

## Research Article

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# Whitehead's Organic Conception of Humanity. Beyond Mechanistic Philosophy in an Age of Transhumanism

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**Abstract:** There are several conceptions of man in the history of philosophy. However, two considerable tendencies are recurring throughout modern history. A human being can be perceived as a complex mechanism or as a living organism. The response to the query has essential consequences in different areas. The article aims to provide a view of humankind that builds upon an organic conception of life, nature, and human beings, especially as elaborated by A. N. Whitehead and some of his followers. The article also briefly examines the emergence and development of a mechanistic view. The historical overview exposes the close relationship between the worldview of a given era and the understanding of man. Finally, the article argues that the organic conceptions of life developed in the first half of the 20th century provide an essential alternative to mechanistic views and could help us to deal with several problems we are currently encountering.

**Keywords:** modern mechanicism, A. N. Whitehead, philosophy of organism, conception of man

## 1 Introduction

We live in turbulent times. Humankind is facing several unprecedented challenges, but in the meantime, it appears it has lost its orientation. In dealing with many recent challenges, it is becoming increasingly important to answer the problem of man. What is a human being? What does it mean to be a human? There are several answers to the problem of man in the history of philosophy and philosophical

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anthropology. However, two considerable tendencies are recurring throughout our modern history and even more so today – mechanistic philosophy and its viable alternatives from which we choose organic philosophy. Do we perceive a human being more as a complex machine, as a mechanism, or rather as a complex living organism? The answer to the question has significant consequences for different areas – our understanding of health, the concept of happiness and the quality of life, the problem of transhumanism and the future of mankind, as well as the problem of mutual relations between man, nature, and human culture.

The article aims to provide a view of humanity that builds upon an organic conception of life, nature, and human beings, especially as elaborated by A. N. Whitehead and some of his followers, and to suggest its usefulness in present times. The article also examines the emergence and development of the early modern mechanistic view mainly as reflected by Whitehead and other philosophers from the beginning of the 20th century, when there was an increased interest in a critical reevaluation of the foundations of modern thinking. This brief historical overview exposes the close relationship between the worldview of a given era and the understanding of humanity. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the mechanical worldview, view of life, and humankind dominated, and its popularity considerably increased in the course of the 20th century. However, there were notable alternatives to the mechanistic views virtually during the whole modern period. Some movements were influential during the 19th century, but more elaborated and philosophically more complex alternatives were emerging at beginning of the 20th century (see Lucas, 1989).

## 2 Early Modern Thought and the Development of Mechanicism

There are several reasons to examine the journey of the western mind from its medieval perspective to its modern mechanistic worldview of the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Modern science has mechanistic foundations, and our understanding of the world as well as human beings heavily resides in modern science. It is not the aim of this article to study this journey in detail, but a partial historical examination will be beneficial for my main argument.

Medieval philosophy was dominated by rational thinking, appeal to written dogma, authorities, deductive method of inquiry, and emphasis on the relation of any intellectual enterprise to religious goals. Solely a few scholastics emphasized the role of experience, experiment, and the concrete material world perceivable with our senses for the cognition of the world, but these empiricist appeals tend to result in skepticism.

These exceptions set aside we can agree with A. N. Whitehead that “the Middle Ages formed one long training of the intellect of Western Europe in the sense of order. [...] It was preeminently an epoch of orderly thought, rationalist through and through” (1997, pp. 11–12). The natural philosophy of the late medieval and early modern period was predominantly Aristotelian, while cosmology was derived from both Aristotle’s physics and Ptolemy’s astronomy. It was the discipline of astronomy that underwent a fundamental change, which was crucial to the scientific revolution initiated by N. Copernicus and to the rise of modern science as such including the formation of the modern worldview and the conception of humanity. It is thus understandable that so much attention has been devoted to the history of astronomy of this period (dating circa from the 14th to 17th centuries). However, natural philosophy was also considerably transformed during this period.

Scholastic authors mostly relied on Aristotle’s works. It is noteworthy that Aristotle’s philosophy was open to various interpretations and thus could be developed in different ways, which is probably the reason why it was influential for so long. Although the scholastics suggested some innovations to his system, these remained within the framework of Aristotle’s system. On the other hand, Renaissance thinkers also worked with quite different alternative natural philosophies, that is, they were willing to go beyond the tradition of Aristotle’s natural philosophy (Blair, 2008, pp. 372–373).

