Beyond Technological Singularity-the Posthuman Condition

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Abstract: In the transmodern context, transhumanism appears as a new paradigm, with a centripetal tendency, which proposes the reinventing of man by overcoming the current biological limitations with the help of new technologies, so called human amelioration. In our work, we want to discuss in a speculative manner the possibility of the existence of the posthuman individual in the biological and moral (self) transcendence of the self. We will discuss a series of technologies capable of irreversibly modifying the human condition by placing humanity first in a transhuman or posthuman condition: technologies of virtualization of the social space that allow the transcendence of the spatial limitation of the human condition as a localized being within the finite limits, by opening up to communication and beingness in a non-topological space, the possibility of downloading the consciousness into electronic storage media, which would allow it to be in a non-biological space, that is, independent of its own corporeality and the supposed technologies of indefinite extension of life, which removes the human being from the the physical horizon of temporality and finitude. In defining the boundaries of the human condition, we have appealed to the work of the philosopher Abhinavagupta (975-1025), who was one of the greatest philosophers, aestheticians and mystics of the Shia school of Kashmir. The revaluation of the Kashmiri philosophy in the postmodern context allows us to rethink the human being's boundaries, whose overcoming allows for a transcendence of the human condition. The boundaries identified based on the work of the Kashmirian philosopher are: limitation in temporality, limitation in the capacity for knowledge, limitation in fullness (limitation in scope - spatiality), limitation in causality, limitation in creative power. The overcoming of these ontological boundaries leads, in our opinion, to the emergence of an anthropological singularity, a concept built after the technological singularity, and implicitly of physical singularity.

Keywords: trashumanism, anthropological singularity, limitation, human condition, posthuman condition, Abhinavagupta.

Introduction

In the transmodern context, transhumanism appears as a new paradigm, with a centripetal tendency, which proposes reinventing the man by overcoming the current biological limitations with the help of new technologies, so called human amelioration. In our work we want to discuss in a speculative manner the possibility of the existence of the post-human individual as a (post) biological species, in the biological and moral (self) transcendence of the individual. We will discuss a series of technologies capable of irreversibly modifying the human condition by placing humanity first in a transhuman or posthuman condition: technologies of virtualization of the social space that allow the transcendence of the spatial limitation of the human condition as a localized being within the finite limits, by opening up to communication and being in a non netopological space, the possible unloading of consciousness into electronic storage media, which would allow it to be in a netopological space, that is, independent of its own corporeality and the supposed technologies of undefined life extension, which removes the human being from the fiery horizon of temporality and near death beingness (Heidegger, Stambaugh & Schmidt, 2010). In defining the boundaries of the human condition, we have appealed to the work of the philosopher Abhinavagupta (975-1025) who was one of the greatest philosophers, aestheticians, and mystics of the Trika school in Kashmir (Abhinavagupta, 2015). The revaluation of the Kashmiri philosophy in the postmodern context allows us to rethink the limitations of the human being, whose overcoming allows for a transcendence of the human condition.

Human condition: onto-gnoseological limitations

The present moment of technological evolution of the humanity can be defined as an attempt to transcend human limitations by creating and using technological artifacts. The partial or total transcending of the onto-anthropological boundaries that define the human condition leads to an existential condition called in the literature - a post-human condition. In our approach we will analyze how to overcome these limits by observing the implications of information technology, assisted reproduction, virtualization of social space, etc., in order to obtain a posthuman condition.

One of the reference objectives of the transhumanist movement is the creation of technological tools that allow the transcendence of the human condition. For this, a series of technologies such as physical or moral human improvement technologies, technologies for conscious digitization,

genetic modification technologies, or assisted medical reproduction technologies have been proposed to contribute to the creation of a better being. Improving means for us the overcoming of the current limits of the human being. Self-transcendence is an ideal of various spiritual mistical currents that emphasize the ability of the human being to self-condemn his condition. By contrast, the mystical spiritual traditions bring to the fore the role of the divinity in the eschatological process, humanity not having the capacity to overcome the ontological gap between human and divine. It is the merit of John Petru Culianu to signal the epistemological contiguity between medieval magic and current technological developments, the author focusing on the technologies of power. In line with Christian tradition, transhumanism proposes the substitution of divinity and transcendence with the help of technologies. We can speculate that specific human enhancement technologies are such technologies of power as to generate a pseudo-self-transcendence.

