圖壓以技術進步的方式來尋覓存在之意義，好比鑽冰求火般難以實現。

再次，儒家倫理在建構當代生命倫理學方面的優長。限於篇幅，這裡談兩點。其一，以儒家之“仁”對治超人類主義的技術濫用。儒家的仁強調“己欲立而立人”，主張通過技術使人類更好地存在。同時，儒家的仁也主張“惕隱之心”，即不忍人之心，強調對他者的尊重與同情，側重於將技術限定在同情與尊重他者的範圍內，從而與積極施行技術以推動人類進化之間相互制衡。以定制嬰兒為例，儒家會考慮這一技術會帶給嬰兒怎樣的處境和未來，若我們是嬰兒，會不會接受自己的一切被別人設計。若我們無法接受，則應同情嬰兒的處境，不可濫施技術來定制嬰兒。

其二，以儒家之“道”對治超人類主義的技術偏執。超人類主義將追求技術進步視為人類存在的意義本身，而沒有意識到技術進步應考慮人類與自然宇宙的關係。《中庸》云：“天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。”朱熹注曰：“命，猶令也。性，即理也。天以陰陽五行化生萬物，氣以成形，而理亦賦焉，猶命令也。於是人物之生，因各得其所（我：生-生）賦之理（我：真正的生命理性），以為健順五常之德，所謂性也。率，循也。道，猶路也。人物各循其性之自然，則其日用事物之間，莫不各有當行之路，是則所謂道也。”(朱傑人、嚴佐之、劉永翔2002)儒家
認為，人的稟賦來源於天，這構成了人之“性”。遵循由天而得的稟賦，這構成了人類存在與發展的道路。在儒家看來，人類的存在與發展，必須考慮“天”的影響，逆天而行、棄天而動，都是對“道”的偏離，將導致人類自身的災難。超人類主義者則不認可天對人的限制，它恰恰要從根本上打破這種限制。但儒家強調的是，人類可以根據自身發展不斷突破天道的制約，但人類又必須遵循天道對人類的某些根本性限制，因為這構成了人之性，一旦破壞，人類將變得無所適從。

最後，未竟的探討。儒家與超人類主義的爭論，涉及的根本問題是人類該如何定義自身。例如，超人類主義主張人應該不受限制地接受技術，只要這些技術是相對安全的，且能幫助我們不斷突破人類面臨的年齡、智力等局限。而儒家則認為人類面對自然宇宙，有些根本的限制和原則是不能突破也不該突破的，這些東西構成了人之為人的規定性，它是天給人的“命”和“令”。那麼，這些根本的限制和原則應該是什麼？它是否能隨著技術進步而得到化解與突破？這些問題將繼續推動我們深思下去。

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