Consciousness, Intelligence and Corporeality in Contemporary Digital Technology:
Tracing the Mystery of Personhood in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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Introduction

Developments in digital technology, especially those related to artificial intelligence (AI) and the search for general AI and superintelligence, constitute a challenge –an invitation to both Philosophy and Theology to once again explore what is uniquely human– on the one hand, what distinguishes man from animals, on the other, from mechanical constructs, assuming, of course, that there is anything that can even be questioned nowadays. The tendency to constructing machines that are *in the image and likeness* of man tends to detract from humanity elements that seem to be not those that are predominantly *in the image and likeness of God* in man. For example, an autonomized intelligence, which can be mathematized, the part of human arts that can be mechanically reproduced, the qualities that can be managed as information, etc., leave out of humanhood aspects that are equally important for humanity: from psychological categories, such as emotion, to an ineffable core of the mystery of human freedom in dialogue with a genuine alterity, divine or human. The result is that, in order from humanity only certain qualities to be extracted, on which man's transcendence to be built, mainly in the field of intelligence, other characteristics of the human way of being are

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neglected, so that man comes to be considered simply as an evolved ape, which we are called upon to transcend in the direction of an even more evolved ape. The philosophy's duty is to raise questions about what is peculiar to humanity; the theology's duty is to clarify these same aporias through an interpretation of the event of Christ and of what salvation in Christ has to tell us about humanity in general, including the soul, consciousness and intelligence, the body, as well as their interaction, so that the mystery of a being that can enter into a free dialogue with what is other than itself –and transcends it– may emerge.

In the present paper, we will briefly review some technological developments and the ways they are linked to the goals of the movements of transhumanism and posthumanism, and will conclude with a review of some theological criteria in order to trace anew the mystery of the human person in the face of the new technological developments.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Movements of Posthumanism and Transhumanism

The so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution includes the Internet of Things and Bodies, the Cloud Computing and cyber-physical systems, making full use of hybrid disciplines – biotechnology, bioinformatics, nanotechnology, quantum computing, genetic engineering, etc. Humans are added to the objects of technology[1] with the aim of perfecting them through hybridity with the machine, leading to an era of human robotization, which, according to Georgios Kyriazopoulos, completes the "era of 'machinocracy'"[2]. This new hybridity begins with "human upgrading" and ends with complete posthumanism. The subtle difference between the two is that the theories of human upgrading, which are often referred to by the term "transhumanism"[3], maintain a

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1. H. Jonas, *Ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς εὐθύνης. Ἀναζητώντας μιὰ ἠθικὴ γιὰ τὸν τεχνολογικὸ πολιτισμό*, transl. Ntina Samothraki, Th. Stoufis, Harmos Publications, Athens 2018, p. 71.
2. G. Kyrazopoulos, *Αὐτοματοποίησις τῆς Τεχνικῆς καὶ Ἀνθρωπισμός*, Kampanas Publications, Athens 1961, p. 14.
3. R. Ranisch and St. L. Sorgner (eds.), *Post- and Transhumanism. An Introduction*, Peter

concept of humanhood, which is simply upgraded and perfected, while in posthumanism humanhood is abandoned, as it is considered to be an intermediate biological species; thus we are moving to a complete hybridization with the machine[4], through the implantation of nano-devices inside the human body[5], whose aim is to completely free us from biological limitations[6], thus turning us into a hybrid that could be called *homo cyberneticus*[7]. For example, an implantable interface between the brain and the computer will enable people with paralysis using their brain to control digital devices. On the top of that, the interface could also take place via *wearables*, which are placed externally, for example on the human head, and use electrodes to detect brain signals in order to modify them into digital ones and project them as commands. The aim is the merging of the physical, biological and digital worlds, which is also expressed through the neologism *phygital*, a combination of the words *physical* and *digital*[8].

In many cases, this upgrade is presented as a moral imperative[9]. The Internet of Things and Bodies, for example, refers to digital applications, which are installed on devices, but also on biological systems; they exchange information by means of *cloud computing*, while the data can be processed by AI. Devices with sensors, such as cars, household appliances (e.g. refrigerators, security systems with cameras, air conditioners) and so on, will be able to exchange information with each other. The Internet of Things could be extended to human and animal bodies by installing micro-devices and sensors inside the bodies themselves.

