SciencePG
Science Publishing Group

Research Article

The Instrumental Beyond the Human: Transhumanism, Emanation Theory, and Critical Posthumanities for the 21st Century

Nathan Matthias Moore*

Cultural Studies, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, The United States

Abstract

Being "Instrumental Beyond the Human" proposes a radical reconceptualization of transhumanism through the lenses of emanation theory, post-humanist critique, and avant-garde cultural studies. It builds upon the traditional foundations of classical liberalism and the history of science by juxtaposing it with emerging digital humanities. Informed by the works of historical and contemporary cultural theorists, this treatise explores how socioeconomic narratives shape technological prosperity and its implications for humankind's enhancement toward the avant-garde. By drawing upon critical infrastructures, this essay will move beyond traditional techno-optimism to interrogate how power, labor, gender, and race all intersect with emerging technologies including artificial intelligence, prosthetics, and even virtual reality in enigmatic ways. They do so by combining speculative narratives with an examination of sociocultural hauntologies rooted in anthropology. Avant-garde scholarship also investigates how immersive storytelling and posthuman narratives challenge conventional notions of selfhood, agency, and justice. By integrating new perspectives from the critical posthumanities, transhumanist discourse argues for a more inclusive and ethically reflective transhumanism rooted in the modern avant-garde. Rather than envisioning human enhancement as a centered, neutral, or utopian project, it highlights the necessity of confronting biases, power imbalances, and sociopolitical consequences embedded in the development of new technologies from all ends. Ultimately, this treatise provides a blueprint for the ongoing cultural, ethical, and political negotiation that reflects the broader avant-garde academic currents of the 21st century.

Keywords

Avant-Garde, Cultural Anthropology, Cultural Studies, History of Science, Transhumanism

1. Introduction: The Age of Instrumentality

In the 21st century, the evolving landscape of science and technology demands a radical reevaluation of the human condition. The U.S. Transhumanist Party (USTP) offers this treatise as a roadmap for those ready to embrace the future—a future defined by the unceasing progress of human life and its fusion with machine intelligence, biology, and social infrastructure. At the core of this treatise lies *emanation theory*—a framework suggesting that all scientific and technological innovations stem from a unified source of creative energy that transcends material existence.

Transhumanism, grounded in this emanation, challenges us to think beyond the instrumental use of technology, venturing into realms where humanity surpasses its biological and social limitations. In this vision, science and technology are no longer neutral tools—they are fundamental forces shaping new cultural formations, bodies, and spaces of power. As a guiding treatise for PhD graduates, this document integrates theoretical underpinnings from a critical syllabus, "Of the Instrumental: Culture, Science, and Technology," with the pressing questions of our age. The treatise will guide scholars and innovators to connect transhumanism with justice, equality, and distributed power across the intersectional categories of race, gender, and class.

The instrumental nature of technology, as it has been historically understood, implies domination over nature to propel human progress. Heidegger's critique of the instrumental approach to technology—technology as a means to an end—serves as a cautionary tale. Instead, transhumanists embrace technology as an *emanation* from a creative, infinite source. This aligns with Freud's exploration of illusion and the collective human imagination, where technology and magic blur in the service of transcending the self [18].

In this context, emanation theory posits that technology is not merely a constructed artifact but a manifestation of deeper, universal principles—progress, connection, and unity. Werner Herzog's "Lo and Behold" probes the existential meaning of such connections in the digital world, suggesting that cyberspace is an emanation of the human desire for transcendence. Virtual bodies are all the rage [23]. The future is not built on positivist reductionism but on the liberating force of emanative progress—science and technology as expressions of a deeper will to transcend limits, whether biological, social, or cosmic.

2. Posthumanism and the Avant-Garde: Learning from the Past, Embracing the Future

In exploring the avant-garde, we must consider how posthumanism interrogates traditional human-centered frameworks, questioning the limitations of humanism itself. Thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti and Cary Wolfe have called for a posthuman paradigm that incorporates nonhuman entities—machines, animals, and ecosystems—into our understanding of agency, identity, and ethics. This is directly relevant to transhumanism, which seeks to transcend the limitations of the human body and consciousness. By viewing humans as part of a broader posthuman ecology, transhumanism must grapple with ethical considerations regarding enhancement technologies. It can no longer be solely about human progress but must be about broader networks of intelligence and sentience.

The work of Kurt Vonnegut, particularly his satirical examinations of technology and humanity (*Slaughterhouse-Five*

and *Player Piano*), helps contextualize this shift [47, 48]. Vonnegut explores the tension between human agency and mechanization, an essential theme in posthumanism. Transhumanism, while often optimistic about technological enhancement, needs Vonnegut's cautionary lens to consider the consequences of dehumanization and loss of autonomy in a highly technologized world.

Moreover, Albert Camus' philosophical contributions, such as his exploration of the absurd and the tension between human meaning and an indifferent universe (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, *The First Man*), provide a critical counterbalance to the idealistic views of transhumanist utopias [8]. Camus' works offer a reminder that existential crises could arise when humans augment themselves beyond their natural limitations, confronting questions about purpose and meaning that science and technology may not easily resolve. Incorporating speculative design as a methodology in transhumanism allows for creative explorations of the future, envisioning scenarios where human enhancement intersects with society's political, economic, and cultural dimensions. The works of speculative thinkers and intellectuals provide radical imaginaries of these possibilities. Moore's Cloud narratives invite readers to engage in immersive storytelling, contemplating how augmented realities, enhanced cognitive capacities, and decentralized social structures may emerge from transhumanist technologies [36, 37].

