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Will Posthumanism be the End of the *Homo Sapiens* Era?

The thesis posited by Francis Fukuyama two decades ago of “the end of history and the end of man” plays an increasingly important role in contemporary philosophy.¹ Attempts undertaken within critical philosophy to change the image of man² are accompanied by high expectations voiced within techno-humanism and are linked to the development of biotechnology which transcends the fundamental limitations of human nature. Both these concepts share a disappointment with the present state of mankind and a desire to change it. The extent to which they herald a transition from human to post-human and a departure from the humanism of contemporary culture can be analyzed from various angles, e.g., cognitive, moral, technological or social, and can lead to various conclusions. However, due to the specificity of posthumanism, any question about the end of the *homo sapiens* era should include the issues of discourse on man and the mode of human existence. The

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¹ Francis Fukuyama, *Our posthuman future: consequences of the biotechnology revolution* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002).

² The word “man” is used in this paper in the traditional sense of referring to the ‘human being’, both male and female.



considerations on these two issues that are presented in this article will be conducted from the perspective of classical philosophy, with its two and a half millennia of experience in analyzing human existence.³

Posthumanism or posthumanisms?

The term “posthumanism” is used to describe a set of concepts and phenomena that are essentially in opposition to humanism. Thus, if humanism, in all its varieties, is understood as a view or attitude which assigns to man a central place in reality and at the same time recognizes him as the highest value, then posthumanism includes those concepts which, for various reasons, deny him such high value or undermine his privileged position in reality. If humanism is understood as that which is human, posthumanism means a post-human reality in the sense of going beyond or above the human. Posthumanism can also be understood as that which openly opposes humanism as well as that which historically follows humanism within broadly defined culture and encompasses its various spheres: cognition, morality, and production. Thus, the term “posthumanism” can be used in a descriptive sense as well as in a normative sense, with both their positive and negative connotations.

The concept of posthumanism encompasses a number of views on man and his place in reality formulated within various philosophical traditions. Francesca Ferrando lists several forms, including posthumanism, transhumanism and new materialisms.⁴ Transhumanism

³ On the understanding of classical philosophy, see Piotr S. Mazur, “Between cognition and discourse: Robert Spaemann’s classical aspects of philosophizing,” *Revista de Filosofia Aurora* 58, vol. 33: 284–287.

⁴ Francesca Ferrando, “Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Meta-humanism, and New Materialisms Differences and Relations,” *Existenz* (2013) 8/2: 26.

refers to the concept of human enhancement obtained by technological means (biomedical and cybernetic). Posthumanism includes a critique of the entire humanistic vision of man, especially the concept of human nature and the privileged position occupied by man in the world (cultural posthumanism), and it broadens the discourse in such a way that what has so far been considered the prerogative of man as a person or an individual (e.g., thinking) can also be assigned to other material beings, which obviously changes the image of man and his place in reality (philosophical posthumanism). New materialisms demand a different approach to man that results from the understanding of matter and the treatment of corporeality and gender as something dynamic, changeable and culturally mediated (constructed in the process of discourse) rather than being something ready-made.⁵ Techno-humanism is a reflection on the ontic situation of man in the circumstances in which his “ontological condition” is affected by biotechnological and IT revolutions, while various branches of cultural posthumanism (e.g., ecologizing or feminizing ones) focus on creating a new concept of man, beginning with

cultural representations, power relations and discourses that have historically placed the human above other life forms, and in control of them.⁶

Theorists and analysts of posthumanism agree that there is a difference between posthumanist discourse and posthumanist (transhuman-

Ferrando also pays attention to differences between various positions—such as antihumanism, posthumanism and metahumanism, and a set of posthumanisms—that stem from their understanding of man.

⁵ Ferrando, “Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms Differences and Relations,” 26–32.

