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From Divine Transcendence to the Artificial One. Challenges of the New Technologies

Loredana TEREC-VLAD¹

Abstract

The invasion of the new technologies in our lives and the current dependence upon them makes us believe that in a not too distant future we will be made of more technology than biological matter. If until recently computers had hardly been discovered, today we are witnessing a real technological revolution in all the fields: biology, medicine etc. The evolution of the new technologies has raised various questions related to the future of mankind and the current human species, which determines us to make speculations regarding a future event that may occur. For this reason, in this paper I shall analyze the concept of artificial intelligence and singularity and I shall also outline the relationship between the ontological argument and the possible worlds. The idea of possible world can serve as a way of describing a metaphor (heretofore) in the philosophy of science, as singularity can exist in a possible world only if one creates the conditions of a new concept regarding fiction. We believe that technological singularity will change the values of the current society and the individual will have to face a world that depersonalizes the individual, as transhumanism draws the theoretical frameworks of a «brave new world».

In this paper, we have also analyzed the logical explanation of God's existence and the explanation of singularity through artificial intelligence. Therefore, we shall bring up for discussion the idea of virtual universe in the context of downloaded consciousness, which can be operated through artificial intelligence. Our conclusions refer to the fact that eternal life could exist artificially, but it cannot be demonstrated in terms of the ontological argument.

Keywords: *Singularity, Transhumanism, Artificial Intelligence, New Technologies, Possible Worlds.*

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Introduction

Today we are witnessing fundamental changes within our society: the scientific findings in terms of genetics, medicine, the new technologies, etc. remind us that in a not too distant future we will become immortal by using mind uploading or by colonizing another planet from another solar system. The new technologies are part of the individual's everyday life and they are often considered indispensable for the members of the current society; an example in this respect is real time communication with the persons from the other side of the world or the use of ultrasound devices that enable the doctor to see the evolution of a foetus; robots that are able to cook or recognize voices have also been created. In 1965, I. J. Good made speculations regarding the likelihood of ultraintelligent machines to far surpass human intelligence: "Let an ultraintelligent machine be defined as a machine that can far surpass all the intellectual activities of any man however clever. Since the design of machines is one of these intellectual activities, an ultraintelligent machine could design even better machines; there would unquestionably be an *intelligence explosion*, and the intelligence of man would be left far behind. Thus, the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make" (Good, 1965). Since 1965 until today science has progressed, and the new scientific findings make their presence felt in almost all the fields, splitting researchers into two camps: the ones supporting technological progress and the conservative (traditionalist) ones. In order to speak about artificial intelligence, we must first define the concept of intelligence: the ability to understand, communicate, and abstract, emotional awareness, memory, creativity, problem solving (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence>); it can also refer to „The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of available information" (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/intelligence>). Therefore, there are a variety of definitions for the word Intelligence, and every explanation is provided from a certain perspective: psychological, philosophical, military, etc. So, depending on the accepted fundamental idea, there are two approaches of artificial intelligence:

- A connectionist approach, which explains the fact that intelligence is due to the neural networks (Trăușan-Matu, 2006);
- The symbolic approach, which is based on the hypothesis of physical symbolic systems (Trăușan -Matu, 2006).

Alternatively, the foundations of artificial intelligence (AI) lie in philosophy, mathematics, economics, neuroscience, psychology, computer engineering, control theory and cybernetics, and linguistics (Russell, Norvig, 2010). The first acknowledged work was published year 1943, when Warren McCulloch and Walter Pines „drew on three sources: knowledge of the basic physiology and function of the neurons in the brain; a formal analysis of propositional logic due to Russell and Whitehead, and Turing’s theory of computation. They proposed a model of artificial neurons in which each neuron is characterized as being «on» or «off»” (Russell, Norvig, 2010).

I needed to bring these issues up for discussion in order to be able to carry out the analysis, since the paper aims to analyze the possibility for eternal life to exist artificially, through the new technologies and artificial intelligence.

However, the recent years have been characterized by a growing interest in artificial intelligence (Savulescu, Maslen, 2015; Savulescu, 2014; Strass, Wallner, 2015; Adami, 2015); thus, scientists and researchers from various fields are becoming increasingly concerned regarding this issue. Ben Goertzel believes that regarding artificial intelligence „no one can sensibly claim to know what is going to happen”, but „the basic idea of the scenario analysis is simple. Rather than trying to make definite predictions with specific probabilities, or trying to arrive at elegant abstractions binding the past, present and future, one tries to lay out a series of specific future scenarios for a complex system” (Goertzel, 2007). Therefore, there are different categories of scenarios regarding the future of AGI:

- Steady Incremental Progress Scenarios;
- Dead-end scenarios;
- AGI Based Singularity Scenarios;
- Skynet Scenario;
- Kurzweil Scenario;
- Sysop Scenario;
- AI Big Brother Scenario;
- Singularity Steward Scenario;
- Coherent Extrapolated Volition Scenario (Goertzel, 2007).