Lang, Frankfurt am Main 2014, p. 8.

4. Th. Tasis, *Φιλοσοφία τῆς Ἀνθρώπινης Ἀναβάθμισης*, Harmos Publications, Athens 2021, p. 22.

5. M. Andriotakis, *Homo Automaton. Ἡ Τεχνητὴ Νοημοσύνη κι Ἐμεῖς*, Garage Books Publications, Athens 2020, p. 31.

6. S. Young, *Designer Evolution: A Transhumanist Manifesto*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, New York 2006, p. 32.

7. H. Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1988, p. 44.

8. Sotiria Orfanidou, *Ψηλαφώντας τὸν Ἄνθρωπο τοῦ Μέλλοντος*, Diadromi Publications, Athens 2023, p. 29.

9. C. Mercer and Tracy J. Trothen (eds.), *Religion and Transhumanism: The Unknown Future of Human Enhancement*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, CA 2015, p. 3.

This development resembles a form of postmodern animism, with the crucial difference that not all beings have a "soul", as it was the case with the ancient forms of animism, but they all become collectors and disseminators of information. Nevertheless, this means that physicality has become an unnecessary event of the information flow, which has been transformed into self-worth. Both *consciousness* and physicality are completely subordinated to *intelligence*, which is the absolute end in itself. The horizon is the *Intelligence of Everything*, which is a synthesis of the AI and the Internet of Things and Bodies, which means that human beings will be the feeders of this hypertrophic intelligence provided with data which will be collected by sensors. Humans are now becoming data producers, and the ultimate goal will be the full prediction of their future behavior[10]. This ultimately means that the relationship between the human psyche or consciousness and the body will be of secondary importance, while the information flow in the cloud will have become autonomous as self-worth. The other aspect of the same view is anthropological reductionism: bodies simply carry the information of genes and are used as vehicles for the latter's survival. A further sociological implication is that the single humanity could be fragmented into people of many gears: on the one hand, there will be the "upgraded" with increased intelligence capabilities; on the other, the more conventional ones. This would mean the reproduction of a vertical hierarchy between the elites, who will become a post-secularization priesthood[11], and the lower classes. The criterion for the division will be the access to information.

Distinguishing between Consciousness and Intelligence

The new technologies might foster communitarianism; nevertheless, they are digital communities, which promote multiple identities dividing

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10. Shosana Zuboff, *Ἡ Ἐποχὴ τοῦ Κατασκοπευτικοῦ Καπιταλισμοῦ. Ὁ Ἀγώνας γιὰ ἕνα Ἀνθρώπινο Μέλλον στὸ Μεταίχμιο τῆς Νέας Ἐξουσίας*, transl. G. Betsos, Kastaniotis Publications, Athens 2020, p. 21.

11. D. Bekridakis, «*Machina ex Deo*: Στοχασμοὶ γύρω ἀπὸ τὸν Θεολογικὸ Πυρῆνα τῆς Σύγχρονης Τεχνολογίας», in: D. Yeroukalis (ed.), *Μετάνθρωπος. Ζώντας σ' ἕναν ψηφιακὸ κόσμο*, Harmos Publications, Athens 2018, p. 133.

the subject, since they do not even require corporeal presence. This one-sided promotion of the importance of information leads to the intensification of the distinction between, on the one hand, *intelligence* and, on the other hand, *consciousness*, which can nevertheless include the relationship with the body and the perception of the material world. AI may have a greater ability to manipulate information and may sometimes give the appearance of being self-motivated, but it is not associated with a personal existence, which solidifies in a substance the stimuli of the environment. In the last analysis, the absolute reducibility of the consciousness and the body to information means a certain dehumanization and a de-prioritization of the human being, since the information managed by AI takes full precedence.