⁶ Pramod K. Nayar, *Posthumanism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 13.

ist) human enhancement, seeing in the latter a strengthening of humanism rather than a departure from it. Carry Wolfe claims that transhumanism intensifies humanism, which consists in transcending what is human through disembodiment and thus achieving subjective immortality. In this sense, posthumanism refers to what is or what is supposed to be “after” man, while what matters in critical discourse is going “beyond,” which is linked not only with the decentralization of discourse on man but primarily with abandoning the human point of reference centered around an autonomous subject of cognition and action.⁷ According to Wolfe, this process will lead to the decentralization of experience, manifested in a departure from the ways in which people today share their experiences with others and the ways in which these experiences are interpreted. In this approach, human perception and cognitive states are considered one of the many ways of relating to reality (autopoietic systems) that have developed during evolution, which equipped different life forms with particular perceptual abilities (*sensorium*). Experiences of the “human animal” are treated here only as a part of the entire spectrum of experiences of all life forms, and that is why they should be perceived and interpreted in connection with this whole rather than in isolation or in opposition to it, with all its consequences.⁸ Thus, the very way in which human experience (self-experience) is approached entails not only decentralizing it but also relativizing it (it is nothing special) and naturalizing it (this approach rejects any manifestations of transcendence). This results in the fluidity, instability, and uncertainty of man’s place in reality as well as the fluidity of his identity.

Harari explicitly explains the expectations of transhumanism:

⁷ Carry Wolfe, *What is Posthumanism?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), XV.

⁸ *Ibid.*, XXV.

Techno-humanism agrees that *Homo sapiens* as we know it has run its historical course and will no longer be relevant in the future, but concludes that we should therefore use technology in order to create *Homo deus*—a much superior human model. *Homo deus* will retain some essential human features, but will also enjoy upgraded physical and mental abilities that will enable it to hold its own even against the most sophisticated non-conscious algorithms. Since intelligence is decoupling from consciousness, and since non-conscious intelligence is developing at breakneck speed, humans must actively upgrade their minds if they want to stay in the game.⁹

Despite differences between the critical and transhumanist versions of posthumanism regarding their diagnosis of the condition of humanity and culture as well as their visions of the future, they do share certain features. Ferrando mentions not only the time when they originated, i.e., the late 1980s and early 1990s, but also their preoccupation with technology, which is treated as a tool of human evolution and man's adaptation to post-biological conditions or as a means of revealing man's place in reality. Above all, they share the view of man as an entity with a nature that is not stable or fixed but changeable.¹⁰

There are more similarities between these two versions of posthumanism. Apart from their rejection of human nature as a boundary for existence and a norm for human activity, they are bored and disillusioned with man, with what man is like, and with his self-image. Both posthumanist discourses, in their own way, undermine the importance of the understanding of man developed within the culture of the

⁹ Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus. A Brief History of Tomorrow* (London: Vintage, 2017), 356–357.

¹⁰ Ferrando, "Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms: Differences and Relations," 26–27.

Western world. They claim that humanist discourse on man (humanism) stems from erroneous premises or that it has simply become obsolete due to the changing cultural situation. As a result, both discourses “disenchant” the image of man as a unique entity which is distinct from the rest of reality. “Over the last century, as scientists opened up the Sapiens black box, they discovered there neither soul, nor free will, nor ‘self’—but only genes, hormones and neurons that obey the same physical and chemical laws governing the rest of reality.”¹¹

According to these discourses, the present state of man—who he is and who he thinks he is—is not good or good enough. Therefore, they promise not only liberation from the limitations in which man is currently stuck, but also various ways of improving and perfecting him. However, they make any further prosperity of man dependent on the rejection of human nature and traditional ways of understanding it. Both discourses have deterministic elements in them. They share the conviction that necessary states are part of cultural development and that a new approach to man and his problems is inevitable. These discourses are also characterized by radicalism. In an extreme version, posthumanism entails a total redefinition of humanity, which will result in the reconstruction of social relations and man’s place in reality. Yet, even in its moderate versions, the aim is to bring about deep changes in the mode of human existence and human identity. These discourses also have ideological undertones, as the context of their narratives and the final objective is not to understand who man is, but to reconstruct human life.

Both posthumanist discourses are prepared to transgress the boundaries of humanity and to experiment on people within their biological, psychological and social lives. As such, today they help to neutralize the intellectual and moral resistance coming from scientific, philo-

¹¹ Harari, *Homo Deus*, 284.

sophical, religious, and cultural quarters against interfering in the integrity of the person and his human nature. While demanding a change in our understanding and relating to man in the name of what does not yet exist (the posthuman), they give priority to potential states over real ones and to an idealistic order of thinking.