The name of a post-human physical condition is associated with that state of a biological or non-biological entity, whose origins are human, but in which the actual limitations specific to the present humanity are transcendent, partially or completely overcome through technologies. The physical limitations we refer to can be considered in the metaphysical sense as a restriction of the Being in the transition to beingness in the world.

In order to understand the transhumanist idea (Bostrom, 2013) of overcoming the current status of humanity towards a post-human condition (Fukuyama, 2002; Bostrom, 2013; Sandu, 2015; Cirkovic, 2017), we will have to understand what are the existential limitations that circumscribe the human condition. In this sense, we have appealed to a number of categories (tattve), as they are in the philosophy of India, more precisely, we have appealed to the work of the philosopher, the aesthetician and mystic Abhinavagupta. These limitations, which circumscribe the limited finite condition of the human individual, are the ones that detach him from the divine physical condition, their overcoming making possible the self-transcendence of the human being. For this article we have bracketed the spiritual dimension of the work of the Kashmirian philosopher, keeping only the definition of the limitations that circumscribe the human condition: *the limitation in temporality, the limitation in the capacity of knowledge, the limitation in fullness (the limitation in scope - the spatiality), the limitation in causality, limitation in creative power.* These limitations, as part of the existential categories (tattvas), are taken over by Abhinavagupta from the tradition of the Trika school - the philosophical mystic kashmirian school - but are preferred in similar forms

in most of the Kashmiri mystical-philosophical systems (Lakshmanjoo & Hughes, 2000).

Anthropological Singularity: Limitations of the Consciousness (Kanchukas) to Technological Decomposition

This existential condition is referred to as *anthropological singularity* by analogy with the concept of *technological singularity*, derived in turn from that of *space singularity* in the cosmological sense as a space region in which the laws of physics become ineffective due to the action of huge gravitational forces. Thus anthropological singularity can be understood as a moment in the evolution of humanity in which the laws defining the very existence of the human condition become ineffective due to the action of human technological creativity, which modifies - almost irreversibly - the human condition. In our paper we want to discuss, in a speculative manner, the possibility of the existence of the post-man individual in the biological and moral (self) transcendence of the individual. We will discuss a series of technologies capable of irreversibly modifying the human condition by placing humanity first in a transhuman or posthuman condition: technologies of virtualization of the social space that allow the transcendence of the spatial limitation of the human condition as a localized being within the finite limits, by opening up to the communication and being in a netopological space, the possible unloading of consciousness into electronic storage media, which would allow it to be in a netopological space, that is, independent of its own corporeality and the supposed technologies of indefinite extension of life that remove the human being from the physical horizon of temporality. This artificial pseudotranscendence will go through the filter of the anthropological limitations taken from the Kashmiri philosophy, especially from the one belonging to the Trika school represented by the philosopher, mystic and esthetician Abhinavagupta.

Kanchukas represents those ontological levels (beingness realities) meant to cover the divine nature of each consciousness being. They represent the limitations of the human nature in relation to the transcendence. These limitations constitute the frameworks that define the human condition (Swami Lakshman & Swami Lakshman, 1991). The onthological levels (Tattva), which make the switch from divine reality to the human one represent, in the vision of the Trika kashmirian philosophy, a point in which the Divine existence, lacking any conditionality (where no law applies), comes into contact with the human one, who is subject to

limitations. We can basically consider this onthological stage as being a suis generis of singularity, which separates two different existential conditions. The self-consciousness (AHAM) – is the bond between the two existential conditions, being able to exist – in Abhinavagupta's vision – simultaneously in the area of pure reality (tattvas) – which are not subject to differentiations between the Subject and the Object – as well as the impure – where the split between the Knowing Subject and the Reality to be Known. Kanchukas – limitations of the human condition – are true *masks of the being,* which hide the plenitude of the Supreme Beiing, and the essence identity between the two poles of the consciousness – the Human Consciousness and the Supreme Consciousness - from the limited consciousness.