This speculative approach aligns with the discussions of Manuel Castells in *The Rise of the Network Society*, where he envisions a global networked society enabled by technology, reshaping social, economic, and spatial relations [13]. The incorporation of speculative design into transhumanism encourages bold visions of future societies, not just technologically advanced but socially restructured by these enhancements.

3. Toward a Transhumanist Vanguard: The Hungarian Avant-Garde

The Hungarian Avant-Garde, emerging during the 1920s, was an art movement that simultaneously engaged with radical innovation and social transformation. Through the work of artists like Lajos Kassák, Sándor Bortnyik, László Moholy-Nagy, and László Péri, the movement proposed that artistic progress necessitated a re-imagining of both aesthetic and human experience. This vision is echoed in transhumanism, which envisions the transformative potential of science and technology not merely as tools of human enhancement but as catalysts of cultural and ideological evolution. As in the avant-garde, transhumanism's pursuit of progress demands a radical re-visioning of human identity, blurring boundaries between material reality and simulated environments. This alignment with the avant-garde provides transhumanism with a historical framework that accentuates its ideological potential and emphasizes the ethical considerations of its techno-

logical ambitions.

Historically, the Holy Crown of St. Stephen has functioned as a powerful symbol of Hungary's political and spiritual unity, central to its national identity since its coronation of Stephen I in 1000 AD. Its enduring significance as a relic of divine authority and cultural heritage persisted through centuries of political upheaval, from the Ottoman occupation to Habsburg rule and beyond. The Hungarian avant-garde of the early 20th century emerged in a period of national and cultural flux, following the dissolution of Austria-Hungary after World War I [46]. Avant-garde artists, such as Lajos Kassák, sought to break from the constraints of traditional narratives, including those embodied by icons like the Holy Crown, to assert a modern, globalized vision of Hungarian identity [40]. This historical tension—between the Crown's representation of continuity and the avant-garde's embrace of rupture—provides a critical framework for understanding transhumanism's aspirations. Much like the avant-garde rejected medieval hierarchies in favor of progressive ideals, transhumanism challenges the boundaries of the human itself, advocating for a technologically mediated identity untethered from biological or national determinism. By situating these movements within their historical contexts, we uncover a recurring dialectic: the push and pull between preserving identity and radically transforming it in response to cultural and technological shifts.

The tumultuous period surrounding World War II intensified the rift between the Holy Crown of St. Stephen and the progressive ideals represented by the Hungarian avant-garde. During the war, the Crown was evacuated to protect it from the advancing Soviet forces, eventually falling into American hands and symbolizing the fragile state of Hungary's national sovereignty [6]. Meanwhile, the avant-garde movement, already fragmented by political oppression during the interwar years, faced further suppression under the fascist and communist regimes. The Crown came to represent not only Hungary's cultural heritage but also a contested symbol in the ideological struggles between tradition and modernity. The avant-garde's critique of entrenched hierarchies, including nationalist iconography like the Crown, was silenced by regimes that sought to co-opt or suppress dissenting voices. This historical moment highlights the fraught interplay between cultural preservation and radical transformation, laying the groundwork for contemporary transhumanism. Just as the post-war rediscovery and eventual repatriation of the Crown underscored questions of identity and sovereignty, transhumanism's challenge to fixed notions of humanity echoes the avant-garde's defiance, inviting reflection on how technology might mediate future cultural and political rifts.

László Moholy-Nagy's experimentation with light, motion, and industrial materials within the Bauhaus context underscores the avant-garde commitment to redefining materiality and sensory experience [14]. Moholy-Nagy's kinetic art directly anticipated the immersive, experiential technologies that transhumanism seeks to normalize—virtual and augmented realities that not only simulate environments but actively reconfigure identity and embodiment within digital landscapes. For transhumanism, the digitization of identity offers unprecedented opportunities for individuals to transcend physical limitations, embody new forms, and interact with augmented environments in ways that seem to challenge the boundaries of the self.

Yet, this reconfiguration also reintroduces long-standing ideological questions about agency and authenticity. While Moholy-Nagy's work critiqued rigid structures and opened new sensory experiences, transhumanism's pursuit of virtual embodiment risks reproducing a narrow, market-driven vision of human enhancement. Much as avant-garde artists redefined their materials to expand artistic language, transhumanist practitioners must scrutinize the frameworks within which they deploy their technologies, particularly as they relate to socio-political power in the modern city setting [29]. A truly transformative transhumanism would, therefore, heed Moholy-Nagy's call to radically repurpose the material constraints of reality, fostering accessible, human-centered technological spaces rather than replicating existing hierarchies in digital form.

Lajos Kassák's vision of a collective will, central to the avant-garde project, aligns with transhumanism's ideal of enhancing human potential on a societal scale. Kassák understood art to activate collective agency, proposing that aesthetic and social progress are mutually reinforcing. This ethos resonates with the U.S. Transhumanist Party's objective to democratize access to life-enhancing technologies, envisioning a society where every individual can transcend biological limitations. However, Kassák's emphasis on "pictorial architecture" as a vehicle for social mobilization invites scrutiny of transhumanism's operational frameworks. While transhumanism imagines technology as a public good, its integration into the economic frameworks of Silicon Valley often contradicts this vision, funneling power and access into the hands of a select elite.