Posthumanism in the discourse on man

There are three main reasons for placing the question of posthumanism and the posthuman at the level of discourse. The first is related to the mode of human existence. Unlike other material beings, humans have not only nature, but also condition. Nature points to the stable foundations of man's being and acting, while condition refers to existence, i.e., to those elements of man's being and acting which are changeable. Condition is dynamic: it changes in time and space depending on man's relationship with reality; it is mediated and influenced by culture. Some of its determinants are necessary and constitute certain boundaries, such as birth and death; others are related to human dynamisms, such as cognition, action (morality, politics) or production; still others come from outside of man, such as changes in man's lifestyle that are triggered by technological development. While nature is the source of man's activity, condition, at least to some extent, is its result and product.¹²

The second reason for placing posthumanism at the level of discourse also stems from the specificity of human existence. For man is not only who he ontically is, he is also how he understands himself. For, as Thomas Aquinas aptly noted, man is what reason makes him.¹³

¹² Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 8–11.

¹³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 19, a. 2, c.

The first expression of this dependence of man on his reason is his image of himself obtained through cognition. The mode of human existence, both individual and social (and in both the order of thought and the order of action), largely depends on this self-image. Having a specific understanding of man's existence and, at the same time, a narrative about it, is necessary because "no society can do without the image of man."¹⁴ The image of man is both dynamic and correlated with a more general cultural context within which human experience is approached and explained. Furthermore, there are many different and even contradictory images of man in both philosophy and culture.

The third reason why the issue of posthumanism should be posed at the level of discourse stems from the specificity of philosophy. The history of philosophy can be treated as a discourse of more than 2.5 thousand years, within which diverse paradigms of understanding reality have been proposed. It is characteristic of philosophy that new paradigms do not automatically remove old ones, but rather force them to adapt to new conditions. Therefore, classical paradigms of our understanding of reality and man—Platonic or Aristotelian—are still present today within ongoing discourse. Philosophical discourse is controversial (philosophers seem unable to reach universal agreement on any issue), ceaseless (no view or concept is final), and inconclusive (there are no cognitive tools that could ultimately verify any view).¹⁵ Discourse cannot be stopped; discourse is something alive and changing. In the course of discourse, new aspects of traditional problems or new problems emerge; when everything is discourse, there can be no truth. Discourse in itself neither solves metaphysical problems nor tells us what reality is. As such, it does not replace systematic philosophy, just as the history of philosophy does not replace metaphysics.

¹⁴ Chantal Delsol, *Kamienie węgielne. Na czym nam zależy?* [The cornerstones. What is important to us?], trans. Małgorzata Kowalska (Kraków: Znak, 2018), 28.

¹⁵ Mazur, "Between cognition and discourse," 284–287.

Treating philosophy as discourse can lead to relativism. On the one hand, everything is present to the same extent in discourse: all paradigms, traditions and concepts have the same validity as they all constitute an integral part of discourse. On the other hand, there is a dominating theme to discourse in each era that provides the foundations for each period's culture and social life. Contemporary discourse is highly pluralized. Very different concepts are present in it, but it is no longer as natural and autonomous as it was in antiquity. Since the early modern period, discourse has been strongly stimulated by the natural sciences, which enable rapid technological development that is based on naturalistic foundations and which use the language of mathematics and impose a naturalistic vision of the world and of man. This discourse is increasingly taking place outside of philosophy, and its participants have to face political, social, economic, media and technological pressures, which prompts them to tackle and solve philosophical problems in a way that is consistent with prevalent expectations. This also applies to the practical use of all available production and social techniques, tools and procedures that are aimed directly at human life or integrity. However, participants of this discourse understand that philosophy is so diverse in its assumptions, methods and language that, with its help, any view can be neutralized and, at the same time, any view can be justified. Moreover, within contemporary discourse, it is more important to steer it in the desired direction and gain social dominance through it rather than to search for the truth.

