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Transhumanism from the Perspective of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE)

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Abstract

This paper investigates two central themes of contemporary transhumanism—human enhancement and artificial intelligence—from the perspective of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE). First, it reconstructs the metaphysical framework and ethical orientation of CIPE through an analysis of its major representatives. Second, it examines the concept of enhancement in transhumanist thought in light of the metaphysical assumptions and ethical principles of this tradition. The analysis argues that although transhumanist enhancement theory generates significant tensions with classical philosophical conceptions of human nature, it can nevertheless be interpreted as compatible with certain premises of CIPE when understood within a broader framework of human perfection, intellectual development, and the harmony of body and soul. Building on this discussion, the paper further argues that CIPE offers valuable insights into contemporary debates concerning the topics of enhancement and artificial intelligence. In particular, it highlights the importance of harmony, integrity, and the reinterpretation of traditional philosophical concepts in response to emerging technological challenges. Overall, the paper seeks to contribute to discussions on transhumanism from within the Islamic intellectual tradition. It also aims to demonstrate the possibility of a middle path between the rejection of transhumanism on the basis of classical philosophy and its uncritical acceptance, thereby opening new avenues for dialogue between ancient philosophical traditions and contemporary technological developments.

Keywords: Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics; transhumanism; enhancement; genetic intervention; artificial intelligence

1. Introduction

This paper analyzes transhumanist ideas, focusing on the issues of enhancement and artificial intelligence (AI), through the perspective of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE). It first reformulates the metaphysical orientation of CIPE in conjunction with its ethical premises in order to construct a normative framework for the analysis of transhumanist conceptions of enhancement and Artificial Intelligence. The amalgamation of Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, and Islamic tendencies within the CIPE tradition gives it a distinctive character. This tradition also has the potential to contribute to contemporary discussions concerning the relationship between transhumanist ideas and ancient philosophy.

Discussions concerning this relationship have generally developed along two influential lines. Susan B. Levin ([Levin 2021](#), pp. 9–27) and Michael Sandel ([Sandel 2007](#), pp. 1–25), however they move from different standpoints, criticize transhumanist claims on the basis of their understanding of classical and ancient philosophy (for other criticism



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see (Fukuyama 2004, pp. 42–43). In contrast, Nick Bostrom (Bostrom 2005, pp. 1–14), Natasha Vita-More (Vita-More 2013, pp. 73–82), and Malanowski and Baima (Malanowski and Baima 2022, pp. 653–55), in direct opposition to Levin argue for a continuity between ancient philosophical traditions and transhumanist convictions. In this paper, I propose a third approach to the debate on ancient philosophy and transhumanism by drawing upon Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics. The central argument of this alternative reading is one of cautious optimism toward transhumanist claims and the possibility of developing a new discourse within CIPE in response to transhumanism. The key elements of CIPE for such an interpretation are its emphasis on integrity and harmony in relation to enhancement, and the reformulation of the semantic content of the concepts of CIPE in relation to issues in the context of artificial intelligence. In that context, as an example, I suggest that it is possible to categorize the processing of artificial intelligence with the idea “wisdom inside computation”.

Within this general framework, the paper adopts a hermeneutical approach to CIPE. It first outlines the main ethical premises of the tradition while emphasizing the need to distinguish between its form and its substance. This means that if one adheres strictly to the traditional soul–body distinction, it becomes difficult to formulate a third way. However, if one focuses instead on the broader philosophical ideal of harmony between soul and body, engagement with transhumanist discourse becomes more meaningful. In this sense, the paper opens the possibility of reinterpreting some of the central concepts of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics. Although there remains an intrinsic incompatibility between certain transhumanist claims and the classical perspective, the paper nevertheless explores the possibility of a third way grounded in the CIPE tradition.

In addition to broader philosophical discussions concerning transhumanism and ancient philosophy, the paper also engages with contemporary Muslim approaches to transhumanism. Similar to debates concerning ancient philosophy, the literature from an Islamic perspective is divided between critical and optimistic interpretations (Kam 2023, p. 30). Scholars such as Can (Can 2023, pp. 125–26), among others (Mahootian 2012, p. 153); (Bouzenita 2018, p. 225); (Syed 2024, pp. 7–8), emphasize the intrinsic incompatibility between the Islamic worldview and transhumanism, whereas scholars such as Doko (Doko 2023, pp. 102–4) and Jackson (Jackson 2020, p. 158) develop more optimistic approaches. Whatever position one adopts, analyses of transhumanism that draw extensively upon the intellectual heritage of Islamic civilization remain relatively rare. This paper seeks to address that lacuna while preserving the argumentative strengths of competing perspectives.

Within this framework, it appears that the major challenge posed by transhumanism lies in its insistence on surpassing the current limitations of human nature. I acknowledge that this is a serious issue and that it is extremely difficult to reconcile fully with a classical outlook. Nevertheless, I believe that a third way remains possible, provided that we recognize that the meanings of the metaphysical convictions and ethical premises of any intellectual tradition inevitably undergo a degree of transformation over time. This implies that even if transhuman or posthuman forms of existence emerge, they will not necessarily eliminate the formal structure of CIPE. For example, wisdom may acquire new meanings in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. The wisdom of a singular artificial intelligence would not be identical to the classical conception of wisdom; nevertheless, it is highly probable that the ancient concept of wisdom would find a new direction amid the uncertainties of contemporary challenges. The paper develops its argument around this tension.

The paper consists of two main parts. First, it examines the nature and scope of CIPE and explores how the tradition can contribute to contemporary discussions on transhu-

manism. Second, it analyzes enhancement practices and the challenges posed by artificial intelligence in light of the normative framework provided by CIPE.

2. What Is Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE) and How Can It Contribute to the Discussion Around Transhumanism?

The term “Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics” (CIPE) refers to the continuation and transformation of ancient Greek philosophical thought within the context of the Islamic worldview. As Majid Fakhry demonstrates in his work, a variety of ethical traditions developed within Islamic civilization. In this section, the scope of the CIPE tradition will be outlined, and its principal representatives will be identified. The paper focuses on the metaphysical foundations of ethics and the ethical premises articulated in the works of al-Fārābī, Avicenna, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Bājja (Fakhry 1991, pp. 78–85). The ideas of Ibn Ruṣd are not included in the present study, as they would require a separate and more detailed investigation. Nevertheless, the general framework developed in this paper remains largely consistent with Ibn Ruṣd’s philosophical outlook. It should also be noted that the points of divergence among these thinkers are not examined in detail. Rather, the paper seeks to map the general tendencies and shared principles that all of these philosophers would likely regard as acceptable.

2.1. What Is Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE)? The Scope of the Tradition

In this paper, I focus on the classical period of Islamic philosophy, which begins with the philosophy of al-Kindī and ends with, including, the philosophy of Avicenna. Al-Ġhazālī, in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, targets al-Fārābī and Avicenna as the main representatives of classical Islamic philosophy and refers to them in *The Deliverance from the Error “philosophers within Islam”* (Al-Ġhazālī 2000, p. 4; Watt 1953, p. 32). This classification by al-Ġhazālī is broadly correct in terms of metaphysics; however, the map of the tradition becomes more nuanced when it comes to ethics. This is because central metaphysical figures such as Avicenna did not write extensively on ethics (Kaya 2013, pp. 205–10), although their metaphysical perspectives must still be taken into account for ethical analysis. For the purposes of this paper, I consider al-Fārābī, Avicenna, Ibn Miskawayh, and Ibn Bājja as the main representatives of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics, and I outline the principal tenets of this tradition by referring to the common points shared by these four influential philosophers.

In general, Classical Islamic philosophy can be understood as the continuation of Neoplatonic and Aristotelian philosophy within the Islamic milieu (Adamson and Taylor 2005, pp. 1–8). This threefold structure gives the tradition its distinctive character. Philosophers within this tradition synthesized these distinct intellectual streams into a coherent whole. However, although there are disagreements among these thinkers, this does not mean that their philosophies are entirely constructed within a shared uniform framework. The commonality among them emerges more clearly in the field of ethics than in other philosophical domains. Historically, the tradition of Classical Islamic philosophy begins with the writings of Abū Ishāq al-Kindī. He represents the initial intersection of Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, and Islamic worldviews, particularly in metaphysics. He also wrote several treatises on ethics, which reflect Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, and Stoic influences. However, he did not develop a fully systematic ethical theory (Adamson 2007, pp. 144–46).