In Kassák's avant-garde, artistic collectives represented the democratization of creativity, positioning the artist as both an individual and community member within a shared aesthetic project. Transhumanism, to embody this philosophy fully, must actively promote accessible systems that prioritize collective autonomy over privatized innovation. Just as Kassák's work engaged with Yugoslav-Hungarian literature to expand cultural consciousness across boundaries, a transhumanist collective will ought to engage a plurality of voices, prioritizing inclusivity over exclusivity. This inclusive ethos would not merely enhance society's relationship to technology but could also democratize identity itself by facilitating diverse forms of self-expression in digital and augmented spaces.

Péri's "spatial constructions" and Bortnyik's contributions to the MA group encapsulate the avant-garde's commitment to technological experimentation as a form of ideological praxis. By challenging the limitations of conventional art forms, these artists constructed new realities that blurred the

line between art and life, directly influencing their audiences' perception of reality. In Péri's case, "spatial construction" sought to redefine the aesthetic experience by challenging the viewer's perception of space, paralleling transhumanism's ambition to disrupt the conventional limits of human experience.

Transhumanism, like Péri's constructions, seeks to redefine human potential by challenging the limitations of the material body. However, while Péri's work remained deeply critical of existing power structures, transhumanist applications often replicate these structures, particularly through the commodification of enhancement technologies. If transhumanism is to realize its potential as a true avant-garde of human progress, it must, like Péri, rigorously interrogate its ideological commitments. This means cultivating technologies that promote societal benefit, emphasize ethical considerations, and challenge the market-driven imperatives that increasingly dominate the tech industry.

The Hungarian Avant-Garde's efforts to reshape art, society, and identity through radical redefinitions of materiality, collectivity, and ideology mirror transhumanism's ambition to enhance human potential through technological innovation. By drawing on avant-garde principles, transhumanism gains a framework to critically examine its relationship with power, agency, and collective transformation. Just as the avant-garde artists redefined the boundaries of art to reflect a broader ideological commitment, transhumanism must continually re-evaluate its technological applications to ensure that they serve the collective good rather than reinforce existing inequalities. Embracing an avant-garde ethos would enable transhumanism to establish itself as a movement that not only enhances the human experience but also reshapes the socio-political conditions that define it.

4. Critical Posthumanities: Rethinking the Disciplines

The emergent field of critical posthumanities is crucial for transhumanist studies, offering an interdisciplinary space that draws on philosophy, literature, history, and critical theory. By transcending the boundaries between the humanities and sciences, the critical posthumanities can offer new perspectives on the ethical, social, and cultural implications of enhancement technologies. Our contemporary vexation emphasizes how emergent media technologies and social media have shaped political identities and movements that turn into cult-like personalities. These kinds of analyses underscore how technology is not politically neutral, aligning with transhumanism's need to consider how technological advancements might reinforce or disrupt existing power structures. This inquiry ties into Gramsci's theory of hegemony, revealing how cultural and ideological power works in tandem with technological advancements such as Fordism. The development of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and

wearable technologies in transhumanism echoes these historical trajectories, leading to the quantification of life itself—a phenomenon that demands critical scrutiny from a posthuman perspective.

In *Algorithms of Oppression*, Safiya Noble critiques how algorithms perpetuate racial inequalities, urging transhumanists to confront the biases that may arise in technologically enhanced societies. The emergent field of decolonial digital humanities responds to these challenges by interrogating the ways technology can reproduce or resist colonial power structures. Heidi Hausse's exploration of prosthetics during the early modern period provides an invaluable historical insight into the embodiment of technology [24]. As Hausse explains, prosthetics during this era reflected not just technological innovation but also cultural narratives about the human body and disability. Her research reminds us that the integration of technology into the body—central to transhumanism—is not a neutral act but a deeply cultural one. By considering the historical context of prosthetic technologies, transhumanists can better understand how body modification reflects broader societal values and power dynamics of bodily insecurity.

5. New Western History and Political Dimensions of Science and Technology

Finally, integrating the political and historical frameworks of the "New Western History" into this treatise allows for a broader reflection on the relationship between science, technology, and political history. *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society, Volume I to 1877* by Nash, Howe, and others, offers valuable insights into how technological advancements (such as the telegraph and the railroad) played a crucial role in shaping the political and economic landscape of early America [38]. Incorporating this political history into transhumanism allows for a more nuanced understanding of how science and technology have historically been mobilized to advance political agendas, especially Manifest Destiny's westward expansion. The open roads of America are no different [12].

Integrating these academic fields and texts into the transhumanist discourse brings forth more radical, reflective, and critical transhumanism. By drawing from posthumanism, speculative design, critical posthumanities, and decolonial digital humanities, transhumanism can avoid the pitfalls of technological determinism and engage in more ethical, inclusive, and imaginative visions of the future. Transhumanism must remain grounded in a critical understanding of historical, political, and cultural power, as illustrated by the contributions of thinkers such as Gramsci and Camus. Moreover, by looking at speculative futures and immersive storytelling, transhumanism can offer radical alternatives that challenge the status quo. As we move toward an enhanced future, the transhumanist treatise must be open to these avant-garde

academic currents, ensuring that the pursuit of human enhancement is not just a technological endeavor, but a deeply cultural, ethical, and political one.

Marx's "hazardous concept" of technology warns us of the contradictions embedded in technological innovation [34]. How can transhumanism, with its focus on human enhancement, avoid reinforcing existing structures of inequality? Foucault's biopolitics and Rose's *Politics of Life Itself* provide critical insights into the intersections of biology, power, and technology [44]. For transhumanism to be emancipatory, it must grapple with how bodies, gender, race, and labor are reconfigured through science and technology. This process often remains obscured by the "pernicious neutrality" of technoscience, which disguises power relations within infrastructures that serve dominant cultural and political interests. Thus, we ask: How can the USTP create infrastructures that do not merely reproduce existing inequalities but transform them? Through new biopolitics of care, as theorized by Haraway and feminist scholars of technology, we can build a science that is situated, partial, and accountable—an emanation of justice rather than control.