Contrary to appearances, posthumanist discourse—like the entire contemporary discourse on man—is not detached from the history of philosophy. Ancient and medieval thought distinguished man from other material beings, pointing almost from the beginning to the rationality of human nature and to man's status as a person. Modern philosophers who reject metaphysics and man's substantiality have directed their interests to the subject and cognition. The beginnings of this new approach to man can be traced back as far as the Renaissance,

but the fundamental breakthrough came with Descartes, who shifted the focus of attention from the real subject to the thinking subject (*res cogitans*). For Kant, this subject was the condition of objects, and Heidegger recognized it (*Dasein*) as the key to understanding the being of all beings. The first signs of deconstruction and criticism of the concept of a subject can be found in the works of Hume, who treated the “self” as a bundle of impressions.

In the exact sciences, which with time increasingly pushed philosophy out of cultural discourse and at the same time gained more and more influence on philosophy, the focus was on the Cartesian *res extensa*. Man’s consciousness and mental life were derived from bodily determinants, which strengthened the naturalistic position. Evolutionism portrayed man as the crown of transformative processes; however, Nietzsche, dissatisfied with the state of culture, proclaimed the need to reorganize social life and move from man to superman. Finally, the modern understanding of man has led to the deconstruction of all key anthropological categories: substance, person, subject, nature, soul, reason, will and consciousness. The position of the subject was weakened and was accompanied by a consolidation of the conviction that he is not something primary, as Descartes believed, but is the result of specific biological, psychological, social, linguistic, and cultural processes or structures. Nowadays the subject is frequently reduced to a psychological or narrative sphere. Its historicity, temporality and fictionality are increasingly emphasized, while at the same time the focus has shifted from man’s nature to his condition. Man is decreasingly considered a privileged subject-personal substance and is increasingly considered a derivative of biological, evolutionary, or social processes.

There is no doubt that contemporary discourse on man is dominated by the critical tradition and naturalism. Cultural posthumanism belongs to the critical tradition, drawing inspiration from postmodernism, while transhumanism has grown out of the tradition of modern

naturalism. Whereas transhumanism reveals the extent to which contemporary discourse on man is stimulated by technological advances and developments in the exact sciences, posthumanism is an expression of the extent to which the image of man is dependent on discourse. It is difficult to imagine the discourse being absolutely ahumanistic, i.e., not in any way linked to human self-narrativity, completely detached from man as its subject and addressee, and not referring to man at all. Discourse can be more or less personalistic—it can elevate man, belittle him, or relativize his position. Posthumanism and transhumanism are part of a dispute about man that takes place in every era. The participants of this dispute can not only gain but also lose something in cognitive terms.¹⁶ Today, as Chantal Delsol argues, we face a real danger of losing the fundamental truth about man as a personal being. This is a consequence of the collapse of faith in the Christian Revelation in Western societies, and thus of the loss of the foundations on which the classical image of man was built.¹⁷ Posthumanism plays an active role in this process, undermining the previous position of man in the cosmos and focusing mainly on what can be gained individually or socially, while downplaying what can be lost. The problem, according to Delsol, is that it is not possible to maintain a personalistic approach to man, i.e., to recognize man as a mature subject capable of self-direction, without social recognition of his personal status.

At the level of discourse, posthumanism would mean the end of man only if man, as Sartre claimed, were “nothing else but what he makes of himself,” i.e., if he had condition but no nature (essence).

¹⁶Holger Zaborowski, *Robert Spaemann's Philosophy of the Human Person. Nature, Freedom, and the Critique of Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 43–47.

¹⁷Delsol, *Kamienie węgielne. Na czym nam zależy?* [The cornerstones. What is important to us?], 104–117.

Discourse as such does not determine who man is but plays a fundamental role in shaping his image because “ideas have consequences.”¹⁸ How man lives and treats himself and other beings, especially other people, depends on who he considers himself to be. The image of man is the basis for the forming of interpersonal relations (morality, politics) and production (transformation of reality). As such, discourse is neither theoretically (cognitively) nor practically neutral because, although it does not change human nature, it exerts a significant impact on the human condition (the mode of human existence). It is in the context of the ongoing discourse and what dominates within it that man answers fundamental questions about the purpose and meaning of his existence. Thus, philosophical discourse is not only a joyful space for developing and presenting a range of concepts and points of view, but also the arena of a fierce struggle for the dominant image of man in culture and social life. What is really at stake here is the status of man as a person.