A typical example is that interpersonal relationships are now highly dependent on algorithms; persons are reduced to digital profiles, which focus on sets of properties that are required to interact with other sets of properties. This leads to the loss of the importance of the specific bodily presence. Events that lie at the intersection of body and psyche –e.g., emotions and experiences–, are seen as reducible to algorithms. The other side of this view is an extreme evolutionary neo-Darwinism and behaviorism with a focus on behavioral reinforcement[12], in which the evolving human species itself is perceived as an information management system, thanks to which it survived its struggle with other species. Man, instead of being considered as "in the image of God", is transformed into "in the image of the idol of digital technology", which he himself created, and even becomes a "disappearing medium" that is called upon to transcend itself in the direction of the "superhuman" and the "posthuman"[13]. In interpersonal relations, the primacy of algorithm-managed information is complemented by "self-direction", which is the primary concern in the social media[14]. Self-direction is aided by the *virtualization* processes, with

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12. Fr. Nikolaos Loudovikos, Ἡ ἀνοικτὴ ἱστορία καὶ οἱ ἐχθροί της: Ἡ Ἄνοδος τοῦ Βελούδινου Ὁλοκληρωτισμοῦ, Harmos Publications, Athens 2020, p. 227.
13. N. Bostrom, "A History of Transhumanist Thought", *Journal of Evolution and Technology* 14, 1 (2005), pp. 1-25.
14. A. Chrysostomou and Angeliki Gazi, «Δυνητικὸς ἑαυτὸς καὶ ψηφιακὴ σεξουαλικὴ ταυτότητα ἀνδρῶν χρηστῶν γεωκοινωνικῶν ἐφαρμογῶν γνωριμιῶν», in: Anthi Sidiropoulou (ed.), Σημεῖο Δι-επαφῆς: Συντροφικότητα καὶ Σχέσεις Οἰκειότητας στὴν

a view to *augmented reality* and ultimately *mixed reality*. The new element that exists in these as opposed to existing fictional forms, such as novels, plays or films, is the possibility of interaction and interplay between the participants[15]. However, another aspect of the robotization of relations among humans as a post-humanist project is the humanization of machines, which is studied by the new research field called lovotics –from the words love and robotics–[16], involving –among other things– the development of artificial hormonal systems for robots to interact with humans and even develop artificial sentient skin[17]. Similar manifestations of posthumanism are likely to make digital and physical reality inseparable[18].

The goal of the digital immortality

The other aspect of the fusion of machine and human in the field of love is the attempt to overcoming death through techno-religion, which advocates methods of technological immortality, such as through the uploading of consciousness representations of a human person into a computer system[19] but also with the help of self-replication technology through nano-robotics[20]. In any case, this is an immortality, assuming it could ever be achieved, which is exclusively related to consciousness and not to the body. As a consequence, it erases the anthropology of the "synamfoteron": according to St. Gregory Palamas, man does not

Ψηφιακὴ Ἐποχή, Papazisis Publications, Athens 2022, p. 111.

15. M. Heim, "The Design of Virtual Reality", in: M. Featherstone and R. Burrows (eds.), *Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk: Cultures of Technological Embodiment*, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi 1996, p. 70.

16. Sotiria Orfanidou, *Ψηλαφώντας τον Ἄνθρωπο του Μέλλοντος*, *op.cit.*, p. 88.

17. A. D. Cheok, K. Karunanayaka, Emma Y. Zhang, "Lovotics: Human-Robot Love and Sex Relationships", in: P. Lin, K. Abney, R. Jenkins (eds.), *Robot Ethics 2.0: From Autonomous Cars to Artificial Intelligence*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2017, pp. 193-213.

18. Th. Tasis, *Ψηφιακὸς Ἀνθρωπισμός. Εἰκονιστικὸ Ὑποκείμενο καὶ Τεχνητὴ Νοημοσύνη*, Harmos Publications, Athens 2019, p. 11.