This willingness may have opened a quite new era in natural philosophy, although the first alternatives are remarkably different from the mechanistic philosophy. Perhaps Plato was the most influential and most important alternative to Aristotle. Platonism and Neoplatonism played a crucial role in the philosophical thinking of diverse philosophers including the pioneers of modern science.

It is Kepler’s thought that is probably the most appropriate example to explore the metaphysical and cosmological transformations of this period. In his works we can trace how the transition from a medieval Aristotelian perception of nature (natural philosophy and cosmology) to first a Neo-Platonic perception,<sup>1</sup> then to a modern mechanistic perception of nature, was historically shaped. Kepler formulated a spiritual principle. He talked about a force that runs through the whole of nature or thought about an active spirit everywhere in the universe. Kepler, as well as most of the platonic philosophers, believed in a soulful cosmos.

This kind of thinking significantly differed from both medieval Aristotelianism and modern mechanistic philosophy. However, Kepler also believed that forces in the universe function much like a clock mechanism rather than a divine living being.

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<sup>1</sup> Although, this term is not accurate enough. Kepler’s natural philosophy was influenced also by Hermetism, William Gilbert, Julius Caesar Scaliger, and Cornelius Gemma (Bialas, 2009, pp. 30–31).

The motions of heavenly bodies are carried out by a simple magnetic force as described by W. Gilbert in his *De magnete*, and similar to the clock mechanism that functions by simple weight (Bialas, 2009, p. 32; see also Gingerich, 1972, p. 354). How to reconcile Kepler's philosophy of nature described above with mechanistic elements in his thinking remains a puzzle for me. What we know is, that the early modern developments in natural philosophy evolved into a dominance of mechanistic thinking in the 18th and 19th centuries. Most of the basic principles of mechanistic philosophy were formulated in the 17th century by such thinkers as R. Descartes, R. Boyle, or I. Newton.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, those thinkers adhered a mechanistic view of nature (although, including living nature), but not a mechanistic view of human beings. Human individuals were believed to have an immortal soul, only their bodies were perceived as mechanisms. The mechanistic principles were neither fully elaborated, nor implemented into the lives of these thinkers. Many of them practiced astrology or alchemy, wrote extensively on theology, and all of them set their work into a religious context believing that they could help to unfold God's creation, and thus approach to knowing God himself.

The 18th-century enlightenment philosophers expanded the mechanistic worldview to a mechanistic anthropology. Human beings were no longer perceived as radically different from the rest of the natural world. The whole universe was viewed as a gigantic clockwork (a frequent and pertinent metaphor), a *machina mundi* (a world machine) made of simple parts (atoms or corpuscles) having some measurable, quantifiable qualities supposedly verifiable by sense perception (mostly sight). The mechanistic worldview always had its opponents, and there were numerous alternatives. The romantic movement, German *Naturphilosophie*, evolutionary cosmologists,<sup>3</sup> and many other philosophical movements had at least one thing in common – their work can be perceived as a protest against mechanistic worldview and human loss of freedom and dignity. At the same time, it can be viewed as an attempt to recover man's place in the universe, or in E. A. Burt's words, an "attempt to reinstate man with his high spiritual claims in a place of importance in the cosmic scheme" (2003, p. 25; see also Lucas, 1989, p. 35; Whitehead, 1997, pp. 75–78). I will return to some of these alternatives later, but first, it will be helpful to outline the main features of mechanistic philosophy, its view of nature, its understanding of humanity, and consider its consequences.

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<sup>2</sup> Although there were important differences between them, as well as between the 18th century materialists, there were also some common elements. I have no space for a closer examination.

<sup>3</sup> "Evolutionary cosmology represents, in particular, a widespread and massive rebellion against the decidedly insufficient and unsatisfactory hegemony of Newtonian reductionistic materialism" (Lucas, 1989, p. 74).

