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POSTHUMANISM: HISTORY, GOALS AND IMMINENT PERILS***

Resume

The Paper studies the origin, development, main representatives, and basic characteristics of the posthumanist movement, its normative positions and goals (including its relation towards technology and nature), as well as the similarities and differences between modern posthumanism and transhumanism. In order to compare the posthumanist movement with humanistic modernism and notice their basic similarities and differences, which are crucial for understanding the relationship of man and technology towards natural conditions, the second part of the Paper points out the basic characteristics of modern humanistic anthropocentrism and its attitude towards technique. The final part of the Paper concerns the critique of posthumanism from the perspective of Christian personalism, which opens up possibilities for us to have a different view of the problems of postmodern living that posthumanism wants to overcome.

Keywords: posthumanism, Anthropocene, Christianity, humanism, modernity, posthumanism technique/technology

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INTRODUCTION: FROM IMPROVING TO OVERCOMING HUMAN NATURE

Posthumanism personifies the main direction of postmodern ideological activities that are dealing with the crisis of modernity at the beginning of the 21st century. Enthused by the new possibilities opening in the fields of cybernetics, informatics, genetics, and the creation of new forms of artificial intelligence, posthumanism proponents want to turn them in the direction of causing fundamental changes in the very nature of the human species and its relation to the world. In other words – they plan to completely overcome the “human condition” and, consequently, human society. That’s the main reason why Francis Fukuyama, in a noticeably apocalyptic tone, claimed that posthumanism is the “world’s most dangerous idea” (Fukuyama 2004, 42–43).

Throughout history, mankind has mostly aspired to improve itself and its way of living by a spiritual approach, with the assistance of a deity or supernatural forces. Other approaches, including those that tended to achieve human improvement by their own efforts and earthly means, were much rarer: we can identify them in Gilgamesh’s quest for immortality and his encounter with Utnapishtim (Epic of Gilgamesh, tablet 9) or adventurous quests to find the “Fountain of Youth” (the most notable is Ponce de Leon’s in the 16th century). Such approaches can be also identified in modern celebrations of human potentials in some notable Renaissance philosophical treatises, like Pico della Mirandola’s “Oration on the Dignity of Man” (1486) or early modern utopian literature (Thomas More’s “Utopia”, Francis Bacon’s “New Atlantis”). The modern Enlightenment movement in the 18th century fervently advocated the idea that human beings could radically improve their lives by applying their capacity for reason and understanding. Just as modern science discovered the physical laws that govern the material cosmos, they searched for a similar set of principles about the nature of the human mind and human societies. Following that reasoning, all modern revolutions were carried out, and more modern concepts and their arguments were created by a long list of thinkers, from Condorcet (who argued that the perfection of human society would ultimately lead to the perfection of individuals), William Goldwin (who was the first to favor the possibility of “earthly immortality”) to social reformers and revolutionaries of the early (Henri de Saint-Simon, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx) and late 19th century (Edward Bellamy, the Fabian Society, etc).

Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy and his predictions about the origin of the "Übermensch" by self-actualization can be seen as a kind of theoretical basis from which a transhumanist and posthumanist worldview will later emerge. The same can be said of the Russian movement of cosmism which combined elements of science, religion, and ethic for the construction of evolutionary natural philosophy of both the cosmos and humankind (most notably in the writings of Nikolai Fyodorov (Fjodorov 1997), and for the theories of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French paleontologist and Jesuit theologian who portrayed evolutionary "telos" (the so-called "Omega Point") in the development of an all-encompassing global consciousness ("Noosphere").

Although Dante Alighieri was the first to coin the verb "trasumanar" (meaning "to transhumanize") - but in a spiritual way, to be transformed and able to visit paradise, it was the biologist Julian Huxley who used the term transhumanism (previously mentioned only by the Canadian philosopher W. D. Lighthall in 1940) which was completely placed in a secular scientific dimension. In his book "New Bottles for New Wine", Huxley borrowed most of his ideas from John Desmond Bernal (1901–1971), who advocated the improvement of the human species through the direct application of technology, and mixed them with Fabian socialist inclinations of his close friend, writer H. G. Wells. It was directed toward the glorification of sciences and technologies in order to enhance human capacities such as intelligence, health, memory, the ability to concentrate, and the prolongation of the human health-span.