Posthumanism in a systematic view

The issue of posthumanism at the ontic level is primarily linked with the question of whether it is at all possible to transition from man to superman, which would result in the creation of a totally different but at the same time more perfect species to man. Traditionally, in the Thomistic understanding, if man changed his essence or nature, this would involve his losing his substantial form and assuming another form by way of a substantial transformation. For the subject this would mean a loss of existence, not its enhancement. We can talk about any changes, modifications, or enhancements of a being only when this

¹⁸Richard M. Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984).

being continues his existence and when these changes take place within the potentialities inherent in his nature. This way of understanding change, although valid within the Thomistic system, does not alter the fact that the development of biotechnological, medical, and cybernetic tools and techniques enables ever greater interference in human existence. Therefore, in order to explain why these changes take place, some thinkers try to reformulate the Thomistic understanding of human nature. As Brian Green argues, a distinction should be made between the metaphysical first nature proper to man as a rational animal (*animal rationale*) and the biological first nature proper to man as an organism.¹⁹ In essence, the biological first nature has always been changeable, but—thanks to biotechnology—it is nowadays affected by cultural nature and changes ever more rapidly and ever more profoundly than before. Ultimately, it is not impossible that metaphysical first nature will also change as a result of changes in biological first nature.²⁰

Proponents of the traditional understanding of human nature emphasize that it is potentialized and thus malleable. According to Vittorio Possenti:

A human being is extremely malleable, and his traits can change [...]. Man [footnote—PSM] is not, however, indeterminate; he is not a being devoid of any specific characteristics. The fact that man is so malleable (but not devoid of form) stems from his nature, which is the nature of a material and spiritual being, i.e., the nature of the person. This is what

¹⁹ Brian Patrick Green, “Transhumanism and Catholic Natural Law: Changing Human Nature and Changing Moral Norms,” in *Religion and Transhumanism: The Unknown Future of Human*, ed. by Calvin Mercer & Tracy Trothen (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 204. The first nature of man (ontic) differs from his second (cultural) nature (habits, customs).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

makes him both malleable and unchangeable in his essence, which remains beyond the impact of technology. Technologies can neither produce the person nor change his nature.²¹

The fact that human nature is more malleable than the nature of other material beings means that man is particularly susceptible to experimenting with various ways of actualizing his nature. Some aspects of man's existence are more susceptible to modifications than other aspects and allow greater changes in his existential structure and activity. There is a fundamental difference between humans altering their shape (human heads by the Maya, women's feet by the Chinese, and women's necks by the Padaung tribe, etc.) and the body changes that can be made thanks to genetics, organ transplants and cybernetics. The possibility of changing man's external features is only one of many manifestations of the more fundamental possibility of interfering with man's biological and psychological aspects from within, and through this also with his personal life. At the same time, "from within" here not only means changing man's internal structures but also primarily the way in which these structures are formed in general. The issue of the unchangeability and malleability of human nature is thus more complex than it might seem on the basis of general metaphysical solutions.²² This is demonstrated by a deeper reflection on man's existential structure and the consequences for his integrity as a person.

In Thomistic anthropology, man is treated as a complex spiritual-corporeal being. The soul, which is a carrier of personal existence and

²¹ The Thomists point to the unchangeability of human nature to emphasize the unrealistic expectations of the goals set by proponents of the biotechnological revolution and transhumanism. However, one can also conclude from this that since human nature cannot be changed, removing any deficiencies from man and improving everything that can be improved in him should be allowed.