### 3 Main Features of Mechanistic Philosophy and its Problems

There are several ways to describe mechanistic philosophy and derive its essential features. I will focus on the philosophical disciplines severely affected by it and on the assumptions and consequences generally criticized by its opponents. Mechanicism is first and foremost a metaphysical position – it is concerned with both ontology and cosmology. Apart from that, it is related to epistemology and anthropology. The starting point to appraise is ontology. Mechanistic philosophy infers that the world is made of very small (invisible to bare sight) material particles, usually referred to as atoms or corpuscles. These are assumed to possess primary qualities i.e. measurable (or quantifiable) parameters like mass, position, length, width, geometrical shape, velocity, etc. (see e.g. Segall, 2021, p. 24).<sup>4</sup> The ancient concept of atomism mediated by Lucretius' work suited the developments of natural science and philosophy in the 17th century. Atoms were considered indivisible, as is obvious from the Greek original meaning. After the discovery of the nucleus in 1911 and soon after of the subnucleus and many other subatomic particles – these were considered to be the basic elements of matter, the new “atoms” of which the world is made up.<sup>5</sup> In the 20th century the search for the fundamental elementary particle was essential for many physicists, and generally the atomistic thinking in ontology was and up to the present still is relevant. However, the developments of modern 20th-century physics played a pivotal role in giving rise to criticism of mechanistic materialism and stimulated the rise of various alternative ontologies and cosmologies.

Whitehead gives a detailed account of mechanistic ontological assumptions in his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge* (1919), which is later complemented by historical examinations of modern science and philosophy in his *Science and the Modern World* (1997; first published in 1925). He especially criticized the theory of simple location which he unveiled as one of the metaphysical assumptions of modern mechanistic science. According to this metaphysical notion, the world is made of individual bits of matter simply located in space and time (or spacetime), or in Whitehead's words, “of a succession of instantaneous configurations of matter”, or “of simply-located bits of material” (Whitehead, 1997, pp. 50, 58,

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<sup>4</sup> Descartes in his *The World* writes: “Let us add that this matter may be divided into as many parts having as many shapes as we can imagine, and that each of its parts is capable of taking on as many motions as we can conceive. [...] [L]et us regard the differences he [God] creates within this matter as consisting wholly in the diversity of the motions he gives to its parts” (1985, p. 91).

<sup>5</sup> Whitehead reacts to this tendency e.g. in the following quote: “But this materialistic concept has proved to be mistaken for the atom as it was for the stone” (1978, p. 78).

cf. 1919, pp. 2–4). These bits of matter are thus located somewhere in space and in time and are defined by their primary qualities. In principle, they are isolated from the rest of the world because they enter only into external relations. That means their relations are not essential to them, for they do not change the essence of their being.

Another problem of mechanistic science and worldview is the notion of the bifurcation of nature and the related dualism. This dualism divides the world into two separated realms – the isolated objects of the extended, material, quantitative, objective world on the one side and the mental, psychical, qualitative, and subjective world on the other side.<sup>6</sup> The reaction to this element of modern thinking has been intensively reflected practically by every alternative philosophical movement. Although there are noteworthy differences between the German *Naturphilosophie*, romanticism, neorealism, evolutionary cosmologists, classical pragmatists, and Whitehead's process philosophy, there are also some relevant similarities (see Lucas, 1989). We can find studies exploring the interconnections between Whitehead's thinking and the other movements, e.g. thinkers like Morgan Lloyd, G. Santayana, Ch. Peirce, W. James, or F. W. Schelling.<sup>7</sup> M. Segall e.g. concludes that both Whitehead and Schelling agree that “the modern ontological bifurcation separating the physical from the psychical can be healed only through an aesthetic act of creative imagination” (2021, pp. 5–6).

The dominance of the natural sciences has led to a preference for certain types of experience. In classical modern thinking, we usually thought about sense perception, with a special focus on sight (see Weber, 2020, pp. 118–119). Classical modern philosophers, when thinking about their epistemological questions, usually thought about a conscious subject, and focused on a state of consciousness that we could call an ordinary state, normal state, or “consciousness-zero” (see Weber, 2009, p. 346). However, we know that there are several types of experience and types of consciousness.<sup>8</sup> Both classical pragmatism and process philosophers, as well as some other alternatives to modern mechanistic philosophy, stress the need for an inclusion of all the diverse dimensions of experience (Soelch, 2011, p. 7). For W. James, the requirement of consistency between different types of subjective experience was also important (Soelch, 2011, pp. 4–8). Whitehead especially underlined the importance of aesthetic feelings and the more fundamental, primitive types of

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6 Descartes was, perhaps, the most important figure formulating a philosophical system underlying metaphysical dualism (*res extensa* and *res cogitans*).

