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Trans-/Posthumanism and the Ethics of Protecting People: Between Possibility and Responsibility

Trans-/posthumanizm a etyka chronienia osób — między możliwością i powinnością

ABSTRACT

The following article addresses anthropology and ethics in the context of bestowing biological and technological modifications on the human being.

The starting point of the discussion are the terms *transhuman* and *posthuman* and the ethics based on the concept of a person as a human being. The author investigates the question of whether the notion of a human being which we uphold allows for a person to be constructed and manipulated within certain boundaries. The author also proposes that transhumanism — especially posthumanism (due to ontology) — breaks with the classical definition of a human being and rejects the ethics of protecting people. In its place, trans-/posthumanism applies situational and utilitarian ethics. From the point of view of the ethics of protecting people, any qualitative changes are unacceptable (particularly considering the formal cause of a human being). What can be accepted are quantitative changes (regarding the material cause of a human being), on the condition that they protect individuals and their interpersonal relationships.

ABSTRAKT

Niniejszy artykuł jest próbą namysłu nad antropologią i etyką w kontekście rozwijających się modyfikacji bio- i technologicznych, którym poddawany jest człowiek.

Punktem wyjścia do dyskusji są pojęcia trans- i posthumanizmu oraz etyki opartej na koncepcji człowieka – osoby ludzkiej. Autor próbuje znaleźć odpowiedź na pytanie: Czy pojęcie natury ludzkiej, które przyjmujemy, dopuszcza, aby człowiek był konstruowany, tj. manipulowany w ramach określonych granic? Odpowiadając na to pytanie, autor proponuje następującą konstatację: transhumanizm, a w szczególności posthumanizm (ze względu na ontologię), zrywa z klasyczną koncepcją człowieka-osoby, równocześnie odrzucając etykę chronienia osób. W miejsce etyki chronienia osób trans/post/humanizm stosuje etykę sytuacyjną i utylitarystyczną. Z punku widzenia etyki chronienia osób niedopuszczalne są jakiekolwiek zmiany jakościowe (dotyczące przyczyny formalnej osoby ludzkiej). Można natomiast dopuszczać możliwość zmian ilościowych (dotyczących przyczyny materialnej osoby ludzkiej), jeśli takie prowadziłyby do ochrony relacji osobowych i ich podmiotów.

Introduction

A revolution usually comes with a sacrifice. Who or what will be the sacrifice of the evolving biotechnological revolution? Will the harm be on the human or ethical side? The following article is an attempt to grasp anthropology and ethics in the context of the developing biological and technological modifications of which humans are the subject. The starting point of the discussion are the terms transhuman and posthuman and the ethics based on the concept of a person as a human being. The author is trying to answer the question of whether the notion of a human being, which we uphold, allows for a human being to be constructed and manipulated within certain boundaries.

The notions of transhumanism and posthumanism

According to some, we are currently entering an era of trans- or posthumanism.[1] This is a concept borrowed from the Russian

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1 The transhumanist manifesto can be found on the website: https://humanityplus.org/ (dostęp: 14.02.2019). We can read there, among other things:

philosopher Nikolai Fyodorov (1829–1903), who was a fan of prolonging human life through scientific methods, as well as of immortality and conjuring the dead. In 1957, Julian Huxley published a collection of essays, *New Bottles for New Wine*, the first of which was titled "Transhumanism." According to Karol Szymański (2015, p. 134), the term transhumanism (also denoted as "H+") in its modern meaning was created by Max More in his work, *Transhumanism: Toward a Futurist Philosophy*.[2]

Raymond Kurzweil is a proponent of transhumanism as well as an American IT specialist and futurologist, who in 2009 together with NASA and Google created a department of futurology for the Singularity Group in Silicon Valley. The main goal of the department was to prepare humanity for accelerated technological change and the emergence of singularities (Kurzweil, 2005). Transhumanists use human drive to break free from limitations. Simon Young (2006, p. 32) believes that just as humanism freed us from the bonds of superstition, so transhumanism will free us from the bonds of biology. The ultimate goal of the transhumanist evolution of mankind is the so-called posthuman condition. According to Nick Bostrom (2003, p. 5), posthumans are to be immune to disease, forever young, and full of life; they will have control over their own desires, emotions, and mental states; they will not feel tired or have negative

