

# Motives of Transhumanism †

**Tomáš Sigmund**

Department of System Analysis, Faculty of Informatics and Statistics, University of Economics, Prague, W. Churchill Sq. 1938/4, 130 67 Prague 3-Žižkov, Czech Republic; tomas.sigmund@gmail.com; Tel.: +4202-2409-5472

† Presented at the IS4SI 2017 Summit DIGITALISATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY, Gothenburg, Sweden, 12–16 June 2017.

Published: 8 June 2017

**Abstract:** Due to the concentration on necessity and underestimation of creativity and especially of the political realm men have lost understanding of their world. The accent on satisfying biological needs and improving man's environment through automated labour evince these tendencies. Other examples are the transhumanists' efforts to improve man's body. The efforts to perceive more, better, faster etc. without knowing why are just manifestations of endeavours deprived of sense.

**Keywords:** transhumanism; labour; sense

---

## 1. Introduction

Earth and cosmos are man's home. However, since the beginning of modern age man is not contented with his world and tries to flee from it. World has been reduced to the condition and necessary evil of man's existence which must be transformed through labour to provide resources for human life. The never ending striving for progress, effectiveness, accumulation, growth etc. is the example of an infinite automated process deprived of human understanding and sense. The whole society has been subordinated to laws of nature or laws of history. Men have become slaves of their laws, they know labour and its opposite—leisure in the form of idleness—only.

## 2. Transformation of the World

Man's dissatisfaction with his place in the world is expressed in the distrust in his abilities, senses and bodies. The development of robots is one of the answers to the allegedly difficult situation of man who has to work in order to improve his miserable living conditions. However, if robots replaced man in all his necessary work, man wouldn't know what to do. He is so much bound to his biological life (as labour is in fact the result of man's imperfection and dependence on nature), that he would be able to respond to biological impulses only. The popularity of simple amusement proves this conclusion. How can a society of labourers without labour look like? asks H. Arendt [1].

As man is not happy with his environment, he is not happy with his body, either. Man's body is considered imperfect, weak, bound to nature and in need of improvement. As well as world is seen as a realm of necessity, so too is human body. That is why people work on its improvement, strive for immortality, enhancement of their abilities etc. The new technical devices distract our memory and attention to the world as they need a lot of attention themselves and so hide the human character of the world in various ways (amusement, simplification, automation etc.).

## 3. Transhumanism

The idea of transhumanism is dangerous in this context as it puts us in a position where we could need artificial machines to think and speak for us, as we will not be able to do it ourselves. Politics in the sense of evaluating and discussing issues of the common world requires meaningful

speech. The new conditions developed without understanding may create a world people won't be able to understand. The progress of globalization accelerated by ICTs has already shown incomprehensible consequences against which people protest. The political consequences of new technologies should be discussed. Big data also provide knowledge without understanding that may be useful, but difficult to deal with and to discuss. We are losing the sense of what we are doing with modern technologies available. Transhumanist have lost the respect for intentionality, bodily existence, freedom, involvement and other phenomena that characterize human existence in the world. In history the examples of the Tower of Babel, Golem, Frankenstein etc. show how dangerous the actions of man playing the role of god can be.

Transhumanists enhance human abilities without clearly explaining the sense and reason of such actions. Man is a balanced system of various components and we still don't understand the balance properly. Increasing or strengthening some of the powers may destroy that balance. Unintended consequences may be another harmful outcome of the transhumanists efforts. Even with genetic manipulation, we fear the consequences for nature and with human body manipulation we may get similar results.

In order to accept and respect reality one needs stillness and protected environment. With our orientation on labour we don't know how to keep still, we know either activity or passive consumption of the activity's results. We are not happy with ourselves and that is why we seek for diversion and amusement in the free time. However, we rather need cultivated attention, respect for the surprises of the world (respect and not government of nature), and patience. We need to get rid of the eternal processual time of the world and understand our life as an interval between life and death. Such a time conception focuses on the present moment spanned between past and future instead of the processual concentration on the future. Such a life can change and interrupt the automatic series of events and constitute something new brought about by human activities. In such understanding of the world we would be less oriented on biological needs and their satisfaction, but would be more focused on creativity, which produces durable objective things into the world, and political space that evaluates, compares and praises the objects of the common world [2].

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Arendt, H. *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed.; University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL, USA, 1958.
2. Braun, K. Biopolitics and Temporality in Arendt and Foucault. *Time Soc.* **2007**, *16*, 5–23, doi:10.1177/0961463X07074099.



© 2017 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).