²² The Thomists point to the unchangeability of human nature to emphasize the unrealistic expectations of the goals set by proponents of the biotechnological revolu-

rational nature (humanity), is a substantial subject: simple, spiritual and self-contained, it transcends all material determinants in its origin and nature. As a spiritual substance, the soul is an incomplete subject of existence (as without a body it cannot act and actualize its potentialities). Therefore, as a substantial form, it organizes matter into a human body, grants its existence, and forms a hylomorphic unity with it. Thus, matter—and consequently the body which is organized by it—enters the internal structure (essence, nature) of man as a personal being. “The body participates in the existence of the soul according to its bodily capacities and, by existing as a human being, imprints an essential mark which is characteristic precisely of human action.”²³ The body is an actual coefficient of man’s existence and activity and contributes all of its potentiality and its material determinants. Thus, by modifying his body, it is possible to change the internal constitution of man’s existence in the functional aspect, to strengthen or weaken the impact of various factors of his mental life: it is possible to stimulate human drives and sexuality; it is possible to facilitate or even prevent the development of human personal life; it is possible to affect man’s interactions with other persons; and it is possible to prolong or shorten human life. A body as a body can take on various changes within itself and can be modified to a certain extent in a way that does not lead to a situation in which a being loses its existence, i.e., as long as changes do not generate such dispositions that the soul as a substantial form will no longer be able to control. Although interfering in the structure of the body and its functions cannot change the deepest (spiritual) essence of man, at the same time, due to his psychophysical unity, it is

tion and transhumanism. However, one can also conclude from this that since human nature cannot be changed, removing any deficiencies from man and improving everything that can be improved in him should be allowed.

²³ Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, *Człowiek jako osoba* [Man as a person] (Lublin: PTTA, 2005), 102.

possible to create internal conditions in which this subject acts. It is no coincidence that a body is not only a “vessel” inside which a person resides or what a person possesses as “the first mine”: it is also what a person himself is in some aspect.²⁴ Thus, although man is a personal, spiritual and corporeal being with rational nature, to the extent that a body participates in his existence and acting, he is susceptible to the consequences of its modifications.

The second area of influencing man by means of modifying his corporeality is action. Nature is the source of human action. Following Karol Wojtyła, it can be said that:

Nature is nothing else but the basis of the essential coherence between the one who acts (or something that acts, if the agent is not man) and his action. Speaking more broadly and more strictly, nature is the basis of the essential coherence between the subject of dynamism and the entire dynamism of this subject.²⁵

Nature, then, is that by which man acts and that which is recognized through action. Human nature is rational, which means that its actions are based on decisions made because of a rational and conscious cognition of reality. At the same time, because of man’s internal constitution, human corporeality with all its determinants actually participates in every act of this nature, and thus the dynamism of what happens in man also participates in the dynamism of human agency: “something happens in man.”²⁶ The unchangeability of human nature in the area of acts of decision, which are the basis of its action, does not mean that it cannot be influenced in a real way by what it acts with, especially because—

²⁴ Krąpiec, *Człowiek jako osoba* [Man as a person], 92.

²⁵ Karol Wojtyła, *“Person and Act” and Related Essays*, trans. Grzegorz Ignatik (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 184.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 163–164.

in the functional aspect—man’s mental life is interconnected with the activity of his senses and brain. By stimulating their activity and the activity of the mental processes that depend on them, it is possible to influence human personal acts (cognition and decisions) and thus facilitate or hinder those activities that are proper to man’s rational nature.

Man’s internal life is also related to the aforementioned two aspects of interference in man’s existence. Personal life is the entirety of various dynamisms: organic, appetitive, sensual, psychological, and spiritual. Although these dynamisms are in a certain disorder at the starting point of man’s personal life, his development requires their actualization and integration, which is achieved through virtues. There are at least two ways of integrating man’s personal life. In the classical conception of education, it is stressed that appetitive and emotional life is characterized by considerable autonomy in relation to mental life, so the aim is to integrate the dynamism of appetitive and emotional life into personal life.²⁷ Human will should control emotions and submit to reason, while reason should strive to know the truth more fully. However, this integration can also go in the opposite direction, i.e., it can result from subjecting mental life to appetites and senses. The former way of integration requires human effort and perfecting (education and work) in order to do good, while the latter is the result of surrendering to what at a given moment of human life constitutes a stronger impulse to act and is connected with various vices. Man’s personal life is an area where different dynamisms not only clash but also cooperate with one another. By gaining a significant influence on the sources of dynamisms or on the functioning of at least some dynamisms, other dynamisms can be greatly influenced. The human mind can be shaped by modifying organic and sensory life and, ultimately, it is possible to