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"The Transhumanist Declaration was originally crafted in 1998 by an international group of authors: Doug Baily, Anders Sandberg, Gustavo Alves, Max More, Holger Wagner, Natasha Vita-More, Eugene Leitl, Bernie Staring, David Pearce, Bill Fantegrossi, den Otter, Ralf Fletcher, Kathryn Aegis, Tom Morrow, Alexander Chislenko, Lee Daniel Crocker, Darren Reynolds, Keith Elis, Thom Quinn, Mikhail Sverdlov, Arjen Kamphuis, Shane Spaulding, and Nick Bostrom. This Transhumanist Declaration has been modified over the years by several authors and organizations. It was adopted by the Humanity+ Board in March, 2009."

2   Max More (1990) writes on this subject: "Transhumanism is a class of philosophies that seek to guide us toward a posthuman condition. Transhumanism shares many elements of humanism, including a respect for reason and science, a commitment to progress, and a valuing of human (or transhuman) existence in this life rather than in some supernatural 'afterlife.' Transhumanism differs from humanism in recognizing and anticipating the radical alterations in the nature and possibilities of our lives resulting from various sciences and technologies such as neuroscience and neuropharmacology, life extension, nanotechnology, artificial ultra-intelligence, and space habitation, combined with a rational philosophy and value system."

thoughts; they will have a greater ability to experience pleasure, love, and aesthetic impressions; they will also experience new conscious sensations unavailable to ordinary people.

The transitional stage between man and posthuman is the "transhuman." For the transformation from human into posthuman to be accomplished, Max More indicates seven so-called "corrections" to human biological life:

Amendment No. 1: We will no longer tolerate the tyranny of aging and death. Through genetic alterations, cellular manipulations, synthetic organs, and any necessary means, we will endow ourselves with enduring vitality and remove our expiration date. We will each decide for ourselves how long we shall live.

Amendment No. 2: We will expand our perceptual range through biotechnological and computational means. We seek to exceed the perceptual abilities of any other creature and to devise novel senses to expand our appreciation and understanding of the world around us.

Amendment No. 3: We will improve on our neural organization and capacity, expanding our working memory, and enhancing our intelligence.

Amendment No. 4: We will supplement the neocortex with a "metabrain." This distributed network of sensors, information processors, and intelligence will increase our degree of self-awareness and allow us to modulate our emotions.

Amendment No. 5: We will no longer be slaves to our genes. We will take charge over our genetic programming and achieve mastery over our biological and neurological processes. We will fix all individual and species defects left over from evolution by natural selection. Not content with that, we will seek complete choice of our bodily form and function, refining and augmenting our physical and intellectual abilities beyond those of any human in history.

Amendment No. 6: We will cautiously yet boldly reshape our motivational patterns and emotional responses in ways we, as individuals, deem healthy. We will seek to improve upon typical human emotional excesses, bringing about refined emotions. We will strengthen ourselves so we can let go of unhealthy needs for dogmatic certainty, removing emotional barriers to rational self-correction.

Amendment No. 7: We recognize your genius in using carbon-based compounds to develop us. Yet we will not limit our physical, intellectual, or emotional capacities by remaining purely biological organisms. While we pursue mastery of our own biochemistry, we will increasingly integrate our advancing technologies into our selves. (More 1999)

A superficial reading of the above letter urges reflection on transhumanism's views as to what is fantasy and simple eccentricity with no rational basis in philosophy (e.g., the urge to create a copy of a human brain or achieve immortality) or what would make sense and could be put into action (e.g., in the sphere of genetic manipulation).

