
FROM GIFT TO GADGET: THE SILICON KINGDOM AND THE LOST MAGIC OF LIFE

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Abstract :

In the past, humans believed that being alive was a gift- a divine blessing of something special given to us by a higher power (for example, think of a beautiful song which you didn't write, but were lucky enough to hear). This was called 'Grace'.

But the present scenario has changed, crossing the first quarter of the 21st century. Now, life is no longer just a gift; some people consider it a machine that can be fixed (for example, just like an old phone that needs an upgrade). This new idea is called 'Techne' or, in easy terms, engineering.

This paper depicts two different worlds to understand the shift. First is The Old Way, where thinkers like St. Thomas Aquinas argued that humans are made in the 'Image of God'. Second is The New Way, where a group called 'Transhumanists' believes that our bodies are like obsolete hardware. They want us to become 'super-humans' who never die.

This modern 'Tower of Babel (2.0)' is trading Spirit for Silicon, aiming to build a 'Kingdom of Heaven' on earth, built out of code instead of clouds. But here is a catch. This paper serves as a warning that if we try to use technology and turn ourselves into gods, we might lose the very thing that makes us human.

The paper concludes with an affirmation about the world built only on computer chips, which appear all glittering but can also be very gloomy. We must be careful not to build a future where we have all the power of a god, but have forgotten how to be a person.

I wrote this with the hope of reaching beyond the intellect and touching the conscience. Technology is taking over our lives. The digital dominance may come at the cost of our very being. Technology is no longer just a convenience but a threat to our human existence.

Keywords : • Transhumanism • Techne • St. Thomas Aquinas • Omega Point • Theology • Imago Dei • Tikkun Olam • Homo Deus • AI • Divine Comedy

Introduction :

We are witnessing the convergence of Biology and Artificial Intelligence serving a

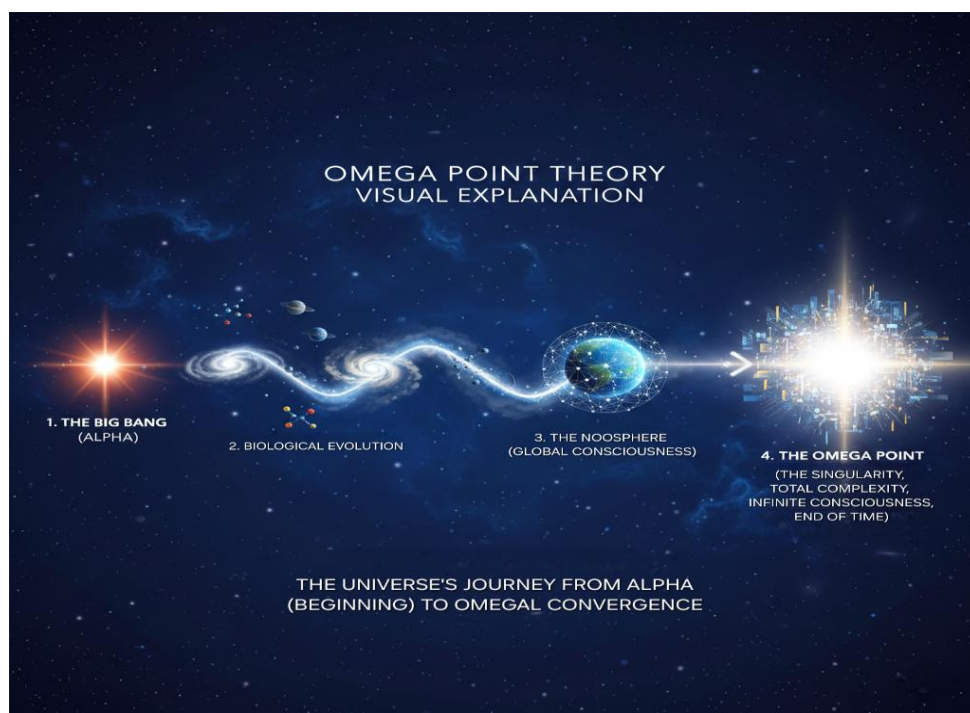


‘Promethean Promise’. We no longer merely observe life, we edit it. But this technological mastery has brought out a sharp philosophical tension.

From asking 'how we can change' through technological capability to 'why we should' into a theological inquiry, we deal with a startling thesis: Transhumanism.

Transhumanists aim to eliminate death and all sorts of suffering with the aid of Techne (i.e. engineering or human craft). But in creating the so called 'Kingdom of Heaven' on earth, we are risking spirituality for a world built with silicon.

As coined by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin the 'Omega Point' is an evolution goal (Chardin 257), which in present times being done through hardware without holiness, and trading divine Grace for human engineering.



The Dogma Of Blasphemy :

In his work, *Daedalus; or, Science and the Future* (1923), J.B.S. Haldane argued that at first all Scientific advances are viewed as an affront to God, as blasphemy to the established order (Haldane 45). But with more advancements it shifts to seeing as a moral mandate.