7 See e.g. Lucas (1989), Segall (2021), Soelch (2011), and Gare (2002).

8 For example, internal perceptions include interoceptive and proprioceptive data. Interoceptive perception complements the external senses. We feel, for example, the messages coming from our bodily organs or tissues. It is usually operating unconsciously and through reflex action. Proprioception gives us information about the position and movement of our body (see Weber, 2020, p. 120). On the different types of consciousness see e.g. Weber (2012, pp. 17–20).

experience and consciousness. We cannot simply ignore some types of subjective experience just because they do not fit in our metaphysical scheme and highlight only one type of experience as well as one state of consciousness, which thereby underlie our metaphysical worldview we do not want to abandon. Radical empiricism as a basis for our cognition of the world was common to both Whitehead and James (Segall, 2021; Soelch, 2011; Weber, 2020).

## 4 From Cosmology to Anthropology

In modern times, emphasis is placed on the common features of the human body and human behavior with other animals. This demonstrates man's connection with nature and their dependence on the laws of nature. In this context, the question of man is closely related to the question of free will. Humans are often perceived as determined by their instincts, needs, and reflexes; as merely reacting to stimuli given to them by their environment. And ultimately, human beings are determined by the laws of nature, which govern the particles of which the body is composed. The world is also conceived as deterministic. The causal sequence of individual events governed by the inevitable and fixed laws of nature cannot be interrupted. All events in nature are not only controlled but also predetermined by the laws of nature. Free will is thus either an illusion or it must be redefined to fit into this deterministic scheme of things. To illustrate we can say that free will (to the extent that it can be said to exist) is a known necessity, and that it resides in understanding the laws of the world; in understanding our instinctive animal drives and accepting all of that. Generally, in the modern period (in contrast to premodern conceptions) the emphasis is primarily on the animal aspects of human beings.

The modern world is often seen as fully determined by the impersonal, immutable, and inevitable laws of nature. Within the history of modern thought from the Renaissance to the 20th century, it is possible to trace, first, how the worldview was gradually transformed and, consequently, how the understanding of man gradually shifted in a new direction. In the 17th century, the metaphysical dualism of Descartes was formulated. According to this dogma, there are two substances – the spiritual and the material. Human beings are also dual. Descartes thought of mind and body as separate substances having nothing in common, and he believed they have no causal influence on each other (see e.g. 1985, pp. 314–315). In his *Treatise on Man* Descartes frequently uses the terms machine and mechanism when writing on the human body and animals (which lack reason) (see e.g. 1985, pp. 107–108), and he compares the body to the functioning of a clock: “I should like to consider that these functions follow from the mere arrangement of the machine's organs every bit as naturally as the movements of a clock or other automaton follow from the arrangement of its

counter-weights and wheels” (1985, p. 108). However, the problem of communication between these two substances (also called the psychophysical problem) has haunted philosophers and accordingly led to two different types of monism. On the one hand, there is idealism, on the other hand, much more dominant materialism (Whitehead, 1997, pp. 63–64). Since the emergence of the early modern worldview, about two centuries have passed before the view of man has been transformed too. In the 18th century, humans are no longer an exception within nature. They have only a body, and no soul, and are very much like other animals, only more complicated. J. O. de La Mettrie was the chief promoter of such a view of man (described in his *Man a machine* first published in 1747).<sup>9</sup>

## 5 Whitehead's Organic Philosophy

In his *Science and the Modern World* Whitehead (1997, pp. 80, 107) calls his position “organic mechanism” to contrast the modern metaphysical doctrine, although this term can be misleading (see Lucas, 1989, p. 94). Later in his *Process and Reality* he uses the term “philosophy of organism” (1978, p. xi), further, it is used by Whitehead's later interpreters (see, e.g. Plamondon, 1979; Segall, 2021; Weber, 2009, 2012, 2020). For Whitehead, it means the internal relatedness of actual entities.<sup>10</sup> In his metaphysical system, this internal relatedness is temporally asymmetrical. The present actual occasion that is in its process of becoming (in Whitehead's terminology in its process of concrescence) is internally related to past actual entities because this relation is constitutive for the present actuality (see e.g. Whitehead, 1978, pp. 24–25; Lucas, 1989, pp. 71–72). In other words, this relationship is essential to what it is, or, we could say, to what it becomes. For the past entities, their relations to other entities are external. They have already finished their processes of concrescence and are thus objectified – they have become objects to be prehended by other actualities (in their processes of becoming). On the other hand, the present actualities, while still in their processes of becoming, are subjects. Subjects prehend two kinds of objects – objectified past entities also termed stubborn facts (usually from the immediate past), and eternal objects as forms of possibilities. In the third phase of the process of concrescence, the actual entity integrates the prehended data from the first phase

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9 There were various types of materialism based on different conceptions of matter. La Mettrie himself used a different conception than Descartes. Anyway, he also frequently used mechanical metaphors (see Thomson, 2001, pp. 28–31). “The essential point for La Mettrie is that all organized matter, however small, that is the form of fibres, possesses *un principe moteur*, which is enough to explain all observable phenomena, including human intelligence” (Thomson, 2001, p. 31).