Grzegorz Osiński—computer scientist, cognitive scientist, and a quantum physicist who studies the activity of the human brain using the theory of nonlinear dynamic models—in his book *Transhumanizm: Retiarius contra Secutor* writes about the hopes and fears related to the practical implementation of transhumanist ideas. The author describes current projects related to global brain simulation in a silicon computer environment (the Brain Activity Map project being carried out in the USA and the Human Brain Project in Europe, which aim to create a digital copy of not only all neurons in the human brain, but also the network of connections between them). According to Osiński, the particularly controversial thesis of transhumanism reduces the human being to a "material shell" that serves only the proper handling of the brain, the only site of the human mind. According to this thesis, it is possible not only to freely refine the "shell" technologically, but even to make copies of the mind itself, while guaranteeing its immortality. For example, the European Parliament has introduced the concept of an "electronic person," granting rights to robots that were previously only available to humans (Osiński, 2018).

Alexis Halapsis (2019) points out that the ongoing attempts at biological and technological modifications are leading to the creation of a modular human hybrid:

There are already a lot of cyborgs among us and over time their number will grow. We get used to the idea that some parts of the body can be replaced by 'spare' ones—donor, artificially grown, or completely artificial. It is not just the further development of medicine and the sciences related to it, but a fundamental turn in the look at the person him/herself, the essence of which is the transition *from human-as-integrity to a modular human* (p. 81).

He adds that

adjustments to the natural body are associated with serious surgical interventions fraught with complications (remember Michael Jackson, whose pursuit of beauty resulted in disability and premature death).

In the near future, changes in the human body can be more radical and negative consequences can be minimized. Beauty will not only become the norm, as predicted by Julian Huxley, but new types of (post-)human beauty will surely emerge and modern Barbie and the Elf women will seem distant classics to our descendants against the backdrop of the monstrous aesthetics of the posthumans. Fashion will reach a new level, and clothing and accessory designers will be replaced by body designers. Height, weight, facial features, figure, age, race, sex will turn out to be variable parameters, becoming something like clothes and makeup; the decision on the optimal body for a vacation or party will be limited only by imagination. (Halapsis, 2019, p. 81)

In the introduction to his book *Improved Humanity*, Grzegorz Lindenberg (2018) writes that

genetic modifications and artificial intelligence are the greatest challenges in the near future. The upcoming changes will be faster and more meaningful than anything that has happened to humans in history, and will bring about both good and bad repercussions. (p. 9)

According to Lindenberg, two revolutionary papers were published in 2012: one on genetics and the other on artificial intelligence. The first described a new method for easily and cheaply swapping genes, called CRISPR/Cas9, while the second was about the role of artificial intelligence in neural networks.

In his famous book *Sapiens: From Animals to Gods*, which sold over 5 million copies worldwide, Yuval Noah Harari covered the evolution and history of humankind. His latest work, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, takes the next step: the thinker focuses on today's challenges, ponders what awaits us in the future, and above all proves that soon humans will become equal to the gods (Harari, 2017).

Transhumanism aims to rethink the possibilities of human development, going beyond the imposed limits, with the help of tools created by mankind, such as technology. According to Monika Bakke (2010), "transhumanists in fact identify with humanism cultivated in the spirit of the Enlightenment, that is, they place human qualities such as rationalism, self-awareness, self-control and faith in progress in the center" (p. 341). It is certainly an echo of humanity's striving for emancipation, understood as a break with all limitations. As Jan Białek (2017, p. 82) aptly points out, there is a transition from the natural to the technological environment; this is connected with the idea of the postmodern world, or the postindustrial revolution.

Additionally, transhumanism started to be widely promoted as a way to channel deep inner incapacitation and the continuous evolution of human beings physically, socially, culturally, and spiritually. It limits the drives to explore, arrange, and control the natural environment, channeling them into an exploration of the virtual world, personality development, and technological extensions.

