

TRANSHUMANISM - THE SEMI-TRUTH OF TRENDS (SECURITY AND DEFENSE ASPECTS)

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Abstract

This article discusses the issues related to the present and, especially, the future of humanity and the human species, raised by transhumanism and other currents of thought close to it. The author does not deny the current negative trends in human, environmental and technical developments highlighted by transhumanists as fatal to biology or the human body. He only states that these tendencies are not an absolute truth, but only a half-truth. The efforts of humanity must not be directed towards the transfer of the human intellect to the machine, but towards the protection and restoration of connections and natural species disturbed or destroyed throughout history. Science, technique and advanced technologies, reason, the will and desires of man can be directed towards the protection, restoration and improvement of terrestrial nature, towards the sustainable development of man, society and nature. Ecosophy or ecological wisdom, global ecological ethics, traditional, ethnic and ecological humanism, the universal paradigm of humanism, as its components, will serve as the theoretical basis for this creative human activity.

Keywords: *human species, ecosophy, humanism, human biology, science, technics, advanced technologies, transhumanism.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Basically, no one still denies the beginnings and the danger regarding the future of the human species and of the global ecological crisis. Transhumanists, as representatives of a contemporary current of thought, consider that the individual as a biological being does not have any future and they also speak about a global anthropological crisis.

According to transhumanism, the development tendencies of the contemporary civilisations are incompatible with the biological existence of the individual. Human intelligence and intellect will not be able to survive only by being passed down to machines or robots.

Is such a perspective even possible? What would be the ways and methods of excluding

such an evolution manner for the individual and for his activity? We shall analyse these issues in this present article.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Philosophical and scientific literature, the state of the environment and of the contemporary human society, the evolution tendencies of the individual, of medicine and technologies all served as research material.

The present research used a number of methods, such as: extrapolation, analysis, synthesis and generalisation, the logical unit, the historical unit and comparison.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The representatives of transhumanism state that around the year 2045 the human civilisation will enter the "dynamic chaos" phase and that it will get close to the border of "singularity", after which will follow either its degradation and deterioration, or its transition to a qualitatively new stage of development.

According to D.I. Dubrovsky, the possibility of the survival of terrestrial civilisation represents a new and more advanced development stage, which depends on anthropo-technological development processes. The latter stage takes place in the present and at an accelerated pace, impossible to stop.

The concept and problematization of transhumanism

What exactly does transhumanism represent, when did it appear and which are its main concepts and arguments?

Trans means “over”, “after”. Transhumanism refers to what comes after the individual and the humanism. We therefore speak about the overcoming of the individual and of humanism. Their disappearance, including that of moral, at the same time with the transfer of the human intellect towards a machine, which is unavoidable in the transhumanist view, leads to the progress of present-day society, in the worst possible environmental circumstances. Will this represent any progress and if yes for whom?

The disappearance of the individual and of his world will represent, in our view, an enormous regress and not at all an authentic progress. Progress in the technological field must in no way be opposed to man and his evolution.

According to Iastreb N., “the ambitious programmes of well-known researchers in the field of technologies are already based on a conceptual background which implies the nature and the future of the human being, the social relationships, the values and the ideology. These changes determine not only the content of the contemporary philosophy of technique, but also of the philosophy of science, since the problems of the edification of the technical theories, of the specificity of technical sciences, the production of technical knowledge, the elucidation of their conditions, possibilities and truth is nowadays placed in the foreground”.

One can understand that the progress of technique can only be appreciated in terms of man, nature, future and their values, ideology and social relationships. In other words, the development and the progress of technique and of technologies should not take place independent of the human being, nature and their values.

The concept of transhumanism was introduced in 1957 by the English evolutionist biologist and transhumanist Julian Haksly. He considered that the new technologies should be used of physically and mentally strengthen the individual. His view did not take into account any ethical issues.

Nowadays, transhumanism is regarded as one of the versions of posthumanism. The issue regarding posthumanism refers to the fact that within this collective notion there are a number of directions of thought, which do not only intersect, but they are found in complex and contradictory relationships. In the given context

one speaks about the concepts of “posthumanism”, “transhumanism”, “metahumanism” and “the new materialism”.