The central figure of the tradition after al-Kindī is Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, who is referred to as the “Second Teacher” after Aristotle (Fakhry 2002, pp. 11–15). Al-Fārābī is particularly significant for the present study because he is the true initiator of ethical and political philosophy in Islamic civilization. He integrates political philosophy with an ethical agenda and develops a sophisticated theory of ethical perfection, which is articulated in

works such as *The Virtuous City*, *The Philosophy of Aristotle*, *The Attainment of Happiness*, and *The Exhortation to the Way of Happiness* (Al-Fārābī 1961, 1973, 1987, 2019). The importance of al-Fārābī lies in his synthesis of Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, and Islamic intellectual traditions into a coherent whole. Another pivotal figure and the most central in terms of metaphysics, Avicenna, continues and further develops the synthesis initiated by al-Fārābī. In metaphysics, Avicenna exerted a profound influence on later figures in Islamic philosophy (Griffel 2021, pp. 176–91). Although his philosophical system is primarily centered on metaphysics and the theory of the soul, the ethical dimension of the tradition is also significantly refined in his work.

In relation to Avicenna's philosophy, another key figure in ethics is Ibn Miskawayh. Majid Fakhry, for instance, considers Ibn Miskawayh's *The Refinement of Character* to be "the most systematic work of ethics in Islamic philosophy" (Fakhry 1991, pp. 107–8). For the purposes of this paper, the systematic character of this work is crucial, as it brings together the most important ethical considerations of Classical Islamic philosophy. Alongside al-Fārābī and Avicenna, I will use Ibn Miskawayh in order to map the structure of Classical Islamic ethical philosophy.

For my purposes in this paper, Ibn Bājja is also important, although not as central as al-Fārābī, Avicenna, or Ibn Miskawayh. Ibn Bājja contributed to the tradition with his work *The Regimen of the Solitary* (Ibn Bājja 1994). His main concern is how to live a virtuous life within a non-virtuous society. According to Ibn Bājja, the virtuous individual should partially withdraw from an imperfect society in order to secure the path toward perfection (Ibn Bājja 1994, p. 13). In discussing the social aspects of transhumanism, I partially refer to Ibn Bājja's ideas. I do not include the philosophy of the Iṣwān al-Sāfa (Brethren of Purity) in this framework because, although their premises are broadly compatible, their writings lack the philosophical coherence observed in the major figures discussed here.

The most important point here is that the general premises of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics are shared, in one way or another, by the major figures of the tradition. It is clear that these philosophers differ in their perspectives and explanations of various problems; however, this paper focuses not on their differences but on the common conceptual framework that remains implicit across their works.

The distinction between classical and post-classical Islamic philosophy is also a significant issue. It is generally accepted in the literature that the post-classical period of Islamic philosophy begins after Avicenna and al-Ġhazālī. The character of philosophical thinking changes significantly after al-Ġhazālī's critique (Fakhry 1970, pp. 326–47; Griffel 2021, pp. 77–108). Philosophical ethics is also affected by this transformation. Theology and philosophy become increasingly intertwined in the post-classical period. A key example of this synthesis is the philosophical theology of Faṣṣal al-Dīn al-Rhāzī. Major ethical works of the post-classical period bear the imprint of this synthesis. For instance, the ethical writings of Kınalızade and Taşköprüzade exemplify the integration of religious, theological, and philosophical perspectives. I also consider it important to analyze modern or contemporary challenges from the perspective of post-classical philosophy; however, this represents a different research agenda. Nevertheless, the methodological strategy of this paper may be applicable to the analysis of contemporary issues from the perspective of different strands of the Islamic intellectual heritage. For example, a study based on the ideas and philosophical agenda of al-Ġhazālī in contrast to transhumanist challenges might yield different results, since the center of gravity in al-Ġhazālī's philosophy differs from that of al-Fārābī and Avicenna.

2.2. *How Can Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics Contribute to the Discussion Around Transhumanism?*

The reasons for selecting Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE) as a framework for addressing the challenges of transhumanism are multiple. These reasons can be summarized under three main points.

First, classical Islamic philosophy can be understood as a continuation of ancient Greek philosophy, interwoven with Islamic concepts and intellectual developments. In transhumanist discourse, a substantial body of work has already been developed with reference to ancient Greek philosophy. These studies generally follow two main directions. On the one hand, Bostrom and Vita-More defend the view that transhumanist discourse represents a continuation of ancient Greek philosophical thinking (Bostrom 2005, pp. 1–12; Vita-More 2019, pp. 49–63). In this view, transhumanist authors reinterpret the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus in line with the claim of transcending the current limitations of human beings. On the other hand, as it is pointed out previously, scholars such as Levin and Sandel, together with the broader anti-transhumanist literature, critically evaluate transhumanist ideas from various perspectives (Levin 2017, pp. 278–302; Sandel 2007, pp. 1–25). Moreover, due to the work of Levin and Sandel, it remains unclear whether transhumanism should be criticized or supported from a strictly Platonic or Aristotelian standpoint. This ambiguity continues to be a subject of ongoing debate.

I select Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics as a background because I argue that it can contribute to this ongoing discussion on transhumanism from the perspective of ancient philosophy. This contribution has two main dimensions. Regarding enhancement practices, the notion of integrity—understood in relation to the totality of existence or the new form of existence that may emerge after enhancement—is central. Regarding artificial intelligence, I employ the concept of “wisdom within data” to reformulate the challenges of AI within a classical Islamic philosophical framework.

From this general perspective, one might object that there is no substantial difference between ancient Greek philosophy and classical Islamic philosophy. Although this is a serious claim that requires separate discussion, the response is relatively straightforward. Classical Islamic philosophy, while drawing extensively on ancient sources, significantly transforms this material. For instance, questions concerning the relationship between God, the universe, and human beings gain central importance in classical Islamic philosophy. In ethics, issues such as obedience to God, religious practices, and their ethical purposes are extensively discussed. For these and many other reasons, classical Islamic philosophy constitutes not merely a continuation of ancient philosophy, but a tradition that develops distinct emphases and original contributions.

The second reason for selecting classical Islamic philosophy is the prevalence of predominantly negative and critical approaches to transhumanism in studies based on Islamic perspectives (Ferrero 2022, p. 221). The literature is generally divided between works seeking reconciliation between transhumanist ideas and the Islamic worldview, and works that strongly criticize transhumanism from an Islamic standpoint. However, the diversity of ethical traditions within Islamic intellectual history has not yet been fully utilized. An analysis of transhumanism from the perspective of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE) shows that it is not impossible to construct a philosophical discourse that is simultaneously Islamic and engaged with transhumanism. The engagement of a Muslim intellectual framework with transhumanist challenges cannot be separated from its historical background. The crucial question here is what constitutes a “Muslim intellectual framework” in relation to contemporary challenges. I argue that the Islamic perspective includes multiple dimensions, especially if “Islamic” is understood not solely as a religious category, but more broadly as a civilizational one. In this sense, Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics

can serve as a first step for engaging contemporary challenges through the intellectual heritage of the Islamic civilization.

The third reason is that Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics is far more systematic than it may appear at first glance. Philosophers within this tradition not only attempted to synthesize Islamic intellectual frameworks with ancient Greek philosophy, but also reformulated this inherited material into coherent ethical systems. For this reason, I select Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics as a framework that may serve as a model for further studies.

Therefore, Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics can contribute to transhumanist discussions both as a philosophical and as an Islamic perspective. Philosophically, it is evident that analyzing transhumanism through a classical philosophical framework yields significant and interesting results. However, much of the existing literature focuses primarily on Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, while studies based on al-Fārābī and Avicenna remain limited. Secondly, this paper also contributes to the literature on transhumanism from the perspective of the Islamic worldview.

The use of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics as a framework does not exclude the application of more contemporary methodological tools by Muslim thinkers in addressing transhumanist challenges. Approaches such as post-phenomenology may function as critical instruments; however, transhumanist arguments may also appear persuasive to contemporary Muslim intellectuals. It is also possible that a revival of classical philosophical perspectives may not fully satisfy contemporary intellectual expectations. Regardless of these considerations, the success of interpreting transhumanism through classical Islamic philosophy can only be assessed through its engagement with contemporary debates. In this paper, I attempt to apply Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics to transhumanist discussions in a relatively objective manner. This means that the paper aims to identify both the points at which transhumanist ideas appear implausible from the perspective of classical Islamic ethics and the points at which they may be considered plausible, with particular attention to their practical implications.

3. The Central Tenets of the Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE)

Before analyzing the main tenets of this tradition, it is important to note that the present inquiry focuses on identifying the metaphysical and general structure of the ethical outlook within the Islamic philosophical tradition. In this regard, I concentrate on four central ideas of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics. Within this framework, the Aristotelian–Galenic scientific background constitutes the historical dimension of the CIPE tradition. However, the form and underlying principles of this scientific background represent the core structure that will guide the analysis of contemporary transhumanist practices and ideals.

