



Research Paper

A review of posthumanist education; An entangled world with multiple agents

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of the current paper is to review and criticize posthumanist education. Posthumanism is an approach in the criticizing and evaluation of humanism which holds that humans are not the only active factor and that we need to consider the role of objects, technologies, animals, and generally non-humans as well. Posthumanism believes that man is not necessarily the master of creatures. It believes that the decentralization of human beings will lead to a better world. This study first uses an analytical and explanatory method to analyze and explain the posthumanist perspective; then, it examines post-humanist education; and finally, it reviews criticisms of post-humanist views, especially in education. The present study suggests that the role of the human subconscious should also be considered as a factor in posthumanism. Posthumanist thought has a non-instrumental view of nature and views man and nature as a whole; it treats humans as equal to animals, and with respect to education, posthumanism equates the teacher's role with that of various other factors involved in learning. Posthumanist thinkers believe that humans can learn a lot from animals.

Keywords: *Posthumanism, Multiple Agencies, Education, Entangled World*

Introduction

Humanism envisions man as a unique being and takes the world and all other beings at the service of man. In recent years, scholars have presented theories that try to question human exceptionalism and the dualities of humanism. They hold that other beings and even objects have agency and should be distinguished for the role they play in our 'being a human' and our evolution. Stiegler (1998), for instance, believed that humans have become 'humans' through technology and have evolved with it. He also stated that there is human on one side and technology on the other side, but these two evolve and progress together. Other scholars, including Don Ihde (1978; 1990) with his theory of post-phenomenology, Bruno Latour (2007) with his Actor-Network theory, and Peter Verbeek (2011) with his theory of moralizing technology with multiple agencies and the role of material objects and technologies, have insisted on reducing the exclusivity of human agency. Today, the emphasis on multiple agencies, the criticism of binary oppositions, and in general the criticism of the basic assumptions of humanism, are recognized as the posthumanism movement, which is especially associated and introduced with the works of Hayles (1999), Harvey (2008), and Braidotti (2013). These works emphasize the decentralization of humans and the entanglement of humans with non-humans (objects and other beings). From the perspective of posthumanism, human agency is influenced by various factors, and as a result, human beings are created through the mingling of multiple factors. Posthumanism has also received attention in the field of education, and some scholars have offered views on the concept of posthumanist education, including Snaza and Weaver (2015), Herbertcher (2018a), Herbertcher (2018b), Hasse (2020), and Kouppanou (2022).

Methodology

Analytical and explanatory methods are first used in this study to describe and explain the perspective of posthumanism and analyze the relevant concepts. Then, the analysis of posthumanist education and the criticism of posthumanist views are discussed. Internal criticism is a method of philosophical research that examines the validity of themes and materials (Pakatchi, 2015). This method can also be defined as a philosophical investigation of values that are considered goals and ideals in education and forms part of educational research. This category of educational research is carried out using rational and logical methodologies (Bagheri, Khosravi, 1386: 71). In the words of Haggerson, we will engage in critical philosophical exploration, whose most important goals include

disambiguation, understanding and clarification, providing alternative options, going beyond, strategizing towards rationality and improving educational practices (Haggerson, translated by Pakseresht, 2009).

Results

Posthumanism proposes a kind of non-instrumental view of humans, as if man is also a part of nature. In this approach, man is not considered a dominant subject or exceptional species. This philosophical view has also been discussed in the philosophies of the East. Seder states that man usually does not rule over nature, but is himself part of it. From this perspective, nature is not seen as a resource ready to be exploited; rather, all parts of the world are connected. This is in opposition to the individualistic or human-centered worldview (Ceder, 2016:55). This type of view can initiate new developments in the field of science, epistemology, and education. This study suggests that the human unconscious can also be of significance as an issue that posthumanism has neglected. What posthumanism criticizes is man's self-consciousness and his unique agency, which have resulted in the central role of man in the world; therefore, the concept of unconsciousness can be considered another contributing element. In the domain of education, posthumanists equate the teacher's role in learning with that of objects and animals. The flat view of post-humanism on the various factors involved in education and training declines the high status of the teacher. Insisting that students learn from animals, i.e., that animals be considered their teachers and stimuli for learning, does not seem acceptable, although it is well maintained that learning from the lives of some animals is not utterly wrong.

Discussion and conclusion

Posthumanism is a movement against humanism. It tries to revise some of the principles of humanism, such as the relationship between postmodernism and modernism. It seems that some of the elements emphasized by posthumanism are occurring naturally with the advances in science and technology. As time goes by, perhaps new technologies will take the place of humans in some fields and occupations and reduce the human agency and centrality. Posthumanism tries to reduce the unpleasant consequences of this reduction by confronting the anthropocentric way of thinking in the world. Therefore, in education, posthumanists prescribe a non-human-centered education that takes account of mundane factors and other living beings and their role among the other emphasized points. In general, it seems that further attention to some of the elements emphasized in posthumanist education that were mentioned in this article can lead to positive change in various aspects of education, but education cannot be completely

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transformed into posthumanist education. The reason is that posthumanism has ignored the spiritual aspects of man and his distinctive features. In better words, posthumanist ideas can be used in education, but education cannot be completely posthumanist. If educational systems become completely posthumanistic, the result will be the decline of education and the omission of its humane and sublime goals.

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