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A Postmodern (Singularity) Future with a Post-Human Godless Algorithm: Trans-Humanism, Artificial Intelligence, and Dataism

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Abstract: The objective of this manuscript is to reveal that the challenge in understanding the ethical consequences of a post-human condition characterizing trans-humanist ontology is linked to postmodern epistemology lacking any metaphysical and theological essence. The introductory section provides an overview of trans-humanist thought and the concerns deliberated against it at the recent conference titled *A.I Ethics: An Abrahamic Commitment to the Rome Call*, charting a path ensuring that technological innovations do not undermine the ethical, spiritual, and moral values animating the *telos* of the human being. The second section traces the philosophical genealogy of trans-humanism from the Age of Reason (i.e., modern epistemology) to our current Age of Feeling (i.e., postmodern epistemology). This section also stresses that the ontology accenting both periods—the *death of God* and the *death of human*—is latent in trans-humanist ideology, which seeks to extinguish the quest of *knowing* God with an *ateleological* state that crucifies the human in pursuit of worshipping technology. The third section scrutinizes the conceptual framework of trans-humanism by deconstructing concepts structuring its worldview such as Singularity, Artificial Super Intelligence, and the pseudo-religion known as *Dataism*. Additionally, this section examines how trans-humanist proponents—while adhering to postmodern philosophy—alter the definitions of sacred concepts that exclusively animate a human state of being, such as consciousness, intelligence, and awareness, by *anthropomorphizing* AI. The final section recalls the wisdom of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Alchemy of Happiness*, composed—respectively—by Aristotle and Al-Ghazali. It highlights the immoral significances of choosing to ignore the implications of Dataism and its techno-scientific objectives, which obscure the use of *techne* in a virtuous manner attaining *eudaimonia* and the essence of humanness seeking a path—using God-given sensoria—knowledge of Divine Beauty.

Keywords: Al-Ghazali; Aristotle; anthropological dualism; artificial intelligence; acedia; computational theory; consciousness; ethics; Islam; nafs; postmodernism; Plato; trans-humanism; sensoria; techne; singularity

You can't tell if a machine has gotten smarter or if you've just lowered your own standards of intelligence to such a degree that the machine seems smart. If you can have a conversation with a simulated person presented by an AI program, can you tell how far you've let your sense of personhood degrade in order to make the illusion work for you? —**Jaron Lanier (2010)**

The major changes in the history of civilizations have occurred when there was a revolution in information technology, and every revolution in information technology has had spiritual consequences —**Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sachs (2017)**

1. Introduction—A Non-Modern ReconnAIssance in the Vatican Pursuing a Spiritual RenAIssance

The challenge of trans-humanism and its post-human condition consists of the fact that our current *zeitgeist* lacks any metaphysical framework for comprehending the dire

consequences of a techno-scientific future reifying postmodern philosophy. Postmodern epistemology—which characterizes a trans-humanist ontology claiming that only what is measurable is *real*—has resulted in the silencing of metaphysical and religious thought that recalls human nature being embedded in a Divine Order (Nasr 1997; Al-Badawi 2022; Al-Attas 1990, 2022; Al-Kassimi 2022a). This objective moral order informed by an ontology balancing between reason and revelation has been replaced by the idolization of a techno-scientific human personality with purely subjective and materialistic impulses. Trans-humanism is a pervasive postmodern phenomenon that seeks to edit and delete our humaneness by merging human beings with technology—not simply at a physical level, but also by "encroach[ing] upon the most intimate dimensions of the soul" (Helminski 2018). In contrast, an epistemology balancing between reason and revelation is aware that we live in two distinctly harmonized realities. The first world is characterized by matter and energy, including an intermix of waves and particles that science explores and measures, and the second description of reality—often overlooked by scientists who reify reason *over* revelation—is the most valuable and meaningful aspect of our subjective experience as human beings, and that aspect is *consciousness*. That is, (sub)consciousness is the crown subject that makes human existence and experience possible by manifesting the realization of the *self* through the nourishing, nurturing, and reviving of one's inborn talents and potentialities extending a profound understanding of the metaphysical realities of the universe. While the modern era ejected religion from the epistemic equation by stressing humanism rather than spiritualism—with the former relying on subjective *truths* to understand reality—today humanism is being replaced with *Dataism* as a pseudo-religion and trans-humanism as its ideology. *Dataism* entails the belief that all entities and processes are "fundamentally algorithms, and everything, from living creatures to political and material processes are forms of data processing which will soon be better understood and known by artificial intelligence" (Helminski 2018).

In the postmodern age of AI, the human being is conceived simply in computational-data-flow terms, thereby eroding our essential humanness, which consists of a spectrum of experience from the deeply personal to the cosmically transcendent. As stated by Helminski, "the concept of human identity put forward by the transhumanist technocrats is that we are merely databanks of memories and abilities, mere information processors" (2018). For example, trans-humanist Daniel Dennett mentions that humans are simply specialized computers that generate the "illusion of being conscious," while Ray Kurzweil believes that it is simply a matter of time before "machines will become intelligent and conscious" (Helminski 2018; Faruque 2022). In other words, a cybernetic trans-humanist ideology seeking a post-human future denies any fundamental *ontological* distinction between *humans* and *computers*. True humanness—in contrast to postmodern philosophy—is understood in the context of a relationship between the individual and the Creator, which all Abrahamic faiths emphasize by proposing that the human is sourced in, and has a relationship with, a greater spiritual reality imbued with awareness, free will, love, and morality—all possible and experienced exclusively through human consciousness. Spirituality, which is understood as the process of developing our inner capacity to experience truth and beauty, is being challenged by a trans-humanist ideology preaching Dataism and directly paralyzing our innate capacity to experience Divine Beauty and Divine Knowledge[1] since it supposes that transcendence is simply a problem of "engineering" and views human beings as mere "biology" and "data storage" banks. Therefore, *Dataism* deletes the path leading to spiritual cognizance and weakens the human *telos*, which seeks soul purification and the accumulation of a qualitative spiritual substance that we can *experience*.

Trans-humanists' suppressing attributes of our humanness by replacing them with a virtual reality undermines our capacity for *knowing*. Dataism stimulates tendencies of the *ego* that overlook human self-awareness and its inner-life dimension, which is animated by aspiration, wisdom, and conscience. These postmodern egocentric tendencies increasingly make possible the disappearance of creativity, moral striving, and selfless sacrifice, thereby blinding humanity to the ontological reality of human existence which consists of human

beings experiencing spirituality[2]. As mentioned, the moral issue with AI can be traced to its (post) modern epistemic underpinnings (more on this in Section 2) that reify a "scientific worldview" adhering to the ontology characterizing the period of Enlightenment, which sought to de-animate and reconstitute the essence of the human being. The authority of scientific empiricism pervades our epistemology to the point that we often overlook the definition of human identity in terms of objective values linked to objective morality and spiritual longing. A non-secular ontology (i.e., pre-modern) describes humanity on many levels from the "molecular to the psychological to the spiritual" since we are subjects, rather than objects of our own experiences, intentions, thought, and judgement (Al-Kassimi 2022a; Faruque 2022; Mahmoud 2022). However, in a (post)modern worldview, people are increasingly identifying themselves by reverting to reductionist and machine-oriented views of consciousness, intelligence, and personhood for the reason that a (post)modern worldview is not interested in objective morality or in epistemes seeking a balance between reason (i.e., science) and revelation (i.e., religion). According to a non-modern epistemology, "human intelligence consists of reason, intuition, wisdom, moral conscience, aesthetic judgement in addition to computation. . .[however] in an AI dominated world, 'intelligence' implies only the analytic function of computation. Hence for proponents of Dataism, there is no fundamental difference between natural intelligence and artificial intelligence—which is to say we are nothing but a computer and its algorithms" (Faruque 2022, emphases added). Proponents of Dataism eliminate any prospect of humanity seeking Divine Love, Truth, and Beauty. By invoking a postmodern subjective worldview, Dataism reduces the human being to simply an emergent aspect of computation that adheres to a scientific worldview claiming that our reality consists of elementary particles whose "behaviour is described by exact mathematico-physical models. . .these particles interact and exchange information, and these processes are computational" (Faruque 2022).

This scientific computational worldview erases any metaphysical and spiritual animation figuring the natural essence of the human being, and—consciously or not—academics and professionals do not hesitate to adopt it, thereby inadvertently degrading and downgrading their intelligence by comparing it to AI. The most important ethical monotheistic critique against a trans-humanist worldview concerns the goal and focus of human life. Trans-humanists do not simply claim that a machine can become conscious and more intelligent than a human being, but also claim that the goal of life is to eliminate death, aging, and suffering. Abrahamic religions disagree by emphasizing that consciousness—and therefore intelligence—is exclusively a human attribute and stress that the focus of life should be the afterlife, since overcoming sin and death is God's gift of grace that allows us to develop the virtues of faith, compassion, hope, and love through joy and suffering. The great physicist Erwin Schrödinger highlights the lack of philosophical reflection in trans-humanism, which preaches the dogma of Dataism, by stating:

> "It is certainly not in general the case that by acquiring a good all-round scientific education you so completely satisfy the innate longing for a religious or philosophical stabilization, in face of the vicissitudes of everyday life, as to feel quite happy without anything more. What does happen often is that science suffices to jeopardize popular religious convictions, but not to replace them by anything else. This produces the grotesque phenomenon of scientifically trained, highly competent minds with an unbelievably childlike—undeveloped or atrophied philosophical outlook". (Schrödinger 2014, p. 12)

Trans-humanists seek to put an end to Abrahamic monotheistic beliefs by pursuing a post-human condition that compels humanity to accept the possibility of "editing" themselves, assuming that we extend our genetic foundation to machines—that we are increasingly capable of the mastery over God-given legislation. To what extent are we morally entitled or even obliged to assume that it is wrong to grow old, to stay young, to die, or to be sad or happy, and to edit those fundamental aspects of our humanness, which sustains the human being as the most precious creation created in the image of God? On 10 January 2023, the Vatican Apostolic Palace received in audience participants in a

meeting entitled *A.I Ethics: An Abrahamic Commitment to the Rome Call*, which was promoted by the Vatican's RenAIssance Foundation, the United Arab Emirates' Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace, and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel's Commission for Interfaith Relations. The participants included—amongst others—Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome and head of the Catholic Church; Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life; Chief Rabbi Eliezer Simcha Weiss, Member of the Chief Rabbinate Council of Israel; Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah, Head of the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace and Chairman of the UAE Fatwa Council; Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President of Microsoft; and finally, Dario Gil, Global Vice President of IBM. Most speakers emphasized that while the computational power of AI has been around for decades and has several benefits, this technology has advanced exponentially in the past decade, forcing many philosophers, theologians, academics, industry experts, and government officials to chart a path ensuring that techno-scientific innovations do not undermine and replace the essence of humanity, which is leading a meaningful, virtuous, and/or spiritual life. Pope Francis opened the meeting by reminding the audience that "promoting a culture that places this technology at the service of the *common good* of all and the care of the *common home* is exemplary for many others...we are all aware of how much artificial intelligence is increasingly present in every aspect of daily life, both personal and social. It affects the way we understand the *world* and *ourselves*" (Francis 2023, emphases added).