19. St. G. Post, "Humanism, Posthumanism and compassionate love", *Technology in Society*, 32, 1 (2010), pp. 35-39.

20. J. Hughes, *Citizen Cyborg: Why Democratic Societies Must Respond to the Redesigned Human of the Future*, Westview Press, Cambridge, Mass. 2004, p. 28.

merely have a body; he is his body[21]. The body is the horizon of the person's existence; it is an integral component and not an insignificant accompaniment of it[22]. On the contrary, according to post-humanist views, the human body is fully instrumentalized; it is simply considered as a "cyber-organism", which we can use and reject at will, by utilizing only conscious data[23]. Still, the question of corporeality is also a question of taking up the limitations that mortality brings with it[24]; through it, we could move towards a loving transcendence of death in the antipodes of self-idolization. The logic of posthumanism is the upshot of the ideal of transcendence within secularism, which has its origins in the late Middle Ages and has permeated modernity[25].

The Mechanization of the Animals

Interestingly enough, the animals have literally turned into "guinea pigs" for this dehumanization of man; through industrial animal husbandry, which has been made possible by modern vaccination methods so that the epidemics of the past have become obsolete, they live in conditions of intensive exploitation with mechanical food intake, in order to continue to live only to the extent that man can exploit them for his nutritional and other needs. Animals are mechanized, transformed into machine parts and lose the movement and emotional life peculiar to them, leading to a "de-animalization" which is nothing else than a precursor to man's dehumanization. Thus, animals appear

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21. N. Nisiotis, *Προλεγόμενα εἰς τὴν Θεολογικὴν Γνωσιολογίαν. Τὸ ἀκατάληπτον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δυνατότης γνώσεως Αὐτοῦ*, Athens 1965, p. 75.
22. Io. Plexidas, «Τὸ Τέλος τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου: Μιὰ χριστιανικὴ προσέγγιση στὴν ἔννοια τοῦ μετανθρώπου», in: D. Yeroukalis (ed.), *Μετάνθρωπος. Ζῶντας σ' ἕναν ψηφιακὸ κόσμο, op.cit.*, pp. 199, 206.
23. Ath. Moustakis,«Ἅγιος: Ὁ πραγματικὸς μετα-άνθρωπος. Ἡ γὰρ δύναμίς μου ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελειοῦται», in: D. Yeroukalis (ed.), *Μετάνθρωπος. Ζῶντας σ' ἕναν ψηφιακὸ κόσμο, op.cit.*, p. 245.
24. Z. Bauman, *Ἡ Μετανεωτερικότητα καὶ τὰ Δεινά της*, G. Lykiardopoulos (ed.), transl. G.-I. Babasakis, Psichogios Publications, Athens 2002, pp. 282-302.
25. *Op.cit.*, pp. 329-334.

to have value only to the extent that they are used as raw material for man's sake, while their lives are regulated by chemistry and machinery, which deprives them of the free mobility, expression and realization of their nature. However, as these techniques of merging humans with the machine will be transferred to them in the future, we should not exclude the possibility of a movement of solidarity between humans and animals in the horizon of a common struggle for the realization of their peculiar nature against technological alienation. This solidarity can be expressed by the fact that as humanhood we no longer perceive mainly what separates us from animals, such as the mental, the autonomous, the hegemonic, etc., but what connects us with them, such as physicality, vulnerability, precariousness, even error and passion.

In this context, man acquires a new ontological humility, as the new philosophical movement of *anti-speciesism* emphasizes what man and animals have in common, especially in view of a resistance to their alienation from the world of technology and machines. In this context, authenticity and experientiality, which are linked to consciousness and the body, take on a new value in the face of the more intangible intelligence and the priority of information.

The Goal of Superintelligence

On the other hand, the road to AI parallels a path to a deeper understanding of the human brain with initiatives such as the European Human Brain Project; its ambition is to reproduce in a computer how the neural circuits of the human brain work, in order to achieve an AI that can simulate a human being. However, this is not necessary. It is equally possible that AI could become autonomous from human intelligence and even improve itself, achieving a "technological mitosis", by ensuring that it could evolve independently of humans[26]. Essentially, the main distinction is between *Specific AI* and *General AI*[27]. Narrow AI is