An important concept used by transhumanist researchers is *post-human*. It is supposed to be a symbol of "what is to come"—a better human or man 2.0—because the project of Man so far has ended. As Halapsis writes, human time is ending and posthuman time beginning:

> Neurotechnologies of prosthetics, organ transplantation, installation of various stimulants, and implants have become the reality of today. Tomorrow it will be nanochips and nanocomputers capable of modifying the human body and enhancing intelligence. This will mean further cyborgization of people. Yet today, the human body can be subjected not only to external correction, but also to internal transformations; in the future, the possibilities of medicine in its 'repair,' 'renewal,' and 'tuning' will increase manifold. The history of man ends and the history of the posthuman begins. We can no longer turn off this path, however, in our power to preserve our human qualities in the posthuman future. (Halapsis 2019, p. 86)

The concept of the ethics of protecting people

Ethics is a philosophical discipline covering a set of issues determining the essence of a moral obligation (good or bad). The subject of ethics is human action (a decision, a deed, or conduct). It includes free and conscious human acts and human attitudes related to moral norms. Reflecting on ethics, we can distinguish the following approaches: nomological, axiological, aretological, or exemplary. Mieczysław Gogacz presents the model of ethics of protecting people. For him, within the framework of consistent Thomism, ethics and pedagogy become a metaphysics of education, upbringing, and behavior that is faithful to the truth about humans and which indicates the choice of actions aimed at protecting people and their interrelations in the environment.

Ethics deals with human behavior and must therefore first identify the human being. Gogacz (1997, p. 67) writes that ethics and pedagogy concern real people. In it, standards should be sought to protect them through realistically oriented ethics and to educate them through realistically oriented pedagogy. Elsewhere, he writes that "to build an ethics that concerns man, one must first identify the person. Identification of a person is the direct basis of a realistically formulated ethics" (Gogacz, 1998, p. 42).

Gogacz, representing Thomism, defines a person as a real, individual being that includes the intellect, and under the influence of its existence is associated with love with other people. In other words, a person is an existing rational being who also loves. Thus, a being is made up of three constitutive elements: existence, intellect, and love. In the individual being, existence is the first structural element, indicated by direct knowledge of the reality of being. The rationality of cognition indicates the intellect. Love is selfless concern for the welfare of others. Existence, intellect, and love characterize people and God. Humans and God are therefore persons (Gogacz 1997, p. 69).

The task of ethics is to establish which human activities protect the well-being of people, indicating the norms of protective actions. The relations that arise through existence and in its manifestations are called transcendental relations, three of which are called personal and must be protected: those based on reality—relationships of love, those based on the property of truth—relationships of faith, and those subject to the transcendental property—relationships of hope. A relationship of love manifests itself in being sympathetic, even loving one another. The relationship of faith is openness to the revealed truth—the principles of the encountered being. On the other hand, the relationship of hope appears as trust that the good in personal beings will be accepted and available, that it will remain in the relationship between people.

Ethics deals with the actions of every human being, but those that one consciously undertakes toward oneself and toward other people as the actor. Ethics does not study the structure of these activities, as the philosophy of man does, but it instead determines whether these activities protect the truthful good of people. This good of people is their existence, the development of the human soul and body, the improvement of intellect and will as spiritual powers and sensory,

cognitive, and lustful powers, in turn ideas and feelings, and above all a place among people as connections through kindness and trust, which is called love and faith (Gogacz, 1998, p. 36).

Defining the rules of conduct, Gogacz emphasizes that these must be principles that directly guide actions, referring to a proper goal. In the field of general ethics, there are three conditions for pious behavior: contemplation, wisdom, and conscience. Contemplation is a reflection of the intellect which directs the will into existence according to the personal relationships identified at the level of the heart's speech. Being a loving affirmation of personal ties, it sets the goal of acting in accordance with their interests, consisting in the protection of people. It is possible with the support of wisdom, which allows one to perceive the good of being from the position of the truth about it. This happens when the intellect, perceiving the truth about being, shows it to the will as a good that is appropriate for a given being. The function of conscience is manifested in the simultaneous action of intellect and will. The intellect is prompted by conscience to account for good when recognizing the truth, because conscience is the principle that people desire good and avoid evil.