These enhanced, modified humans still undertake most of the activities that have characterized the human world for many millennia: they still enjoy the same pleasures, still suffer the same kinds of pain. They still have the same dilemmas and disappointments as their ancestors, but their performance lies well beyond the previous human range in terms of both quality and quantity. Transhumanism also shares most elements of the earlier version of modern humanism, such as respect for reason and science, belief in progress, etc. but differs in recognizing significant alterations in human nature by interferences of science and technologies and the possibilities that they open. "However, the contemporary concept of transhumanism is more closely related to the ideas of the Iranian futurist Fereidoun M. Esfandiary, better known as FM 2030, who wrote the 'Upwingers Manifesto' (1973) and the book 'Are You a Transhuman?: Monitoring and Stimulating Your Personal Rate of Growth in a Rapidly Changing World' (1989), and his former partner Natasha Vita-More, who

wrote the ‘Transhumanist Arts Statement’ which came out in 2003 and which is a revised version of the ‘Transhuman Manifesto’ from 1983” (Sorgner, Sorgner and Grimm 2013, 13). The first self-proclaimed transhumanists formed their movement in the early 1980s at the University of California in Los Angeles, which still remains their main center. In L.A. leading humanists such as Esfandiary (FM 2030) and Natasha Vita-More gave lectures and held experimental movie premieres, published their books and magazines (for example “Extropy Magazine”) and founded their institutes (Foresight Institute).

Nowadays, transhumanists are mostly concerned with interdisciplinary ways to understand, evaluate, and apply all available possibilities for the overcoming of human biological limitations. They draw their inspirations from both futurology and ethic, while seeing nature and its givenness as a problematic obstacle to progress. While some of them stick to a theoretical approach to the perceived benefits of human enhancement by advanced technologies, others are focused on the practical realization of the modification of the human body and specific methods of enhancement like changes of the nervous system (both brain and peripheral nervous system) and genetic predispositions. Therefore, contemporary transhumanism can be described as having four main branches – a branch of philosophy, a scientific, experimental approach, a social movement, and a worldview. It can be also divided into many currents or subdivisions such as immortalism, extropianism, postgenderism, democratic transhumanism, libertarian transhumanism, etc.

While transhumanism yearns for the era in which technological reformulations of the “human condition” will irredeemably impact their evolution, posthumanism sees the posthuman as a goal which is already within reach, since we have never been human: “human” is a modern concept, based on humanistic and anthropocentric premises that need to be completely overcome.

Posthumanism is a contemporary social and philosophical movement based both in continental European philosophy and Anglo-American literary and cultural theory as their outgrowth. Mainly postmodern, posthumanism eclectically combines perspectivism with naturalism, immanentism, and materialism, all seen as postmodern interpretations. Its philosophic branch aspires to reconceive the human by criticizing modern discourses that previously defined “humanity” and “human nature”. Whereas a modern humanist approach defines humans as autonomous, conscious, capable of free will, intentional and exceptional

beings at the apex of existence, posthumanism sees the human being as a) physically, chemically, and biologically enmeshed and dependent on the environment; b) moved to action through interactions that generate effects, habits, and reason; and c) possessing no attribute that is uniquely human but is instead made up of a larger evolving ecosystem. This position points out both the outer and inner imperfectability and disunity of all beings because it understands the whole existence through heterogeneous, fluidly changeable perspectives. “Contemporary transhumanists argue that human nature is an unsatisfactory ‘work in progress’ that should be modified through technological means where the instrumental benefits for individuals outweigh the technological risks. This ethic of improvement is premised on prospective developments in four areas: Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Information Technology and Cognitive Science – the so-called ‘NBIC’ suite” (Roden 2010). But, their goal is less focused on the hyper-technological appliance to enhance human beings but more so on completely overcoming it by constant, progressive disappearances of differences between the human and the outer world. Since the publication of the first programming texts that propagated it (“A Cyborg Manifesto” by Donna Haraway in 1985), posthumanism has been directed towards three interconnected “border demolitions” or destructions of barriers – removing the clear distinction between human and animal, between the organism and the machine, and between the physical and non-physical. By pushing these barriers – the posthumanists are convinced – a new space for the creation of chimeras (creatures created by crossbreeding different animal species), human-animal hybrids and the cyborg (a combination of man and robot) will be opened.