Rabbi Weiss stressed that "*intelligence* doesn't make the human being," and that rather, the source of "*human dignity* is the *divine spark* within and being made in the *image of God*" (Glatz 2023, emphases added). Rabbi Weiss continued by accentuating the moral issue with AI altering the human *telos* by cautioning trans-humanists against extending human qualities such as consciousness, intelligence, and reason to machines. He said, "*Being human* will *always* be far greater than anything that is *artificially created*...Every invention has its potential dangers...but these risks are accepted if appropriate safeguards exist to prevent consequential harm" (Glatz 2023, emphases added). Similarly, Sheikh Abdallah bin Bayyah mentioned, "humanity in one way or another finds itself held hostage to dangerous scientific developments...religions at their core seek to secure humanity's quest for *happiness* in both this world and the next, therefore, all of our religious traditions urge us to seek out its means of felicitous well-being" (2023)[3]. According to Dario Gil, there exists no "grand solution...[but rather]...a cocktail of answers to what is the right thing to do...we need all the help we can get to make sure AI is aligned with fundamental human values without leaving anyone behind," and similarly, Brad Smith claimed, "this technology is too important to be left to the technologists alone...I think it would naïve to expect everyone in the world that has access to AI will use it only for good...that's not human nature. It's not what history tells us is the path for any technology" (Bishop 2023; Glatz 2023).

Another prominent scholar attending the Vatican meeting was Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, who reminded the audience of AI exacerbating one of the seven deadly sins in the Catholic tradition known as *acedia*—a spiritual laziness or distractibility that castrates human consciousness from seeking purposeful metaphysical and philosophical knowledge that brings them closer to Divine Knowledge. Yusuf remarked, "acedia—this idea of constantly being distracted—is what a lot of people are suffering from now...we have a massive mental illness crisis...I think one of the real factors is the types of technology [we are] being exposed to...where we are going? I don't know, but I think we must think seriously about the dangers of AI...who benefits from artificial intelligence? what is the purpose of life? and what type of meaning in life?" (Yusuf 2023). Sheikh Yusuf also reminded the audience of Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus* and pleaded with the audience at the Vatican to consider the wisdom imparted by the dialogue between Theuth—the inventor of the pen—and the king of Egypt known as Thamus. In this dialogue, Theuth says to Thamus that the pen "will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memories; for it is an elixir of memory and wisdom that I have discovered." But Thamus replies:

"Most ingenious Theuth, one man has the ability to beget arts, but the ability to judge of their usefulness or harmfulness belongs to the user not the inventor...you have been led by your affection to ascribe to them a power the opposite of that which they really possess...for this invention will produce forgetfulness in the minds of those who learn to use it, because they will not practice their memory...you offer your pupils the appearance of wisdom, not true wisdom, for they will read many things without instruction and will therefore seem to know many things, when they are for the most part ignorant and hard to get along with, since they are not wise, but only appear wise." (Plato 2003, pp. 274c–275b)

The wisdom of the dialogue is applicable to proponents of trans-humanism who insist that their technological innovation known as AI will benefit humanity, while opponents of Dataism emphasize that AI risks undermining humanity's highest innate faculties, which permit human beings to explore the wider metaphysical fields of reality. Postmodern epistemology—the philosophy of trans-humanist proponents—limits our consciousness to thoughts that are simply quantifiable, thereby preoccupying humans with outward things rather than with matters of the heart[4]. This means that Dataism seeks to normalize filling our minds with *information* rather than *meaning*, thereby reducing *living* to simply a superficial level of existence and downgrading existence to a condition of reduced humanity—a humanity that has lost consciousness of the full range of reality. Instead of *seeking to* connect human minds and bodies to a supposedly all-knowing machine produced by AI, the essential ontological reality of human beings is tasked to awaken its God-given human faculties. Instead of AI proponents assuming that humanity is better off attaining "transcendence" by uploading the data of its memory into a supercomputer known as "cyborg flesh" or merging its sacred brain into a simulated reality that awaits an eschatological moment of "Singularity," mortal beings would be better off developing their humanness within this finite earthly dimension by seeking Divine Knowledge and Beauty, thus uploading their souls into *al-ākhirah* (Eng. hereafter).

2. Modernity and Postmodernity—The Philosophy Informing the Post-Human Condition of Trans-Humanism and Techno-Science

The Enlightenment period—also known as the Age of Reason—generated a cataclysmic shift in the ontology of what it means to be a human being that modernity, and then later postmodernity, inherited. Valorizing reason (i.e., science) over revelation (i.e., religion) or naturalizing a detachment of the most intimate traditional elements animating the human being—body (i.e., physical stature), mind (i.e., intelligence), and spirit (i.e., soul)—generated vital alterations in the reigning objective conception of humanness. Modern philosophy focusing on the "thinking I," and claiming that the "criterion of truth must be sought not in the reality to be apprehended or in the thinking person himself, but rather only in the act of reason that apprehends," meant that only "affirmations that participate in the primary and grounding evidence of the 'I think' are true" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 337; Yusuf and George 2016). Put differently, prior to the Age of Reason (i.e., modernity), there was the Age of Faith (i.e., pre-modernity), where conformity to revealed law in tandem with reason was the criterion of truth, goodness, and virtue. However, the modern onto-epistemological reformulation of humanity, known as "anthropological dualism," directly reformulated how a human being related to himself (Nasr 1997; Yusuf and George 2016; Al-Kassimi 2022a). Anthropological dualism, separating body and mind, did not deny that the body exists, but claimed that the body "ends up belonging to the world and, in consequence, is something that the human being possesses and not something that he is" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 337). In other words, if the body belongs to some nonmaterial world, then it is something different from me, and is only real if it is thought by the "I"—or, put differently, the activity of thinking is displaced to the psychological terrain of the mental alone (i.e., mind) with no natural attachment to a Divine Order (Nasr 1997; Abou El Fadl 2014). In addition, the naturalized detachment makes it that objective

morality becomes unlinked from the sensible realm, with the corporeal (i.e., physical body) only having a *presentist* character with no spiritual value in relation to the metaphysical and—therefore—being devoid of any *teleological* character (Nasr 1997; Abou El Fadl 2014; Al-Badawi 2022)[5].

The modern idea of the human being assuming that the human is *of* the world and not *in* the world means that knowledge can exclusively be obtained using an empiricist scientific method that, paradoxically, amputates the importance of rationality (i.e., reason) by making the human being mistrust his capacity to reason and access certain (spiritual) dimensions of reality since anthropological-dualism has already discarded as irrational the possibility of such transcendent access (Nasr 1997; Al-Attas 1990, 2022; Abou El Fadl 2014). The influence of the scientific method produces a mode of thinking claiming that "it is no longer a question of knowing good or evil; instead we need to merely know the correctness of our actions. . .In this ethical model there are no human actions that are always to be rejected, since the end can justify any choice" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 338). Furthermore, prior to modern philosophy, nature was linked to the sacred; however, with the scientific method emphasizing that nature can be altered depending on the "I," nature was disconnected from reality through a mechanistic approach by being reduced to merely physical and biological dimensions, all in the name of not limiting *freedom*. As poignantly claimed by Pastor and Cuadrado, "there arises a dialectic between the natural as irrational, in contrast with the human as rational and free. . .a consequence of this split, ethical goods become unlinked from the physical and biological, and any reliance on those realities is labelled as being 'physicism' or 'biologicism'" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 339).

It should be evident that from the beginning, modern epistemology had difficulty in maintaining its ontological unity with the separation of the corporeal, spirit, and mind since an element of voluntarism existed in Cartesian *Cogito*, thereby revealing an internal contradiction. This contradiction was that choosing to discard evidence that is not quantitative is not caused by any desire to discard a method, but rather, a voluntary negation based on an epistemological commitment choosing to reject revelation at the expense of reason, with the former providing absolute (objective) knowledge and the latter speculative (subjective) knowledge. However, within dualism and empiricism, the person, rather than identifying himself with consciousness, self-identifies with *human-will* and its longing for freedom and with freedom, understood in Baconian terms as allowing man to conquer (and subjectify) nature; therefore, freedom enthroned by reason is now simply—from a modern perspective—a *will for power* that is capable of determining truth subjectively (Nasr 1997; Pastor and Cuadrado 2014; Abou El Fadl 2014; Al-Kassimi 2022a). In addition, the voluntarist stance of the Enlightenment project reveals that while the project exoterically began as a search for certainty through suspicion, it inevitably resulted in the weakening of reason since it produced a "materialist soul" and a "pseudo-spiritual soul" that rejected objective morality and left the mind free to decide what is Good or Evil (Nasr 1997; Al-Badawi 2022; Al-Attas 2022). Both reason-based souls are founded on a dualistic ontology that alters human self-understanding. The materialist soul enamored with empirical science is characterized by (a) an unending human evolution liberated from beliefs and traditions, (b) developing a new human being through the transforming force of the will, which decides its own subjective truths, and finally, (c) the identification of the human being with his freedom rather than with his soul grounded consciousness. The pseudo-spiritual soul recognizes the cognitive limits of reason, but since it adores reason over revelation, then it becomes simply a tool at the disposal of desire and will that animates the human being. It also seeks a "new" human being based on the secularization of tradition—through reason-based purification—thereby assuming the independence of the human being on the self-sufficiency of his all-knowing reason. While both souls appear different, they simply end up solidifying a neo-human reality that reveals the unequivocal consequence of modern (Cartesian) philosophy seeking a path that leads to exaggeratedly trusting rationality (i.e., ratiocination) (Nasr 1997; Al-Attas 1990, 2022; Al-Kassimi 2022a). This desire for "undoubtable [quantitative] verifiability has not resulted in a trapping of philosophical

discourse within the moulds of modern instrumental and scientific reason, but also in an atrophy of reason itself, as *postmodernity* revealed clearly" (as cited in Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 340, emphases added).