The idea of singularity can be approached in the context of transhumanism only if in the context of the virtual universe - and implicitly that of the downloaded consciousness – we operate with

artificial intelligence. The cyborg could be the connection between the human consciousness and transhumanism (the human consciousness carries the condition of temporal being, while singularity does not face the anguish of temporal being).

Regarding the imminence of singularity, we must first take into account how we will describe this intelligence explosion whereas it is well known the fact that we will not be able apply any of the previously known laws in any of the fields; Kurzweil believes that singularity is a future period within which the pace of technological change will be so rapid and the impact will be so deep that human life will be irreversibly transformed (Kurzweil, 2005). Vince: singularity is the point where ultraintelligence will be created by using technologies in the context where the mind can exist in the non-biological substrate and the algorithms are of particular importance for the existence of the mind (Vince, 1993). Marie Jones believes that artificial intelligence could be on the verge of a step towards a new level, which would make cars more intelligent than the man who invented the car (Jones, 2010). The author believes that technological singularity will consist of two types of artificial intelligence: on the one hand, the amplification of the human brain's intelligence would include fields such as bioengineering, genetics, the use of nootropics or mental transfer, and on the other hand, pure artificial intelligence, which is considered the most productive choice (Jones, 2010). But however promising it is and however much progress it brings along, it is not riskless, since by creating a superhuman intelligence we risk to commit mistakes that will someday lead to our total annihilation generated by the products of our own creation (Jones, 2010). We believe that, along with the creation of the new technologies and the development of artificial intelligence, in a not too distant future life extension will be possible by uploading the human consciousness without the need for a biological body or a body made of any other material.

We believe that the possibility of achieving eternal life will not remain a goal, whereas through the new technologies and artificial intelligence we will have the chance to live in a virtual reality, in a future possible world.

When artificial intelligence will be aware of its own existence and will surpass human intelligence, we will be witnessing an intelligence explosion, which will lead to what specific literature calls technological

singularity. Of course, these are speculative theories, just like the theories regarding the end of the world and the Mayan prophecies. However, we cannot ignore the fact that there is a rather high probability for technological singularity to exist, for eternal life to no longer be an unattainable goal, and for man to be able to move from one side of the universe to another at the speed of light. Of course, as mentioned previously, these are just speculations; however, we cannot ignore the fact that they appear on the list of priorities of researchers worldwide.

About the existence of God and the possible worlds

Divinity is known as masterful logos when it says: *let there be light* (Sandu, 2015); The emancipation of the human being from its own condition and self-transcendence is achieved through the universalization of the seductive logos as part of the practice of mass communication (Sandu, 2015). The transhuman transition involves a rethinking of the religious and metaphysical meaning of this transformation; we believe that the relationship with the transcendent dramatically changes the technological self-transcendence (Sandu, 2015).

We have brought the ontological argument and the existence of possible worlds up for discussion because in the near future we will be witnessing an intelligence explosion, and the individual's life will be looked at from other points of view, not just the Christian, philosophical or moral point of view. Given that immortality will be possible in a not too distant future, we believed it would be appropriate to bring up for discussion the fact that within artificial eternal life there could exist a possible world where the individual socializes, lives and promotes his own values. We must take into account the fact that the possible worlds have been demonstrated through modal logic and involve necessity and probability.

The ontological value of the first postulate of David Lewis lies in asserting the universality of the worlds (Sandu, 2012), "because nothing is more than a world" (Lewis, 2006, as cited in Sandu, 2012). The concept of possible worlds is related to that of fictional worlds or alternative worlds. In modal logics, a possible world is that where every sentence taken into consideration has a defined value of truth, so that a sentence *p* is necessary if it is true in all the possible worlds, it is possible if it is true only in some of the possible worlds and impossible if it is not true in any of them (Blackburn, 1999); concepts such as necessity,

possibility and contingency are involved. In the current paper, the idea of possible world can serve as a way of describing a metaphor (heretofore) in the philosophy of science, as we believe that singularity could exist in a possible world or that the theory of possible worlds creates the conditions of a new concept regarding fiction, since the plurality of reality systems enable the use of concepts such as possible world and current world when characterizing fiction (Ryan, 1991, in Constantinescu, 2010) or – in our opinion - another reality. Starting from the idea that possible worlds may exist, we believed it would be appropriate to bring into question the issue of the existence of God as well. It is already known that when we shall achieve eternal life and we shall use mind uploading, we shall also be able to connect to a quantum global brain (Terec-Vlad, Terec-Vlad, 2014), which is considered to be the divine being of the next era (the one proposed by transhumanists).

Some philosophers have also tried to justify the existence of God through modal logic and in this sense we must mention Anselm de Cartenbury, Descartes, Kant, Dawkins or Godel. The conclusion of Godel's whole analysis is that: if the positive attributes can form a consistent system, then there may exist an object that instantiates them all (Ștefanov, 2008); analyzing Godel's ontological argument, Gheorghe Ștefanov concluded that there is a pronounced similarity between the characterization of the positive properties and the characterization of the true sentences; furthermore, Ștefanov demonstrated that there is a contradiction within Godel's ontological argument, since “the same result can be achieved using mathematical properties that cannot be defined through one another” (Ștefanov, 2008).