The philosopher A.V. Pavlov regards posthumanism, as well as transhumanism, as one of the versions of postpostmodernism. Posthumanism is interested in how we should think in order to coexist with nonhuman life forms, whereas postpostmodernims attempts to describe current tendencies in arts and culture. Posthumanism searches the boundaries between human and nonhuman, whereas postpostmodernims directs itself towards the social and the representation of art in this context. Posthumanism represents a philosophical preoccupation and postpostmodernism mainly represents a culturological preoccupation and theory on arts and literature.

Posthumanism appeared at the beginning as a culturocentric philosophy. The material on which the reasonings where based, as well as the conceptual apparatus of this theory were exclusively “cultural”. Although the terms “posthumanism” and “posthuman” appeared later than the notion of transhumanism, they gained higher popularity. These notions were introduced in 1977 by the cultural theoretician Ihab Hassan. According to I. Hassan, one should understand that the human form, including the human desire and all its external representations, can radically change and therefore it should be revised. We have to understand that the 500 years of humanism may get close to an end since transhumanism itself changes into something that we should call posthumanism. At the same time, he proposes the overcoming of the fundamental oppositions of philosophical thought such as unity and multitude, the cosmos and culture, the universal and the concrete. He was prepared to create new languages in science, art and the theory of culture. Hassan’s main thesis consists in the statement that posthumanist culture represents “a culture in development”. The theoretician also militated for the connection between posthumanism and robotics and the artificial intellect (SÎRBU, 2019a).

For Hassan the changes that occurred in the fusion between science and art, in the last instance, should lead to the dematerialisation of life and the conceptualisation of the existence

through the extension of the human conscience on the entire cosmos. Hassan saw these new possibilities of humanity joined with the development of the artificial intellect.

If Hassan was only interested in culture, even synthesized with the cosmos, his followers attempted to overcome culture or at least question it. The most important theoreticians of the feminist movements, such as Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti and Cetrin Hayls, were among the first people to develop the project of posthumanism. These feminists, coming together with posthumanism, were inspired not only by Hassan's texts, but also by the nonhuman experiences (technological and biological). Numerous feminists were interested in programming robots, cybers the cyber-space. They later came to other conceptions. Therefore, D. Haraway, the author of the famous "A cyborg manifesto", gave up on posthumanism. "All these sprawling beings stretching their threads and I was unable to disappoint myself in posthumanism, despite the fact that I grew up with the results of that rich and productive work that was done under this heading".

Numerous feminists suffered a profound evolution in their concepts going beyond the denial phase of posthumanism they focussed on new topics. Overcoming the postmodern, the feminists developed the "cultural posthumanism" project, distancing themselves from the anthropocentric conception of the world. Such humanism, in comparison to its other versions, firstly highlights itself as ethical theory. This is why the firm cultural posthumanism redefined the relationships with the Other in intercultural communication. D. Haraway and C. Heyls addressed some ethical issues, dreaming of overcoming a subjectivism based on the liquidation of body sizing.

Cultural posthumanism revealed social inequality and required the human potential improvement technologies to be used to their advantage. In its early stages, posthumanism required the fulfilment of the commitments to all human and non-human agents.

The situation radically changed in the 21st century. The feminists, using the arguments of the new trends of the academic environment,

were able to propose the projects of the "new materialism". The latter represents a hidden term for the numerous conceptions of feminist authors.

The new materialism refers to some concrete ethical and political goals. The shifting process from the postmodernism movement towards the posthumanism movement takes place, because the philosophical posthumanism nullifies the cultural posthumanism, giving way to the already mentioned political and ethical perspectives.

In 2000, the Nobel prize winner, Paul J. Krutzen, presented the conception of "the anthropocene epoch". It represents a new geological period in which the main influence on the development of the planet and of the soil belongs to the human being. Therefore, the individual is responsible for the fact that in the next 30 years, our planet will endure ecological catastrophes and that we have to eliminate some of our actions in order to eliminate our disappearance.