Recently, practitioners and professionals—whether in academic institutions or in the entrepreneurial world—have been increasingly advancing the technocracy of a bioethical value system that seeks the development of an enhanced human model, thereby accelerating—whether consciously or not—the transition of humanity (i.e., trans-humanism) into a post-human world (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014; Smith 2018; Helminski 2018; Faruque 2022). While the philosophical roots of these value systems are linked to the epistemology of the Enlightenment project identified as modernity, it is more specifically the philosophical proposals appearing in the first few decades of the 20th century, known as postmodernity, that exemplify their epistemic worldview (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014; Yusuf and George 2016; Smith 2018). Prior to the epistemic shift that occurred following the Enlightenment period, the human was historically situated at the highest level of the hierarchical scale and thus informing the non-human realm. These traditions stressed revealed law by locating human exceptionalism in the Great Chain of Being[6]. As mentioned earlier, modern philosophy initiated an epistemic shift from the Revealed certainties of the past by reifying a world exclusively governed by Reason (i.e., earth detached from heaven). For instance, in the realm of philosophy there was a shift away from Divine Truth towards truths of pure reason. In the realm of culture, there was a shift away from a reliance on sacred institutions and the meaningful relationships established by traditional relationships of family to the more rationalized and bureaucratic structures of the secular modern nation-state system (Nasr 1997; Mahmoud 2022; Al-Attas 2022; Al-Kassimi 2022a). Modernism, therefore, initiated a radical divorce with the past by stressing a material sense of meaning, purpose, and morality founded on an ontology that valorized a detachment from tradition and its objective moral certainties.

During the inter-war years, a moment of self-doubt ushered in a period questioning the certainties of the "modern project" since it was assumed that the West could not possibly be rational, or assumed to have attained the *telos* informing modernity and civilization, considering the catastrophic horrors and calamities accenting the world order. It was in this period of resistance, of epistemic self-doubt in certain aspects of rationality, that postmodernism as a philosophy was born. The ontology of the postmodern era was the result of the radicalization of ideas that had already been latent in modernity. A postmodern worldview should be understood not as *sui generis*, or an opposite reaction to modern epistemology, but rather as its natural evolution (Al-Attas 1990; Nasr 1997; Yusuf and George 2016; Al-Badawi 2022). Postmodernity highlights the triumph of the existentialist/materialist soul of the modern era, which presents itself as antirationalist and therefore disillusioned with the scientific projects it sought to achieve. By choosing one soul over the over, postmodernity further reveals the contradiction of modernity, but now, stresses its unequivocal rejection of metaphysical thought. This rejection claims the necessity of abandoning rational systems with a more subjective way of thinking that is essentially hyper-skeptical, relativist, and anti-theist. Brent Waters poignantly asserts that a "*trans-humanist* echoes a *Manichean* disdain of a corrupt, if not *evil material body* from which the soul must be rescued...Trans-humanism ignores or denies the *good* of embodiment" (Hubbard 2012, emphases added).

Therefore, according to postmodern epistemology, human life is "more what one *chooses* than what one *thinks*. If every choice has an equal value, then any system of thought on which that choice is based is—of necessity—indifferent" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 341). Postmodernity considers science and rationality as important, but only to further liberate and free the human being from the modern past. While modernity still emphasized the traits of humanness in its dualist framing, postmodernity is interested in using rationality to legitimize a (techno-scientific) post-human condition that no longer charts any ethical normative base on the plane of human action. As a consequence, "history doesn't aspire to anything, and we need only to worry about the 'here-and-now'...human

behaviour is closed off to a future that is either awaited or sought. Facts are therefore trivial, since they do not obey a project to be realized in life or in history; instead, one can only attend to what is immediate" ([Pastor and Cuadrado 2014](#), p. 342). Therefore, pre-modern and—to an extent—modern questions concerned with the transcendent or the immanent human being, the existence of God, or of reality itself are now provided—from a postmodern lens—aesthetic answers reifying quantifiable experiences where everything has a place but in a space that is ambiguous and relativistic.

Postmodern philosophy erases confidence in the human subject and the possibility of *knowing* what a human being consists of and what their natural capabilities are. Anthropology becomes simply anti-human because all kinds of choices concerned with configurations of the human are extended an equal plane by emphasizing *eros* at the expense of *logos* ([Al-Kassimi 2022b](#)). Postmodernity, therefore, demands the abandonment of objective morality and religion as the criterion of truth and seeks to substitute it for a plurality of lifestyles and *truths* based on *feelings* ([Al-Kassimi 2022a](#), [2022b](#)). While skepticism is one of the many traits latent in the ethical plane of the modern project, postmodernity identifies skepticism as *the* trait, thereby making it a "decadent modernity." While the modern critique about human nature allowed some possibility for acquiring knowledge about the essence of the human being, postmodernity accentuates not only that nothing is true in the real world, but also privileges the belief "that there is no good that is really worthy of being chosen in personal life" ([Pastor and Cuadrado 2014](#), p. 342). With every opinion assumed appropriate since any decision is "good"—simply because the self/I desire(s) it—then reason is no longer a faculty that seeks to inform the human being of his value in the world. If the pre-modern world had a divine stamp and the modern world a rational stamp, then the postmodern world has an irrational stamp with a *thelemite ethos* of "do what thou wilt" since seeking to increase the autonomy of the subject in a postmodern world—by reifying skepticism—invariably results in the *self* not obeying any rational purpose[7]. With modernity claiming that the subject is the center of the universe, and that reality depends on it, postmodernity naturally resulted in the dissolution of the human, with the subject no longer possessing any value. Modernity has moved from "everything goes" in relation to what the subject *thinks* the human is, to "everything goes" to what the post-human being *chooses* to be. This is tantamount to claiming that the human is *nothing*, for the reason that postmodernity is exclusively materialist, and therefore, able to admit any form of *humanness*. While it is obvious that postmodern philosophy is unable to provide a *mindful*—let alone *heartful*—response to justify a techno-scientific future, not only does it no longer seek to do so, but it *a priori* is not required to do so because the human being is *dead*. If modernity—the Age of Reason—championed the *death of God* by advancing a false humanism reifying reason over revelation, then postmodernity—the Age of Feeling—affirms that the death of God naturally results in the *death of the human*. With postmodernity eliminating any possible reasonable and faith-filled answer seeking human essence, the question of "what is a human being" ceases to have any *teleological* ethical value and amputates any pursuit seeking to know who the human *was*, *is*, or will *be*. Postmodernity, pursuing a techno-scientific *telos*, is merely the acceptance that science and engineering are "generators of diverse possible options [of the human], real, virtual...with greater or lesser possibility to be realized. Technoscience need not carry any ethical meaning, since there is no human condition that must be respected...the exercise of the many scientific-technical options offers a diversity of possibilities for the human being...since all are valid. Only the results determine the selection of the various alternatives" ([Pastor and Cuadrado 2014](#), p. 344). Therefore, with the death of the human, the ethical question in a postmodern trans-humanist world seeking a post-human condition is transfigured and summarized with the adage "everything that we can do, we should do."

Postmodernism's rejection of reason and revelation led to a philosophy rejecting moral certainty and objective standards for what is right and wrong in favor of moral relativism, which is the utter and complete rejection of objective standards of beauty with the acceptance of individualistic sentiments of superficial beauty. This created an

ontology, based on subjective morality, that decided that the true essence of human nature was different for each human being. Postmodernism, therefore, allows humans to define themselves on their own terms, independent of any external authority, thereby putting greater emphasis on the capacity of the individual to self-define themselves. Modernity and postmodernity placing the responsibility of the discovery of human essence on the *self*—without providing resources connecting it with the wisdom of religious tradition— makes it so that individuals assume that they have the capacity to author the criteria for the nature of truth and beauty. The moral challenge of such responsibility is manifest in that it should be reason and revelation—symbiotically—that work out the entailments that seek to define the nature of humanity, since it is beyond human *intellectus* to ascertain such teleology without transcendental moral intimation. Postmodernity, with its individualistic *ethos* rejecting revelation, forces the human being to look inwards to search for meaning even though the Age of Feeling can hardly provide any objective criterion that can aid in deciding whether an action or decision is virtuous, good or bad, worthy or unworthy, or finally, desirable or undesirable since the ontology of postmodernity is based on subjective truths (i.e., individualism) and—therefore—essentially existentialist.

Postmodernity is, therefore, based on a kind of fundamentalism. If we take fundamentalism to denote the desire to detach the present from its spiritual essential past by negating an era of tradition, metaphysics, and philosophy, then we can say with confidence that a postmodern ontology denoting the human as espoused by the likes of social-Darwinist Richard Dawkins and trans-humanist Nick Bostrom is a fundamentalist worldview. The reason is apparent with their deliberations *a priori* stipulating that an intervening human made in the image of God is categorically backward or unintelligent. Since a trans-humanist agenda is a natural consequence of a postmodern idea of being, then how can one have an ethics-based society? It is far from clear how one can on the one hand assert that an absolute blind robotic "selfish gene" dictates everything that human beings can be and become, and on the other hand, claim that we need a society in which laws, ethics, and relationships based on principles of mutuality and sharing can exist (Nasr 1997; Yusuf and George 2016; Murad 2012, 2013, 2020). If we mean by *humanism* a valorizing of the higher ethical possibilities of the human condition, a true regard for our humanity in its spiritual pre-modern conceptualization, then clearly Abrahamic religions are a better basis for an authentic *humanism* than the unpleasant irresolute image of an essentialist trans-humanist deliberation on human nature. Put differently, postmodern humanism is not *humanism*, but rather a false humanism characterized by secularity, with its most extreme hypotheses assuming that man evolving from Simians is *possibly* valid (Murad 2012, 2013). This postmodern (new-atheistic) possibility has not only accelerated the death of the human, but also, and most importantly, paved the way for another *possible* idea maintaining that human beings *could* also evolve into something totally different in the future. Therefore, trans-humanist philosophy is the most logical and coherent consequence of (post)modern philosophy since it is an anti-theist and anti-human movement which seeks a post-human future and accepts as valid different experiments longing for the biological and technological engineering and enhancement of humans.

Postmodernity: Trans-Humanism and Its Post-Human Condition

In contemporary academic debate, the post-human(ism) signifier arouses moral and ethical urgency since it seeks to transform the essence of human nature by basing its motives on the epistemological shifts—including scientific and biotechnological developments—of the 20th century. While there are some theoretical differences between post-humanism and trans-humanism (Ferrando 2013), the sections accenting this essay focus on how the later signifier naturally leads to a "post-humanist" condition since the ideas constellating a "post" human have roots in the ontology that characterizes modern philosophy generally, and later, postmodern philosophy specifically[8]. Therefore, trans-humanist ideology shares a common ontological—and therefore epistemological—perception of the human as a non-fixed and mutable *be-coming*. Moreover, within the debate critiquing trans-humanist

ideology, the concept of the post-human itself is interpreted in a specific trans-humanist way: that is, one in which human beings eventually transition to a "new" pseudo-human form, characterized by *Singularity*, thereby evolving into a new human (Ferrando 2013)[9].