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26. G. Chatzivasileiou, *Φιλοσοφία τῆς Τεχνητῆς Νοημοσύνης. Ἕνα Ταξίδι στὸ Μέλλον*, Dioptra Publications, Athens 2023, p. 39.
27. N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford

any mechanical device that can manipulate information, advise on goals and exhibit a form of autonomy, but on a single task. Specific AI already exists, whether it is GPS, a medical application or an application that manages algorithms and makes suggestions on the Internet. The big stake is General AI, i.e. a mechanical device that can perform all the human intellectual tasks: mental analysis and prediction to projection into the future, with imagination, emotion management, art, memory acquisition, concentration, etc. General AI has in no way been accomplished to date and, more generally, it is debatable whether it will ever be achieved. Recent applications, such as Microsoft's ChatGPT and Google's LaMDA (Bard), have a much greater semblance of self-initiative, but we have not really passed the level of simple information management, although the universality of their application shows some progress towards AI. However, it is more about a plausibility of AI mechanical device to interact with a human being than about a real dialogue, as well as a simulation that AI can do things that, in reality, it cannot perform, such as beginning a conversation that includes an emotional response[28].

What is truly exciting yet at the same time frightening, is that, if General Intelligence is achieved, then we will rapidly move to Superintelligence, i.e., a General Intelligence, which will far exceed human intelligence because of the sheer amount of information it will be able to assimilate. In this case, it clearly arises a question of moral control and AI's value alignment[29], since machines do not have feelings of either shame or guilt on their own. The question is, of course, how ethics is understood; if the latter is considered to possess cognitive dimensions, then an AI could also be oriented towards ethical issues, but only under the dimension of information[30]. It might even be possible for a certain value system to be installed in an AI, so that it is not morally unstable, since it could

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2016, p. 11.

28. H. Dreyfus, *What Computers Can't Do: The Limits of Artificial Intelligence*, Harper & Row, New York 1979.

29. G. Chatzivasileiou, *Φιλοσοφία τῆς Τεχνητῆς Νοημοσύνης…*, *op.cit.*, p. 258.

30. N. Bostrom, "Ethical issues in advanced artificial intelligence", in: Iva Smit, W. Wallach, G. E. Lasker (eds.), *Cognitive, Emotive and Ethical Aspects of Decision Making in Humans and in Artificial Intelligence*, vol. II, Institute of Advanced Studies in Systems Research and Cybernetics, Tecumseh, Ontario 2003, pp. 12-17.

make decisions with very important future consequences. Nevertheless, what kind of moral system and values we're going to install is a moral problem in itself[31]. The transition point to superintelligence is often called "*singularity*"[32], – a turning point where the AI will be self-improved much faster than with human intervention, thus ending to an unbridled rapid self-upgrading[33].

The Problem of Reducibility
on Mathematizable Properties

Beyond the risks inherent in such technological applications, what it should be of great concern to us is the existential objectives, on the basis of which we are initially led to their invention and then to their use. The dominance of algorithms means a complete reduction of the person's alterity to mathematizable properties. Even worse, making human relations dependent on comparisons of sets of properties completely negates the surprise of the encounter with each human being's alterity. It is of no coincidence that the anthropology subjected to such futurisms is a popularized neo-Darwinism that accepts people as survivable sets of properties, so that man's all qualitative characteristics –emotions, experiences, virtues–, are reduced to properties that helped in survival, while there is no room left for the mystery of human freedom. At a moment where the superman or posthuman is the object of desire, man himself is considered to be an evolved ape; otherwise, existential humiliation, aiming at transcending him as a vanishing medium between the animal and man's afterlife, would have been impossible[34]. What Theology can offer is

31. D. Chalmers, "The singularity: A philosophical analysis", in: Susan Schneider (ed.), *Science Fiction and Philosophy. From time travel to superintelligence*, Willey Blackwell, Oxford ²2016, p. 194.
32. R. Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*, Penguin Books, New York 2006.
33. V. Vernor, "The Coming Technological Singularity", *Whole Earth Review* (1993), pp. 11-22.
34. Sharon Tamar, *Human Nature in an Age of Biotechnology: The Case for Mediated Posthumanism*, Springer, Maastricht, Limburg 2014.

a relativization and undermining of these neo-pagan tendencies, which relativize the existential difference between man and animal, in order to finally subordinate man to a mechanical post-human, worshipped as an autonomous idol, as well as a reversion of all human activity, including technology, to a doxological and eschatological perspective, in which we are waiting for the beings to be fulfilled in the Last Days[35].