²⁷ These issues constitute the foundations of the classical concept of virtues. Wojtyła draws attention to the integration of the different dynamisms of the person which takes place in an act. Idem, *“Person and Act” and Related Essays*, 295–373.

exert an impact on the internal personal life. Although it is impossible to change the fact that life consists of particular dynamisms, it is possible to strengthen or weaken those mechanisms of mental life which make the actualization and integration of these dynamisms more dependent on or independent of the person himself.

Since man's spiritual soul is a carrier for his existential status and human nature, in its essential, innermost sense, it is not possible to move from human to posthuman. Nevertheless, a profound interference in man's existential structure, in the way he acts and in his personal life, is possible. From an ontic perspective, the biological boundaries of modifying a human organism are determined by the ability of the substantial form to integrate the dispositions which emerge from a body and grant them existence. Introducing changes that are too big into an organism leads to its destruction, but at the same time it is impossible to answer in advance the question of how many and how different particular modifications can be taken on by a human organism, especially in the initial phase of its existence, without being destroyed. A human body, as a complex biological organism, is dynamic, and various determinants of matter, deficiencies and dysfunctions, due to which it requires care and improvement, are revealed within it. However, only some of these lead to its enhancement and serve man as a person, not only from a biological and psychological perspective, but primarily from a moral one.

Conclusions

Posthumanism is an important element of contemporary discourse on man and encompasses a number of anthropological concepts that advocate the idea of the posthuman. The multitude and diverse ways of understanding posthumanism can be reduced to two main views: cultural posthumanism and techno-humanism, both of which opt for the

radical transformation of man. Cultural posthumanism postulates a change in the image of man, while technological posthumanism postulates his enhancement. No discourse, including posthumanist discourse, can change human nature, i.e., who man is, but it does affect the way in which man is understood and thus also his condition. Although the theses of the Thomistic system acknowledge that human nature is unchangeable, it is also complex (spiritual-corporeal) and potentialized, and thus open to different ways of actualizing itself. The corporeal-biological aspects of this nature are particularly susceptible to modifications through which human corporeality, action and psychological life can be significantly influenced. At the same time, it is difficult to indicate the actual boundaries of where the introduced changes either enhance or impair man.

Classical thought associates belief in the unchangeability of human nature with the beliefs that 1) man has a natural tendency to want to enhance his existence; 2) no self-enhancement can remove man's existential contingency;²⁸ 3) the complete realization (actualization) of human nature cannot be achieved in material reality because it is directed at that which does not exist in the world of material beings; 4) it is possible for human nature to be perfected by the Being who is its cause.

If it is acknowledged that faith is an expression of man's most fundamental intuitions, then the conviction that human nature can and should be transformed and enhanced is embedded in religions. In Christianity we talk of God's grace, which presupposes nature (*gratia praesupponit naturam*)²⁹ and perfects it in such a way that it does not destroy it but brings it to its proper fullness because grace does not destroy nature but perfects it (*gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficit*).³⁰

²⁸ Benedikt Paul Göcke, "Christian Cyborgs: A Plea for a Moderate Transhumanism," *Faith and Philosophy* 34 (2017), Iss. 3: 361.

²⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 1, q. 1, a. 8 ad 2; q. 2, a. 2 ad 1.



Will Posthumanism be the End of the *Homo Sapiens* Era?

SUMMARY

The purpose of the article is to answer the question whether posthumanism is the end of the homo sapiens era. The multitude of posthumanisms can be reduced to two main views: cultural posthumanism and techno-humanism. Cultural posthumanism postulates a change in the image of man, while technological posthumanism postulates his enhancement. Posthumanist discourse cannot change human nature, but it does affect his condition. Although human nature is unchangeable, the corporeal-biological aspects of this nature are particularly susceptible to modifications. At the same time, it is difficult to indicate the actual boundaries of where the introduced changes either enhance or impair man.

Keywords: transhumanism, cultural posthumanism, discourse, human nature, human condition

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