Trans-humanism is identified as a cultural, scientific, and intellectual movement that claims the necessity of enhancing the capacities of human nature through biological, psychological, and subjective moral adjustments. With modernity characterized by an *ethos* of "the ends justify any choice," trans-humanism seeks to improve the human being by seeking the "elimination of pain and suffering associated with illness. . .aging, [and] the improvement of our societies, eliminating harmful behaviours and fostering the possibility of immortality" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 344). While the relativistic and deterministic consequences of such enhancement will be elaborated in further sections below, one can readily notice the ethical problems of such a project—as highlighted in the Vatican meeting—since the line between where therapeutic action ends and where modification begins, in relation to what is essential to our humanity, is completely blurred (Hoffman 2011; Chamsi-Pasha and Albar 2013). The measures proposed by proponents of a trans-humanist project seeking a post-human condition constitute eugenics *par excellence*, with the use of nanotechnology and the implanting of microchips, drug consumption fortifying different capacities and regulating affect (i.e., hormone therapy)[10], eliminating negative aspects of human personality, and finally, including the use of genetic therapy to make certain changes in the genealogy of descendants, and thereby genetically realizing new characteristics, each held as an "improvement" of humanity (Hoffman 2011; Yusuf and George 2016; Faruque 2022; Miller 2022)[11]. Also, and more crucially, trans-humanism's post-human condition is open to possibilities that seek to transcend the familiar human limits of temporality, which are identified as a post-biological existence through the "dumping of contents of a human brain into a computer, or the development of a hybrid reality, part organic and part cybernetic" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 345). Trans-humanist culture assumes that human nature is constituted by physical determinism and mechanistic reductionism, thus adhering to the anthropological dualism that characterizes (post)modernity, which anthropomorphizes AI by speaking of "human-machines," "human-animals," "machine-intelligence," or "machine-learning" since machines are identified subjectively as performing "conscious," "rational," and "calculable" tasks[12]. Therefore, the postmodern philosophy accenting trans-humanist culture is manifest in that it "reduces human *essence* upon grasping that the *corporeal* does not enter into its definition, and on seeing that respect for *human dignity* is a property strictly linked to the exercise of *rationality*. . .trans-humanism-post-humanism presents itself as a typical product of *modernity* that seeks the *liberation* of mankind from its own limits and conditioning factors" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 346, emphases added).

With postmodernity emphasizing human will with no objective moral limitation, this permits trans-humanists the *freedom* to propose the modification of biological structures and redefine corporeality (i.e., physical stature) according to subjective values. That is, with the postmodern adage stating, 'what we can do, we should do', then why not "direct human evolution by means of bioengineering, why should we allow it to follow its course? If we can attain more health, a better human being, by means of technology, or through the genetics of germ cells, isn't this a *responsibility* that man has towards himself?" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 346. Emphases added). Trans-humanism, in assuming that the responsibility for "freeing the body" naturally improves the condition of humanity by modifying corporeality, reveals its Godless reasoning, since the essence of being human—according to postmodernism—is not simply reduced, but rather, abolished. Such subjective thinking based on "choice" rather than "thought" makes it such that a techno-scientific future does not need to be given *meaning* since its subjective view of the future is presented as simply one more *possible* option among many others. As discussed earlier, postmodernity claiming that every choice has an equal value—and thus being indifferent to the essence of humanness—results in the trans-humanist project achieving complete autonomy from ethics. According to trans-humanists, the human is simply a material "launch-pad" for something not "better," but rather "distinct," with (postmodern) radicalized "scientific"

culture no longer aiming at rejuvenating humanity, but rather aiming at a "diversity of the human or pseudohuman forms...distinct from the human being as we know him today" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 348). Accordingly, trans-humanists' depending on postmodern philosophy makes it that their culture is not interested in a human project; nor "does there exist a way to perfect the human. Everything fits in the essence of the human being because it is emptied of any property that would be characteristic of the human...the diversity and fragmentariness of the human is what matters. There is no answer, nor is there any intent to respond to the question 'what is the human being', because the question is open to infinite possibilities of human forms, and since human identity, what is proper to it, does not exist" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 348). In other words, postmodern philosophy seeks to rebuild the human as an *ateleological* reality wherein the outline of the human is negated, but more crucially, it proposes that at the beginning of the process there is a "non-acceptance of human identity itself, with its limits and conditioning factors" (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014, p. 349). This is evident with postmodern philosophy claiming that the human being is amorphous and that his reality is plural and everchanging, thus justifying a post-human condition and deciding on multiple hybrid pseudo-human categories such as "human-machines" and "animal-human".

Therefore, with trans-humanism advocating the use of technology to enhance the human condition physically and cognitively, transcending human limitations concerning bodies and minds is the primary goal of trans-humanism (Vita-More 2011, 2019, 2023; Faruque 2022). Human limitations such as death and aging are seen as an obstacle to be overcome by the use of technology since trans-humanists seek to control and design "a new human evolution" by using "every possible means of technology like genetic engineering, information technology, neuroscience, molecular nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and other future technologies" (Young 2005; Lee 2019; Vita-More 2023; Yusuf and George 2016; Cavus 2021). According to Vita-More—the author of the *Transhumanist Manifesto* (2019)—trans-humanism is interested in a post-Darwinian evolution where "the biological human" is not considered "the final stage of evolution for the human" (Vita-More 2011, 2023). That is, the next step in human evolution for trans-humanists is "the post-human...a term widely used by transhumanists to indicate the stage after transcending the current human condition" (Cavus 2021, p. 178). The evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley—one of the main founders of trans-humanist thought in the first half of the 20th century—recommended that society "utilize[s] all available knowledge in giving guidance and encouragement to the continuing adventure of human development;" this has been a core belief within the trans-humanist program of human evolution (Huxley 1992, p. 287; Tirosh-Samuelson 2011). More recently, Max More—a leading trans-humanist scholar—has indicated that "transhumanists take Humanism further by challenging human limits by means of science and technology combined with critical and creative thinking" (More 2003; Tirosh-Samuelson 2011; Vita-More 2019; Cavus 2021). Similarly, the famous trans-humanist Nick Bostrom—the Founding Director of the Future of Humanity Institute and the World Transhumanist Association (WTA)—has indicated the heritage trans-humanist philosophy had in the modern and postmodern project by stressing that "empirical science and critical reason—rather than revelation and religious authority—[are] ways of learning about the natural world and our place within it, and of providing grounding for morality" (Bostrom 2005, p. 2). James Hughes—founder of WTA with Bostrom—supports equal access to human enhancement technologies to prevent widening the gap between the rich and the poor and to promote social equality (Tirosh-Samuelson 2011; Vita-More 2019; Cavus 2021). Hughes not only supports citizenship for non-humans by saying "democracy for persons, not humans," but also regards cyborgs as persons and argues that some cybernetic organisms in the future should have citizenship rights (Hughes 2004, p. 79). Furthermore, Newton Lee—the chair of the California Trans-humanist Party—regards the movement as the "next logical step in the evolution of humankind, and as the existential solution to the long-term survival of the human race" (Lee 2019, p. 38). Vita-More argues that "nanotechnology will resolve environmental hazards, molecular manufacturing will stop

poverty, and genetic engineering will mitigate diseases" (as cited in Cavus 2021), and Hughes claims that "the *technologies* won't make society more equal or tolerant, but we could use *technologies* to become more equal and tolerant" (Hughes 2009), thus extending techno-science a rational capacity that has historically been exclusively assigned to the human being.

It should be clear that while trans-humanists vary in terms of their projections about humanity's future, all emphasize reason and empirical science, technology, and a subjective worldview, thereby making their variations simply semantic rather than substantial (Tirosh-Samuelson 2011; Pastor and Cuadrado 2014; Cavus 2021). Therefore, regardless of differences in the futures projected, all aforementioned trans-humanists have declared that their worldview is a continuation of Enlightenment philosophy seeking a "post-human" condition, thereby rejecting objective morality, the philosophical notion of the Good elaborated by the Ancients, and, finally, objective moral teachings revealed in sacred scriptures. The trans-humanist perseverance in recognizing science and technology as the main assets of "human evolution" runs the risk of techno-reductionism whereby technology "becomes a hierarchical project, based on rational thought, driven towards progression" (Ferrando 2013). With most countries during the 20th century having been granted independence by the same sovereign powers that advanced a "civilizing" and "modernizing" mission promising socioeconomic "development" and "progress," it would be apt for trans-humanists to recall that a large number of the "world's population is still occupied with mere survival, if the reflection on desirable futures was reduced to an overestimation of the technological kinship of the human revisited in its specific technical outcomes" (Ferrando 2013; Al-Kassimi 2022a). The question of how technological mitigation will be maintained remains unclear since measures preventing the "technologically advanced" from benefiting from all technological means to "update" themselves, and from exploiting others, has yet to be "morally" addressed and, with regards to this exploitation, "how it can be moderated in the age of global elites becomes an important research question" (Allenby 2011, p. 451; Stolyarov 2019; Cavus 2021).

One of the foremost opponents of trans-humanist philosophy, Francis Fukuyama, in an article titled *Transhumanism—The World's Most Dangerous Idea*, wonders, if "we start transforming ourselves into something superior, what rights will these enhanced creatures claim, and what rights will they possess when compared to those left behind? If some move ahead, can anyone afford not to follow?" (2004). These concerns are significant in terms of politics and law since the *Trans-Humanist Bill of Rights* declares opposition to discrimination of any kind; however, this cannot be guaranteed in a trans-humanist future because of its postmodern philosophical underpinnings and post-human condition. The philosophical movement of trans-humanism problematizes the traditional objective understanding of human nature through the possibilities "inscribed within its possible biological and technological evolutions. Human enhancement is a crucial notion to the trans-humanist reflection; the main keys to access such a goal are identified in science and technology, in all of their variables, as existing, emerging, and speculative frames— from regenerative medicine to nanotechnology, radical life extension, mind uploading and cryonics, among other fields" (Ferrando 2013, p. 27)[13]. While there are distinctive trends in trans-humanist thought—as mentioned previously—science and technology are essential to all trends, with Max More summarizing their main principles by stating that they include "perpetual progress, self-transformation, practical optimism, intelligent technology, open society, self-direction, and rational thinking...Like humanists, transhumanists favor reason, progress, and values centered on our wellbeing rather than on an external religious authority. Transhumanists take humanism further by challenging human limits by means of science and technology combined with critical and creative thinking" (Ferrando 2013, p. 28). Trans-humanists' adherence to a postmodern philosophy that rejects any normative definition of the human being by extending mechanistic pseudo-human categories human qualities such as "intelligence," "consciousness," and "rationality" normalizes the *death of human* accenting the post-human condition. This normalization is epistemically linked to

the *death of God* that accented the modern project of Enlightenment, but more specifically to the postmodern ideology of the 20th century, which established, in the past decade, *Dataism* as a new religion that promised an earthly neo-salvific event aspiring to achieve a techno-scientific moment known as Singularity.