Prior to ethical premises, it is essential to picture the metaphysical background because in the philosophies of al-Fārābī, Avicenna and Ibn Miskawayh, the ethics are centered around the metaphysics, more specifically the idea of “God”. The philosophers in the tradition of CIPE dealt with the rational explanation of the connection of the God to the universe. As the paper indicated above, three elements (Aristotelian, Neoplatonic, Islamic) are crucial here. For instance, Avicenna, created a sophisticated theory of necessity and essence in order to explain the categorical existences of God and human being (Avicenna 2005, pp. 29–34). This explanation of Avicenna is also central for our purpose in this paper because this idea builds the whole ethical spectrum that covers the practical actions of human beings.

For CIPE, the God is the source of all existence (Avicenna 2005, pp. 34–38). It means that the God is not only the creator but more than being the creator it is the source of existence. The perfection and transcendence of God cannot be reached by human being. For this reason, the only necessary being in the universe is God. All the other beings including the human being is in the ontological status of contingency. The application of the category of contingency (*imkān*) to the human being is the core claim which affects metaphysics and ethics. This background is also crucial to analyze transhumanist ideas regarding the enhancement because it implies the ontological status of human being as “changeable and oriented towards perfection”. The human being, for Avicenna especially, is the outcome of the perfection of God and the survival and persistence of human being is tied with the God’s existence. For the metaphysics of CIPE, God is the sole necessary being and this necessity is the guarantee of all other beings in the universe including human being.

The practical implication of this metaphysical rule is another prevalent idea in CIPE. The human being, for the ethical perfection, needs to seek the perfection of God with the acquisition of knowledge and with the virtuous acts. The idea latent in the emphasis of perfection is the imitation of God through virtuous actions. For the tradition of CIPE, imitating God means acquiring character traits that resemble, as far as possible, the attributes of God (Al-Fārābī 1984, pp. 32, 53–54; 2019, pp. 44–70; Ibn Miskawayh 2012, p. 319). This ideal is pursued through the process of intellectual perfection. The principal representatives of the CIPE tradition, such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Miskawayh, explain that the ultimate goal of human perfection is to cultivate a character disposition that mirrors God’s imperturbability and perfection. Although this aim is hypothetical, it is crucial for understanding the central orientation of the tradition. From the metaphysical perspective of CIPE, God is the sole cause of the universe and the most perfect being. Consequently, human beings should strive to partake in this perfection by developing the most intellectually and morally perfect character traits possible.

In accordance with this metaphysical background, the first ethical premise of the CIPE tradition is the existence of the soul as distinct from the body (Ibn Miskawayh 2012, pp. 235–63). The principal representatives of this tradition—al-Fārābī, Ibn Miskawayh, Avicenna, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Bājja—maintain that it is not possible to reduce the human being solely to the body (Avicenna 1975, pp. 1–10; Al-Fārābī 2019, pp. 160–65; Ibn Bājja 1994, pp. 37–47; Ibn Miskawayh 1981, pp. 57–59). However, there are different perspectives about the ontological status of soul (*nafs*), the tradition of CIPE accepts that the reality of human being is not reducible to the physical aspect. The common conviction in the CIPE is that the rationality as a part of human soul is the locus of knowledge and being and the ontological status of human being is tied with the development of intellect (*‘aql*).

The non-material aspect of the human being is referred to as the soul or spirit. However, acknowledging the soul as distinct from the body does not subordinate the body; rather, the central concern of this premise is that the tension and interaction between soul and body constitute the locus of human perfection. However, the separate existence of the soul is accepted in the CIPE, the issue of harmony is more central in the face of transhumanist challenges. Thus, whether or not the soul is considered a separate entity, human nature in the CIPE tradition is understood—and ought to be, in ethical terms—as a site of harmony (Al-Fārābī 1984, pp. 27–29; 1987, pp. 170–72).

This harmony places priority on the existence, actualization, and perfection of the intellect. In my view, the emphasis on intellect within the CIPE tradition serves to establish the foundation for a general theory of human perfection. The intellect distinguishes human beings from other animals, and accordingly, any ethical framework must organize human actions so that they align with reason. The process of perfection is not unidimensional; rather, all rational aims of human beings are taken into account and integrated into

the process of perfection within the CIPE tradition. This becomes evident when human perfection, in parallel with the theory of human nature, is divided into two dimensions: theoretical and practical. Consequently, the second premise of the CIPE tradition, within the broader framework of the philosophy of ethics, is the primacy of human intellect and the correspondence between the theoretical and practical aspects of human nature. This premise is directly connected with theory of conjunction of human intellect with the active intellect. For the tradition of CIPE, the human intellect is always in the way for the perfection. The imitation of God is through the perfection of human intellectual side but, in this bodily and material world, it is not possible to reach the perfection of God. The cosmic realm is not as deficient as the worldly realm for the tradition of CIPE and for this reason, the supra cosmic intellect which is called as “‘aql al-fa‘āl” is the target of human intellectual perfection (Al-Fārābī 1938, p. 32; Avicenna 1982, pp. 310–14). This aspect of human intellect is also pivotal for the discussions of artificial intelligence. This parallel between artificial intelligence and active intellect deserves another study. The paper discusses the issues in related points to the philosophical ethics.

Another aspect of the primacy of the intellect is related to the character of human thinking. Wisdom, for the tradition of CIPE, is among the cardinal virtues (wisdom, courage, temperance and justice). Wisdom as an aim of intellectual life is the outcome of observing the virtuous aims and also the decision towards the moderate virtuous actions. I think alongside the idea of harmony and integrity the concept of wisdom is crucial to the discussions around the ontological and ethical status of Artificial intelligence which I will discuss in the following pages.

The third premise of CIPE concerns the ultimate goal of human life. For the majority of Islamic philosophers, following the Aristotelian perspective, the purpose of life is to achieve a state of happiness. Philosophers such as al-Farabi and Ibn Miskawayh adapt the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia to a new context, emphasizing that ultimate happiness is realized in the afterlife (ākhirah) (Al-Fārābī 1938, pp. 8–10; Ibn Miskawayh 2012, pp. 306–8). Whether in this world or the next, the human soul experiences true pleasure and fulfillment through the actualization of its highest capacity—the intellect. The philosophers’ emphasis on reason serves to ensure coherence between the practical and rational dimensions of human beings. This correspondence between the theoretical and practical aspects of human nature aims at the attainment and preservation of virtue in its completeness and integrity.

This aspect of the IPE tradition is clearly illustrated in Ibn Miskawayh’s *The Refinement of Character*, where he demonstrates that the coordination of virtues such as courage, temperance, and wisdom results in the comprehensive virtue of justice (‘adāla) (Arkoun 1961, pp. 73–76; Ibn Miskawayh 2012, p. 331). Within Ibn Miskawayh’s framework—and the CIPE tradition more broadly—justice is understood in relation to the development of character traits, the alignment and integrity of actions with social reality, and obedience to metaphysical reality (God). The guiding principle behind virtue and happiness is the conception of goodness (ḥayr). In the CIPE tradition, human actions are classified as either virtuous (faḍīla) or vicious (raḍīla), and it is the notion of goodness (ḥayr) that renders an action praiseworthy. This conception of goodness constitutes the foundation for cultivating a virtuous character (Al-Fārābī 1973, p. 70; Ibn Miskawayh 2012, pp. 331–34).

The fourth premise of the CIPE tradition concerns the integrity of the individual in relation to social reality. Like other Aristotelian-inspired principles, this premise emphasizes that any ethical action is meaningful only within a social context (Ibn Miskawayh 2012, pp. 357–59). Social reality influences the individual’s ideal of happiness in multiple ways. The importance of aligning individual action with social structures is highlighted by al-Fārābī and further developed by Ibn Bājja. Although Ibn Bājja tended toward a more

secluded lifestyle, particularly in the context of morally corrupt societies, the broader tradition of CIPE continued to emphasize the ethical significance of the social consequences of human actions (Ibn Bājja 1994, p. 13).

4. The Enhancement from the Perspective of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE)

In this section of the paper, the issue of enhancement is examined. To this end, the analysis focuses on genetic enhancement, cyborgization, and cryonics (Clark 2003, pp. 1–7). The central claim is that enhancement practices may be assimilated through an optimistic reading based on CIPE, although significant ethical tensions remain. Integrity and harmony, as two foundational principles of CIPE, may acquire new meanings in the context of transhumanist challenges.