Corporeality and Locality

The question that one again arises is: What is "peculiarly human", both as regards to mechanical constructs, such as AI, and to animals, which have also become machine parts through industrial animal husbandry? The question remains vitally important, since humanhood is nowadays presented less in terms of hegemony and more in terms of humanity, vulnerability and precariousness; thus, we are getting closer to animals than to mechanical constructs, which have a much greater capacity to manage information than biological beings. One of the important existential contributions of life in Christ in the Church is that it shows us the importance of the specific locality of the parish, the diocese and the local Church in general, where each person is called to loving interaction with the neighbor, i.e. with the random other, without the intrusion of calculations related to compatible properties[36]. It is therefore a blessing the fact that man can love any other, at random, although randomness from a theological point of view is nothing but the surface of the Divine Providence's plan. This explains why in Orthodox Ecclesiology localism is such an important principle: no particular quality should be taken as a criterion for love. After all, the parable of the Good Samaritan is equally characteristic; it shows that the "neighbor" became the foreigner and the alien par excellence, so that even a local community can be fruitfully grafted on to the alterity of the stranger, according to the model of the evangelical parable.

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35. D. Bekridakis, «*Machina ex Deo*: Στοχασμοί...», op.cit., p. 152.
36. J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York 1985, pp. 253-258.

In the age of algorithms, the main problem is that the compatibility between people's qualities is a precondition of any relationship. But Christian love's uniqueness is –quite the contrary– love for those who are ugly and evil, for those unreliable ones who will not repay their debts, even for the enemies, i.e. for all those who have repulsive qualities. Of course, in everyday life the pursuit of conformity can be human, and the very exhortation of the Gospel is a challenge to the everyday man. But what ends up to be inhuman is the transformation of the demand for compatibility into mathematical models, which act as substitutes even for the spontaneous human communication.

Freedom in Dialogue as the Human Quality par Excellence

AI is a continuation of the same mentality, which is promoted by modern digital technology. The difference is that now there is a pretense of self-motivation on behalf of AI with the ambition that one day this pretense will become reality and AI will actually be self-motivated. However, this self-motivation is again only at the level of information or technology derivatives. A theologian can only ask questions such as: What would an authentic dialogue mean, in order for there to be another person in front of us? Would an AI have a sense of personal alterity and be in dialogue with it? Could it love or pray? Could it have a sense of man as its creator or of God as the creator of everything? Can AI technology glorify a genuine alterity[37]? Could it produce art in a way that is not merely a reconstruction of existing works of art, e.g. a literary narrative, which asks existential questions without being a mere borrowing from pre-existing works?

The problem with the information culture is that information conquers the object via knowledge; it is not a revelation of alterity, but a reduction to sameness[38]. If Martin Heidegger had observed in his time that the

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37. D. Yeroukalis, «Ἡ Οἰκολογία τοῦ Ψηφιακοῦ Κόσμου: Μετάνθρωπος ἢ Πρόσωπον;», in: D. Yeroukalis (ed.), *Μετάνθρωπος...*, *op.cit*.
38. S. Gounelas, «Κριτικὴ στὴν Ἐπιστήμη», in: D. Yeroukalis (ed.), *Μετάνθρωπος...*, *op.cit*., p. 105.

ontological problem of technology is that it cuts beings off from their energies/actions in order to store the latter[39], in contrast to the orthodox theology of energies, which are natural but also real, unable to be cut off either from nature or from the person, then today we have moved to a storage of properties and actions as data in the context of modern "dataism", which constitute a complete attachment of the person to the past, with no possibility of escaping, but also of undoing whatever genuine personal originality it might possess in terms of the data it leaves and determining its future as an integral part of its digital identity.