Between the realities (tattvas) of the pure Supreme Consciousness from the separation between the Self (Aham) and the Other (Idam), and those of the limited consciousness, subject to separation between the knowing subject and the subject to be known, there are the semi-pure realities (tattvas) which have the role to break the Beeing intro fragments that are in the beeingness, separated from each other and from the pure essence. These semi-pure tattvas include the Illusion of Separation (Maya Tattva) along with the *separating realities* (canchuckas). They act as an ontological filter, which limits the supreme condition of human condition of the Supreme Subject. These limits of the Beeing are those that permit the experience of the human consciousness and the human condition. Overcoming any of these represents the experience of the transcendence of the limited human condition. The onthological levels (tattvas) which make the transition between the divine and the human reality in the vision of the Trika kashmirian philosophy, represent a point in which the Divine existence, lacking any conditioning (in which no law applies), comes into contact with the human one, subject to limitations. Basically, we can consider this onthological stage as being a sui-generis of the singularity that divides two totally different existential conditions.

Starting from those categories, and reformulating them in the current philosophical language, we can talk about (Sandu, 2015) a series of real limitations of the human condition (Swami Lakshman & Swami Lakshman, 1991), as presented in the following paragraphs.

1. Limitation in temporality (Kāla).

The limitation in temporality is an existential condition where the being experiments the sequencing (Singh, 1979; Evola, 1992), as a division of the temporary experience in the past, present and future. The Subjective

experience is sequenced between one experience and the other, creating a surrogate of Totality. This sequence makes the experience of the Subject to be insufficient, and to require a different experience in order to obtain the illusion of completenesss. In the essential metaphysical way, this limitation distinguishes the human beeingness from what we call the Divine Condition of Eternity. The Eternity doesn't only imply that lack of any impairment of the Subject by the passing of time, but also his constant presence in all dimensions of time. Unlike the Divine Beeing who is eternal, the human being is in time and in the proximity of death, experimenting time as a limitation of own existence, and at the same time, as sequentiality of actions (past-prezent-future) (Swami Lakshman & Swami Lakshman, 1991).

This limitation is expressed by Heiddegger as beingness in time and the horizon of death (Heidegger, Stambaugh & Schmidt, 2010). The beingness in time is accompanied by the anguish of death and the awareness of own finitude. Overcoming the limitations in temporality is a challenge to any soteriological concepts, but also to many practices targeting self-transcendence, either them being magical, or more recently inspired from the capacity of technology to prolong life indefinitely.

The transhumanist discourse includes a scientocentric and finally anthropocentric soteriology. Overcoming the temporal conditioning is the objective of the current we would call longevity and immorality, within the transhumanist studies. Gaining immortality represents the decisive point for passing from a posthuman beingness state, overcoming the other limitations by placing us in an existential transhuman condition, of a limit between the human and the posthuman one.

The technology of downloading the human consciousness into virtual environments, with the eventual reloading into surrogate (non)biological bodies is the most promising one from the point of view of transcending the limitation in temporality, not necessarily in the sense of obtaining an absolute immortality, but an exceptional longevity, even at the level of millennia. Obtaining artificial immortality involves, on the other side, the head transplant and, at the same time, creating clones to which head transplants could be made, technologized individuals whose potential digitalized consciousness could be downloaded, etc. The tehnology of time travel may also lead to transcending the temporal limitations, ensuring the presence of the Consciousness in the different dimensions of time. The eventual technologies that would permit immortality, by combining the biological and the technological factors – especially those based on the digitalization of the consciousness that is a paradigmatic mutation in the concept of evolution of the human species. Overcoming the limitations into

non-temporality as an artificial immortality may generate an altered, but super-human condition. Overcoming the existential condition of being around death makes any anthropological analysis of such hybrid biological-non-biological species to be absolutely impossible. Homo Sapiens Imortalus may truly represent a posthuman species that will mark a moment of anthropological singularity.