Only when this inner, diffuse transformation is accomplished (as its supporters believe), it will be reflected in the outside world and influence its further improvement. But social changes are of a derivative, secondary importance in comparison with the posthumanists primary goal – the emergence of a titanic supernatural being. Posthumanists are dreaming that these creatures will be able to transform and awaken new potentials in the entire material universe, those which, unawakened and unrealized, have been “asleep” since the creation of the cosmos. Some posthumanists (for instance, Kurzweil) even attribute a sacral dimension to such an “awakening”, while the scientific, non-religious majority among them sees the emergence of postmodern intelligence as the driving force leading to the reconstruction of all natural laws that exist in our universe.

The first to use the term “posthumanism” was Ihab Hassan in his article “Prometheus as Performer: Toward a Posthumanist Culture?” in 1977. The term was later adopted by cultural theorists like Donna Haraway, author of “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” (1985) and Katherine Hayles (“How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics” (1999)). Some of the recognized philosophers of today, like Peter Sloterdijk, Bruno Latour, Cary Wolfe, Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson and Humberto Maturana, can be also seen as close to posthumanistic positions. Roch’s, Thompson’s and Varela’s book ‘The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience’ from 1991, or Varela’s and Maturana’s ‘Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living’ from 1980 represent many traces of what posthumanism stands for, e.g. plurality, perspectivism and immanentism. It is their way of dealing with the theory of evolution which reveals the relevance of this topic for the posthumanism. The geneticist Eva Jablonka can be seen as being related to posthumanism from a scientific perspective, too. Her book ‘Evolution in Four Dimensions’ co-authored together with Marion Lamb and published in 2005 stands for posthumanism within evolutionary biology. Given the wide spectrum of researchers and thinkers who are related to posthumanism, it can be described as a diverse and a contemporarily strong cultural movement” (Sorgner, Sorgner and Grimm 2013, 12–13).

But, is posthumanism still humanism or a kind of antihumanism? Does it retain some modern humanist values or completely reject them? Is it using technique against or in line with humanist goals? To be able to truly understand the discourse of posthumanism and its aspiration to redefine the boundaries of humanity by both technological and discursive/deconstructive approach, we must turn our attention toward modern humanistic anthropocentrism and its attitude toward technique, which should allow us to detect the basic similarities between humanism and posthumanism.

MODERNITY, TECHNOLOGY AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

It is no easy task to determine modernity: some portray it in contrast to the Middle Ages and all pre-modern epochs and their traditions as their complete opposite, or even as “counter-traditional rationality”;

others see it in a progressivist, positive perspective as a great step forward in scientific and technological development in comparison to previous backwardness and ignorance. The advocates of modernity claim it to be an expression of the emancipation of humankind against the forces of ignorance, underdevelopment, and evilness. Historians are still trying to define modernity as a historical period placed between the 17th and 21st centuries. Sociologists mostly claim that it is characterized by industrialization and the division of labour, which led to a new social distribution and, consequently, social transformation. “But it was not a triumph of humanity over nature, but rather the triumph of humanity over itself or over those privileged ones. Its path was not the path of intellectual discovery but the one of an intellectual conflict” (Valerštajn 2005, 110).

Modernity was born with the gradual but permanent deconstruction of the experience of the “theocentricity” of the meaningful world, in which the relation of the Creator and the creation was continuous and uninterrupted. “As humans lost their true and full connection with the Divine, they tried to elevate themselves to the pedestal of the visible world that was given to them by Providence, but without God’s Grace, in a mere desire to “behave in a godlike manner” through all his activities. An individual (as an individuum, citizen, personality) is born through the genesis of modernity as its main impulse and the reason for existence...” (Cvetković 2008, 60). He is willing to use his mind in order to conceive and realize a society that would enable self-realization, direct thinking, absolute self-concept and full freedom of the subject, whose individuality would have universal reach.

The basic principle of modernity is that the spiritual, metaphysical foundations which the social, ontological and political orders rest on can no longer be taken as reliable. Therefore, the deconstruction of a religious order is carried out. In contrast, self-centered rationalism initiates a series of mutually conditioned quantitative and qualitative social changes that are proclaimed to be a path to something better, as “progress”. By placing himself in God’s position to creation but without spirituality to manage it, modern anthropocentric humanism was unable to overcome and reconcile the existing differences and instead only increased them. Faced with these results, it turned to a non-spiritual, dualistic approach that transformed existing differences into separated entities or spheres of existence: those which can be controlled and transformed in a progressive direction, and those that cannot and thus must be suppressed as inadequate or even bad. These opposites can be exemplified in pairs

such as culture/nature, mind/body, male/female, civilization/barbarity, progressive/backward, etc. Modern humanism has, therefore, produced oppressive institutions, discourses and the historical praxis of war (the righteous “us” against an evil “enemy”), all of which tried to impose as exemplary one sort of normative model which is the same for all instead of reconsidering existing differences and insisting on coexistence, gradual inclusion, rapprochement and some kind of symbiosis.