In Romania the ontological argument has been analyzed by Constantin Noica and Adrian Miroiu. The latter believed that it has already been argued that the concept of necessary existence has to be developed in such a way so as to be applicable only to God, since the ontological argument proves that we can move from the concept to the existence of the object only in the case of God (Miroiu, 2000). Singularity was also analysed using modal logic; however, the analysis is as fragile as in the case of the ontological argument. We believe that the concept of singularity and the idea of explosion of intelligence can be attractive to scientists, but we cannot pretend to agree with the non-human being more intelligent than the individuals of the homo sapiens species.

In this context, Selmer Bringsjord outlined the fact that the idea of singularity is seductive at the informal level, but does not stand up to any rigorous logical analysis. The premises are:

- There will be artificial intelligence (AI). It will be created by human intelligence (HI) and will equal human intelligence $AI=HI$ (Bringsjord, 2012);
- If there is such artificial intelligence, there will be a superior form of artificial intelligence (AI+), created by artificial intelligence or AI (Bringsjord, 2012);
- If there is Superior artificial intelligence (AI+), it will create an even more advanced intelligence (AI++) (Bringsjord, 2012);
- There will be AI++ (=S will occur) (Bringsjord, 2012).

The author states that the machines in the dialectic of which the present short note is a part are obviously information-processing machines and the intelligence of this machines can hence be respectably formalized (Bringsjord, 2012).

Given these issues, we must acknowledge the fact that we are rapidly moving towards a new dimension of humanity. There are various speculations regarding how singularity could affect us as human species; at the same time, there are pros and cons. In this regard, we can only assess - even if only at theoretical level – the possible consequences of this intelligence explosion. Since we cannot know for sure how quickly they develop and how far scientists have gone regarding the emerging technologies, we cannot accurately state that artificial intelligence will exceed human intelligence in a very near future or that artificial intelligence will be self-conscious. We can speculate that in a not too distant future artificial intelligence may exceed human intelligence and may be self-conscious, and that there is the possibility for self-conscious artificial intelligence to enslave the human race through the new technologies.

As previously mentioned the moment of singularity is considered irreversible for mankind and comes with multiple controversies: an issue that raises multiple questions is related to the existence of God, since the uploaded consciences will be connected to a superior system. In this case, we may raise the question whether in the era of singularity God, as an absolute being and holder of the truth, will be substituted by a creature of the new technologies called the God of the generation of singularity.

We have brought these issues into question as we are on the verge of the «transfiguration» of the world we live in. Transhumanism uses the individual's needs, the fear of death and the desire of domination in order to sell a new «ideology», which is perfect from their point of view. Since promises sound extremely good, I believe there will be tactical acceptance and resignation regarding the invasion of the new technologies, since they will enter even the most hidden part of our conscience, claiming to provide welfare and moral enhancement. The issues presented in this paper can only make us state once again that transhumanism is the most dangerous idea in the world (Fukuyama, 2009)

As previously outlined, it is possible for the individual to achieve eternal life through artificial intelligence.. A real problem will arise when their intelligence will exceed the intelligence of the current human species, since there is the risk for soft slavery to occur (Terec-Vlad, Terec-Vlad, 2013)

Conclusions

Humanity progresses and the human species have to comply with the new transformations. We believe that we will achieve technological singularity in the context of a transhumanist society within certain possible worlds.

In this paper we have analyzed aspects related to the possibility that in a not too distant future the human species may be surpassed by robots in terms of intelligence. Within the analysis, we have brought up for discussion the ontological argument, the explanation for the possibility of singularity and the possible worlds. It is important to mention the fact that in a future period we will be witnessing a radical transformation of the human condition, since there is the possibility for immortality to be achieved artificially, not only after experiencing death.

It is important to outline the fact that in a future period we will cease to exist as humanoid species in order to adapt to the new conditions. Singularity could be possible in a not too distant future, and this would change all the aspects of human life: from the personal sphere to the aspects related to the economic, social or political sphere. However, an aspect that draws attention is related to the autonomy of the individual, since as long as we are to become robotized our deepest

thoughts will be read, and this will lead to an attempt of moral bio-amelioration.

In this paper we have analyzed the concept of artificial intelligence and singularity, and also the ontological argument and the possible world; the idea of possible world can serve as a way of describing a metaphor (heretofore) in the philosophy of science, as we believe that singularity could exist in a possible world or that the theory of possible worlds creates the conditions of a new concept regarding fiction.

In conclusion, we ought to appreciate the fact that the virtual universe involves a downloaded consciousness, operated through artificial intelligence. The possible worlds can make the connection between singularity and transhumanism, whereas singularity does not face the anguish of temporal being.

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