2. Limitation in plenitude (Rāga Tattva) (Evola, 1992).

Limitation in plenitude is rather called limitation in scope or space. Understood as a limitation in space, Raga Tattva presents the human being as being conditioned as a topological being, existing locally and bounded by its own corporeality, while the human interactions meet the Other as a Close one. The limitation in plenitude appears as an awareness of the dissipation of the Totality, undergoing any subjective causality. The limitation in plenitude generates the separation of the Consciousness of Self from what we call the Consciousness of experimenting the Alterity, including the Consciousness of experimenting Self Consciousness as an Alterity, which leads to the alienation of the Being into Beingness. The limitation in plenitude generates what we call today the *consumerism society*, as a need for fulfilling the experience of Totality.

From a technological perspective, the most promising discourse that aims to overcome the limitation in fullness can be linked to the Gaming Machine, virtualization strategies of Reality, which allow Consciousness (somehow digitized) to simulate any sensation, and satisfy any attachment or desire. The consciousness of the space infinity and of the contents of the whole Existence is an apanage of the Absolute Being. This limitation is generally correlated with the consciousness of our own corporality and the incarnation of Being in the world. The limitation in space is in consciousness the separation of the Epistemic Subject from the Epistemic Object, and generates the relationship with the Alterity.

The same limitation induces the idea of separating the Consciousness from the World, and generates the worlds of experience, including the participation of the Self to the communicative construction of the reality. The limitation in spatiality opens the temptation of a transcendence through access to multidimensionality, the attraction towards the parallel Universes, embedded dimensions, etc. Also, the limitation of spatiality is overcome by practices of *expanding the consciousness*, capable of allowing for the consciousness of the de-limitation of the human being. The psychedelic experiences and the trance can generate such an overcoming of

the limitations in content. From a tehno-optimist perspective, the most promising technologies, that will lead to overcoming the limitations in content, are those of virtualizing the space and separating the consciousness from the biological support. A non-local consciousness can be interpreted as transcending the limitation of spatiality in a continuous of the beingness.

The technologies of virtualizing the social space (based on internet and/or virtual reality) allow for the emergence of a supplementary dimension, untraceable, where the consciousness manifests as tele-action (from instant communication to using robotic arms through remote ordering, for example in tele-medicine). The virtual space allows for a non-topologic existence, the interactions being noethic rather than physical or biological.

The virtualization of the social space generates a special category of responsibility – the responsibility towards the non-presence. The technologies of transfer of knowledge (to the extent in which the upload and download of consciousness will be possible), will also lead to a pseudo-transcendence of the limitation in plenitude, completely delocalizing the consciousness into an a-dimensional digital space.

3. Limitation in causality (**Niyati tattva***)

The limitation in causality is being understood as a limitation in absolute freedom, or in absolute authonomy (Evola, 1992) of the Supreme Conscious Subject. Unlike the Supreme Being, the human being is generally subject to a strict causality, which limits its freedom. The limitation in causality is also understood as *order of the world*, the interactions being limited by the existence of an explicit or implicit order that transcends the human nature.

The limitation in causality: although there are no technologies that would lead to an obvious transcendence (overcoming) of causality, increasingly more researches target the construction of possible future technologies that would be based on the quantic causality and the non-locality.

Pure action, without the existence of certain causal determinants, could be technologically expressed through genetic editing. If the processes of social construction are based on humans' freedom to give meaning to the world and to create and re-create new forms, then the genetic editing is what can determine creating new forms of individuals. In this case we discuss about genetically manipulated individuals. The genetic manipulation could lead to creating individuals with a higher resistance to pain, or certain

individuals with a high level of morality. In this case, we could talk about a new form of slavery, called soft slavery (Terec-Vlad & Terec-Vlad, 2014).