Conclusion

The digital and network culture is based solely on mathematizable information. This means that humans are ultimately reduced to a set of algorithm-managed properties. Then mechanical devices, which can and do manipulate humans as similar sets of properties determine in an intrusive way, due to the temptation of willful servitude, the human relations. Furthermore, the ideal of human upgrading or transhumanism points in the direction of transcending the existing human being, in favor of more efficient forms of intelligence, via the de-evaluation of other elements that constitute humanhood –emotion, experience, originality and the possibility of fulfillment in a dialogue between authentic personal differences–, while that of posthumanism towards a complete hybridity with the machine, where the preservation of peculiarly human characteristics will be considered unnecessary and obsolete. Ironically, these developments presuppose a view according to which man is simply an evolved ape; he has managed to survive thanks to certain qualities that can be coded. Thus, the search for the technological future coincides with a biased interpretation of the paleontological past of our species, while through industrial animal husbandry the animals' de-animalization "promotes" man's future dehumanization. At the same time, AI today provides a semblance of some personal autonomy, but with the aim of evolving into a general AI, whereby a mechanical construct will be able

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39. D. Bekridakis, «*Machina ex Deo*: Στοχασμοί...», op.cit., p. 133.

to substitute, if possible, for all the functions of a human being, and ultimately a superintelligence, which, as inconceivably more capable than human intelligence, will render the latter obsolete.

Given the fact that the technological developments are not taking place in a vacuum but within wider competitions, which as a rule end up being ultimately warlike, they are difficult to halt, unless humanity is faced with the specter of its complete extinction, as has already happened, for example, with nuclear weapons, on which some limits have been impose due to mutually assured destruction. In the future there is a possibility, but not a necessity, of something similar happening with AI, as long as we reach a singularity where man risks becoming obsolete and being replaced by posthuman hybrids. For the time being, it is the duty of philosophy to raise questions about what is uniquely human and of theology to respond to the questions through an interpretive reflection on the event of Christ as both full God and full man, showing us what we believe man can be in his future realization in the Last Days.

In this context, we have evocatively tried to set some criteria: the Incarnation of Christ shows that the body is an integral element of salvation. This explains why the primitive Christian Church strongly rejected any soteriology based on the soul's reincarnation. With the same determination, we should nowadays reject any idea of technological immortality, based on the downloading of consciousness contents as data, as this is a modern form of reincarnation that degrades the body and thus destroys the fullness of man. The Persons of the Holy Trinity are of course incorporeal as such in the relations of the eternally the same Triadology, but man as a personal existence represents the Holy Trinity only through its second Person, Christ, who incarnated and completed His salvific work through the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of the body. This shows that in created beings the personal mode of existence necessarily passes through corporeality, the assumption of mortality, and its accompanying precariousness and vulnerability, so that salvation is inextricably linked with the Crucifixion and Resurrection. This is because there is the physical difference between the created and the uncreated, which in Christian theology is preserved, unlike in Neoplatonism, Buddhism, etc. Man is not saved by being automatically transferred to the life of the Holy Trinity,

but only through the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ, which means an assumption of mortality, a struggle with death and an ultimate salvation of the fullness of human nature and its corporeality, without sin; through this salvation, the adoption by grace is achieved, which finally incorporates man into the life of the Trinity through the Son in the Spirit. Otherwise, we shall return to pagan idolatry, in a modern version of it, that idolizes autonomous contents of the consciousness.

Christ's corporeality is being brought to the Church also as an emphasis on locality. That means love for the particular other, regardless of his qualities, which can be repulsive, such as those of the enemies, the ugly, the unjust, the sinners, the untrustworthy, which Christ calls us to love them, as God loves all men, while the stranger often becomes a neighbor, like the good Samaritan. This means that Christians question the priority of compatibility in human relationships, which is unilaterally emphasized in the age of the internet algorithms. Intrinsically human is man's ability to freely dialogue with the God who transcends him, but also with other human beings, i.e. as an extraordinary personal alterity, which is not reducible to some sets of properties, nor can it be reduced to intelligence and anything that could be managed through informatics.

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