Donna Haraway's influential Cyborgs and Emily Martin's critique of gendered narratives in biology challenge us to think of the body beyond its current limitations [22, 35]. Transhumanism must reject essentialist ideas of the body in favor of an emanative conception, where the body, gender, and care become sites of radical transformation. The body, seen as a canvas for technological enhancement, must also be a site of political contestation. Feminist theorists like Hi'ilei Hobart and Tamara Kneese stress the need for radical care in a world where bodies are commodified and surveilled. In the future envisioned by the USTP, care will not be a secondary or marginalized concern; it will be central to technological innovation [26].

The reproductive capacities of both society and nature are reimagined in the transhumanist future. Walter Benjamin's critique of mechanical reproduction under capitalism hints at the dangers of mass-produced, standardized Fordism humanity [3]. But transhumanism must resist the pitfalls of mechanical reproduction, seeking instead a sublime form of self-reproduction—one that balances technology's potential for homogenization with the rich diversity of human experience. Urbanism thrives on this interconnectedness and interdisciplinary within its metaphorical, and literal wall of abundance [20]. Call it special well-being [43]. Transhumanist infrastructures—digital networks, prosthetics, and AI—must reflect an emanative ethics of care and justice. As Castells theorizes the "space of flows" in the network society, transhumanism positions itself as both within and beyond these flows, using them as tools for empowerment rather than domination [13].

In an age where private labor fuels public consumption, and selfhood becomes a product, Byung-Chul Han's *Psychopolitics* serves as a critical guide [21]. Transhumanists must be wary of how technology creates neoliberal subjects who are controlled by their data [27]. The emanative theory of technology positions the self as fluid, ever-expanding, yet conscious of the structures that seek to define and limit it. As the digital self emanates into broader networks, transhumanists must cultivate selfhood as a creative, autonomous force—one that resists surveillance and commodification. Secrecy and the techno-spy authority are not isolated enigma but spread throughout this ideological regime's body-politic [33]. In this sense, the self becomes a site of resistance against the new psychopolitics of neoliberalism.

6. Never Neutral—Technoscience and Algorithmic Liberation

The neutrality of science has long been exposed as a myth, especially in the wake of algorithmic bias and systemic racism embedded in Artificial Intelligence or AI, and digital infrastructures. Safiya Noble's *Algorithms of Oppression* and Shalini Kantayya's "Coded Bias" reveal the dangers of unchecked technological advancement [30, 39]. The USTP, rooted in an emanative ethos, seeks to create technologies that liberate rather than oppress. Transhumanists must actively work to decolonize technology, creating systems that empower marginalized communities. The future of AI must be one where biases are not merely corrected, but where justice is coded into the very fabric of technological systems.

The integration of transhumanist technologies into modern warfare represents a critical juncture where advancements in human enhancement meet the harsh realities of perpetual conflict. Technologies such as advanced prosthetics, AI-powered drones, and exoskeletons, initially designed to improve human capabilities, are increasingly repurposed by defense industries to create a new breed of enhanced soldiers and equipment. These developments shift the ethical landscape of warfare, raising questions about the commodification of human bodies and the blurring lines between the organic and the mechanical in combat zones against an ever-strengthening adversary.

Economic imperatives play a significant role in perpetuating these "forever wars." Technology corporations, entwined with defense industries, often stand to gain from prolonged conflicts, as innovation in weaponized enhancements feeds into a profit-driven military-industrial complex. This cycle exacerbates class divides, with affluent nations deploying enhanced soldiers and advanced weaponry, while marginalized populations bear the brunt of these conflicts without access to similar resources. Moreover, the reduced human cost of war for technologically superior nations could incentivize continuous military engagement, deepening global inequities.

The U.S. Transhumanist Party, while largely focused on individual and societal enhancement, must contend with the ethical implications of these military applications. How might these technologies, when deployed in warfare, reshape not

only combat strategies but also global power dynamics [15]? Can regulatory frameworks prevent the exploitation of transhumanist innovations for profit-driven violence? These questions demand urgent attention as the line between human enhancement and militarization continues to blur, threatening to entrench a dystopian cycle of technological superiority and unending war.

As transhumanists envision new forms of enhancement, they must critically engage with the politics of prosthetics and AI, as explored by Atanasoski and Vora [1]. The body becomes a site of both empowerment and exploitation, and the USTP must advocate for ethical technologies that expand human potential without reducing people to instruments of capital or state power. Since the nineteenth-century women have dealt suffrage a mighty persona in the form of Victoria Woodhull [11, 19]. The future is one where prosthetics are not simply tools but extensions of human freedom. AI, too, must be guided by ethical principles that emanate from a deep respect for human dignity and diversity. As Preciado's *Testo Junkie* and Alvaro Jarrín's biopolitical takes on beauty show, the future of transhumanism is deeply aesthetic and biopolitical [41, 42]. The body, in its enhanced form, becomes both a work of art and a political statement. The USTP envisions a world where beauty, health, and enhancement are available to all, not as commodities, but as expressions of a more just and equitable society.