Limitation in efficiency (Evola, 1992) or limitation in creative power (Swami Lakshman & Swami Lakshman, 1991). (Kalā or 'Akāla)

According to Trika, the Creating Power is represented by the triad of divine energies (where the name for this spiritual and philosophic Trika current comes from – the term meaning triad): will, knowledge and action, acting unlimited and unseparable. The representations on the Supreme Consciousness are centred on the ex-nihilo creation and omnipotence. The Creating Efficiency signifies the total fulfillment of any objectives of the Absolute Being: towards the Divine Being – omnipotent – the human being is limited in creating power, some things being possible, and others not. The limitation in efficiency represents the individuals' lack of capacity to achieve all the objectives. This limitation is approached from the perspective of overcoming the human conditions through technologies such as 3D printing, tele-action, symbolic constructions in the space of virtual reality, etc.

The majority of the technologies that target the enhancement of the human condition – increasing the cognitive, sensorial and, why not, moral potential – addresses one way or another to the limitation in efficiency, either it concern bionic prosthetics that would not only permit the recovery of the lost potential, but also obtaining certain superior capabilities for the human condition. Under these circumstances we can talk about technologies of human improvement that would permit overcoming certain limitations, both physical and moral. We can therefore create individuals with a higher level of suffering, such as the universal soldier, but also beings with a high level of morality or obedience.

Limitation in creating power: the technology itself makes possible the overcoming of many limitations, otherwise considered unsurpassing by the human condition. We can give the example of flying, underwater travel, conquering space, but also revolutionary technologies in the area of genetics. A particular emphasis is here given to the construction of hybrid entities (chimera). Recently, testimonies on creating a hybrid entity (man-pig) have begin to emerge in the press. Craig Venter and his team (creators of synthetic biology) have developed the first fully artificial cell – with artificial genome, developed from nucleotides in the lab. Sergio Canavero officially announces that the end of 2017 will bring the first human head transplant.

4. Limitation in knowledge (Vidya – Tattva) (Swami Lakshman & Swami Lakshman, 1991; Evola, 1992).

Limitation in Omniscience appears when the Supreme Knower limits himself to a limited Epistemic Subject. For Consciousness, the convention of the impossibility of absolute knowledge emerges. The transcendence of this limitation from the technological perspective represents the creation of Singularity, of a an Artificial Self Consciousness that is capable of instantly communicating with all existing databases, eventually with a global knowledge obtained through the interconnection of the human minds with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and vast neural networks where the human mind would be an interconnectivity node.

The limitation in knowledge: the majority of digital technologies are meant to improve the capacity of knowledge of the man in particular, and of the humanity in general, the possible (future) technologies based on neural interface and online connectivity of the individual, make the transition towards a global mind (Popoveniuc, 2016).

Instead of conclusions: the anthropological singularity. The transcending without transcendence

We consider that none of the mentioned technologies lead to a real transcendence of the human condition, since they cannot lead to overcoming the existential anguish in front of the human finitude (Sandu, 2015). Overcoming the spatial limitations, the exceptional growth of the power of action and knowledge, makes the anthropological status of the humanity to be questionable, the already existing technological realities allowing the humanity to compare themselves with the heroes and the semi-divine beings in the majority of myths that underly the humanity: Prometheus, Icar, Hercules, Gilgames, Achilles, etc.

We could discuss about a transhuman condition, where obviously, the fundamental limitations that define the human condition are continuously overcome. The human condition is partially overcome by the technological development, but we cannot, yet, talk about a new specific antropic condition – "Homo Sapiens[+]". The technologies that could allow immortality, through the combination between the biological and the technological factors – especially those based on the digitalization of the consciousness – represent a paradigmatic mutation in the concept of evolution of the human species, by its shift towards the non-biological. Overcoming the limitation in non-temporality as an artificial immortality could generate an altered, but superhuman human condition. Overcoming

the existential condition of near-death experience makes it absolutely impossible to conduct any anthropological analysis of a certain hybrid biological - non-biological species. Homo Sapiens Imortals may truly represent - in case it will be constructed -, a posthuman species that will mark a moment of anthropological singularity.

None of the identified forms of technological self-transcendence that we have identified doesn't lead to a divine condition, but rather to an existential, transhuman or posthuman condition. The artificial self-transcendence denies the continuity man-divinity and the human's teandricity (Ghideanu, 2007), the overcoming of the human being becoming horizontal towards the technological Alterity, and not to the Divine one.

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