What was the role of technique in modernity? To put it simply, the logic of technology, its function and development are identical to the logic of modernity. It seems that modernity has taken a technical approach as its role model and applied it first to man as the centre of its activity (the mechanistic concept of man), and then to the whole world (materialism). Descartes was the first to define the body as a machine, and describe humans as the addition of mind to it; Spinoza defined the body in the same matter but with an emphasis on affects, not ratio; La Mettrie defined man as a mechanical machine (*L’homme Machine*); Marx followed this direction, but lamented its deformation in the processes of capitalist exploitation. During the realization of the modern experiment, technology ceased to be only a sum of technical means (as per the neutral, narrow definition of technique) and turned into “the totality of methods rationally developed to attain absolute efficiency (at a given stage of development) in every field of human activity” (Elil 2010, 19) which, as Heidegger notes, puts an extremely irrational requirement on the created nature: to provide man with its power, with the energy that can be extracted from nature and stored, because it would harrow and attack the land, exhaust it, exploit and change (Heidegger 1977). This problematic direction was taken when this technological approach was adopted by humans as the central and total one, according to which anthropocentric humanism understood itself and the whole world in all its material and spiritual complexity and entanglement. “The quantification of nature, which led to its explication on the basis of mathematical structures, separated the reality from all inherent goals and, consequently, separated the true from the good, science from technique (...) The same de-realization affects all ideas which, by their very nature, cannot be verified by scientific method. No matter how much they may be recognized, respected, and sanctified, in their own right, they suffer from being non-objective” (Marcuze 1990, 142–143). It was more problematic, even dangerous when the human reason began to regard everything from the instrumental perspective, to reduce, generalize, and

mold everything to schematism with its fixed values, set patterns of development and goals, just as technical perspective requires. There was nothing beyond it that could be used as its reference, that could be valued and to which it was subordinate. Under the impression of technical efficiency, a reduced, mechanically rationalist approach with its “own” orientation has been developed – from self-centering towards self-improvement, all along with developing its own indivisibility and autonomy. This way, the technical approach has grown into an irresistible external force that subjugates and changes nature conceived exclusively in its material, exact form.

TRANSHUMANISM AND POSTHUMANISM – STILL HUMAN AND MODERN?

We have already seen that transhumanism fully shares the modern normative positions that have been present since the early days of humanism and that its main goal is to achieve (by technological enhancement) the Renaissance ideal of a human individual. Hence it is inevitable that transhumanists affirm the type of ethical humanism. Posthumanism is quite a different story with its specific style of rethinking the human by deconstructing his modern normative basis – his subjectivity, his body, his cognition understood in a diffuse key and then directed towards alterations by engagements with communications technologies, artificial intelligence, and media networks. All of the opportunities offered by these advanced technologies provide new ways for decentering and destabilizing the “human condition” – turning it into an amalgam, a “hive” of heterogeneous components and material-informational influences whose unstable boundaries undergo continuous transformation (destruction and construction). Posthumanism is, therefore, characterized by the dissolution of all moral standards in favour of moral relativism and perspectivism which aims for a new but earthly anthropology. But is it antihumanist and anti-modern or not?

Posthumanism responds to legacies of (now obsolete) humanism by breaking up, fracturing, decentralizing and distributing its representation of man, combined with its critique as a guiding normative framework and questioning its subjectival unity and epistemological concepts. On the other hand, like all modern humanists (from the Renaissance, Enlightenment and Romanticism up to today), posthumanists cling to the celebration of human will, freedom, and unrestrained

creativity. “Posthumanist figurations of freedom range from the beatitude of autonomous self-creation found in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari to states of libertarian noninterference inspired by the systems theory of sociologist Niklas Luhmann. Despite posthumanism’s interest in undermining the humanist subject, Hassan’s invocation of a singular, salvific, and renegade figure, that of Prometheus, still serves as an index of contemporary posthumanism’s reliance on solo figures of creative and often heroic autonomy. These figures — a poet, a trickster, a cyborg, a scientist, an engineer of self — are triply charged with maintaining an ethical stance with respect to others, with preserving a zone of human freedom without which respect for difference would not matter, and with carrying forward what is explicitly, or simply by virtue of a kind of posthumanist rhetorical zeal, the project of posthuman creative differentiation” (Weinstone 2004, 10).