3. The Foreshadowed Post-Human Death of the Human Being—Dataism as Religion, Singularity as Eschaton, and Consciousness as Computational

The trans-humanists' adherence to a postmodern philosophy has birthed a new religion that seeks to replace a personal relationship with a transcendent God by recreating a radically individualistic, materialistic, and subjective view of humanity. According to Kyle Hubbard, trans-humanism is a scientific-philosophical movement tracing its heritage to Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin seeking to establish a post-human condition that makes "humanity's dreams come true in this world by relying not on supernatural powers or divine intervention but on rational thinking and empiricism, through continued scientific, technological, economic, and human development" (Hubbard 2012). While monotheistic religions emphasize that humans are animated by an unseparated physical body and immaterial soul, postmodernism, sourcing some of its ontological commitments to the Enlightenment period, claims that what really counts is simply the corporeal form and its associated *mind*, which are reducible to mere chemicals, biological matter, and computational-electrical exchanges (Burdett 2015; Faruque 2022; Smith 2018, 2023). In addition, while revealed law promises eternal salvation in the afterlife, transhumanism offers the prospect of salvation via radical life extension that can be attained in the material word via technological applications in what, according to Wesley J. Smith, is "a postmodern twist. . .on faith's promise of eternal life. This new religion is known as *transhumanism*, and it is all the rage among the Silicon Valley *nouveau riche*, university philosophers, and among bioethicists and futurists seeking the comforts and benefits of faith without the concomitant responsibilities of following dogma, asking for forgiveness, or atoning for sin—a foreign concept to transhumanists. Truly, transhumanism is a religion for our *postmodern time*" (2018). The trans-humanists' techno-scientific ambitions claim two core promises alluded to earlier including the acquisition by humans of heightened capacities, not through deep prayer, meditation, or personal discipline, but merely by harnessing medical science and technology to transcend normative human physical limitations. Also, trans-humanists seek to experience eternal life or indefinite existence—in the material world—through the wonders of applied science. Here, the objective of trans-humanism clearly becomes eschatological, since achieving a post-human form of eternal life or a neo-salvific event, known as "Singularity," is conditioned on human history reaching a crescendo of scientific advancement that enable trans-humanists to recreate themselves (or new-selves) in subjective mechanistic images. In other words, the Singularity, as the objective of trans-humanist proponents, pronounces the death of *the* human and reveals its anti-theist garb, seeking to delete any metaphysical and religious considerations informing personhood. Trans-humanists believe that to achieve the future good, the eschaton will come through the application of human engineering and science, whereas Abrahamic faiths await the eschaton *willed* by God. This highlights the disenchantment and relativization of nature in postmodern thought since religion identifies humans as stewards who have a moral responsibility towards society, but in a techno-scientific world, nature becomes simply raw material and resources to be exploited.

Trans-humanists' longing to eternally save their minds—as opposed to souls—by uploading their minds into computer programs, crafting their own virtual realities, or merging their consciousnesses with "human-machines" to experience multi-beinghood makes it so that their highest virtue is the mind/intelligence. It is no wonder that increasing intelligence—whether in a human or non-human form—is the movement's second most desired enhancement after the defeat of death[14]. Trans-humanist entrepreneur Bryan Johnson was reported by the *New Scientist* as investing $100 million to develop an implant to increase intelligence. He said, "I arrived at intelligence. . .I think it's the most precious

and powerful resource in existence" (as cited in Smith 2018). In previous decades, trans-humanists were reluctant to repudiate any claim that alluded to their movement being a substitute to ethical monotheism; however, in recent years, this postmodern requisite has become explicit. In 2015, Yuval Harari—during his presentation at the Hay Festival in the UK—emphasized his post-human stance by claiming, "I think it is likely in the next 200 years or so *homosapiens* will upgrade themselves into some idea of a divine being, either through biological manipulation or genetic engineering by the creation of cyborgs, part organic, part non-organic" (Knapton 2015). Furthermore, Harari accentuated his subjective view of reality being devoid of any metaphysical and religious features—and therefore of objective morality—by saying, "what we see in the last few centuries is humans becoming more powerful, and they no longer need the crutches of the gods. Now we are saying, we do not need God, just technology" (as cited in Smith 2018).

It should be clear that the problem of a techno-scientific future—and AI specifically—hinges on how trans-humanists define values and on how they define "consciousness," "intelligence," "soul," and "personhood," which ultimately determine what it means to be a human in a (postmodern) world. That is to say, AI enthusiasts and futurists such as Nick Bostrom (2005), Ray Kurzweil (2005), Max More (2003), Yuval Harari (2016b), and others mentioned above assume that a post-human condition is a *fait accompli* because of their fundamental misunderstanding concerning the nature of human consciousness, which they classify as a computational mathematical *object* (Tirosh-Samuelson 2011; Vita-More 2019). Muhammad Faruque aptly accentuated the weakness of this trans-humanist characterization by stating, "one wonders if it would ever be possible to develop AI with a human-level consciousness...this, however, is an impossible dream that rests upon a misunderstanding of human consciousness...consciousness as understood correctly is always a *subject*, which is both self-luminous and self-presential" (Faruque 2022, emphases added). The trans-humanists' rejection of objective morality and assumption that human-nature and its normative qualities are subjective and ever-changing make it convenient to assume that human beings can simply be "reduced to biological machines or a dataflow pattern and that the question of human vulnerability can be ignored in the process of building an AI with humanlike consciousness" (Faruque 2022).

One of the most detrimental aspects of postmodern thought that devalues humanity as simply being biological matter devoid of any spiritual value was unraveled with the advent of the *computer* in the second half of the 20th century and its interpretive reformulation of *consciousness*. Computational theories were adopted to show that computer languages held the password to "unravelling how a system of matter in motion (i.e., brain) might produce consciousness and intelligence" since the computer was perceived as the pinnacle of (post)modern civilization (Faruque 2022). Linking the invention of the computer with the dissolution of the human and the possibility of computers possessing "consciousness" was predicated on explaining human evolution through an "empirical" or "scientific worldview" (Searle 1997, p. 190). This predication—assuming human consciousness as just another kind of computer system—can be interpreted in Baconian terms, wherein computational theories of consciousness express a certain freedom or technological *will to power* that claims that if we are able to "create AI simply by designing computer programs, we will have achieved the final technological master of human over nature" (Searle 1997; Faruque 2022).

It should be emphasized that while there are two distinguishable types of Artificial Intelligence known as weak/narrow and strong/general, it is the latter type, including its consequential quality of "super intelligence," that is of ethical concern considering the most recent techno-scientific developments relating to the likes of Metaverse, Google Bard, or Microsoft chatGPT, with users—whether consciously or not—anthropomorphizing these programs (Eisikovits 2023; Sparkes 2023).[15] While strong AI (henceforth SAI) is a purely theoretical notion entailing a machine *appearing* to have human-level consciousness, artificial super intelligence (henceforth ASI) is a futurist goal that claims to surpass the intelligence and ability of the human mind (Faruque 2022; Bishop 2023; Hattenstone 2023; Sparkes 2023). The philosophies of SAI and ASI are postmodern, and their pseudo-

religion can be aptly identified as *Dataism*. Harari described this Godless religion based on subjective hubris as follows: "Just as divine authority was legitimized by religious mythologies, and human authority was legitimized by humanist ideologies, so high-tech gurus and Silicon Valley prophets are creating a new universal narrative that legitimizes the authority of algorithms and Big Data. This novel creed may be called '*Dataism*'. In its extreme form, proponents of the *Dataist* worldview perceive the entire *universe* as a *flow of data*, see *organisms* as little more than *biochemical algorithms* and believe that humanity's cosmic vocation is to create an all-encompassing data-processing system—and then merge into it" (Harari 2016a, emphases added). It is interesting to note that while Google's Blake Lemoine was discharged in July of 2022 for claiming that the company's LaMDA language model had become "sentient," many of the leading personnel in Silicon Valley are trans-humanists who believe that the "coming" of SAI and ASI is only a matter of time (Wertheimer 2022; Faruque 2022). For instance, Larry Page stated, "the ultimate search engine is something as smart as people—or smarter," and similarly, Sergey Brin contended, "certainly if you had all the world's information directly attached to your brain, or an artificial brain that was smarter than your brain, you'd be better off" (Carr 2008). In this postmodern view of "personhood" and "consciousness"—given enough biometric data and computing power—Dataism claims to understand humans much better than they understand themselves. Its underlying ethics is subsumed by "industrialist goals of speed and efficiency, optimized production and consumption," and it is constantly attempting "to reshape the very definition of a human being" especially with its aspiration to reach a post-human form of ASI identified as the Singularity point (Faruque 2022).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (d.1955) wrote, "what dominates my interests increasingly is the effort to establish in me and define around me a new religion. . .call it a better Christianity, if you will" (Chardin 1965, p. 210), and continued by emphasizing reason over revelation, stating that the "religion of the earth" must replace a "religion of heaven" (1968, p. 208). With his unwavering commitment to a postmodern man characterized by a materialistic rather than spiritual ontology, he wrote about reaching a "Christic Omega Point" (Chardin 1968, p. 22). Interestingly, contemporary trans-humanists adhering to Dataism as a religion speak of reaching a techno-centric moment characterized by "intelligence explosion" (Chalmers 2010)—a requisite for SAI to reach ASI—known as technological Singularity. The Singularity point is Chardinian in essence since it adopts a postmodern scientific worldview. According to Eric Steinhart, there is a significant overlap of ideas between "secular singularity" and Chardin's "Omega Point" since Chardin was the first trans-humanist thinker to give "serious consideration to the future of human evolution" through the use of genetic engineering and technologies by relying on Darwin's evolutionary narrative (Steinhart 2008; Burdett 2015; Miller 2022). According to J.R. Miller, Chardin's techno-scientific trans-humanist vision of building a "perfect humankind" demanded the usage of "individual eugenics and racial eugenics which repudiated the traditional Christian ethic that valued every individual human as created in the image of God (2022)"[16]. Also, Kurzweil, like Chardin, predicted a period of rapid technological change that would result in a merger of humanity and technology wherein the evolution of human intelligence would reach a critical point at which humans were replaced with a "post-human" type of machine (Kurzweil 2005). The point of Singularity finds its most dedicated support from intellectuals such as Ray Kurzweil, David Pearce, Mark O'Connell, and Nick Bostrom. For instance, Kurzweil argues, using the Law of Accelerated Returns (LOAR)—which has no scientific basis—that SAI will arrive by 2029 and ASI by 2045 since "technological innovations increase exponentially over time and the distance between major technological breakthroughs decreases" (Faruque 2022). Kurzweil's postmodern philosophical worldview that characterizes the Singularity point is evident in that he believes that with the advent of ASI, humanity will reach a point of "progress" where machines—rather than humans—will rule as the most intelligent entities on the planet, since that is what "human civilization is all about" (Kurzweil 2001, 2005). O'Connell reveals Dataism's "commandment" seeking Singularity by stating, "it is their belief that we can and should eradicate