In this future, beauty is not a standard imposed from above but an emanation of diverse human experiences. This is the final frontier of transhumanist politics—a future where the body is a site of freedom, justice, and aesthetic transformation. This treatise posits that the U.S. Transhumanist Party (USTP) embodies an emanative approach to science, technology, and culture, rejecting instrumentalism in favor of a vision that emphasizes equity, justice, and the radical reimagining of the human condition through artistic creativity and "free-will." By integrating concepts from autotheory, the critical theories of Antonio Gramsci, and the linguistic critiques of Noam Chomsky, this treatise serves as a call for scholars and practitioners in cultural studies and history to embrace the transformative potential of transhumanism while remaining critically aware of its cultural implications.

7. Autotheory and the Radical Subject

At the heart of the transhumanist agenda lies a vision of progress that transcends traditional notions of positivism. Rather than viewing technology as merely an instrument for human dominance over nature, transhumanism reframes it as an emanative force—one that arises from a collective desire to improve the human condition. Heidegger's critique of technology emphasizes the need to re-evaluate our relationship with the technological world [25]. This emanative approach aligns with the thoughts of Freud, who regarded human creativity as a driving force behind technological innovation [18]. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of human desires

and technological advancement, transhumanism offers a pathway toward a more inclusive understanding of progress. The interplay between culture and power is crucial in understanding how technological advancements shape society. As noted by Marx and Foucault, technology often serves the interests of dominant classes while perpetuating inequality [17]. Transhumanism must confront these power dynamics by advocating for equitable access to technological advancements.

In examining the political economy of technology, we find that innovations often reflect existing cultural biases, reinforcing social hierarchies rather than dismantling them. By addressing these inequalities, the USTP can ensure that transhumanism becomes a vehicle for empowerment rather than oppression. Autotheory, as articulated by contemporary theorists, combines personal narrative with critical theory, inviting individuals to position themselves within broader social and cultural contexts. This approach aligns with transhumanism's emphasis on the potential for personal and collective transformation.

Transhumanism must be critically aware of the narratives it perpetuates, ensuring that it does not unwittingly reinforce existing power structures. By fostering a counter-hegemonic discourse, transhumanism can challenge dominant cultural paradigms, creating space for alternative visions of the future. This process involves recognizing the role of marginalized voices and integrating them into the transhumanist agenda.

8. The Role of Language and Communication

Noam Chomsky's linguistic theories highlight the importance of language in shaping human cognition and communication. In the context of transhumanism, understanding the role of language is essential for fostering inclusive dialogue around technological advancements. Transhumanists must critically engage with the language used to describe emerging technologies, ensuring that it reflects a commitment to equity and justice. By cultivating a language of inclusivity, transhumanism can better articulate its vision for the future. Zoltan Istvan refers to it as a "wager" of sorts [28].

Feminist theorists, including Judith Butler, Haraway, and Martin, provide critical insights into how technology intersects with gender and biopolitics [7]. Transhumanism must address these intersections by advocating for a more equitable and just approach to technological advancement. This involves recognizing the role of care in the context of technology, as articulated by Hobart and Kneese. By centering care on the transhumanist agenda, we can create a more inclusive vision for the future.

The intersection of race and technology is a critical area of inquiry for transhumanism. Noble's work on algorithmic bias and Kantayya's examination of facial recognition technology reveal the ways in which technology can reinforce systemic

racism. Transhumanism must actively work to dismantle these biases, advocating for equitable access to technological advancements and ensuring that marginalized communities are not further oppressed by emerging technologies. The relationship between beauty and technology is a crucial aspect of transhumanism. Preciado's exploration of the biopolitics of beauty and Jarrín's work on aesthetic citizenship highlights the ways technology can shape our understanding of beauty and identity. Transhumanism must embrace a diverse and inclusive vision of beauty, recognizing that aesthetic. Progress, often equated with technological advancement, is a concept that needs reexamination. Traditional notions of progress are rooted in positivism, which emphasizes empirical evidence and objective measurement. However, this view often obscures the cultural and ethical implications of technological development. As noted by Latour, the process of scientific discovery is deeply intertwined with social contexts and power relations [32].

Emanation theory, derived from various philosophical traditions, posits that all phenomena arise from a single source, reflecting a continuum of existence. This perspective challenges the dichotomy between nature and culture, suggesting that technological advancements should be viewed as part of a broader, interconnected human experience. Transhumanism can benefit from this understanding by framing progress as a communal endeavor rather than a mere accumulation of individual achievements. Understanding the political economy of technology requires examining how technological advancements are produced, distributed, and consumed. For instance, the digital divide highlights disparities in access to technology, which are often linked to socioeconomic status and geographical location [13].

Noam Chomsky's linguistic theories highlight the importance of language in shaping human cognition and communication. Language can be both a tool of empowerment and a mechanism of oppression. Transhumanism must critically engage with the language used to describe emerging technologies. Developing a language of inclusivity is essential for articulating the transhumanist vision. This involves recognizing the power dynamics inherent in language and striving for terminology that reflects a commitment to equity and justice. The language used in AI development often reflects existing biases, perpetuating stereotypes and marginalization [39]. Transhumanism can reshape public discourse by adopting inclusive language that emphasizes collaboration, equity, and justice.

Care is a central theme in feminist discourse and must be integrated into the transhumanist agenda's message. This involves recognizing the importance of care work, which is often devalued in a capitalist society. Technologies of care use innovations in healthcare technology, such as telemedicine, have the potential to enhance access to care while challenging traditional hierarchies in medical practice. Immunity comes at a cost [2]. Community-based care models emphasize that community-oriented care models can help address the ine-

qualities perpetuated by conventional healthcare systems.