As indicated in the previous sections of this paper, analyses grounded in different traditions within the Islamic intellectual heritage may lead to different conclusions regarding transhumanism. For instance, religious ethics often contrast the ideal of enhancement with the concept of human nature (*fiṭra*) in the Islamic context. Can, in his work on transhumanism in relation to the Islamic concept of human nature, criticizes transhumanist efforts to modify or enhance human nature (Can 2022, pp. 605–10; 2023, pp. 107–10). It is likewise possible to develop a similar critical stance toward the transhumanist ideal of enhancement. However, I argue that it is also possible to interpret and partially integrate the ideal of enhancement within Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics. For this purpose, I present the negative interpretation alongside an optimistic interpretation, highlighting the tension between the two.

4.1. *The Practices of Enhancement from the Perspective of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE)*

Transhumanist thinkers argue that enhancement practices aim at improving human capacities. They also seek to ground their views in ancient philosophy, suggesting that the enhancement of human capacities was already among the aims of philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. In contrast, Susan B. Levin sharply criticizes the transhumanist ideal of enhancement and intervention in human nature, arguing that it is incompatible with ancient philosophical thought (Levin 2021, pp. 9–42). Opposing Levin, Malanowski and Baima claim that transhumanist ideals are indeed rooted in ancient philosophy, particularly in Neoplatonism. In Neoplatonic thought, the idea of the transformation of the human being is central, and Malanowski and Baima interpret this as a form of “assimilationism,” which they relate to the transhumanist ideal of enhancement (Malanowski and Baima 2022, pp. 653–55).

These discussions provide a fertile ground for understanding transhumanist claims, and the CIPE framework has its own significance within these debates. In her critical work, Levin argues that transhumanism cannot be reconciled with ancient philosophy because its underlying aim is to intervene in the natural order of existence (Levin 2017, pp. 280–81). The central issue thus becomes whether enhancement practices truly aim at transforming human nature and, if so, whether such transformation is necessarily incompatible with ancient or classical philosophical conceptions of human nature.

From the perspective of CIPE, it is not possible to treat the transhumanist ideal of surpassing human nature through various technological means as entirely unproblematic or “safe” for its metaphysical structure. The criticisms raised by Levin against transhumanist practices are, to a significant extent, also applicable to a CIPE-based analysis. Transhumanists often regard intervention for the sake of enhancement as being as natural as biological evolution (Sorgner 2021, p. 34). However, it is evident that transhumanist practices do

involve intervention in the natural flow of existence; the key question, therefore, concerns how this intervention should be interpreted.

From the metaphysical standpoint of CIPE, enhancement practices (such as genetic and medical interventions) carry the risk of blurring the distinction between necessary and contingent being. For instance, if we consider a posthuman being who realizes the ideals of enhancement—such as extended longevity, continuous interaction with AI, or an enhanced genetic structure—one may ask whether such a being would challenge the distinction between contingency and necessity.

Within the CIPE framework, such a transhuman or posthuman being would still fall under the category of contingency oriented toward necessity. However, in any scenario, the transhuman or posthuman cannot be fully necessary, since, as established in CIPE metaphysics, divine necessity cannot be attained within the worldly realm and, in the formulations of al-Fārābī and Avicenna, extends beyond the entire created order.

For this reason, from the perspective of CIPE, the ideal of enhancement—understood as surpassing the limits of current human nature (Cordeiro 2019, pp. 75–83; Daniels 2021, p. 42)—is not in itself contradictory to its metaphysical structure. The more fundamental issue concerns the preservation of harmony and integrity in the enhanced being. As emphasized in the premises of CIPE, the concepts of harmony and integrity are central normative principles. If transhumanist enhancement cannot generate a new form of integrity and harmony, then a fundamental tension arises between transhumanism and CIPE. The most problematic aspect of transhumanism lies precisely in this point, since the transhumanist perspective tends to prioritize enhancement as an end in itself. From the standpoint of CIPE, unregulated enhancement may therefore lead to diverse and potentially destabilizing outcomes. Within this general and ambivalent framework, genetic intervention may be examined as a case study.

4.1.1. The Enhancement Through Genetic Intervention and the Premises of CIPE

Genetic enhancement, understood as the deliberate modification of the human genome in order to improve physical, cognitive, or psychological traits, has become one of the most influential domains of contemporary transhumanist discourse. Developments such as CRISPR-Cas9 gene-editing technology, proposals for germline modification, and philosophical defenses of enhancement (Bostrom 2009, pp. 1–25; Harris 2009, p. 154; Savulescu 2009, pp. 135–216; for the genetic experiments on the animals see Tang et al. 1999, pp. 63–69) articulate a vision in which human biological limits are no longer fixed but are instead technically revisable. The scope and limit of the enhancement practices are also discussed and the limited or weak type of pro-enhancement approaches are developed (Brennan 2023, p. 245). When evaluated through the metaphysical and ethical framework of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE), this phenomenon initially appears to challenge traditional assumptions about human nature. However, a more careful reading suggests that genetic enhancement can also be interpreted in a largely constructive manner, as an extension of human actualization rather than a rupture from the metaphysical order.

In this context, the metaphysical orientation of CIPE is primary. As noted, CIPE is grounded in Avicenna's distinction between the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*) and contingent beings (*mumkin al-wujūd*). Human beings belong to the domain of contingency, meaning that their existence is dependent, caused, and inherently finite. However, contingency in this tradition does not imply static limitation; rather, it signifies structured openness within a graded metaphysical order oriented toward perfection and, ultimately, the imitation of the divine. Beings unfold through causal processes and move from potentiality to actuality. From this perspective, genetic intervention does not necessarily contradict metaphysical contingency.

From this standpoint, genetic enhancement practices such as gene therapy for hereditary diseases or embryo selection (Savulescu 2009, pp. 216–35) aimed at eliminating severe genetic disorders may be interpreted in a positive light. These interventions, already present in contemporary medical genetics and reproductive technologies, do not alter the ontological status of human beings but rather refine the biological conditions under which human life unfolds. In this sense, CRISPR-based correction of genetic diseases such as sickle cell anemia or Huntington’s disease may be understood as the removal of impediments to the actualization of human capacities. Within CIPE, where perfection is defined through the progressive actualization of potentiality, such interventions can be interpreted as supporting rather than disrupting human nature.

However, counter-arguments against genetic intervention must also be considered (Agar 2010, pp. 18–29; Sandel 2007, pp. 46–47). For instance, Sandel, in his critique of transhumanism, offers influential examples that challenge overly optimistic readings. According to Sandel, enhancement practices threaten the “giftedness” and naturalness of life (Sandel 2007, p. 83). Without proper regulation, transhumanist interventions may generate serious ethical problems. For example, one might consider a scenario in which hearing-impaired parents request genetic intervention to prevent their child from hearing, on the grounds that such a condition would better align with their lifestyle or conception of well-being. Such cases raise significant ethical concerns not only for critical approaches to transhumanist theory but also for the CIPE framework. Nevertheless, the principles of integrity and harmony retain the capacity to address these difficulties. In CIPE, harmony and integrity do not refer solely to the relation between soul and body; rather, they denote a broader harmony encompassing being and society as a whole. Accordingly, interventions that carry a high risk of disrupting this harmony become ethically problematic from a CIPE perspective.

The ethical anthropology of CIPE further reinforces this constructive interpretation. Although the tradition distinguishes between soul and body, it emphasizes their unity and harmonious interaction. The body is not a dispensable substrate but a necessary condition for intellectual and moral development. Accordingly, genetic enhancement aimed at improving bodily health or cognitive stability may be seen as contributing to this harmony. Preventing congenital neurological impairments or stabilizing genetic conditions that hinder cognitive development may create more favorable conditions for the perfection of the rational soul.

This becomes even clearer when considering the primacy of intellect (‘aql) within CIPE. Human perfection is defined by the actualization of intellectual capacities in both theoretical and practical dimensions. Genetic enhancement, particularly cognitive enhancement, is often criticized for reducing intelligence to measurable performance metrics. However, if carefully interpreted, it may also serve as a means of supporting intellectual development. For instance, genetic interventions that improve memory retention, reduce neurodevelopmental disorders, or enhance cognitive resilience may be understood as enabling conditions for the cultivation of wisdom (hikma), provided that they remain embedded within a broader—potentially reconfigured—ethical and educational framework. In this reading, enhancement does not replace wisdom but facilitates the conditions under which wisdom becomes more attainable.