Contrary to the premodern concepts that perceived humans as the apex of a hierarchically created visible universe, posthumanism sees man as nothing other than one of the living species that inhabit our planet, with the same material composition and qualities that other creatures have. “In this way, the culmination of the posthumanist philosophy is not reached in the denial of anthropocentrism – which is peculiar of the Renaissance era and of modern philosophy – but in a return to a pre-Socratic or stoic period, to that time in which the research on man and nature was but one. The abandonment of the anthropocentric paradigm on an ethical level, in fact, appears only as a consequence of a certain metaphysical point of view, previously embraced: it is decided that man should not deserve privileges because he is not different from other living beings. The anti-anthropocentric point of view is configured on an ethical level, therefore, as a result of the anti-identitarian conception at a cosmological level (it would be better to say ontological level)” (Valera 2014, 483). So, if still anthropocentric, is posthumanism still modern or not? Or does it stand with one foot on the position of late modernity, and one outside of it, like all of postmodernism?

Postmodernism in general (seen as the post-ideological epoch) does not imply an overall abandonment of modern ideals: it contains a simultaneous critique of some modernist projects (because of the disappointment in their outcomes) while firmly sticking to some of its normative positions and adhering to their already present achievements. As such, the postmodern does not refer to the essential points which, in an effort to resolve the crisis of existence and community, were produced

by modernity: opposition to all authorities through emancipation both of thought and the entire life, of the faith in the power of self-improvement while personal and cultural heritage is negated or rejected, of the ethics of human ‘sublimity’ with hidden instincts such as selfishness, manipulation and ruling.

Is the role of technology in the postmodern world the same as in the modern? While technics’ main goal in the previous modern period was to destroy the old and (re)create the new as the main vehicle of progress, its postmodern role has been partially altered in the direction of maintaining and preserving the metastasis of “modern achievements” and their consequences through the recycling of its ideological contents. In other words, the main technological purpose is not to revolutionize, but to conserve the late modern/postmodern condition. This recycling is performed through various techniques and technologies: from media techniques, techniques of creating and managing crises, to the techniques of conducting electoral campaigns. Thus, the illusion of civilization development forces is maintained, as well as the illusion of the autonomous historical dynamics of individuals and societies that have previously been deprived of all deeper, credible values and foundations. With the help of technics, any true, deep questioning of the existing status quo is prevented, while it continues to be understood in a rationalist-naturalist key in accordance with the recycled modern ideals, with continuous failure to observe all aspects of present-day complexities and nuances. The late modern technological civilization is a partially realized anti-utopia of life achieved without God, where man exists in the belief that he is on his own.

But, even in this “state of emptiness”, the urge and idea of constant improvement – of the free creation of something new and better – persists. Therefore, the ultimate failure of the modernist project, the abjuring of its utopian promises and the abandonment of the ultimate set goals, is concealed by skillful substitutes of the thesis: a technological attempt to compensate for the sweetness of the earthly “paradisaal” utopia and denying any other meaning and purpose except for the one which man, at his own discretion, gives to everything. Thereby, the starting point from which the whole modern enterprise has been launched is – a separate, secularized individual with hypertrophic reason and passion – proclaimed for its goal, for the mere source. The individual is the only purpose, it is its own goal, while the existing forms of self-improvement and self-exceeding of that “human, all too human” with the help

of technology have become a kind of an imperative of the modern world. In the post-ideological, technological world, external utopia is no longer realized, but all energies are directed to the inner, subjective realization of utopian plans regarding the final transformation and the prevailing of man's own nature. A world without God has been achieved to a great extent, and it should not be radically changed at this stage, but rather maintained. What needs to be changed is the nature of man. He and these changes need to be "in a godlike manner" and the outside world should be changed only through successfully achieved self-exceeding. And that's where posthumanism steps in.