Establishing ethical standards in the development and implementation of prosthetics and AI is crucial. This includes considerations around accessibility, affordability, and the potential for exploitation. Examining the accessibility of prosthetic technologies highlights disparities in healthcare and the need for equitable solutions. The ethical implications of AI in decision-making processes underscore the importance of transparency and accountability in technological development. Initiatives aimed at increasing accountability in algorithmic decision-making can help mitigate racial biases in technology. Encouraging diverse representations in media can help shift societal perceptions of beauty and identity. John Berger, an English art critic with British broadcasting projects including *Ways of Seeing*, lauded one of the most influential art programs, argued that mass media changed how people perceived art [4]. Engaging communities in participatory art projects can foster dialogue around the beauty, identity, and technology of the avant-garde.

Progress, often equated with technological advancement, is a concept that needs reexamination. Traditional notions of progress are rooted in positivism, which emphasizes empirical evidence and objective measurement. However, this view often obscures the cultural and ethical implications of technological development. As noted by Latour [32], the process of scientific discovery is deeply intertwined with social contexts and power relations. Emanation theory, derived from various philosophical traditions, posits that all phenomena arise from a single source, reflecting a continuum of existence. This perspective challenges the dichotomy between nature and culture, suggesting that technological advancements should be viewed as part of a broader, interconnected human experience.

Tom Ross's philosophy emphasizes the interconnectedness of existence, aligning with emanation theory and Chomsky. Ross argues that the essence of being transcends individual experience, advocating for a collective understanding of humanity that resonates with transhumanist ideals. Ross's work on the ethics of technology underscores the importance of accountability and transparency in technological development and language acquisition for newcomers. Ray Kurzweil is his predecessor, further reiterating how close singularity is in the minds of forthcoming intellectuals [31]. His perspective can help guide the ethical framework for transhumanist practices, ensuring they prioritize communal well-being over profit. Initiatives that promote collaboration in technology development can exemplify Ross's ethical approach, ensuring equitable access to innovations. Ross's insights into environmental ethics align with transhumanist efforts to develop sustainable technologies, advocating for a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature. Transhumanism invites a reevaluation of beauty standards and aesthetics in a world increasingly influenced by technology.

Some authors such as science fiction writer N. Matthias Moore offer critical insights into the relationship between

aesthetics, identity, and the human experience in a technologically mediated world. In this narrative, Moore explores the concept of beauty in a hyper-connected society in his Cloud science-fiction series, where personal identity is shaped by digital interactions and the commodification of self. The characters grapple with the implications of technology on their perceptions of beauty, illustrating how digital platforms can both empower and constrain individual expression. This work delves into the ethical dilemmas posed by technological enhancement, particularly concerning social equity and the aesthetics of the "ideal" body [36, 37]. Moore critiques how societal norms dictate standards of beauty, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive understanding that embraces diversity and challenges conventional ideals.

9. Hauntologies and the Ghosts of Production

In the context of transhumanism and its sociocultural implications, the concept of hauntology becomes particularly pertinent. Coined by philosopher Jacques Derrida, hauntology refers to the return or persistence of elements from the past, particularly concerning lost futures and unfulfilled potentials. This notion resonates strongly within the framework of transhumanism, where aspirations for enhancement and immortality often confront the realities of social inequalities and historical injustices.

In 2016, sociocultural anthropologists engaged with the idea of hauntology to analyze how the specters of past production methods, labor histories, and technological aspirations continue to influence contemporary society. As we look toward a transhumanist future, we must reckon with these "ghosts of production," which remind us that the technologies we seek to embrace are steeped in the legacies of colonialism, exploitation, and systemic oppression.

For instance, the development of enhancement technologies often mirrors the historical trajectories of industrial production, where certain bodies are valued over others. The ghosts of these histories haunt our present, shaping who gets access to technological advancements and who remains marginalized. By incorporating hauntological perspectives into our examination of transhumanism, we can better understand how the promise of a technologically enhanced future is intertwined with the realities of historical and ongoing inequalities that are oft spoken of by spokespeople [45]. Yet, promises are seldom kept one hundred percent of the time.

The works of Albert Camus offer profound insights into the human condition, particularly as we navigate the complexities of transhumanism. Camus's philosophy, often centered on the absurd, invites us to confront the inherent contradictions of existence and the search for meaning in a seemingly indifferent universe. In this context, his reflections on human resilience and the pursuit of authenticity resonate deeply with the aspirations and anxieties surrounding enhancement technologies.

Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus* serves as a poignant metaphor for the transhumanist journey that can occur in the American transhumanist movement [9, 10]. Just as Sisyphus is condemned to eternally push a boulder up a hill, only to see it roll back down, individuals pursuing enhancement may find themselves grappling with the futility of their aspirations in the face of systemic obstacles and ethical dilemmas. The quest for an enhanced existence can be seen as both a noble endeavor and a Sisyphean struggle, as we confront the limitations imposed by society and the legacies of power that haunt our technological aspirations.

Moreover, Camus's emphasis on the importance of solidarity and community aligns with the ethical considerations inherent in transhumanism. As we explore the potential of enhancement technologies, we must remember Camus's assertion that human connection and shared experiences are vital to finding meaning in our lives. This perspective compels us to envision a transhumanist future that prioritizes inclusivity, recognizing the value of diverse voices and experiences in shaping the narrative of technological progress.

By integrating the insights of figures such as Camus, we can enrich our understanding of transhumanism, recognizing that the journey toward enhancement is fraught with existential questions. As we strive to create a future defined by equity and inclusivity, we must engage with the complexities of our past, the hauntologies that inform our present, and the ethical implications of our technological aspirations. This treatise calls for a transhumanism that not only seeks to transcend human limitations but also embraces the richness of the human experience. By fostering critical dialogue, acknowledging our historical contexts, and prioritizing ethical considerations, we can work toward a future where technology enhances our collective humanity rather than detracts from it.