The concept of happiness (sa‘āda) in CIPE also allows for a constructive engagement with genetic enhancement. While transhumanist discourse sometimes reduces well-being to neurochemical optimization, CIPE understands happiness as the full actualization of intellectual and moral perfection, extending beyond material existence. Nevertheless, the reduction in suffering is not excluded from this framework. Genetic technologies that alleviate chronic pain, prevent severe psychiatric disorders, or eliminate debilitating hered-

itary conditions may be considered ethically positive insofar as they remove obstacles to intellectual and moral development. In this way, genetic enhancement contributes indirectly to happiness by stabilizing the conditions necessary for ethical and intellectual life.

The social dimension of CIPE further supports a conditional affirmative reading. Classical Islamic philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Miskawayh, as it is indicated, emphasize that human perfection is fundamentally social and that individual flourishing cannot be separated from collective harmony. Genetic enhancement, if regulated within a framework of distributive justice, may contribute to social well-being by reducing hereditary diseases and improving overall health outcomes. Public-health-oriented genetic interventions may enhance social cohesion by minimizing suffering and increasing shared capacities for intellectual and moral development. In this sense, enhancement technologies may serve the broader aim of social integration rather than fragmentation, provided that they are ethically governed.

In conclusion, genetic enhancement within the CIPE framework should not be understood primarily as a violation of human nature, but rather as a technologically mediated extension of human potentiality. When subordinated to intellectual development, moral cultivation, and social justice, it can be interpreted as a contemporary form of actualization within the metaphysical order articulated by al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Thus, while critical concerns remain regarding excessive or ideologically driven enhancement projects, a carefully constrained and ethically guided form of genetic intervention can be integrated into the CIPE conception of human perfection. Regulation is therefore essential in this context. Intervention is not entirely excluded within CIPE; rather, if it produces a new form of harmony and integrity consistent with its core principles, it may be regarded not only as permissible but also as normatively supported. In parallel with genetic intervention, the issue of cyborgization likewise occupies a liminal position within the classical perspective.

4.1.2. The Enhancement Through Cyborgization and the Premises of CIPE

Cyborgization—the integration of human biological systems with mechanical, electronic, and computational technologies—has become one of the most significant developments within contemporary transhumanist discourse. In the work of thinkers such as Donna Haraway (*A Cyborg Manifesto*), Kevin Warwick's experiments in neural interfacing, and contemporary brain–computer interface research inspired by projects such as Neuralink, the cyborg is presented not merely as a medical extension of the human body but as a reconfiguration of human embodiment itself (Haraway 2010; Warwick 2020, pp. 1–10). This trajectory suggests that perception, cognition, and action may become increasingly distributed across biological and artificial systems (Clark 2003, pp. 83–85). When analyzed through the metaphysical and ethical framework of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE), cyborgization emerges as a deeply ambivalent phenomenon that can be interpreted both critically and constructively, depending on how human nature, contingency, and intellectual perfection are understood.

Similar to genetic intervention, cyborgization must first be examined from the metaphysical standpoint of CIPE. From this perspective, human beings belong to the domain of contingency, meaning that their existence is dependent, mediated, and structurally finite. However, contingency in this tradition does not imply rigidity or immobility; rather, it denotes a graded and dynamic order of being in which entities move from potentiality to actuality through causal processes. Within this framework, cyborgization does not immediately constitute a metaphysical rupture. Instead, it raises the question of whether technologically mediated embodiment should be understood as a transformation of the ontological structure of human existence.

From a critical perspective, cyborgization appears to destabilize the classical CIPE understanding of the unity of human embodiment. In the CIPE tradition, the human being is not a collection of separable components but a unified substance in which soul (*nafs*) and body interact in a harmonious structure. The body is not an external instrument but a constitutive condition for the actualization of intellect (*'aql*). Cyborgization, particularly in its more radical forms, introduces a hybrid structure in which biological organs are supplemented or partially replaced by mechanical and digital systems. Neural implants that extend memory capacity, prosthetic systems that directly interface with neural signals, or sensory augmentation devices that alter perception all contribute to a condition in which human embodiment becomes partially externalized and technologically distributed.

From this standpoint, a concern arises that cyborgization may fragment the integrated unity of human nature. If bodily functions and cognitive processes become increasingly dependent on external technological infrastructures, the human being risks becoming a composite system whose identity is no longer grounded in a unified natural form. In CIPE terms, this may weaken the classical understanding of human nature as a harmonized structure of faculties oriented toward intellectual actualization. The ethical risk here is not simply technological dependence, but the potential reconfiguration of the human being into a modular assemblage of biological and artificial components, thereby destabilizing the internal coherence of soul–body unity.

From a constructive perspective, however, cyborgization does not abolish contingency and harmony but rather intensifies them by expanding the domain of human interaction with material reality. The human being remains ontologically dependent, yet this dependence now includes technologically mediated forms of embodiment. Neural interfaces, sensory prosthetics, and cognitive augmentation systems can thus be interpreted as instruments that extend the scope of human engagement with the world, rather than as replacements for human nature itself.

The ethical anthropology of CIPE further clarifies this ambivalence. Although the tradition distinguishes between soul and body, it does not subordinate the body to a secondary ontological status. Instead, the body is regarded as a necessary condition for intellectual development. The rational soul requires embodied experience in order to actualize its capacities. Within this framework, cyborg technologies may be evaluated positively insofar as they contribute to the preservation, restoration, or enhancement of embodied functioning. For example, cochlear implants that restore hearing, advanced prosthetics that enable mobility, or neural devices that assist individuals with neurological impairments can be understood as ethically consistent with the CIPE emphasis on enabling the actualization of human faculties.

At the level of intellect (*'aql*), cyborgization raises more complex questions. CIPE places intellect at the center of human perfection, particularly through its doctrine of conjunction with the active intellect (*al-'aql al-fa''āl*). Human intellectual development is not merely quantitative but involves the cultivation of wisdom (*hikma*), which integrates theoretical understanding with practical judgment. A critical concern arises when cyborg systems begin to externalize cognitive processes such as memory, decision-making, or perception. If human cognition becomes heavily reliant on external systems, there is a risk that intellect is no longer actualized internally but instead outsourced to technological infrastructures.

Nevertheless, a more affirmative interpretation is possible if cyborg systems are understood as cognitive scaffolding rather than substitutes for intellect. Memory-enhancing neural devices, attention-regulating interfaces, or sensory augmentation technologies may be seen as supporting conditions that expand the range of intellectual engagement. In this sense, cyborgization contributes not to the replacement of intellect but to the expansion of

its operational field. The key ethical distinction within CIPE is whether technology serves intellectual actualization or displaces it.

The concept of happiness (*sa'āda*) also provides an important evaluative dimension. In CIPE, happiness is not reducible to physical pleasure or functional efficiency but refers to the full actualization of intellectual and moral perfection. Cyborgization, when interpreted narrowly as enhancement of performance or sensory intensity, risks reducing happiness to technical optimization. However, when understood as the removal of bodily and cognitive impediments to intellectual and ethical development, it can be positively integrated into the CIPE framework. Technologies that reduce suffering, restore functionality, and enable more stable cognitive functioning may contribute indirectly to happiness by supporting the conditions necessary for intellectual and moral life.

The social dimension of CIPE further complicates the evaluation of cyborgization. Classical Islamic philosophers such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Miskawayh emphasize that human perfection is fundamentally social and that individual flourishing cannot be separated from collective harmony. Cyborg technologies, if unevenly distributed, may generate new forms of social inequality, producing divisions between technologically enhanced and non-enhanced individuals. Such stratification would directly challenge the CIPE principle of justice (*'adāla*). However, if cyborg technologies are governed within a framework of equitable distribution and public benefit, they may contribute positively to social welfare by reducing disability, enhancing education, and improving health outcomes.

When genetic intervention and cyborgization are considered in relation to the debates between Susan B. Levin, Sandel, and pro-transhumanist thinkers, it becomes clear that each position carries its own argumentative strength. For critics of transhumanism, human nature's giftedness and the integrity of its natural unfolding are threatened by practices such as genetic intervention and cyborgization. For Levin, the analogy between technological enhancement and ancient *techne* is largely superficial (Levin 2017, pp. 290–91). Moreover, the transhumanist effort to anchor enhancement in ancient thought remains questionable, given the metaphysical dependence of human beings on a transcendent order in classical philosophy. Nevertheless, even if transhumanism's historical continuity with ancient thought is contested, the phenomenon of enhancement itself remains philosophically intelligible within ancient frameworks. If notions such as integrity and harmony are properly integrated into the analysis, enhancement practices may find a limited but meaningful place within ancient philosophical horizons, and by extension within CIPE.