Ethics, due to its subject matter, is the science of the principles behind choosing actions that protect personal relationships. The principles of choosing to act that protect individuals and their relationships through love, faith, and hope are wisdom, contemplation, and conscience. Wisdom, as merging truth and goodness in us, indicates actions that protect people. Contemplation, which is a testimony to the duration of personal relationships, fosters reflection, needed by the intellect to define in truth and good actions that protect people. Conscience directs us to good, which wisdom must identify and choose as good for us (Gogacz, 1991, p. 6).

The goal and final effect of the ethics of protecting people is the duration of personal relationships. Gogacz reminds us to acquire and fulfill the values that constitute the foundation of such relationships' durability. The point of arrival of ethics, and thus its task or goal, is to protect personal relationships, and thus people. We protect the community of people with the actions and products of the intellect and will. The effect of these protective measures is the duration of personal relationships, i.e. the fulfillment of values. Therefore, the task or goal of ethics becomes to obtain value as a duration of relationships

that bind people (Gogacz, 1991, pp. 178–179). The ethics of protecting people, according to Gogacz, gives meaning to life, to all internal and external changes. It is closely related to the environment of people; it is situated in co-presence with people.

The ethics of protecting personal relationships and people and their dignity places us among people. Through wisdom and contemplation, it shows protective actions as ways of causing relationships of love, faith, and hope—primary personal relationships—to persist. By showing conservative actions and their principles, it causes our conversion and humanism, which we make into a program of creating culture. Oriented toward the end result of personal relationships, it situates us in co-presence with people. This co-presence, fulfilled in love, faith, and hope, becomes an interesting and achievable meaning of life. Humanism preceded by metanoia is where the meaning of life is realized, which makes culture a way of serving people with reverence (Gogacz, 1991, p. 181).

The ethics practiced by Gogacz refers to a human being as a person and, according to his understanding, determines the principles for choosing noble actions. Ethics understood in this way is therefore about determining what can be used to identify the activities that will best protect people and their well-being.

Discussion

In their publications on the future of humankind and the world, Jürgen Habermas (2003) and Francis Fukuyama (2004) pose the question of whether the concept of human nature that we adopt allows humankind to be constructed, i.e. manipulated, within defined boundaries. This question raises others as well: Is it possible to change nature/human beings? What in a human being is open to biotechnological transformation and what is not? Which actions are acceptable and which are not?

Taking into account the concepts of transhumanism and the ethics of protecting people, in regards to the admissibility of the manipulation of human nature, one can notice emerging echoes of two opposing positions based on different anthropological concepts—limited and unlimited anthropology—and two different attitudes toward the world—gardeners and demiurges. Thomas Sowell (2007)

distinguishes between the anthropology according to which humans are limited beings (limited by original sin and having been created by God) and that which finds humans morally and epistemically perfect (pp. 21–22). This results in two approaches to all kinds of human activity, which can be synthetically formulated in a dichotomy: "everything is allowed and can be done" and "not everything is possible and not everything is allowed." Chantal Delsol (2017) speaks in a similar way, distinguishing two types of human attitude toward the world using the figures of a gardener and a demiurge. The gardener loves the world as the heritage entrusted to them. They contribute to the maintenance of a world order which they did not create and which largely surpasses them (Delsol, 2017, p. 6). A demiurge does not love the world; they are disgusted by it and thus often express their anger, indignation, and condemnation. Demiurgy defines itself as overcoming limitations and surpassing all boundaries. Such a position is connected with the assumption of omnipotence, which is being squeezed everywhere, into all kinds of currents of thought (Delsol, 2017, p. 293).