The representatives of the new materialism claim that we can and we must establish such a perspective of the world that could open the path towards an adequate understanding of the situation, with the help of which we shall firstly be able to solve all our ecological problems. The philosophical posthumanism criticises the activity of the individual but, at the same time, it tries to eliminate the anthropocentric and humanistic allowances, which crystallised during centuries. Posthumanism therefore finds a way to overcome the postmodern, meaning a way to get out of its boundaries, without being afraid of its accusations, since it does not propose anything new. Under these conditions, everything that is not human hits the centre of posthumanism. The natural plays an essential role in it: the animals, the insects, the plants etc.

C. Barad states that by rejecting anthropocentrism, humanism and antihumanism, posthumanism marks the activity of dividing the wrong practices in which "the human" proves to be differently changed and determined. The feminist also states that "using this debatable concept, I am not cointerested in praising postmodernism or demonising posthumanism as a living witness of the death of man or as the

next stage in his development". Posthumanism does not turn to culture as source of all changes and it does not thereby deny nature in agency and historicity (SÎRBU, 2019d).

As I already mentioned before transhumanism represents a version of posthumanism. Therefore, many of the characteristics of posthumanism apply to transhumanism. The latter, still hopes that humanity will not commit suicide, but that it will radically change its activity and therefore nature, society, knowledge and civilisation will continue their ascendant, and not descendant, evolution.

The transhumanists from the Russian Federation state that around the year 2045 human civilisation will reach a bifurcation phase, followed either by degradation and destruction, or by a shift towards a new qualitative phase of its development. The transhumanist D. Dubrovsky considers that the main philosophical issue of our times is represented by the global crisis of the terrestrial civilisation. According to him, we notice that the interdependence of global issues, such as ecological, energetic or demographic, becomes higher. They exacerbate the contemporary social and economic issues, giving birth to a rising threat of anthropological catastrophe.

We consider that the global crisis is not merely a philosophical problem, but it is also a problem of practice, of life and death for the whole mankind. This worry of the Russian intellectuals led to the appearance of a mass social movement, "Russia - 2045" (R-2045).

The R-2045 social movement was started in 2011 by D. Ițcov with the support of a numerous group of scientists and cultural representatives. In 2014 the movement had over 30 000 supporters. Among them we find the patriarch of cybernetics, the founder of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory from the Technological Institute of Massachusetts, Marvin Minsky, the technical director from Google, Ray Kurzweil, the pioneer in the field of brain protection, Teodor Berger, Rogder Penrouzand S. Haneroff, Hirosi Sugura etc.

Supporters of the R-2045 movement permanently speak about the closeness of an ecological catastrophe, trying to activate those "peaceful" philosophers who comfortably lie in their usual mental clichés. The movement aims

to become a catalyst of an important social subject, capable of obtaining spiritual, material and organisational resources, in order to overcome the anthropological dilemma. The supporters of the movement realise the complexity and the gravity of this issue and the fact that there are no guarantees when it comes to solving it. However, at the same time, they are convinced that there is no other way to transform the sociohuman. In these regards, transhumanists appear as alarmists who call human society to action and transformation

Analysing the main conceptions of transhumanism, we came to the conclusion that it possesses certain premises that it absolutizes. Which are they? The disastrous ecological situation; the huge achievements of technique and of convergent technologies; the diminishing of the physical and mental safety of the individual; the threatening presence of the global issues of our times.

Here are the main goals of transhumanism: the creation of a civilisation devoid of physical people, therefore a transhumanist one; the transplant of intellect between human and machine or robot.

Who is able to govern a community of machines and robots? Maybe there will be a government without rulers, according to C. Voinea. Voinea states that "it is becoming more and more clear that the new technologies are not mere useful mechanism in certain activities, but authentic engines for social change. Technology has to be understood as a catalyst of social change, a feature that goes beyond the original function for which it was created" (VOINEA, 2016).

Transhumanists are really right when they speak about the presence of the ecological crisis, which may lead to an ecological catastrophe. Getting closer to the ecological catastrophe represents a threat to the future of human civilisation and it represents the main issue of the current transhumanist conceptions.

Indeed, the threat of those presented above is real and the merit of some transhumanists lies in "the ringing of the bells", in the warning that they address to humanity so that it realises the potential catastrophe and to take certain measures in order to stop it. However, various transhumanists consider that this is precisely the

inalienable future of earthly humanity and civilization. Is this really the case?