There are numerous aspects that reveal the deeply modernist character of posthumanism: we have already detected some of them as the lack of absolute morality, favorization of perspectivism and relativity, reliance on individuality and a creative, Promethean free will ("engineer of self"), etc. But there are others aspects like the negation of the hierarchical structure of all matter and life (deconstruction of ontological hierarchy), hatred toward any givenness and their traditional limitations (seen as obstacles to progress that must be removed), a strong belief in progress in its wider sense, addressing closed entities or individuals regardless of the fluidization of existing differences... Posthumanism's main enemies are the same as those of all progressive modernists: those who share religious belief and faith in God. Posthumanists target God and believers with disqualifications that have already been seen many times in modern ideological visions: for them, God is merely a primitive idea invented by benighted people in an attempt to rise from total ignorance and unconsciousness, which has, over time, turned into an extremely oppressive concept that one should get rid of.

While it appears that posthumanists are destabilizing some humanist values (for instance, the modern pursuit of perfection through control of nature, or even closed, narrowly defined individualism), they are in fact reviving its ideals (mostly progressivist ones) that rely on the usage of technology and knowledge and shifting them from the position of "having" toward "belonging". It is also the direction in which the individual, free will is directed: to a concept of agency that emphasizes emergent directional processes distributed across parts and populations. Of course, instead of a real union, it attempts to create pseudo-unity with the help of technology that enframes human utilization, but that is the problem of all semi-solutions that want to preserve one thing (individuality) and gain another (union) without recognizing the

existing contradictions, without self-diminishing and without sacrificing themselves to another. In other words, posthumanism is not completely abolishing the modern “human condition” with its “will for the new”, but using it as a springboard for a major breakthrough in different directions of existence with the help of its main assistant – (bio)technology.

The most important notion in posthumanism’s dictionary is “singularity”, a term taken from astrophysics. It refers to the central part of a black hole, where all atoms and all material particles that are presumed to pass into another kind of energy split and disappear. This model unites posthumanism deepest desires: its simultaneous aspiration towards self-disappearance and transformation into something higher and more perfect. Singularity as a symbol of nothingness that has a possibility for rebirth is very suitable to unite the contradictory urges of posthumanism: its tendency for breaking down all barriers and borders that allegedly stand in the path of individual self-realization and pursuit of self-abolition.

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION: SOME CRITICAL REMARKS

The complete symbiosis of man with other forms of life and the recognition of a single superior and transversal strength – zoe, life (or Super-Organism) seen as a real entity, moves the posthumanist approach into a kind of New Age pantheism, whose materialism, from modern, the corporoscular, takes on the dimensions of the energetic, the fluid. In other words, posthumanism tries to recreate the concepts of (materialistically conceived) Whole (in modern futurology named as “Gaia”) and to see the Anthropocene – “nature shaped by humankind” – as a progressive step forward in achieving the final goal of evolution – one united global consciousness. It gives new meaning to the Anthropocene, for it is no longer just the natural world that bears the brunt of human technological ingenuity. Instead, humans themselves are also becoming the objects of change and fluid unification with nature and technology into a new totality.

But, those changes in the understanding of the nature of matter and the aspiration to become part of the Whole are hardly new and unknown to the modern concept: in fact, from the very beginning of modernity, they have been present in all of its main utopian aspirations. “The ‘triad’ of paradise, fall, and redemption is attired in a secular, ‘modern’

suit, so that ‘the nature’ becomes an initial source of cosmic and human harmony. ‘The historical suffering’, the fall, is seen as a violation of the original principles of nature and reason that leads to social aberration. The redemption is the realization of a utopia that re-establishes happiness and universal social perfection” (Gajić 2015, 120).

It all starts from the human mind which tends to comprehend the world through abstract models derived from reducing reality to its primary, quantitatively measurable traits, just like the technological approach requires. Then, these abstractions are proclaimed to be “natural facts”, while the entire existing nature is seen as some sort of well-organized technological order that necessarily evolves towards its goal. This development is now seen as “the uncovering of innate and pre-ordered tasks, like the grain maturation, as the realization of a plan and entelechy” (Florovsky 1975, 98) which is predictable and can be rationally recognized. Rationality and nature have the same basis, in which the same laws are applied, the same abstract principles that only need to be discovered and recognized. As a man himself and all men (abstractly understood humanity), in addition to all the singularities, make up a part of a unique nature, that belongs to the same substance bound by universal principles, man by discovering these principles as the ‘bearer’ of the ideals inevitably goes towards perfection, and therefore they also have a universal moral force (see: Talmond 1955).