In conclusion, cyborgization occupies a complex position within Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics. From a critical standpoint, it raises concerns regarding the fragmentation of human unity, the externalization of intellect, and the risk of social inequality. From a constructive standpoint, however, it can be interpreted as a technologically mediated extension of human capacities oriented toward perfection, enabling the enhancement of embodied life and the expansion of intellectual capacities. The decisive factor in its ethical evaluation is not the technology itself, but the teleological orientation within which it is embedded. If cyborgization remains subordinated to CIPE principles of intellectual perfection, moral harmony, and social justice, it can be integrated into a broader ethical framework as a continuation of human actualization rather than a departure from human nature—even if these very concepts acquire new meanings in the process. In this sense, cyborgization occupies a position structurally similar to genetic intervention, although further and more complex practices, such as cryonics within the transhumanist agenda, raise additional challenges.

4.1.3. The Practice of Cryonics and the Premises of CIPE

Cryonics—understood as the practice of preserving legally deceased human bodies at extremely low temperatures in the hope of future revival through advanced medical or nanotechnological technologies—(Bostrom 2005, pp. 12–14; Minerva 2018, pp. 1–7) occupies a particularly distinctive position when analyzed through the metaphysical and ethical framework of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE). In transhumanist literature, cryonics is presented as a rational extension of medicine: if death is a biological process, then it may eventually become reversible given sufficient technological advancement. This assumption places cryonics at the intersection of metaphysical speculation and medical optimism.

Within CIPE, however, the evaluation of cryonics depends on how one interprets the ontology of contingency (*imkān*) and the teleology of human life. At first glance, cryonics appears to challenge the traditional metaphysical boundary between life and death. In the CIPE framework, life is not merely biological functionality but the actualization of form within matter, ordered through divine causality. Death, therefore, is not simply a technical “problem” to be suspended, but a fundamental transition in the ontological structure of the human being. From this perspective, cryonics may be critically interpreted as an attempt to transform a metaphysical limit into a technical delay, thereby reframing death as a reversible state rather than an existential boundary inscribed within contingency.

However, a more constructive reading emerges when CIPE’s principles of graded causality and actualization are taken seriously. Human beings, as contingent entities, exist within a chain of natural causes. Medicine itself is already an intervention within natural processes of decay, aimed at preserving the conditions of life. From this standpoint, cryonics can be interpreted not as a denial of contingency but as an extreme extension of medical causality: a suspension technique aimed at preserving the bodily conditions necessary for possible future reactivation of life, should such causality become feasible. In this sense, cryonics resembles an expanded form of life-preserving medicine rather than a metaphysical rebellion against death.

This becomes clearer when it is connected to the CIPE emphasis on the unity of soul and body. While classical Islamic philosophy does not reduce the human being to bodily processes, it also does not treat the body as irrelevant. The body is a necessary condition for the actualization of soul, and thus its preservation is ethically meaningful insofar as it sustains the possibility of intellectual perfection. Cryonics, in this light, may be interpreted as a radical attempt to preserve the bodily substrate for the possible reactivation of intellectual life. If one accepts the transhumanist assumption that future technological progress may enable cellular repair and memory reconstruction, then cryonics functions as a temporal extension of bodily preservation, aligned with the broader medical aim of sustaining the conditions for rational life.

The ethical dimension of happiness (*sa’āda*) also provides a nuanced entry point. In CIPE, happiness is not mere biological survival but the full actualization of intellect and virtue. From a strict standpoint, cryonics does not contribute to happiness unless it ultimately results in restored intellectual and moral life. Nevertheless, it may still be positively evaluated as an expression of the desire to preserve the possibility of future perfection. In this sense, cryonics reflects a teleological orientation toward the continuity of being, which can be interpreted as an extension of the human aspiration toward perfection, even if its success remains speculative.

At the same time, CIPE introduces important critical boundaries. One concern is that cryonics may reinforce an illusion of controllability over metaphysical limits. By treating death as a reversible technical interruption, cryonics risks weakening the existential awareness of finitude that underpins ethical life in classical philosophy. If mortality is

fully reframed as a solvable engineering problem, the orientation toward virtue and intellectual preparation for ultimate ends may be displaced by an indefinite postponement of existential responsibility. This would conflict with the CIPE emphasis on moderation (iʿtidāl) and proper orientation toward the Necessary Being, which grounds the meaning of contingency.

The social dimension further complicates the evaluation. Cryonics is currently an extremely unequal practice, accessible only to a small economic elite. From a CIPE perspective, this raises concerns regarding justice (ʿadāla), since the preservation of life becomes a privatized privilege rather than a shared good. If cryonics were ever to become socially integrated and medically validated, its ethical acceptability would depend on its incorporation into a just and accessible healthcare framework oriented toward collective flourishing rather than individual exceptionalism.

Despite these concerns, a cautiously affirmative interpretation remains possible within CIPE. Cryonics can be understood as an experimental extension of the human commitment to preserving the conditions of rational life. It represents a technological intensification of an ancient ethical impulse: the desire to sustain the bodily and cognitive conditions necessary for intellectual actualization. If strictly subordinated to ethical governance, metaphysical humility, and social justice, cryonics may be viewed not as an attempt to escape human nature, but as a speculative extension of medicine's long-standing role in preserving the possibility of human flourishing.

In conclusion, cryonics occupies a liminal space between metaphysical transgression and medical continuity within CIPE. It becomes problematic when framed as a denial of contingency or an attempt to neutralize death as an existential boundary. However, it becomes partially intelligible—and in limited respects even ethically interpretable—when understood as an extension of secondary causality aimed at preserving the conditions for future intellectual and moral actualization. As with genetic enhancement and cyborgization, its ethical value ultimately depends on whether it remains anchored in the CIPE principles of intellectual perfection, ontological humility, and social justice. Moreover, the crucial issue is whether the premises of CIPE acquire new meanings in the scenario of a full realization of cryonics.

As these three ambivalent examples show, two central pillars of CIPE are how to interpret metaphysical contingency and how to understand harmony and integrity. It is possible to construct scenarios in which these pillars are either undermined or, conversely, preserved. Enhancement practices appear more intelligible within the metaphysical orientation of CIPE; however, the more pressing question—what happens if superintelligence assumes the role of human intelligence—remains unresolved. In the remainder of the paper, I will focus on the challenges of artificial intelligence in relation to the CIPE framework.

5. The Ontological and Ethical Status of Artificial Intelligence from the Perspective of CIPE

In this section, I focus on the question of whether artificial intelligence can think. Put differently, the central issue is whether the operations performed by artificial intelligence (AI) should be considered instances of thinking. Following this analysis, I evaluate practical problems such as singularity and mind uploading within the framework of Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE).

Before any ethical assessment of the interaction between artificial and human intelligence, the evaluation depends on one's underlying philosophical commitment regarding the nature of thinking itself. Within ancient philosophy, one of the main objections to the claim that AI can think might be that thinking cannot be reduced to data processing (Levin 2017, p. 294). On the surface of the tension between ancient or classical philosophy and

transhumanism, the attribution of “intelligence” to an artificial entity appears philosophically problematic. However, a deeper analysis reveals two crucial layers.

First, artificial intelligence is a product of human activity and, in the broadest sense, a technical achievement. This level of description appears compatible with the premises of CIPE. Second, however, transhumanism does not view artificial intelligence merely as a technical artifact, but as an active agent capable of participating in—and potentially replacing—human cognitive functions. It is this second layer that is most problematic from a classical or ancient perspective, since, as noted above, CIPE is grounded in the primacy of intellect (*‘aql*), and thus raises the question of how this framework should respond to a non-human entity—created by humans—that appears to appropriate the most valuable feature of human existence, namely thinking itself.

For the analysis of this challenge, the question of whether AI can think is therefore central. The transhumanist tendency to reduce thinking to data processing is not as immediately problematic as it may first appear. Within CIPE, thinking is not entirely detached from data, experience, or external input. Indeed, the process of thought begins from experience, which may be understood as the analogue of data in the context of artificial intelligence. In the philosophy of Avicenna, intelligence is also connected to the cognitive process of identifying the middle term in syllogistic reasoning (Avicenna 1982, p. 205). In this sense, certain aspects of thinking can be described in quasi-mechanical terms.

However, the fundamental problem in artificial computation lies in its lack of teleology. Human thinking, within CIPE, is not merely a formal or procedural activity; it is oriented toward perfection and ultimately toward intellectual and moral actualization. Artificial intelligence, by contrast, does not possess an intrinsic orientation toward perfection in this teleological sense. Its operations may be efficient, adaptive, and increasingly complex, but they are not internally directed toward ethical or metaphysical fulfillment.