Kurt Vonnegut, a master of blending satire with science fiction, provides a critical lens through which we can examine the promises and pitfalls of transhumanism. His works often explore the absurdities of modern life and the unforeseen consequences of technological advancements, inviting readers to reflect on the ethical dimensions of progress. In a world increasingly driven by enhancement technologies, Vonnegut's narratives challenge us to question the motivations behind our aspirations and the societal implications of our choices.

In novels such as *Player Piano*, Vonnegut presents a dystopian vision where technology replaces human labor, leading to a society divided between the elite and the disenfranchised [47]. This critique aligns closely with the transhumanist discourse, which often celebrates technological advancement without fully addressing the potential for increased inequality. As we strive for enhancement and transcendence, we must heed Vonnegut's warning about the dangers of dehumanization that can accompany unchecked technological progress.

Moreover, Vonnegut's exploration of the human condition, particularly through his recurring theme of "so it goes," em-

phasizes the inevitability of suffering and the absurdity of existence. This perspective invites a nuanced discussion within transhumanism, encouraging us to consider whether the pursuit of enhancement can genuinely alleviate the human condition or if it merely complicates our understanding of what it means to be human. In a society where technological enhancements are commodified, the risk of alienation and existential despair becomes ever more pronounced.

Vonnegut's satirical tone serves as a reminder that while we may aspire to transcend our biological limitations, we must also remain vigilant about the ethical ramifications of our technological pursuits. His insistence on the importance of empathy and human connection in a fragmented world resonates deeply with the ethical imperatives of responsible transhumanism—one that seeks to uplift all members of society rather than perpetuate divisions. Understanding that embraces diversity and challenges conventional ideals.

10. Conclusion

Integrating Vonnegut's insights into our understanding of transhumanism invites us to approach the future with both hope and caution. As we navigate the complexities of enhancement technologies, we must remain conscious of the absurdities that may arise and the ethical dilemmas we will face. Embracing a transhumanist future necessitates a commitment to inclusivity and solidarity, ensuring that the benefits of technological progress are accessible to all, rather than entrenching existing inequalities. By critically engaging with the works of authors like Vonnegut, we enrich our discourse on transhumanism, fostering a comprehensive understanding of how culture, technology, and power interact in shaping our shared human experience.

As we conclude this exploration of transhumanism, cultural studies, and the avant-garde, it is imperative to situate these discussions within the broader philosophical framework. Classical liberalism, with its emphasis on individual rights, freedom, and the role of rational discourse, provides a foundational context for understanding the transformative potential of emergent technologies in shaping our society toward an even more critical posthumanism debate the likes Frederick Douglass would hold in high esteem [5, 16]. The avant-garde, as a critical lens, calls us to transcend the boundaries of conventional thought and engage with the complexities of our technological landscape. By integrating classical liberal ideas, we underscore the importance of individual autonomy and the capacity for self-determination in the face of rapid change. In this light, transhumanism emerges not merely as a quest for technological enhancement but as a potential pathway to greater personal freedom and self-actualization. It aligns with the classical liberal ideal of progress through reason, as individuals seek to transcend their biological limitations in pursuit of a more enriched existence.

However, as we navigate the nuances of transhumanism, we must remain vigilant against the risks of technocratic domination, where the very technologies designed to liberate can also reinforce existing hierarchies and inequalities. This tension reflects classical liberalism's inherent concerns about the balance of power and the need for robust democratic institutions to safeguard individual freedoms. The insights of theorists like Gramsci and Chomsky remind us that power is never neutral; it is constantly negotiated and contested within the public sphere. The avant-garde thus serves as a critical intervention.

The concept of "hauntology," as articulated within sociocultural anthropology, resonates deeply with classical liberal ideas by emphasizing the enduring impact of historical injustices on contemporary struggles for freedom, equality, and the emanation of prosperity. Just as classical liberalism champions the idea of historical accountability in shaping just societies, the avant-garde beckons us to confront the ghosts of our past—those structures and ideologies that continue to haunt our present. By doing so, we can cultivate a richer understanding of how technology can serve as a means of addressing systemic inequalities rather than exacerbating them.

Furthermore, engaging with works like *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society* enhances our understanding of the intertwined narratives of science, technology, and political history. The New Western History framework illuminates the complex relationships between individual agency and societal structures, inviting us to reflect on the role of collective action in shaping our technological future. This approach aligns with classical liberalism's emphasis on the importance of civic engagement and the public good, advocating for a society where technology empowers rather than alienates.

In synthesizing these diverse threads, we arrive at a vision of the avant-garde as an essential force for progressive change. By embracing immersive storytelling, digital rhetorics, and the speculative possibilities of virtual reality, we can envision futures that honor the complexity of human experiences while fostering inclusive narratives. In conclusion, the avant-garde, viewed through the lens of classical liberalism and critical posthumanism, offers a powerful framework for understanding the interplay of technology, culture, and individual agency. As we engage with the promise and peril of transhumanism, we are reminded of our collective responsibility to advocate for a society that prioritizes human dignity, freedom, and equality. It is in this critical engagement that we find the potential to shape a future where technology serves as a tool for liberation, enabling individuals to transcend their limitations and participate fully in the ongoing dialogue of progress and humanity.

Abbreviations

| AI | Artificial Intelligence |
| USTP | U.S. Transhumanist Party |

Author Contributions

Nathan Matthias Moore is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

[1] Atanasoski, Ned, and Kalindi Vora. Surrogate Humanity: Race, Robots, and the Politics of Technological Futures. Duke University Press, 2019.