The gardener (understood as a supporter of limited anthropology) and the demiurge (a supporter of unlimited anthropology) are essentially two attitudes, two polar positions concerning reality and references to the past, present, and future of humankind and the world. Between these extreme and opposing positions is the answer to the fundamental question of whether it is possible and right to modify human nature through biological and technological interventions.

In his essay *Regeln für den Menschenpark. Ein Antwortschreiben zu Heideggers Brief über den Humanismus* [Rules for the Human Game: The Response to Heidegger's Letter on Humanism], Peter Sloterdijk (2008, p. 56) examines the tradition of self-taming and human cultivation. He draws attention to the fact that in the perspective of the development of science, the possibility of genetically modelling humans may appear. The author does not formulate a moral evaluation of this practice, but places it on the extension of the processes of shaping and educating oneself. The location of possible genetic interference in the continuum of general anthropotechnical practices may suggest that, in fact, there is no qualitative difference between modelling humans by educating them and instituting rules and transforming them by interfering with the genotype.

Ronald Dworkin analyzes the concept of *playing God* and tries to prove that the moral fear of this game is in fact the fear that humanity experiences when, due to the development of technology and science, what we previously had no influence over becomes available and transformable. For Dworkin, education and the process of transforming nature to our needs throughout human history is nothing more than playing God. He claims that genetic engineering can bring us new, more effective tools to transform ourselves and the world, but there is no qualitative difference here compared to what we have been doing for centuries. The practice poses questions: What is the difference between inventing penicillin and using cloned genes to treat diseases that are more terrifying than those dealt with by penicillin? What is the difference between giving your child strenuous exercise to promote health and changing their genes at the embryonic stage with the same goal in mind? (Dworkin, 2000, p. 443).

Dworkin concludes his argument by saying that the fear of moral responsibility should not prevent us from taking advantage of the opportunities open to us thanks to technological development. The Promethean effort to adapt nature to our needs must continue, while remaining morally vigilant and taking responsibility for the consequences of using these new tools (Dworkin, 2000, p. 446).

Peter Dabrock, an advocate of biotechnological modification, believes that in the ethical debate about synthetic biology, the phrase *playing God* is often used to wrongfully attack a new branch of biotechnology. From the theological point of view, Dabrock (2009, p. 47) contextualizes and criticizes the use of this term, showing the ethical corridor of responsibly coping with the social challenges of synthetic biology.

On the other side of the "barricade" we find the reflection of such thinkers as Vittorio Possenti, Edmund Kowalski, Natasza Szutta, or Adrian Magdici.

Vittorio Possenti (2017, p. 195), reflecting on the contemporary problems of bioethics, warns against converting procreation into production. He claims that Faust and Wagner have gained a clear advantage over Darwin. In the new technological vision, human beings become a product of technologists. Procreation becomes production. A new, technically sophisticated in vitro fertilization industry is emerging and is subject to known economic factors: profit, the

law of supply and demand, advertising, competition, the market, and stimulation of consumption. The production of children and the artificial production of families become a business. All this leads to the transformation of "being someone" into "being something".

For Possenti (a supporter of the concept of the person as a new principle[3]), biotechnologies that modify humans are nothing more than another attempt to take possession of the person, following the totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century. He states that:

> In modern times, two great attempts have been made to take over the person: the bloody despotism of 20th-century totalitarian ideologies and the self-subordination to radical versions of biotechnology (neuroscience, genetic engineering, eugenics, or cloning). The latter continues and it is not known if it will end—although at present there is an attempt to reduce the human being to a transitional moment of cosmic evolution. Just as totalitarianism brought true hatred of humankind, so similar effects can be achieved, albeit in a more veiled way, by the project of reducing humans to physis. If this project continues, the result of the attempt to completely naturalize humankind will be a great humanistic demoralization and a 'despotism of what is organic.' There is a contradiction between science's attempt to enter the human intentional, moral, cognitive, and decision-making sphere and the perspective of better self-control through self-determination. Subordinating self-determination to the organic undermines it, revealing the antinomy between the impulse of freedom and the organic/naturalistic reduction of man. (Possenti, 2017, pp. 64–65)

Edmund Kowalski also notes the danger of biotechnology toward a *human person*. Kowalski believes that biotechnological modifications can destroy the integrity of the human person. He writes that biomedical interventions not only interfere with the body, embryo, or fetus, but always touch the whole person, interfering with their unique, individual, and personal process of birth, development, and maturation. Biotechnology is an interference in being-becoming a human-person (Kowalski, 2004, p. 239).