aging as a cause of death; that we can and should use technology to augment our bodies and our minds; that we can and should merge with machines, remarking ourselves, finally, in the image of our own higher ideals" (O'Connell 2017, p. 8). The Chardinian garb of the trans-humanists identifying Singularity as some neo-salvific episode is evident with their dogma charting an eschatological ending of humanity; however, instead of humans being judged in a non-material dimension, machines assume responsibility for salvation in the earthly dimension, thereby announcing the "non-resurrection" of humanity. Pearce identified the Singularity moment as the Hedonistic Imperative (HI) by predicting that over the next thousand years "the biological substrates of suffering will be eradicated completely. Physical and mental pain alike are destined to disappear into evolutionary history. . .Post-human states of magical joy will be biologically refined, multiplied, and intensified indefinitely" (Pearce 2022). Michael Spezio—a critic of trans-humanist philosophy—emphasizes that their goal of eradicating negative emotions—like shame and guilt—eventually abolishes the essence of humanity since negative emotions are necessary to create a loving, compassionate, and rational society (Spezio 2011; Hubbard 2012, p. 4). Similarly, Gerald McKenny reminds trans-humanists that it is only through (pre-modern) natural human capacities—accentuated in revelation and willed by God—that we can receive the gift of transcending our human vulnerabilities (McKenny 2011, pp. 184–85; Hubbard 2012). Going beyond a (post)modern philosophy characterizing AI as a metanarrative evokes Habermas's "post-metaphysical reason," which claimed that religious insights must be welcomed back into scholarly discussions—in our case, of Artificial Intelligence— by making sure that religious insights discussing the consequences of anthropomorphizing AI are translated into a language that non-adherents to religion can comprehend (Yates 2019, p. 315).

With algorithms—according to proponents of Singularity—replacing the richness of human life with a Godless algorithmic code centered around Big Data, ASI assumes it possible that humans can be "reduced from engineers to chips, and from chips to data, and finally to the dissolution of data as dataflow" (Harari 2016b, p. 376). This is by no means hyperbole since the mathematician Irving Good foreshadows the development of an "ultraintelligent machine" (i.e., ASI) resulting in machine intelligence that surpasses human genius (Good 1965; Faruque 2022). In contrast, an opponent of Singularity, philosopher and computer scientist Erik Larson, has documented in his renowned work titled *The Myth of Artificial Intelligence: Why Computers Can't Think the Way We Do* that the idea of "superintelligence" being inevitable, or the idea that machines will one day have consciousness, is not simply wrong, but hampers genuine innovation (Larson 2021). Like Larson, mathematician Roger Penrose and philosopher John Searle argued that it is, in principle, impossible to have computers with human-level intelligence since consciousness involves *non-computational ingredients* and the human-mind (i.e., reason) is in essence characterized by *non-computational activities* (Searle 1997; Penrose 1994, 2002). These critics revealed the inner contradictions of postmodern philosophy, which informs trans-humanist ontology, by using rationality to show that the mathematical thinking of the human mind is different from the algorithmic activities of a computer; however, despite their "physicalist/exact-science" methodology they were widely criticized by the likes of Ray Kurzweil and Aaron Sloman (1992) since, for *Dataist* proponents, it "*must be* possible for computers to ultimately equal or surpass humans, regardless of whether incontrovertible mathematical arguments show otherwise" (Faruque 2022). Postmodern ontology, which defines the contours of Dataism and its subjective view of human beings, makes it propagate a mechanistic and functional definition of intelligence and consciousness by assuming both human traits as computational-machine-like qualities (McCarthy 2007; Faruque 2022)[17]. The computational theories of consciousness—according to Muhammad Faruque—objectify consciousness twice, firstly by "conceiving consciousness in the mind as an *object* of *scientific investigation*, and second[ly] when it seeks to *demystify* it by *observing* and then *theorizing* various psycho-physical states which are but *manifestations* of consciousness rather than consciousness itself" (Faruque 2022, emphases added).

As mentioned, trans-humanists, being materialistic and mechanistic in their approach to human beings, are frequently altering and conflating definitions to fit and advance their own subjective moral and value-free worldview. This is clear in how they conflate consciousness and intelligence by stating they are simply chemical processes or computational activities. Modern and postmodern ontologies—when discussing consciousness and intelligence—blur the line between both definitions since "thinking"—according to postmodern philosophy—is simply a "biological" or "mathematical" activity exclusively linked to our physical bodies (Khan 2019). Furthermore, when they define AI or machine-learning as "existing" and "intelligent," trans-humanists assume it to embody the same quality animating humans in order to give credence to their "post-human" objective—even though these are very different definitions, and to conflate different ideas risks forging a new understanding that, while not existing in *reality*, risks harming and undermining the sanctity of personhood. In other words, machines are not "intelligent," but rather, possess advanced mechanistic microprocessors conducting, at "super-fast" speed—using algorithms—computational sequential functions. Also, when trans-humanists use terms such as "change," "transformation," "evolution," or "awareness" to describe machines or AI, we need to be aware that these terms are, by definition, *only* applicable when we are describing two different *conscious states of being* (i.e., human beings), and AI does not represent "two separate states of beings"—it is simply a machine acquiring more "complex code"[18] (Khan 2019; Eisikovits 2023). Although AI and machine-learning *appear*—in a Theuthian perspective—to have "evolved," having now acquired "more intelligence," it is the same linear computational circuits and algorithmic code that are inputted in them, thus making them *appear* "more intelligent"[19]. This is the difference between *superficial* and *functional* change; just because something looks more complicated does not—*ipso facto*—mean that it is functionally different, even if we cognate using our sensorial vision that it appears—at surface level—different[20]. Put differently, while machine intelligence and human intelligence might superficially appear—according to trans-humanists—similar, they are, in reality, both diametrically functioning in irreconcilably different ways. Taken together, the above insight on consciousness refutes the idea that consciousness can be replicated in a machine because whatever is replicated is an "objectified image of consciousness rather than consciousness itself. . .the multimodality of consciousness brings out its complex manifestations in various domains of existence that transcend algorithmic patterns" (Faruque 2022).

4. Conclusions—Remembering the Human Pursuit for Happiness and Divine Beauty in the Teachings of Aristotle and Al-Ghazali

Trans-humanist philosophy, being materialistic and reductionist, therefore fails to understand the complex essence of humaneness (Hoffman 2011; Cavus 2021). According to Steven Hoffman, trans-humanists reduce the human mind to neurophysiological material processes or, more abstractly, to information-processing systems (Hoffman 2011, p. 276). A similar criticism arises from Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, who criticized trans-humanists for placing too much faith in technology and not considering all aspects of being human, including values such as empathy, care, compassion, and love (Tirosh-Samuelson 2011, p. 79). It is therefore imperative to emphasize that the betterment of humanity cannot be accomplished simply by looking at the material sciences or information technology. We rather must inject theology, philosophy, and metaphysical analyses recalling the nature of being human by moving beyond (post)modern accounts that exclusively adopt the scientific-method. Trans-humanist proponents of Dataism assume that scientific empiricism is the only genuine method explaining the nature of reality; this is a contentious assumption since it claims that consciousness is simply another scientific problem to be solved subjectively by relegating metaphysical and theological explanations as irrational. Such presumption would not have been shared with non-modern theologians and philosophers, who had developed sophisticated explanations, methods, and theories investigating the nature of consciousness over the course of several millennia and asserted that consciousness was a

human trait and therefore, impossible to be extended to any non-human object (Al-Attas 1990; Nasr 1997; Abou El Fadl 2014; Shakir 2018; Moad 2019; Al-Kassimi 2022a; Faruque 2021, 2022; Al-Badawi 2022).

Non-modern philosophies characterize consciousness by an absolute immediacy that "transcends all objectifiable experiences," emphasizing that it is futile to think of consciousness as a "problem" since doing so objectifies it and assumes that consciousness is simply another object among others (Faruque 2022). Consciousness is not an object that comes to existence because of self-consciousness or I-consciousness since our *logos* demands that consciousness precedes *thinking* in order that it "may become self-conscious by the knowledge of objects with which it contrasts itself" (Faruque 2022; Al-Kassimi 2022a). Put differently, consciousness is the crown subject making human existence and experience possible, thereby rendering itself a multimodal and multidimensional phenomenon more fundamental than our inter-subjective/reflective experiences since it is consciousness *a priori* that makes the *self* human. Non-modern philosophies—balancing between reason and revelation—affirm that the empirical consciousness of the individual manifests a limited purview of Absolute Consciousness (i.e., the Divine source of all consciousness). As poignantly mentioned by Faruque, "empirical consciousness characterized by a subject-object structure represents only a restricted portion of the individual-self...[which] represents only a part of subtle consciousness...the intermediate-level consciousness between the divine and the human-self...the *ego* [Ar. *nafs*] is the form of individual consciousness, not its luminous source, while Absolute Consciousness is finite and unbounded" (Faruque 2022). With consciousness defined earlier by reverting to non-modern epistemic analyses that esteemed theology and metaphysics, the remainder of this section remembers the insights of Aristotle (d.322BC) and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d.1111), highlighting the imprudent consequences of choosing to ignore the implications of a postmodern techno-scientific future on the nature of the human being. Remembering the Ancient Greek philosopher aids us in conceptualizing technology in a virtuous manner with an aim of attaining happiness, or the Good, and remembering the latter Sufi Islamic polymath aids us in conceptualizing the nature of the world while using Quranic and Traditional exegetical conceptualizations of technology that seek knowledge of Divine Beauty.

Aristotle was primarily concerned—in the *Nicomachean Ethics*[21]—with distinguishing technology (i.e., techne) from both science (i.e., episteme) and prudence (i.e., phronesis). Prudence is defined as "a state grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about what is *good* or *bad* for a human being," while science was concerned with that "which is necessarily *as it is*, and so cannot be otherwise" (Aristotle 1984; Moad 2019; Parry 2020). Prudence, therefore, differed in that the object of its concern (i.e., action) was contingent "on the very decision process which prudence seeks to inform" (Moad 2019). In other words, it is precisely because we can do *bad* that Aristotle was keen, in his ethics, to chart the know-how to do *good*. Technology is defined as a "state of grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with production...Action and production are both contingent," but for Aristotle, "action can be an end in itself [since] the human good is a certain kind of action. Production differs from action in that, in every case, production has its end beyond itself" (Moad 2019; Parry 2020). Aristotle defined happiness (i.e., *eudaimonia*) as a virtuous activity guided by reason. Happiness, therefore, was a contemplative activity that was not merely a means to an end, but was an end in itself (Parry 2020). Thus, happiness was a unity of will and action—of intellect and reason (Aristotle 1984). Happiness was not merely a feeling of pleasure or contentment but was a fulfilment of the human soul. Aristotle provided a roadmap for achieving happiness as an end through the means of acting virtuous. Here, happiness is not wealth or gratification, but the "good soul." Put differently, we build things in order to attain *eudaemon*, and since happiness or *living good* is an action/activity and an end/product itself, it rationally follows that prudence is distinct from technology (Aristotle 1984; Parry 2020). It also follows, then, that prudence is not possible without reference to an epistemology that distinguishes between *good* and *bad* for the human—or, more precisely, a science of human nature (Moad 2019; Parry 2020). Aristotle, therefore, understood that

techne aimed for good and formed an end, which could be either the activity itself or a product/end formed from the activity (Parry 2020).