10 Actual entities “are the final real things of which the world is made up”, and these “are drops of experience, complex and interdependent” (Whitehead, 1978, p. 18).

(the objectified past entities) and the given possibilities (the limited set of eternal objects) prehended in the second phase. Finally, the entity decides what it becomes and steps into the realm of being.<sup>11</sup>

In relation to the aims of this article, it is essential to note that according to Whitehead's philosophy of organism all actual entities dispose of at least a certain (even if in some cases almost negligible) degree of freedom. Without an account that provides a metaphysical foundation for freedom in the world, it is always difficult to explain the possibility of freedom (including free will) in case of human beings. The mechanistic philosophy tended to view the extended material world studied by natural sciences as determined; while the human soul, the mental world of subjective qualities is a different world and poses a free will. However, as we already know, this line of thought leads to an untenable metaphysical dualism. Our understanding of man and our worldview are always interconnected. In a machine-like material world, there is no room for human qualities. It is valueless and purposeless, following a fixed routine imposed by external relations. "Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly" (Whitehead, 1997, p. 54). All the secondary qualities are projections of the mind. In the philosophy of organism "freedom, givenness, potentiality, are notions which presuppose each other and limit each other" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 133). These three concepts correspond to the three stages of the process of concrescence of an actual entity. The given data, the stubborn facts of the past physically prehended in the first phase, the limited set of possibilities (the Platonic forms) conceptually prehended in the second phase, and the integration of these prehensions in the third phase followed by a decision. This third phase (or eventually some supplemental phases) corresponds to the notion of freedom from the quotation above.

The possibility of novelty is another important presumption for the possibility of freedom. The actual entities can choose whether they continue the processes given from the past and thus ensure some continuity in the world, or they choose a novel reaction and actualize change. According to Whitehead, a true metaphysical system should give an account of both change and continuity because we clearly experience both, whilst experience is the main source of our cognition of the world.

To sum up, apart from the possibility of freedom, the main features of organic philosophy are as follows (see Weber, 2020): first, the organic interconnectedness (interwovenness) of all entities<sup>12</sup> or in other words the interplay between the

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<sup>11</sup> On the concept of decision in Whitehead's system, see e.g. Whitehead (1978, p. 43).

<sup>12</sup> Weber (2020) mentions the last three points, I stressed the first point motivated e.g. by this quote: "The misconception which has haunted philosophic literature throughout the centuries is the notion of 'independent existence'. There is no such mode of existence; every entity is to be understood in terms of the way it is interwoven with the rest of the universe" (Whitehead, 1974, p. 91).

environment and the individual entities; second, emergence and genuine novelty; third, the atomic character of experience.

## 6 Whitehead's Organic Conception of Humanity

Whitehead did not write on his conception of man extensively. According to J. B. Cobb "Whitehead's doctrine of man has received little attention" (1964, p. 209). Scholars have written since on his conception of the self, the soul, rationality, personality, or consciousness (see e.g. Weber & Weekes, 2009; Smith, 2010; Cobb, 1965). However, his understanding of these terms logically follows from his metaphysical system and thus can be inferred from it. It is another example confirming the assumption that a worldview (cosmology) and a view of humanity (anthropology) are interrelated and interconnected.

As we have described the main features of his organic metaphysical position, similar features hold for his anthropological conception as well. The possibility of genuine novelty, freedom, organic interconnectedness (interwovenness) of all entities, and the interplay between the environment and the individual entities are all central to his understanding of human beings. In Whitehead's (perhaps, atypical) terminology, a human person is a society of actual entities. In the environment of a human person, the actual entities can achieve higher grades of experience, including rationality or consciousness. The degree of freedom achievable in higher grade occasions is not negligible but fundamental, although we should add that consciousness, freedom or rationality are all rather exceptional phenomena.<sup>13</sup> Whitehead describes a human personality in processual terms and a relational context.