Transhumanist actions can be characterised as a nudge for the society, the world's political elites and for the society on the whole. According to D. Bîgu, the concept of nudge has become extremely used in the field of public policies (BÎGU, 2019). A nudge represents an intervention which guides people in the right direction, without constraining them. In D. Bîgu's view, nudges do not significantly change the structure of the stimulants, but rather they change some environmental elements in which people make choices. The main argument for the use of nudging strategies comes from various research belonging to behavioural economics.

The standard economic model places the homo economicus at its core, the rational human agent, who pursues his own goals. Although they agree that people are not infallible, the supporters of the standard model claim that no one can do better than that particular person what is better for itself. This is why the paternalist regulations, which impose restrictions to the citizens, are not regarded as desirable (SÎRBU, 2019b).

The behavioural economics research supports the idea that people are not fully rational beings, as presented in the standard conception. A series of experiments show that people systematically deviate from "pursuing their own goals". Although this argument is not a completely new one, the experimental studies from behavioural economics offer new evidence, proving that peoples' decisions are influenced by a series of biases, which make them not pursue their goals in a rational manner. D. Bîgu claims that various nudges help people overcome these biases (BÎGU, 2019).

Thaler and Sunstein use the concept "libertarian paternalism". The libertarian dimension stems from the fact that the citizens still have the freedom to act as they wish to. The paternalist dimension is characterised by the fact that those certain measures are meant to make people act in their own interests, to protect them from their own mistakes when it comes to making decisions regarding health, wealth and welfare (BÎGU, 2019).

The nudge, in our case, is the one that transhumanists give to the society, and it refers

to the future of the earthly civilisation. Will humanity be able to feel it or not? I hope it will and at that moment the individual and humanity, the current human civilisation on the whole, will have a future. Otherwise they will not.

According to V.V. Ceşev, society has reached the information era, with an entire set of technological and social consequences. Geneticists already try to change human nature, technicians build robots capable of listening to people and transhumanists enjoy in advance the synthesis between man and robot. What could be the path for the individual's safeguarding from himself and his harmful actions, which could make him self-destruct?

Nowadays, according to V.V. Ceşev, we notice that in order to connect technical progress to the development of the society, we need another cultural consensus, based on the ethics of social utility and on the solidary individual. The dominant role of general-human solidarity motivation, which ensures social development, represents a universal principle, compulsory to all behavioural programmes, which will ensure the survival of the human species through the survival of the its community and individuals. The moral basis of human life includes the vectors of solidarity and technical progress right from the preindustrial society development phase and this unavoidably takes us back to the ethics of the solidary individual.

We once again ask ourselves if transhumanists are right when they claim that the global ecological crisis takes place right now. The answer is definitely an affirmative one. Indeed, the global ecological crisis takes place in the present. The arguments? The degradation of the biological environment, the change of climate and of the physical processes which take place on our planet.

Global Footprint Network says that humanity consumes in one year the amount of resources that Terra can only reproduce in a year and a half. This refers not only to biological resources but also to water, air and other. If this consumption trend stays the same by the year 2030, we shall need a second Earth.

The study of the ecological problem is closely connected with the deepening of other global

issues and with the increase of contradictions and of social conflicts.

According to 2700 experts from 30 countries, over 36 million hectares of wood are destroyed every year. The global ocean absorbs 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide daily and this increases its acidity and temperature. In the last 40 years, 39 infectious diseases were discovered.

Until 2012, over 40 wars took place on our planet. They destroyed not only tens of thousands of lives, but also the flora and the fauna. The number of storms, floods, draughts and forest fires increased from 300 case in 1980 to 900 in 2012. The number of social conflicts of various types increased pretty much the same.

Is humanity able to contrapose something efficient in order to counteract these problems? We think it is, or they are not fatal, according to various transhumanists. Decreasing exhausts of all kinds, including those emitted by factories and cars can reduce the pressure of human activity on the climate. The rational use of resources and the rationalisation of the human actions when it comes to resources and pollution may lead to solving many of these issues (SÎRBU, 2019a).