According to Gogacz (the creator of the ethics of protecting people) or Possenti, ontology is the foundation of the reality of the

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3 "Adopt the 'principle of the person' as a source of reforming the fundamental institutions of concreting life (marriage and family, culture and knowledge, politics and law, and religion) or apply the 'principle of the person' to society, politics, and culture and base your relationships with others on it within the framework of the righteous institutions" (Possenti, 2017, p. 302).

human person. In the case of biotechnological modifications, the ontological entity of the person may be destroyed. A posthuman—or more precisely, a posthuman subject produced in this way—would not be a person. The term *posthuman* is ontologically risky, as it suggests a substantial transformation of human nature that is not possible. The posthuman entity, created with the help of technology that would give it a new form, would show features and abilities that the human entity does not have, rather than an improvement of those features that a human already has (Possenti, 2017, p. 215).

The antihumanistic attitude of the world proposed by the supporters of transhumanism and posthumanism and the elimination of ontology from ethics may paradoxically be the aftermath of Martin Heidegger's thinking (a great thinker, by the way, in whose work one can find many deep reflections on a spiritual person). In his *Brief über den Humanismus* [Letter on Humanism], he in fact proposed, in relation to humankind, rejecting traditional concepts such as "animal rationale," "substance," "person," "subject," "consciousness," or "ego" and replacing them with the term *Dasein*, which can be translated as "essence." It is, in fact, a critique of humanism as a metaphysical philosophy, a critique of the subject, and a critique of the metaphysics of presence.

In Heidegger, *Dasein* cannot base its being on any existing being. As a being which is always open and unfinished, it must constantly design, that is, go beyond the existing being in an unknown direction. The essence of action is performance. To do means to develop something to its full essence, to bring it to it, *producere* (Heidegger, 1995, p. 129). *Dasein*, crossing being toward being, goes into nothingness. It is faced with the fact that it cannot lean on anything, that the being around it is only a fragile, insignificant structure obscuring its being, which unfolds into nothingness, and finally, that death, as the final and impassable possibility of being, will be its irrevocable end. Being *Dasein* thus turns out to going-to-death.

For Possenti (2017), the "principle of the person" means that it is not enough to limit oneself to the terms "consciousness," "subject," or "individual" in the study of humans and their actions, which many philosophical currents of modernity and re-use have referred to; the term "person" is primal and basic and it has a depth and durability that the other categories do not have (p. 17).

Breaking with metaphysics and ontology leads to nihilism. Adrian Magdici (2015) notes that "the less we are interested in the meta-physical aspect of human life, the more fluid becomes the boundary between bioethics and what we may call thanato-ethics" (p. 45).

Natasza Szutta also sees another danger from various projects to improve human nature, namely, the loss of autonomy (which is also a determinant of a human being understood as a human person). However, she writes that:

> it is worth dwelling on a more general problem that affects all such projects of biological refinement. It is about changing the way we define ourselves as people—beings who are able to make free choices and decide for ourselves, regardless of all biological and social determinants, with the opportunity for both self-improvement and self-destruction.