[2] Biss, Eula. Immunity: An Inoculation. Graywolf Press, 2014.

[3] Benjamin, Walter. "A Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Illuminations, edited by Hannah Arendt, Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 217-252.

[4] Berger, John. Ways of Seeing. British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972.

[5] Blight, David W. Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom. Simon & Schuster, 2018.

[6] Borenstein, Eliot. Unstuck in Time: On the Post-Soviet Uncanny. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019.

[7] Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. Routledge, 1990.

[8] Camus, Albert. The First Man. Vintage Books, 1996.

[9] Camus, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus. Translated by Justin O'Brien, Penguin Classics, 2000.

[10] Camus, Albert, et al. Travels in the Americas: Notes and Impressions of a New World. The University of Chicago Press, 2023.

[11] Chatterjee, Ronjaunee. Feminine Singularity: The Politics of Subjectivity in Nineteenth-Century Literature. Stanford University Press, 2022.

[12] Crawford, Matthew B. Why We Drive: Toward A Philosophy of the Open Road. HarperCollins Publishers, 2021.

[13] Castells, Manuel. The Rise of the Network Society. Blackwell Wiley, 2009.

[14] Clark, T. J. The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing. Yale University Press, 2008.

[15] "Collaborative Combat Aircraft." Behind The Wings, season 6, episode 2, KVCR PBS, 2024.

[16] Douglass, Frederick. The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass. De Wolfe & Fiske Co., 1892.

[17] Foucault, Michel. "Right of Death and Power Over Life." The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1, Vintage Books, 1990, pp. 135-159.

[18] Freud, Sigmund. The Future of an Illusion. Penguin Books, 1927.

[19] Gabriel, Mary. Notorious Victoria: The Life of Victoria Woodhull, Uncensored. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1998.

[20] Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition. Routledge, 2001.

[21] Han, Byung-Chul. Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power. Verso, 2017.

[22] Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature, Routledge, 1991, pp. 183-201.

[23] Hayles, N. Katherine. How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

[24] Hausse, Heidi. "The Body and the Prosthetic: An Intersection of Politics and Technology." Disability Studies Quarterly, vol. 29, no. 2, 2009, pp. 56-70.

[25] Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology." The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, translated by William Lovitt, Garland Publishing, 1977, pp. 3-35.

[26] Hobart, Hi'ilei Kawehipuaakahaopulani, Julia Kneese, and Tamara Kneese. "Radical Care: Strategies for Uncertain Times." Social Text, vol. 38, no. 1, 2020, pp. 1-26.

[27] Igo, Sarah E. The Known Citizen: A History of Privacy in Modern America. Harvard University Press, 2020.

[28] Istvan, Zoltan. The Transhumanist Wager. Futurity Imagine Media LLC, 2013.

[29] Juhász, Tamás, and Ágnes Györke, editors. Urban Culture and the Modern City: Hungarian Case Studies. Leuven University Press, 2024.

[30] Kantayya, Shalini, director. Coded Bias. Netflix, 2020.

[31] Kurzweil, Ray. The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology. Viking, 2005.

[32] Latour, Bruno. "Postmodern? No, Simply Amodern! Steps Towards an Anthropology of Science." Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, vol. 21, no. 1, 1990, pp. 145-171.

[33] Macrakis, Kristie. Nothing Is Beyond Our Reach: America's Techno-Spy Empire. Knopf, 2024.

[34] Marx, Leo. "Technology: The Emergence of a Hazardous Concept." Technology and Culture, vol. 51, no. 3, 2010, pp. 561–577.

[35] Martin, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." Signs, vol. 16, no. 3, 1991, pp. 485–501.

[36] Moore, N. Matthias. Cloud 9: A Novel. Mill City Press/Xulon Press, 2021.

[37] Moore, N. Matthias. Sector 10: A Prequel. Mill City Press/Xulon Press, 2021.

[38] Nash, Jeffrey, et al. The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society, Volume I to 1877. Fourth ed., Pearson, 2013.

[39] Noble, Safiya Umoja. Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism. New York University Press, 2018.

[40] Perényi, V. (2019). The Holy Crown and the Hungarian Estates: Constructing early modern identity in the Kingdom of Hungary (Refo500 Academic Studies R5AS, Vol. 92). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

[41] Preciado, Paul B. Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era. Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013.

[42] Pussetti, Chiara and Alvaro Jarrín, editors. Remaking the Human: Cosmetic Technologies of Body Repair, Reshaping, and Replacement. Berghahn Books, 2024. ---. The Biopolitics of Beauty: Cosmetic Citizenship and Affective Capital in Brazil. University of California Press, 2017.

[43] Prinzing, Michael. "How to Study Well-Being: A Proposal for the Integration of Philosophy With Science." Review of General Psychology, vol. 25, no. 2, 2021, pp. 152–62. https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680211002443

[44] Rose, Nicholas. "The Politics of Life Itself." Theory, Culture & Society, vol. 24, no. 6, 2007, pp. 1-24.

[45] Shirky, Clay. "Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations." TED Talk, 2008, www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_here_comes_everybody

[46] U.S. Embassy in Hungary. (n.d.). Return of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen. Retrieved November 22, 2024, from https://hu.usembassy.gov/return-of-the-holy-crown-of-st-stephen/

[47] Vonnegut, Kurt. Player Piano. Delacorte Press, 1952.

[48] Vonnegut, Kurt. Slaughterhouse-Five. Delta, 1991.