All of this shows us that man’s nature is directed to strive for overall cognition, unity and perfection. In the absence of a real relationship with God and the fulfillment which is the result of this relationship, humans create false gods to worship, deifying nature and themselves. The modern forms of ideological idolatry are a testimony to a naturalistic deadlock. “The fact that man is ‘possessed’ by the world obliges him to seek out and concretize the image of unconditional perfection that is inherent to his soul. This is the enigma of the paradoxical combination of the slave consciousness and arrogant self-assurance” (Florovsky 1975, 110).

The posthumanism concept of the symbiosis of humans with nature and technology into the perfect Whole/Gaia/Anthropocene has many specific shortcomings: the most evident normative shortcoming is recognizable in the posthumanists’ claim of the primacy of “becoming” over “being”, though it is evident that “becoming” needs “being” as its foundation. But that’s something that posthumanism stubbornly denies. Human nature is dynamic; it is not defined once and for all, but it is not “nothingness”. It has a basis, mostly connected with the organic body

and personal qualities that are parts of a person's heritage, of "givenness". The second, glaring shortcoming is that nature/life – ideologically proclaimed as something positive and harmonious – is, in fact, pretty chaotic and full of polemos/fighting. "Living beings – especially those which constitute the main partners of hybridization – are consumed by infighting, and the world outside of man does not seem to be as peaceful as it is described today in an exquisitely sweetened up manner. The nature, outside of man, is not the home of the happy coexistence of different species, rather the contrary: it is the home of the greatest injustices and abuses" (Valera 2014, 489). The third shortcoming is connected with the posthumanist belief that dissolution of boundaries between beings creates the possibility of total openness to other entities, while the condition of openness to the other is, in fact, demarcation of boundaries, not their liquefaction. "The ontologically closed thing is opened to otherness since it is defined: we can, thus, recognize a 'you' distinguished from an 'I'. The difference and the proportion (and thus the diversity marked by the identity) are configured as essential conditions for otherness. For, there to be an 'other', there must always be contemporary given an 'I'" (Valera 2014, 486). And fourth, posthumanism's denial of the role of technology as the main tool of anthropocentric domination pretense over other species and its transformation into a benevolent means of hybridizing transformation and unification, just proves technology's – not the human's nor nature's – central position in the evolutionary process. This leads us to the conclusion that life is just a tool for the "becoming" of technology, and not the reverse.

In the end, all posthumanist ideals – as in all utopias – are exposed as travesties, or even worse: as a new, and probably the last alliance of man and technology against nature's hierarchical, "heavenly" order. The results of this alliance are already visible: in the postmodern, posthumanist utopia of non-spiritual "transfiguration" of human nature, everything is turned upside down. Posthumanism's "fluid" openness to perfection is in fact openness only to the lower spheres and closedness to any higher, qualitative and spiritual direction of existence. Their creativity, by rejecting God's Grace and cooperation with the heavenly, metaphysical reality, turns into mere technological violence against the natural "givenness" that is forcibly perfected and "made happy" in an old, already seen totalitarian way. It seems to misrepresent and paralyze the messages of the Apostle Paul's "Epistle to the Romans": "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of

the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body” (Holy Bible, Romans 8, 19–23).

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ПОСТХУМАНИЗАМ: ИСТОРИЈА, ЦИЉЕВИ И НЕПОСРЕДНЕ ОПАСНОСТИ

Сажетак

У раду се проучава настанак, развој, главни представници и основне карактеристике постхуманистичког покрета, његове нормативне позиције и циљеви (укључујући његов однос према технологији и природи), као и сличности и разлике између савременог постхуманизма и трансхуманизма. Да би се постхуманистички покрет упоредио са хуманистичким модернизмом и уочиле њихове основне сличности и разлике, које су кључне за разумевање односа човека и технологије према природним условима, у другом делу рада указује се на основне карактеристике савременог хуманистичког антропоцентризма и његове однос према техници. Завршни део рада бави се на критиком постхуманизма из перспективе хришћанског персонализма, што нам отвара могућности да другачије сагледамо проблеме постмодерног живљења које постхуманизам жели да превазиђе.

Кључне речи: постхуманизам, антропоцен, хришћанство, хуманизам, модерност, постхуманистичка техника/технологија

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