Aristotle used health as an example of an *end* that was produced from the *techne* of medicine to illustrate that human happiness is something beyond technology. He said, "medical *techne* investigates the nature of the thing it cares for…medicine cares for, or treats, the body; but, more particularly, it cares for the good of the body (i.e., its health)," and this was primarily linked to epistemology informing technology and being prudent about what was good or bad for human nature (Parry 2020). He stressed how spiritual growth could only be achieved by continuously working on the *self*, and that during this process, the human became *self-actualized* (Aristotle 1984; Parry 2020). Therefore, he defined virtues and explored their role in contributing to happiness and the common good and suggested that the attainment of happiness (i.e., the end)—a term that, he suggested, was synonymous with the Good—was determined by one's virtuous actions (i.e., means). He proposed that virtues were the products of intentional decisions: that is, that no person was virtuous by accident. In other words, happiness was the aim of all humans, and virtue was the means/path for reaching it. It is poignant to recall that in *Book X*, Aristotle proposed that the best way to reach happiness was through the virtue he identified as *studying*, which was more accurately defined in his work as *meditation*—the act of contemplation and understanding (Aristotle 1984). According to Aristotle, studying was humanity's most supreme divine quality, and more importantly, a means that was catalyzed by consciousness, which distinguished humans from the animal world. It should be evident at this point that with postmodernity claiming that the ends justify the means, that every action has an equal value, and finally, that morality and truth are subjective rather than objective, then, the epistemology (i.e., science) informing trans-humanism is neither prudent nor concerned in distinguishing between *good* and *bad* or crafting a virtuous path leading to *eudaimonia*, especially because its empiricist scientific method makes it incapable of grasping *truth* and inept in studying or answering the question: how is modern technology serving the *good* of humanity?

In the book entitled the *Alchemy of Happiness* (Ar. كيمياء السعادة), which was concerned with Islamic ethics, theology, and philosophy, Al-Ghazali situated the idea of happiness as part of the human being's quest to achieve "ultimate happiness" in the Hereafter. According to Al-Ghazali, only when the human subject had liberated their soul from its corporeal existence could they be said to have achieved the "active intellect" necessary for "ultimate happiness" (Al-Ghazali 2005; Moad 2019). By using *reason* and *revelation* as means achieving the common good, Al-Ghazali reminds the reader that by utilizing God-given human attributes, such as reason, in tandem with His revealed *nomos*, the human subject transforms the soul from worldly materialistic attachment to complete devotion to Divine Beauty[22]. For Al-Ghazali, "the world and the hereafter comprise two *states*…that which is prior to death and nearer to you and which is called the world; and that which is after death, called Hereafter" (Al-Ghazali 2005, p. 59, emphases added). In this passage, Al-Ghazali stressed that the temporal material world (Ar. دُنْيا) where humans existed was a "state" and not a "thing"—a state that the human subject (not object) was in prior to death, and which was nearer in relation to that state which was posterior to death (Moad 2019). In this case, Al-Ghazali, like Aristotle, claimed that human beings were the only conscious creations who possessed a teleological purpose in the temporal world and were capable of experiencing a *state of being* in the world. However, and most importantly, Al-Ghazali mentioned that the "purpose of the [temporal material] world…is the provisioning for the Hereafter" (Al-Ghazali 2005, p. 59, emphases added). This suggested that the human subject had a teleological purpose—in contrast to what the trans-humanists now state—and that he was nearer in a teleological order—because of active intellect or self-actualization—in the way that *means* were nearer to one than the *ends* for which they were used (Moad 2019, emphases added).

Al-Ghazali's text provides the reader insight into how a subject can achieve ultimate happiness by stating, "the key to the *knowledge of Divine Beauty* is knowledge of the wonder

of *Divine handiwork*. And the *five human sensory organs* are the *first key* to the Divine Handiwork. These senses would not have been possible, save in this body compounded of water and earth" (Al-Ghazali 2005, p. 59, emphases added). In an Aristotelian sense, the sensorial organs constitute technology (i.e., techne), which has an *end* beyond itself because its function is to provide selective access to knowledge, bringing us *nearer* to the wonders of Divine handiwork since knowledge of Divine Beauty constitutes human happiness—i.e., since it is the *good soul* in itself. Put differently, the senses are understood as technological means enabling the human being to "gather his *provisions* and obtain the *gnosis* of God Most High with the key of the knowledge of his own self and the knowledge of all horizons perceptible to the senses" (Al-Ghazali 2005, p. 59). The existential basis of any technology or key is to provide access as a means in an order of *means* and *ends*, and this is why Al-Ghazali understood the sensorial qualities of the human subject as allowing the human being access leading to knowledge of Divine Beauty. Therefore, with Divine handiwork understood as a key extending access to Divine Beauty, the senses in their final analysis are understood as a relation between the human being and God. Al-Ghazali wrote, "as long as a person possesses the senses and they spy out things for him, he is said to be 'in the world'" (Al-Ghazali 2005, p. 59).

According to traditional Islamic psychology, which uses the Quran and Sunna as its referent worldview, the *rūḥ* (Eng. 'immortal essential spirit') is defined as the pure ethereal substance which descends into a womb. Once the *rūḥ* becomes manifest in a body and it is wedded into the psychosomatic functions of the body, at this point it is called *nafs* (Eng. ego/self), since it is now in the process of becoming a physical human being with its natural composites including free will, intelligence, reason, and morals (Shakir 2018; Mahmoud 2022; Al-Badawi 2022). There are three types of *nafs*: (1) the inciting-self is an individual who is inclined toward evil or whose instincts are at the mercy of temptations, vices, and desires, (2) the reproaching-self or self-blaming *nafs* has an element of judgement and cognitive rational capacity to control, and lastly, (3) the tranquil-self or the reassured-self is someone who has actualized a sense of peace and stillness through compassion, love, faith, and piety (Shakir 2018; Mahmoud 2022). The tranquil-self is nearest to the *rūḥ* as it was when it was first blown into the womb, and informs the state of purity and innocence when the human is born (Ar. فطرة). The journey of a human through life is, then, a journey that seeks to self-actualize the various levels of *nafs* through self-purification or sanctification (Ar. تزكية). Al-Ghazali was clear that the tranquil-self was the highest stage attained by a human being in the material world, wherein the human subject had activated his intellect using multiple technologies—including his senses—thus acquiring knowledge and making him a "good soul" anointed with Divine Knowledge (Al-Ghazali 2005; Al-Kassimi 2022a).

Motivated thus, the temporal world is a *state* that a person is *in*, with the nature of *that* state characterized by the possession of sensoria, which has an end beyond itself, and in which the person aims to gain access to gnosis of Divine Beauty, which will lead to ultimate human happiness (Al-Kassimi 2022a). In other words, the "world is nothing but a state that a person is in, of standing in a potential knowing (thus also loving) relation with God" (Moad 2019). Considering the pseudo-religion of *Dataism* and its objective-seeking Singularity, the insights deliberated by Al-Ghazali persuade us to unequivocally state that the technologies informing a trans-humanist culture and its post-human condition paralyze any means that seek to familiarize the *self* with knowledge of Divine handiwork and, ultimately, Divine Beauty, since the main objective of a postmodern future is predicated on extinguishing the quest to *know God*, with an *ateleological* "state" crucifying the human in pursuit of *worshipping technology*. The question that we should contemplate—arising from the works of the Teacher (i.e., Aristotle) and the proof of Islam (i.e., Al-Ghazali)—is not binary in the sense of whether we are "for" or "against" technology, and nor is it a quantitative question of "how much technology is good or bad," but rather, the question should be qualitative: i.e., in terms of "what kind," to "what end," and finally, "at what cost." Knowledge of Divine Beauty transcends the scientific method and its (dualistic) materialist categories of human activity, such as firing neurons, chemical reactions, physical-biology, or

computational activities. The notion of human beings attaining *eudaimonia* and acquainting themselves with the Law of Divine Oneness by utilizing sensoria as *techne* fosters living a moral-spiritual life characterized by compassion and the actualization of the teleology of the highest human *nafs*.

While the above reflections have objectively revealed that we should not fear a dystopian future accented by Singularity and a post-human condition since consciousness, intelligence, and reason are exclusively human attributes, it does, however, caution us to not make the mistake of defining ourselves in terms of achievements that inform Dataism since by doing so, we risk degrading our human essence[23]. It is apt to recall that in Plato's *Phaedrus*, one of the central passages is the famous *Chariot Allegory*, which presents the human soul as composed of a charioteer: a good horse tending upward to the divine and a bad horse tending downward to material embodiment. Until and unless we expand human consciousness and remind proponents of a techno-scientific future that our capacity to love and be intelligent is exclusively a human peculiarity, and *never* a mechanistic property, we risk tending "downward" and darkening the luminous property of "upward" consciousness that *only* the born is *created* in imparting its beauty to the world.

Notes

1　A famous hadith says, "God is beautiful, and He loves Beauty." The person of faith recognizes that knowledge of beauty has an "influence on the human heart, producing subtlety, purity, softness, and all the other qualities which perfect it, and which prepare it to rise" (as cited in Murad 2020, p. 160).

2　Dr. Graham Downing has proposed that there are "three gates of human perception that are being impacted by artificial intelligence and this metaphysical ignorance of the realm of human values. The first is the gate that takes us to the outer world. When replaced with virtual reality, actual reality is devalued, and a synthetic reality is substituted, a creation of commercial, political, egoistic forces enhanced by AI. Second is the gate that takes us to the inner world. This gate will be closed when virtual reality becomes your inner world. Finally, the gate that takes us to the spiritual world will get narrower than it ever has been. When we are increasingly enclosed in the synthetic and controlled environments of this technological age, when we are deprived of the natural world and our human response to it, when we are cut off from the living presence of authentic social relationships, we will also be insulated from the most direct impressions of the spiritual nature of reality. In the end all three of these gates are being systematically and irreversibly damaged. Spiritual coherence is becoming harder to attain; humanity is becoming fractured and dissociated" (as cited in Helminski 2018).