In 1957, Julian Huxley defined ‘Transhumanism’ as ‘humanity transcending itself through science while remaining man’ (Huxley 13).

The Thomistic View is in direct conflict with Transhumanism. St. Thomas Aquinas sees humanity as a participation in God’s Wisdom (Aquinas I-II q. 91, a. 2). For him ‘our transcendence is found in aligning our will with the Divine, without discarding our biology.

On the one hand, Huxley saw this move towards ‘Posthuman’ state progressive

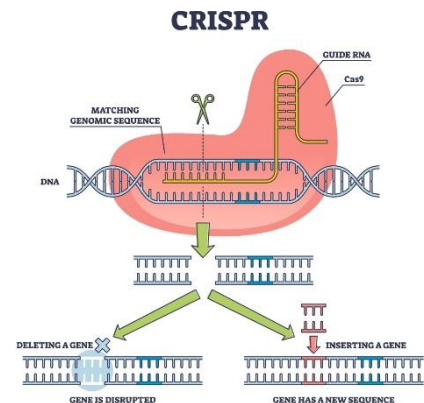


(Huxley 15), while on the other side Aquinas calls it a loss of the 'Imago Dei' (the Image of God) (Aquinas I-II, q. 93).

The New Creators :

Modern technologies are no longer just tools. They have become the new architects of life.

Biotechnological advancements like CRISPR (Doudna and Sternberg 62) has changed human role from being 'Stewards' to 'Dominion'. The Germline editing and similar processes has put humans co-working with God, becoming autonomous craftsmen of the human genome. This is a dark version 'Tikkun Olam' - the Jewish concept of repairing and healing the world (Luria 38).



Neural Interfaces (the Brain-Computer Interface) and other Quantum Complexities such as 'Black Box' AI (Miranda et al. 1528) presents a moral crises. Aquinas, in his 'Treatise on Law' states that- if we cannot trace 'Why' a system decides, we lose the rational moral order behind an action (Aquinas I-II, q. 90-108). Likewise, if we cannot understand how a quantum system decides, we lose human agency and the ability to act as moral beings.

The Transhumanist Declaration (1998) (Humanity+) :

Aquinas' Eternal Law is God-Based. Morality is a reflection of God's rational plan. The Body is a Sacred Temple and the ultimate Goal of life is Beatitude - Union with God (Aquinas I-II, q. 91); whereas the Transhumanist Declaration states that- Morality is centred on 'Sentience' and the reduction of suffering. The Body is treated as an 'obsolete hardware' (FM-2030 16) (coined by FM-2030 in his work: Are you a Transhuman?) and goals for 3-Supers: Super-longevity, Super-intelligence and Super-wellbeing.

Aquinas notes in his first precept of law that "good is to be done... evil avoided" (Aquinas I-II, q. 94, a. 2). The Transhumanists rebranded the 'good' as the optimization of sentience. Aquinas viewed the essential unity of the body and the soul in a human person. But FM-2030 saw the body as a clunky vehicle which is to be upgraded (FM-2030 21).

The Kingdom Without Spirit :

Digital immortality acts as a counterfeit resurrection. 'Mind Uploading' is a materialistic attempt to mimic the soul's eternal life. It seeks to reach the 'Omega Point' (Chardin 257) by replicating data but lacks 'divine spark' or 'spirit' (Imago Dei).

As Yuval Harari notes in Sapiens and Homo Deus (Harari, Sapiens 400; Harari, Homo Deus 45), humanity is shifting from seeking the God's help to acquiring the God's powers.

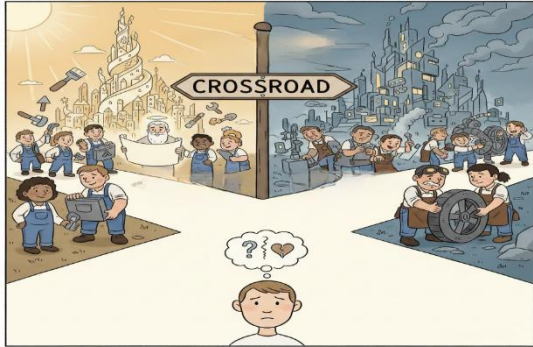
The 'Tower of Babel 2.0' is a Silicon Kingdom which has created a 'Quantum Divide'



- a class-based version of 'Heaven', where entry is purchased, not granted through Grace.

Conclusion :

There is an irony in the very word 'Transhuman'. We need to revisit the use of 'transhuman' as described in 'Dante's Divine Comedy'. In its 1814 translation by Henry Francis Cary, the word 'transhuman' was used to describe 'passing into the divine' (Alighieri Paradiso 1.70); whereas the modern Transhumanism used it to 'replace the divine'.



Warning is that by pursuing 'Kingdom of Heaven' built on Silicon we may achieve '3-Supers', but lose empathy, vulnerability and Beauty that, according to Aquinas, can only be found in God (Aquinas I-II, q. 2, a. 8). Now, 'Humanity' stands at a Crossroad: either to be 'co-workers with God' in healing the world or to become 'autonomous craftsmen' of a world that no longer has room for the Spirit.

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