Deanthropologizing the individual and debiologizing nature – illusory goals of transhumanism

The end goal of transhumanism consists in the immortality of the human intellect and not of the individual in his corporal and mental integrity. According to transhumanism, the extreme conditions of the natural environment will not be able to preserve human corporality, as well as that of other forms of biological life. Biological life at a certain development stage of civilisation will become impossible on Terra, as well as that of the human in his current dimensions. Only the human intellect, transposed to the robot, will continue to exist and function normally. This is the only way in which the individual will become immortal. However, this cybernetic immortality will become real only if the human intellect will be able to function on other nonbiological basis. Therefore, transhumanists debiologize terrestrial nature and deanthropologize the individual.

These aspects will gradually take place, according to transhumanists. “The cultural-historical approach and the mediation theory of

human activity through external artefacts, during the current transhumanist development stage of computer technologies, require the right correctives according to the role that they play in the life of the individual. Computer artefacts stop representing external means, which extend the possibilities of the individual. Here is where their union and convergence take place and it leads to a specific growth in conscience and the appearance of a specific artificial reason. The development of partial reason takes place in an artificial manner, or the functioning of sensorial organs is completed by the functioning of synthetic means of calculus... Therefore, there are no longer any boundaries between the subject and the means, between man and artefact. Subsequently they may lead to the appearance of the individual of the transhumanist era, whose consciousness will be simultaneously bodily and artificially embodied, extended beyond the boundaries of the physical body”.

We consider that this quote contains at least one contradiction. At the beginning, the society’s contemporary development stage is identified with the transhumanist one. Towards the end, the transhumanist era has to be reached, otherwise it does not yet exist.

It is true that our era is completely different from all previous ones. We may partially agree with the French philosopher J. Ellul, who at the beginning of 1960s stated that the life environment of the individual was no longer nature, but technique. We can certainly say that nowadays “we live in technologies and technologies live in us” and it is important to take into account not only the issue of adapting the individual to the technologized environment, but also of the coevolution of a more and more technologized individual with an environment which is becoming more and more anthropologized.

The biological evolution of the individual, as a component of the biotechnological evolution, does not refer to the transformation of humanity into posthumanity, as transhumanists claim. The well-known American philosopher, F. Fukuyama, said, at the beginning of the year 2000, that the human also disappears, turning into posthuman.

Technobioevolution already represents a reality, but the individual during its process does not cease to be a human being. He becomes a

technologized human being. Therefore, when we speak about the technohuman as a result of such evolution, we must not identify it with the posthuman or with the biorobot. The technohuman does not replace the rational human being, but it represents a stage in his development – the rational technologized individual. Until when, until what point of technology will man be identical with himself?

Nowadays, the individual regards himself as identical with himself, without looking for elements that were implanted into his body, in certain moments of his life, replacing the sick or the non-functional ones. Even the biological transplanted organs from other people do not make the individual doubt his identity (ȘIRBU, 2019c).

Identity and identification are such simple elements as they appear at first sight. One thing is however clear. The individual self-identifies himself as a rational and corporal being, thus with some degree of mentality and with a certain body. According to philosopher D.N. Nurmanbetova, “the individual, the group and other communities possess not just one, but a multitude of identities. Each individual has at least a few identities. Here also it is necessary to differentiate between objective and subjective identities. The objective identity is formed during the real process of the humans’ life activity, in the context of a concrete sociocultural reality. The subjective identity is or, in our opinion, should also be called self-identity and it represents the result of self-identification, so of man’s awareness and interpretation of his own identity. Therefore, from this point of view, in the sociocultural reality, there are some objective identification processes and some subjective self-identification processes”.

By stating that the biological body of the individual does not have any future, transhumanists therefore deny the identity and the self-identity, which are proper to the individual. According to E.V. Mareeva, transhumanism in itself presents a development prognosis of the nano-, bio-, info, and socio-technologies in the undetermined given situation, which assume some elements of good intentions, dreams and myth. E.V. Mareeva also states that when it comes to the situation with the

NBICS-technologies, it is important to notice that with the help of technique, the individual does not only improve his “detachable” organs, which turned him into an universal being, but he also compensates for the shortcomings of the organic body. From the prosthesis used for the external organs the civilised humanity moves towards the prosthesis of the internal organs. None of the opponents of transhumanism will not probably refuse the perspective of such a successful mixture in his or her own body. Are there any boundaries to the prosthesis of our bodies which, by going beyond them, means that we might lose what we now call human identity?, Mareeva asks both herself and us.