3　Sheikh Abdallah continues by saying, "when religious civilizations flourished, discoveries and inventions were made that enhanced human life. . .religion was not a hindrance to innovation but rather a stimulus that motivated creativity and achievement. . . many forms of AI raise philosophical and ethical questions. . .and responsibility which call for a careful response. . . with time these dangers could pose a threat to humanity from the perspective of. . .the five protected universals: religion, life, reason, property, and human integrity. . .this desired [universal] ethical framework should be based on innate moral values which are values common to all people. . .the integration of this ethical system in the development of AI has many advantages" (2023)

4　For more on the episteme characterizing the view of the heart (Ar. qalb), spirit (Ar. ruh), and self/ego (Ar. nafs), revert to Abu Hamid al-Ghazali's work entitled *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (Eng. Revival of Religious Sciences) and *Risalah al-Laduniyyah* (Eng. The Message From On High).

5　The holy Bible says, in Corinthians, "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own." (6:19–20). In the holy Quran it says, "And when He had made him upright and breathed into him of His spirit" (38:72). Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī—a towering Muslim exegetic—explains the verse in the Quran by saying, "This indicates that the creation of the human is only complete with two things: first of all, his uprightness, and then the breathing of the spirit into him. This is true because the human is a composite of body and soul" (Shakir 2018).

6   Rooted in the Ancients (i.e., Plato and Aristotle) and revealed *nomos* (Bible, Torah, and the Quran), the Great Chain of Being depicted a hierarchical structure of all matter and life (even in its hypothetical forms, such as angels and demons), starting from God. This model, with contextual differences and specificities, continued in its objective interpretations through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance until the eighteenth century (Lovejoy 1936).

7   Postmodernity involves the ambition to convert *res cogitans* into *res extensa*. It is then through this transitional conversion that the *undoing* of the human takes place, and the post-human is born. In ancient philosophy, Abrahamic tradition, or even the period before modernity, the question of what was more trust-worthy— respecting a nature designed by God or allowing human beings to design a "new man"—was never dominant since the latter idea not only annulled the affirmation of Being and free will, but more dangerously, would facilitate domination and prejudice over him with anyone's idea of "what is human" now having equal value.

8   James Hughes saw, in the *Transhumanist Declaration*, the moment when the legacy with the Enlightenment was explicitly affirmed. He said, "with the Declaration, transhumanists were embracing their continuity with the Enlightenment, with democracy and humanism" (2004, p. 178).

9   An article released on 25 January 2023, by FLScience—a UK-based science website that is a part of LabX Media Group—highlights that Artificial Intelligence may hit the Singularity by 2030. It says, "many AI researchers believe that solving the language translation problem is the closest thing to producing Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). . .this is because natural language is by far the most complex problem we have in AI. It requires accurate modeling of reality in order to work, more so than any other narrow AI" (Felton 2023).

10   Zoltan Istvan—a member and founder of the Transhumanist Party—has mentioned the intricate relation between the post-human ethos characterizing transhumanism and the ideology of transgenderism linked to the LGBTQIA+ movement. He says "It shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that the LGBT movement and transhumanism have a lot in common. Nearly all transhumanists support the LGBT cause. After all, a desire to be free to alter, express, and control one's sexual preference and identity sounds like a transhumanist concept. Advocates of transhumanism aim to alter, express, and control their bodies and preferences too, except they emphasize doing it with science and technology. If you look closely, the two movements—especially some of their major philosophies—are practically different sides of the same coin, and each is poised to gain strength from one another in the future as radical technologies transform the species" (Istvan 2015). Investigative journalist Jennifer Bilek has summarized in several articles the relation between eugenics, transhumanism, and LGBTQIA+ by saying, "Western societies are in the vortex of Transhumanism. . .this radical transhumanist agenda and its eugenicist underpinnings are being obscured by a popular LGB human rights veneer. 'Transgenderism' is a word acting as a social bridge between transsexualism and transhumanism. It is an umbrella term with weak borders that allows this bridging quality to transhumanism to nimbly evade scrutiny" (Bilek 2018, 2022). Also, Martine Rothblatt—known as one of the "Founding Father of the Transgender Empire"—published a manifesto by the name "From Transgender to Transhuman" in 2011 accentuating the movements postmodern philosophical foundation adhering to anthropological dualism. Aside from Rothblatt's prolific career, she is known to be an instrumental figure in the rise of transsexualism, transgenderism, and ultimately a post-human worldview (Bilek 2020).

11   Opponents of trans-humanism stress that trans-humanists humiliate the human body and reject agency by supposing it "rational" to eject the person from their natural dispositions, which require the experience of pain and mortality to achieve, for instance, awakening, wisdom, or a comprehension of the Good through trial and error. Not only does this result in trans-humanists being opposed to *homo patiens*, but it would also place their ideology and its post-human condition in a timeline that seeks to substitute and technify the body (i.e., Hobbesian *automata*) by being abducted by the *res cogitans* since it loathes "human defect" and seeks "perfection" by any possible means (Pastor and Cuadrado 2014).

12   Proponents of trans-humanist ideology are mechanistic in their approach to biology and physicality in that they use a Darwinian approach to understand human evolution. That is to say that since human's evolved from simians, it is possible that contemporary humans could continue to evolve into something better and new. The *ethos* of rationality is then adopted by postmodern trans-humanist ideologues to extend non-human forms the quality of reason, thereby achieving the "post-human," "trans-human," or "super-human" type.

13   The *Transhumanist Declaration*, developed by a variety of international authors and "modified" repeatedly since its publication in 1998, states: "Humanity stands to be profoundly affected by science and technology in the future. We envision the possibility of broadening human potential by overcoming aging, cognitive shortcomings, involuntary suffering, and our confinement to planet Earth" (Lindholm 2022).

14   Recently, Artur Sychov—the founder of Sominum Space, a metaverse company—said that the fast-moving development of ChatGPT has pushed "the timeline for one of his most ambitious and eccentric projects up by a matter of years. . .a user has started to integrate OpenAI's chatbot into his metaverse, creating a virtual assistant that offers a faster pathway for the development of 'Live Forever' mode. . .[the project will] allow people to store the way they talk, move, and sound until after they die, when they can come back from the dead as an online avatar to speak with their relatives" (Strachan 2023). The postmodern influence on trans-humanism's post-human condition is evident in the fact that the individualistic character of this project is manifest in that the dead will not come "back" since an "avatar" is not a human being. Here we notice postmodernism eliminating any objective moral value to human beings by, for instance, undermining the dignity of those have who passed away. Immortality cannot be

attained in the corporeal world. If eternal life is attainable, it will be found by working on one's soul in faith, not by developing ever-more-advanced AI computers.

15 It should be noted that I am not suggesting that AI is *a priori* detrimental, since the applications linked to Artificial Narrow Intelligence that has been trained to perform specific tasks such as computer vision, customer service, speech recognition, and automated stock trading are beneficial. However, even then, ANI threats are real since, in some cases they infringe on civic freedom, and instead of "understanding" human emotions, are employed to "imitate them" (Faruque 2022).

16 God in the holy Bible announces that human beings are made in the image of God: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth." (1:26–28). Similarly, the holy Quran states, "And surely we have honoured the children of Adam and carried them on the land and at the sea, and provided them with good things, and we have made them to excel by an appropriate excellence over many of those we created." (17:70)

17 In an interview with virtual reality tech guru Jaron Lanier in March 2023, he was asked: "Is AI really capable of outsmarting us and taking over the world?" Lanier replied, "OK! Well, your question makes no sense. . .You've just used the set of terms that to me are fictions. I'm sorry to respond that way, but it's ridiculous. . .it's unreal. . .This idea of surpassing human ability is silly because it's made of human abilities. . .It's like saying a car can go faster than a human runner. Of course it can, and yet we don't say that the car has become a better runner." (Hattenstone 2023).

18 Contemporary trans-humanist Karen Lebacqz—in her essay entitled Dignity and Enhancement in the Holy City—justifies her materialistic position on human enhancement by appropriating the biblical evidence of Jesus raising the dead and curing leprosy to advance an earthly techno-scientific "vision of [a] new heaven and new earth" (Hubbard 2012, p. 3). She claims that the actions of Jesus provide a glimpse of our future lives free of death and that this should be a reason to "embrace enhancement that takes away pain, death, and limits on human life" (Lebacqz 2011, p. 58).

19 Saratendu Sethi is another scholar who commits such definitional blurring when he argues that building a sustainable global supply chain requires the "humanization of AI" by stressing what he calls a "sustainable, ethical, and responsible world that puts equity for all at the centre." J.R Miller identifies Saratendu Sethi as Chardinian in his utopian supply-chain AI approach since he is willing to sacrifice the weak for the greater good. Miller asks, in relation to Sethi's recommendations, "whose ethic will drive AI's decision-making algorithms, when resources are limited, will atheist technicians decide who gets food and who does not?. . .in the next pandemic when supplies run short. . .will the AI control human populations based upon projections of biological survivability, statical calculations of racial equity, or the nebulous criteria of sustainability?. . .Will humanized AI allow itself to be guided by religious moral codes, and if so, which ones will it choose? Or will religion, and maybe human existence itself, be rendered obsolete by these autonomous and self-corrective algorithms. . .A clearly defined ethic that protects every human, and protects humans above animals, is fundamental to measuring the practicality of an AI tasked with the mission of replacing human intelligence, human morality, and human compassion" (Miller 2022).

20 While *automatons* (i.e., Al-Jazari's elephant clock, the Mechanical Turk, or Da Vinci's flying machine) have historically had the effect of reaffirming the excellence of the human by blurring the line between appearance and reality, the trans-humanist ideology of today—with its postmodern ontology—perceives the robot, cyborg, or android as a substitute to the supposed "decadent man."

21 The *Nicomachean Ethics* are divided into ten books. Book I discusses how Good is to be defined, Books II-V discuss the moral virtues, Book VI discusses intellectual virtue, Book VII describes moral continence and incontinence, Books VIII-IX describe the nature of friendship, and finally, Book X discusses how pleasure and happiness are to be defined.

22 As mentioned in Surat As-Sajdah, "Then He (Allah) fashioned him (Adam) and blew in him from His spirit" (32:9).

23 When Jaron Lanier was asked about the danger of AI and its current developments, as evidenced in chatbots, he said, "the danger isn't that a new alien entity will speak through our technology and take over and destroy us. To me the danger is that we'll use our technology to become mutually unintelligible or to become insane if you like, in a way that we aren't acting with enough understanding and self-interest to survive, and we die through insanity, essentially" (Hattenstone 2023).

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