Whitehead's philosophy of organism can be viewed as an alternative to idealism and mechanistic materialism. The central terms of these two latter doctrines are mind and matter respectively. The primary term for organic philosophy is correspondingly the concept of organism. Fact remains, we can consider the shift from mechanism to the philosophy of organism from another perspective. For materialism the foundational science is physics. The more complex objects studied by the other sciences are sometimes viewed as (at least in principle) reducible to the objects (and/or phenomena) studied by physics (usually, elementary particles). In the philosophy of organism, biology has a key role as the study of living organisms while physics is the study of non-living organism (see Whitehead, 1997, pp. 148–150). Biology itself can be viewed in different ways concerning its metaphysical basis.

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<sup>13</sup> "It is said that men are rational. This is palpably false: they are only intermittently rational – merely liable to rationality" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 79).

There are several attempts at formulating an organism-centered theory of biology and at accentuation of the concept of life in the scheme of our cognition of the world (see e.g. El-Hani & Emmeche, 2000; Gare, 2008). The philosophy of organism thus provides an organic view of the world, of nature, of life (and living beings), and of human beings.

## 7 A Brief Consideration of Some Contemporary Problems

I will shortly meditate on some questions on the nature of man in the context of the ongoing development of artificial intelligence (AI) and the problem of trans-humanism. This article does not aim to define these concepts, nor does it provide extensive solutions to related problems. I will solely consider the consequences of a possible change in the metaphysical foundation of our (mechanistic) thinking.

One of the questions that can be asked in the context of the developing ever more sophisticated AI is the following: Will AI be able to feel real human emotions (like pain, sorrow, empathy, conscience, etc.), or it will only be able to imitate emotions and act as human beings from the outside but not from its authentic inside world? The answer to this question lies in and heavily depends on our understanding of man. If we perceive human beings as ultimately pre-determined and fully governed by mechanical principles of the body (like instincts, reflexes, brain signals, etc.), then AI will be not essentially different from them. They will possess freedom and emotions to a similar degree as humans. In this case, there is no real free will, with emotions as secondary qualities. But if we perceive human beings as living organisms, self-creative, evolving, experiencing, and feeling real emotions; as having the possibility of free will and responsibility, as having their own intrinsic value, and as having internal relations with other organisms – then AI will be much more different from us humans. AI could imitate human behavior but could not possess the same internal quality as the internal human world. In other words, if we think of human beings in mechanistic terms (and metaphors), then – it is not necessary but more plausible to conclude that – AI can in principle (perhaps in a techno-optimistic future), feel emotions accompanying rational reasoning or intelligence. If we think of human beings in organic terms, then I cannot see any way how to come to the same conclusion. That is, AI cannot in principle, feel (real) emotions; it can only imitate them.

We could similarly apply this line of thought to some questions of trans-humanism. These are related to our perception of the evolution of the human species or our attitude towards the repairing and improvement of humans using technology. Surely, there are more options, but the two worldviews lead to two different

conceptions. A machine-like image of man evolves naturally hand in hand with technological progress and relies on technological progress concerning either his health or the environmental crisis. An organic conception of man imagines rather a spiritual and moral evolution, or an evolution of consciousness embracing ever more extensive types of experience and phenomena, and an evolution of ethics extending the scope of our morality (from our fellow family members to all humanity or even all living beings). It also perceives the human body as a living integrated whole and thus considers the interconnection of the human mind and human body (which are not strictly separated from each other) concerning overall health. The improvement of the human species in this organic view does not exclude the use of technology, but it definitely transcends it and involves a more subtle dimension of organic evolution.

## 8 Conclusion

In this article, we could trace the gradual development of mechanistic philosophy first in ontology and cosmology and later in anthropology. I tried to outline some of the problems and consequences of mechanicism (especially as interpreted by Whitehead). We could see that mechanistic and organic conceptions of the world and humanity render two radically different attitudes to some actual questions concerning AI or the problem of transhumanism. For the mechanistic view, neither AI nor transhumanism represent a significant problem. For the organic view, these concepts represent a too narrow and limited attitude to the understanding of life, human health, or the improvement of the human body and soul (or brain in mechanistic views). I do not want to present Whitehead's views as the final solution to these problems. I offer his philosophy of organism as a possible and promising alternative to the modern mechanistic views of nature and human beings.

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