The creators of artificial intellect hope to improve the machine to the level of the individual, and the ones who with the help of technologies improve the human body the other way around, they transform the individual in what they nowadays call a cyborg. Where is that particular boundary that by overcoming it the machine becomes human, and the human becomes machine?

If nanotechnologies and the imitation of the living tissue facilitate the replacement of the human brain, will the individual preserve its individuality and personality? Or, why should I need an immortal body if I will no longer be myself? If personality is derived from the body, then by changing the body we will lose it. If personality is derived from the communication with the other, then we might assume that another life may influence our mood. This would be our auto-conscience and mood with the help of our “repaired brain”, and not of our internal self.

In principle, the machine cannot be human even if it “assumes” his intellect. According to philosopher Ȃ.V. Iliencov, the individual who deals with the machine, in fact he deals with another man, with its creator and master, whereas the machine represents only a means for people. The “man-machine” issue proves to be a man-man issue or the issue of the man’s attitude towards himself, although not directly, but “mediated” by the car.

From those presented above we understand that transhumanism presents a series of premises which nowadays objectively exist and

it considers that they will lead to the disappearance of the individual as a biological being, as well as that of the entire biological world on Terra. We therefore tried to prove that the transhumanist conceptions are nothing more than an absolutisation of tendencies, the consequences of which can be avoided, and therefore they are not unavoidable.

The significant contradiction between society and nature can be solved and optimized. The convergent technological achievements should not be demonised because they can be beneficial to the individual. The machines and robots cannot replace the individual, they are created to serve him, even in creativity. Debiologizing terrestrial nature and deanthropologizing the individual represent some transhumanist illusions and they can be avoided. They are merely semi-truth, therefore tendencies, and they, from different objective or subjective reasons, may or may not become real. In any case, they are possible, but not unavoidable. In the last instance, the transhumanist conceptions represent a threat to human safety and security.

The absolutization tendencies of transhumanists can definitely be avoided if human society uses some ecological wisdom in its activities (SÎRBU, 2018). Especially since according to the anthropological principle "all the activities, belonging to the individual, transform him into a principle and a paradigm of economy, knowledge and of the human activity in itself. The principle and the paradigm require the integration and the convergence of the sciences of nature, technique and socio-humanist. What for? In order to solve global issues, especially that of the human, a globalism applied in all approaches and of the globalization vector, in the interest of man and humanity" (SÎRBU, 2019a).

The ecological, socioecological, more precisely ecosophical, approach is necessary in all fields of human activity, including the field of the ecological regulation of the economy and the satisfaction of the human needs, based on the interrelationships between society and the biosphere. The ecosophical approach and its principles is required when analysing the Covid-19 pandemics, as well as other possible

pandemics, which ultimately depend on the environment, society and man.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Transhumanism appears as one of the antihumanist trends of contemporary philosophy. It appeared as a natural consequence of postpostmodernism and as a version of posthumanism.

Transhumanists, as well as posthumanists absolutize the negative consequences of contemporary civilisation, of the global ecological crisis and of the use of convergent technologies.

Transhumanists consider that the terrestrial biological life forms, including the biological body of the individual, have no future. According to them, the transfer of human reason and intelligence to the robot is unavoidable. This leads to "the cybernetic immortality" of the individual.

In the transhumanist view, the symbiosis between man and machine represents the first stage of the deanthropologization of the individual and of the debiologization of terrestrial nature. They are regarded as illusory goals of transhumanists. Theoretically, they are possible, practically they are not.

The way out of the impasse drawn by transhumanists consists in its augmented criticism and in directing human activity towards protecting, re-establishing and improving the terrestrial nature, including that of the human, towards solving global issues, optimising and harmonising the individual's interactions with the ambient environment and of society with nature. Therefore, we direct our actions towards the survival and the durable development of the individual, society and terrestrial nature, that the ecological wisdom speaks about, based on the global ecological ethics of the traditional ethnic and ecologic humanism and on its general human principles.

The above-mentioned problems can be solved in the conditions of world peace, solidarity and mutual aid between people, cultures, states and communities. Only in these conditions will the whole terrestrial life, including the human one, triumph.

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