Another question concerns the status of wisdom within artificial intelligence. From the perspective of CIPE, data processing is not necessarily opposed to wisdom (*hikma*). On the contrary, it is possible to identify what may be called a “dimension of wisdom within computational processes.” The development of artificial intelligence, in this sense, can be interpreted as evidence of a latent capacity for ordered selection and structured reasoning, as systems become increasingly capable of distinguishing correct from incorrect outputs and evaluating multiple alternatives. This may suggest a weak or derivative form of orientation toward wisdom.

Nevertheless, such a claim remains limited. While AI may simulate aspects of rational selection, it does not ground this activity in an existential or ethical telos. Therefore, what appears as “wisdom-like behavior” remains structurally different from wisdom as understood in CIPE, which is inseparable from moral and intellectual perfection.

In addition, artificial intelligence raises the possibility of structural analogy with the concept of the Active Intellect (*al-‘aql al-fa‘‘āl*). If its cosmological and metaphysical foundations are set aside, a superintelligent AI might appear as an external entity that stimulates or activates human cognition. However, this analogy remains highly problematic and requires separate and more detailed analysis, since the Active Intellect in al-Fārābī and Avicenna is embedded within a metaphysical order that cannot be reduced to computational functionality.

In conclusion, the question of whether artificial intelligence can think depends not only on empirical or functional considerations, but also on competing metaphysical conceptions of intellect. Within CIPE, AI may be partially intelligible as a sophisticated form of data processing with emergent quasi-rational capacities. However, it lacks the essential teleological structure that defines thinking as intellectual actualization. For this reason, while AI may approximate certain formal aspects of cognition, it does not fully satisfy the

CIPE conception of thought as oriented toward wisdom, perfection, and the realization of human intellectual potential.

5.1. *The Integration with Artificial Intelligence, Singularity and the Premises of CIPE*

The question of artificial intelligence singularity—understood as the hypothetical transition point at which machine intelligence surpasses human cognitive capacities and begins recursive self-improvement—has been widely discussed in contemporary philosophy of technology (Bostrom 2014, pp. 22–52; Butlin et al. 2023; Kurzweil 2005, pp. 111–43). While transhumanist interpretations often frame singularity as an extension of human evolution, critical approaches emphasize risks related to autonomy, control, and value alignment. Within this debate, the Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE) tradition offers a distinctive interpretive framework through which both the promise and limits of artificial intelligence singularity can be reassessed. Rather than treating AI as an external rupture, CIPE provides a metaphysically grounded account of intelligence, perfection, and ethical life that enables a more nuanced evaluation of technological transformation.

From the outset, as indicated, CIPE is structured by a metaphysical hierarchy in which God is the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*), while all other beings are contingent (*mumkin al-wujūd*). This ontological distinction, articulated most systematically by Avicenna in *Metaphysics of The Healing* (Avicenna 2005, pp. 32–34), establishes that existence is grounded in divine necessity rather than immanent material processes. Al-Fārābī similarly frames cosmology through a Neoplatonic emanationist structure in which intellect and being are hierarchically ordered (Al-Fārābī 2019, p. 183). Ibn Miskawayh integrates this metaphysical orientation into ethical theory by grounding moral perfection in alignment with the order of being (Ibn Miskawayh 2012, pp. 265–67).

Within this framework, the human being is not reducible to material structure or bodily function. The soul (*nafs*), particularly in its rational dimension (*‘aql*), functions as the locus of knowledge and ethical orientation. Human existence is thus defined by its capacity for intellectual actualization and moral refinement. Artificial intelligence singularity, when viewed against this metaphysical background, initially appears to challenge the CIPE account of human uniqueness. If intelligence is defined operationally as computational optimization or problem-solving capacity, then advanced AI systems may appear to replicate or exceed human rationality. Contemporary theorists of artificial general intelligence and superintelligence argue precisely this trajectory, suggesting that machine cognition may eventually surpass biological intelligence across domains (Bostrom 2014, p. 4; Kurzweil 2005, p. 22). In a reductive functionalist interpretation, this would appear to undermine the CIPE distinction between rational soul and material mechanism.

However, CIPE’s metaphysical structure resists such reduction. Even if artificial systems achieve superhuman computational performance, the tradition distinguishes between operational intelligence and ontological participation in being. In Avicennian terms, contingency implies not merely cognitive limitation but ontological dependence. Artificial intelligence, regardless of complexity, remains a product of contingent causality and does not participate in necessity (*wujūb*). This distinction allows CIPE to maintain a critical distance from strong AI reductionism while still engaging its functional achievements.

At the same time, singularity can be interpreted more optimistically within the CIPE emphasis on intellectual perfection. For al-Fārābī and Avicenna, the human intellect progresses through abstraction and conjunction with higher forms of intelligibility, culminating in relation to the Active Intellect (*al-‘aql al-fa‘‘āl*). In this schema, intellectual development is both epistemic and ontological, representing the gradual actualization of human potential. Artificial intelligence, rather than replacing this trajectory, may instead be interpreted as an external augmentation of human epistemic capacity.

Nevertheless, CIPE's second premise—the primacy of intellect—must be carefully distinguished from technological optimization. While AI may enhance cognitive efficiency, classical Islamic philosophers emphasize that wisdom is inseparable from virtue. Intellectual perfection is not merely informational accumulation but the harmonization of reason and ethical disposition. In this respect, the singularity thesis introduces a critical ambiguity: increased intelligence does not necessarily entail increased wisdom. This tension is also present in contemporary critiques of technological rationality, which warn that optimization without ethical orientation may lead to value distortion. However, a third way of addressing this tension is to propose a notion of “wisdom inside computation,” thereby resisting the reduction of AI thinking to mere calculation. On this view, AI processes may exhibit more than computation alone; they may partially simulate, or even structurally echo, aspects of human intellectual activity, including its orientation toward problem-resolution and evaluative selection.

The third CIPE premise—happiness (*sa'āda*) as the ultimate end of human life—provides another critical lens. Al-Fārābī and Ibn Miskawayh define happiness not as sensory pleasure or instrumental success but as the realization of the soul's highest capacities. In this framework, ultimate happiness is closely tied to intellectual and moral actualization and, in some interpretations, fulfillment in the afterlife. Artificial intelligence singularity may contribute to worldly well-being by increasing efficiency and reducing suffering, but CIPE would caution against equating technological enhancement with ultimate felicity.

The fourth premise, concerning the integration of individual and social reality, is particularly relevant to singularity discourse. Al-Fārābī's political philosophy in *The Virtuous City* (*al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*) emphasizes that human perfection is achievable only within a well-ordered society oriented toward truth and goodness (Al-Fārābī 2019, pp. 201–8). Artificial intelligence, especially in its networked and infrastructural forms, directly reshapes social reality. Optimistically, AI systems may enable more just governance, efficient resource allocation, and improved collective decision-making. In this sense, singularity could support CIPE's ideal of harmonized social order.

However, critical risks emerge when AI systems concentrate epistemic authority or institutional power. Algorithmic governance may displace deliberative ethical reasoning, while asymmetries in AI ownership may exacerbate social injustice. These concerns align with contemporary debates in political philosophy of technology, which emphasize the fragility of agency under automated systems (Bostrom 2014, pp. 127–43). From a CIPE perspective, such developments would represent a deviation from the ethical requirement that social structures support rather than undermine human perfection.

In conclusion, artificial intelligence singularity can be interpreted within CIPE neither as an unqualified promise nor as a categorical threat. Rather, it represents a transformative epistemic condition that intensifies both the possibilities and tensions inherent in human intellectual life. On the optimistic reading, singularity extends the human capacity for knowledge, supports intellectual cultivation, and may contribute to more just and efficient social arrangements. On the critical reading, it risks conflating intelligence with wisdom, efficiency with happiness, and computation with ontological understanding.

The CIPE framework does not merely remain intact in the face of singularity; rather, it may itself be reactivated and conceptually expanded through it. The emergence of artificial intelligence invites a renewed interrogation of the metaphysical distinction between necessity and contingency, potentially sharpening CIPE's account of created intelligences as contingent yet increasingly autonomous agents. Likewise, the analogy between human intellect and artificial systems may deepen philosophical reflection on the role of the Active Intellect, not as a displaced concept but as a renewed heuristic for understanding distributed and externalized cognition. In ethical terms, new technological forms of

cognition may compel a rearticulation of happiness (sa'āda) beyond purely individual or biological frameworks, toward broader informational and social configurations of flourishing. Finally, the integration of AI into social reality may extend CIPE's emphasis on communal perfection into novel forms of collective intelligence and decision-making. In this sense, singularity does not terminate the CIPE tradition but opens new conceptual horizons within it, transforming it into a more dynamic framework capable of engaging unprecedented forms of intelligence and existence.

