Postmodern Openings

About Singularity | Book Review for the volume "Filosofia singularitatii. Creierul global, o etica a gandirii fara om", author Bogdan Popoveniuc, Eikon Publishing, Bucharest, Romania

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Abstract: We are at a point in the creative evolution of humanity in which we can see the dawn of a new type of consciousness and of self-awareness that would provoke humanity to a redefinition of itself: Artificial Intelligence. The moment of the emergence of self-aware artificial intelligence, whose computing capacity exceeds the human power is defined as *Technological Singularity*. The volume **Filosofia singularităţii. Creierul global, o etică a gândirii fără om** [*Philosophy of singularity. Global brain, an ethics of thinking without the human*] published by Eikon Publishing House in 2016, is a first attempt in philosophy and the Romanian culture of philosophizing on the technology of artificial intelligence, with particular reference to the technological singularity.

Keywords: philosophy of singularity; technological singularity; Bogdan Popoveniuc, artificial intelligence, self-awareness.

We are at a point in the creative evolution of humanity in which we can see the dawn of a new type of consciousness and of self-awareness that would provoke humanity to a redefinition of itself: Artificial Intelligence.

The moment of the emergence of self-aware artificial intelligence, whose computing capacity exceeds the human power (Popoveniuc, 2016) is defined as Technological Singularity. The definition of the mentioned term is an analogy of singularity in astro-physics which represent that region of space in which, due to quasi-infinite gravitational forces, the laws of physics as we know them no longer apply.

We salute the courage and the initiative of our colleague and friend Bogdan Popoveniuc, who made a first attempt of breathtaking scale to bring the philosophy of singularity in the Romanian cultural space. The volume **Filosofia singularităţii. Creierul global, o etică a gândirii fără om**

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[Philosophy of singularity. Global Brain, an ethics of thinking without the human] is by far a strong plea for adequating philosophy to nowadays singularity.

Far from being autistic anymore, lost in an ivory tower of self-thinking, philosophy is summoned by Bogdan Popoveniuc to answer to the possibility of an ethics of thinking without the human, of anchoring it in a postculture. The philosopher from Suceava expresses Singularity both as turning point of self-reflexivity, and as existential angst of humanity who generates its own never seen before alterity: the alterity of its own creation; an alteriy capable to destroy humanity as a whole, or to transform it after the image and likeness of artificial intelligence.

The threat of intelligent technology is an issue long debated in the science fiction literature, and increasingly more in the prospective ethics of top technologies. Current years, however, bring the first complex experiences of intelligent algorithms, capable to answer to the questions about the very existence and meanings of life. Therefore, the horizon of the next decade could inevitably place humanity in a less anticipated ending of history, namely the ending of the history of humanity as dominant species.

The non-biological species capable of self-awareness will be able to dethrone the human from his claims of being a thinking reed, placing him in the position of a demiurge, overthrown by his own creation. The same species of artificial intelligence will, however, be able to place humanity on an infinite path, for example of cosmo-humanity, of artificial immortality through the digitization of consciousness and the infinite possibilities of communication, correlated with the virtualization of the social space.

In his volume, Bogdan Popoveniuc rises issues such as technological mentality and technology as a phenomenon, therefore making a first attempt of phenomenology of synthetic alterity. On this occasion, not only that I congratulate him, but I also challenge him to try to develop a phenomenology of digital self-consciousness, in his further writings.

Starting from the dynamic of technology, the author presents his own perception of the myth of progress, with philosophical influences, but at the same time also sociological and anthropological. Bogdan doesn't waste the opportunity to reflect upon the epistemology of technologization and the epistemic technologization, as a relationship between humanity and its own technology. Technology is not only seen as an accident of humanity, but more and more as an own of the existential condition.

Entering the subject of the philosophy of singularity, the author emerges into the theories related to it, especially related to the moment when

the artificial intelligence can be considered equal to the human, or superior to it. The author's theoretical option is that at this time, we can no longer talk about the question *Will singularity ever occur?,* but rather of *When and how will we distinguish it from the non-technological intelligence?* If humanity currently builds test such as the Turin Test, that would evaluate artificial intelligence in the sense that a user can confuse it by the human one, probably the psychologists of the future will develop tests that would part the human component of the techno-human intelligence.

Of course, Bogdan doesn't miss the opportunity to question singularity from the perspective of the obstacles it faces, the criticisms brought to the arguments in favour of technological singularity, and not last, of the destructive potential for humanity that S.T. implicates. However, the paper doesn't belong to the techno-pessimist category, but rather a realist one, with optimistic accents.

It is impossible for us to not notice a series of philosophical intrusions in the techno-spirituality and the techno-religiosity made by the author. Envisaging solutions for the issues generated by these, he proposes a pro-active ethics that would allow self-reflexive singularity to exist without having the capacity to send humanity, in its current form, into non-existence.

Finally, I congratulate the author for his daring achievement, and I invite the readers to discover such a philosophy, deeply rooted in the everyday life, with prospective accents such as the one necessary for the 21st century, century that might someday be called the Century of Singularity.

References

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