> Why is this questioning the bioconservatives (opponents of the transhumanists)? Because whether such a project has a chance to be implemented (morality is not only a behavioral sphere, but also a motivational one, strongly associated with the very complex realm of values, which cannot be reduced only to biological categories), it is already possible to raise an important moral issue today. Moreover, even if society gains from increasing the sense of security, it will come at the expense of the autonomy of its citizens. And even if they act morally right, it is not because they want it themselves, but because they cannot do otherwise—just like in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. (Szutta, 2016, p. 34)

Conclusions

As Edmund Kowalski (2004, p. 240) claims, bioethics is a very fashionable topic today—philosophical anthropology much less so. Meanwhile, an authentic ethical theory cannot exist without a *proper*—that is, adequate—vision of humankind (*anthropos*). When considering the correlation of trans-/posthumanism and ethics, one should start with human reality. Transhumanism, and even more so posthumanism, offers a concept of humanity that is different from the ethics of protecting people. It breaks the ties that link human reality with metaphysics and ontology. As Possenti (2017, p. 27) claims, the concept (and reality) of a person is not primarily moral, but onto-logical. The value we attach to people derives from their ontic status. The battle for the concept of a person must be won anew at this level.

Transhumanism, and in particular posthumanism (due to ontology) breaks with the classical concept of a human person, at the same time rejecting the ethics of protecting people. Instead of the ethics of protecting people, trans-/posthumanism uses a situational and utilitarian ethics. The decisive factor is often the ideology or the interest of an influential group, not the good of humankind and the common good. The aforementioned Jan Białek (2017, p. 98) even claims that the transition of humanity from the natural environment into the technological environment implies the disappearance of ethics, because in a system dominated by ethics, there is no need to expand the legal and police system; in contrast, ethics is drastically reduced in the fragmented world of the technological environment, leading to an expansion of the law and thereby modifying ethics.

Today, perhaps more than ever in history, it is necessary to reflect on the limits of biotechnological interference with human nature, which is acceptable and appropriate. This does not mean that everything proposed by the proponents of transhumanism should be rejected without reflection. Is it worth considering whether the mere possibility can justify any type of modification? What and whose good does it serve? This is also a task or a challenge for pedagogy and education, as recalled by Gogacz and Possenti. They claim that pedagogy is the definition of specific goals and persuasion to take action toward the goals, which lead to the improvement of the intellect and will in obtaining knowledge and righteous decisions, and in this way to defend existence, life, health, and morality as a truthful fidelity to the good people (Gogacz, 1998, p. 43). Education is first of all educating a person, and only then the civil and political education of a good citizen or preparation to compete with others like in a cockfight (Possenti, 2017, p. 301).

It is worth remembering that upbringing means helping a person to perceive the integral sense of reality, in confrontation with reality and not with dreams. Any genuine education begins with being realistic about things as they are. Real education is an anti-nihilistic process, a rejection of the criteria of unreality and sleep, which seem to be essential aspects of postmodernity. Always, and it seems that especially today, the task of pedagogy is to critically reflect on proposed changes and utopian plans put forward for mankind and implemented by states and corporations in isolation from the natural

rights of human beings (such as the right to self-determination), parents (to raise children in accordance with one's own convictions), or school (to provide ethical education in support of parents).

The production of man 2.0, the posthuman, may be another attempt in history to create an illusion of eternal happiness, an unattainable utopia paid for with harm and suffering. From the point of view of the ethics of protecting people, any qualitative changes (concerning the formal cause of a human person) are unacceptable. Grzegorz Hołub and Piotr Duchliński (2018) put forward a similar opinion in the introduction to the book *Ulepszanie człowieka. Perspektywa filozoficzna* [Human Enhancement: A Philosophical Perspective]:

> Our position is expressed in the conviction that the basis of all attempts to improve *homo sapiens* is its human nature, which has a certain axionormative status. It is nature which determines this scope and the ways to improve it. It fulfils the function of a positive form, regulating the content and scope of the enhancing actions. But it is also a kind of negative norm, which prohibits such activities that would lead to its ontic and moral disintegration. (p. 28)

However, there is a possibility of quantitative changes (concerning the material cause of a human person), if such would lead to the protection of people and their personal relationships.

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