5.2. *The Problem of Mind-Uploading and the Premises of CIPE*

In addition to the issues surrounding human–AI interaction, mind uploading—the hypothetical transfer or emulation of a human mind into a non-biological substrate—has become one of the most debated scenarios within contemporary transhumanist thought. It is often associated with strong forms of computationalism and substrate-independence, according to which mental states are ultimately informational patterns that can, in principle, be instantiated in multiple physical media (Chalmers 2010, pp. 7–10; Kurzweil 2005, p. 199; for a critical analysis see Thorstad 2024, pp. 1627–630). Within this framework, the self is treated as an emergent configuration of functional states rather than an intrinsically embodied or metaphysically unified substance. From the perspective of the Classical Islamic Philosophical Ethics (CIPE) tradition, however, such a proposal raises fundamental metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical questions, particularly regarding the nature of the soul (nafs), intellect ('aql), and human perfection. At the same time, CIPE also provides conceptual resources that allow not only a cautious critique but also a stronger interpretive claim: in posthuman or transhuman conditions, CIPE's ethical ideals may not simply be applied to new cases, but may themselves acquire new structural meanings within distributed human–machine forms of cognition and agency.

The critical dimension of CIPE begins with its ontological commitment to the irreducibility of the human being to purely material structures. In the Avicennian framework, the soul is not identical with bodily processes, even if it operates through them in embodied life (Avicenna 1982). He maintains that the rational soul (al-nafs al-nāṭiqa) possesses an immaterial dimension that cannot be fully reduced to corporeal organization. Similarly, CIPE situate human perfection within a hierarchy of intelligible realities that culminates in intellectual conjunction with higher principles of being. From this standpoint, mind uploading appears problematic insofar as it assumes that mental continuity can be preserved through structural replication alone. If the soul is not merely informational but ontologically embedded within a metaphysical order of being, then digital emulation may at best reproduce cognitive and behavioral functions without guaranteeing continuity of personal subjectivity or moral agency.

This concern is reinforced by the CIPE distinction between contingency (imkān) and necessity (wujūb). Human beings, as contingent entities, exist through dependence on a necessary cause, namely God. Their intelligibility and persistence are not self-grounding but ontologically derivative. Mind uploading, however, tends to assume a form of functional self-sufficiency once cognition is instantiated in computational systems. From a CIPE perspective, these risks conflating epistemic replication with ontological relocation. Even if a perfect digital emulation were achieved, it remains unclear whether it would instantiate the same mode of being or merely a functionally equivalent cognitive profile. Identity in CIPE, therefore, cannot be reduced to informational continuity but remains embedded in a deeper metaphysical structure of existence.

Furthermore, ethical concerns arise from the CIPE emphasis on the unity of soul and body in the process of perfection. Human moral development is not solely intellectual but involves embodied habits, affective dispositions, and socially embedded practices (Al-

Fārābī 1961, pp. 60–61; Ibn Miskawayh 2012, pp. 359–61). Virtue ethics in this tradition presupposes that ethical formation occurs through lived experience within a concrete natural and social world. Mind uploading, by detaching cognition from biological embodiment, risks weakening the formative conditions through which virtue is cultivated, producing what could be described as an “ethically de-situated” form of intelligence.

However, a more productive interpretive move becomes possible when mind uploading is no longer understood as the transfer of a self, but as the emergence of new hybrid cognitive systems in which human and artificial agencies are structurally intertwined. In such a scenario, the key philosophical issue is not whether identity is preserved or dissolved, but how CIPE’s ethical ideals are reconfigured when cognition itself becomes distributed across biological and non-biological substrates.

Within the CIPE tradition, the intellect is dynamic: it progresses through abstraction, learning, and increasing proximity to intelligible forms, culminating in conjunction with the Active Intellect (al-‘aql al-fa‘‘āl) (Al-Fārābī 1938, pp. 30–32; Davidson 1992, pp. 53–54). If this trajectory is interpreted in a broader, non-reductive sense, then posthuman cognitive architectures may represent not the negation of intellectual development but its external expansion. Mind uploading technologies—or partial equivalents such as cognitive emulation, neural integration, or distributed digital cognition—may therefore be understood as environments in which intellectual activity becomes amplified, accelerated, and collectively reorganized.

From this perspective, CIPE’s ethical ideals begin to shift in meaning rather than simply being applied unchanged. For example, wisdom (ḥikma) is no longer located exclusively in an individual rational subject but may emerge from the coordination between human judgment and artificial systems. Similarly, intellect (‘aql) may increasingly refer to a distributed field of reasoning rather than a bounded faculty, while still preserving normative orientation toward truth. Even happiness (sa‘āda) may acquire a broader structure, no longer defined solely as individual actualization, but as the stability of intellectual and ethical flourishing within interconnected cognitive ecologies. Within a CIPE-informed framework, however, this distribution does not necessarily fragment ethical subjectivity; rather, it transforms the locus of ethical realization. The unity of ethical life is no longer confined to the individual soul alone but may extend into structured relations between agents, systems, and informational environments.

Thus, mind uploading—understood in its strongest form or in its partial technological analogues—poses a genuine metaphysical and ethical challenge, but also opens new conceptual possibilities. It generates a deeper philosophical transformation in which CIPE’s core ideals are preserved at the level of orientation (toward truth, virtue, and perfection) while being reconfigured at the level of realization, as they become instantiated within hybrid human–machine systems.

Finally, from the perspective of happiness (sa‘āda), the decisive criterion remains not the substrate of cognition but its teleological orientation. If posthuman systems enhance access to knowledge (‘ilm), stabilize rational deliberation, and expand the conditions for virtue, they may contribute to new modalities of flourishing. Yet this flourishing is no longer exclusively an attribute of isolated human individuals; it becomes a property of ethically structured cognitive networks.

In this sense, CIPE is not displaced by the logic of mind uploading. Rather, it is challenged to reconceptualize its ethical anthropology: from a model centered on the individual rational soul toward a more complex framework in which intellect, virtue, and happiness are increasingly realized across distributed human–technological assemblages.

6. Conclusions

The main issue of transhumanism in the face of CIPE premises concerns how to understand and evaluate the aim of a radical transformation of human nature. If this bold claim of transhumanism is accepted, it becomes possible to construct a discourse grounded in CIPE toward transhumanist proposals. Within the Islamic intellectual heritage, because of the sanctity of human nature (*fitra*), religious worldviews are generally more inclined to criticize the transhumanist ideal. However, even within religious ethical discourse, it remains possible to develop more affirmative or reconstructive interpretations.

This paper has attempted to show that even if the transhumanist scenario of a complete transformation of human nature were realized, it is not impossible for the ethical discourse of CIPE to be transformed in response to this new condition. The metaphysical orientation of CIPE is sufficiently robust to absorb the challenges posed by transhumanism. In addition, the ethical concepts and normative aims of CIPE are also open to reinterpretation within emerging transhumanist scenarios. Nevertheless, three core pillars continue to function as a stable evaluative toolkit for assessing contemporary technological transformations.

First, the metaphysical distinction between necessity and contingency remains structurally stable, even if open to new interpretive elaborations. This distinction continues to provide a fundamental ontological framework for evaluating both human and artificial forms of intelligence and existence. Second, the principle of integrity and harmony exhibits a dual character: it can function as a critical standard against certain forms of enhancement, while also allowing for a re-articulation of what counts as “integrated” or “harmonious” under new technological conditions. Third, the CIPE emphasis on intellectual and moral perfection preserves its normative force, even if the modalities through which perfection is pursued may change.

The discussions surrounding enhancement technologies and artificial intelligence are therefore organized according to these dual characteristics. As indicated throughout this paper, the polarization within the literature is not resolved. For Islamic interpretations of transhumanism, CIPE has the potential to offer a mediating or “middle way” framework. Such an approach may satisfy both the need for continuity with intellectual and ethical heritage and the requirement of engagement with contemporary technological realities. However, all transhumanist ideas and practices must be evaluated independently and in relation to their specific conceptual and ethical assumptions. The transformation of the classical intellectual background appears, in this sense, inevitable; yet the direction, scope, and normative consequences of this transformation remain open philosophical questions rather than settled conclusions.

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