

Transhumanism and Digitalisation as Challenges to Being Human (SLAH/NSS)

status: ongoing

Research Question and Background

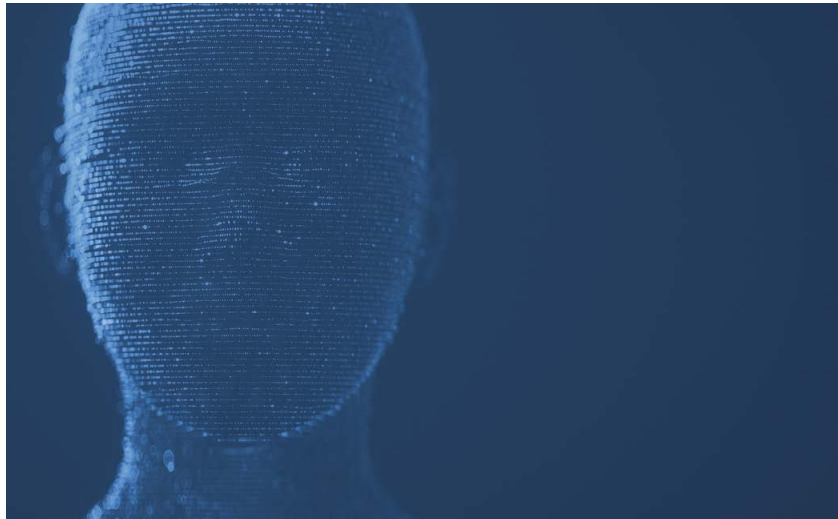
Transhumanism and post humanism conceive human beings as transitional beings who will be transformed into machines in the near future, so that a machine culture replaces the current form of existence. The thought patterns underlying these ideas raise fundamental questions about human beings and their relationship to the world around them: What distinguishes a human being from a machine? What is the significance of the body as a prerequisite for the 'I' experience and its cognitive activity?

Another line of questioning is aimed at capacity building. What skills are needed to be able to differentiate the virtual world from the real one? Linked to this is how we learn to deal with technological achievements in such a way that we use them without letting ourselves be used and in so doing, relinquish all responsibility and freedom.

The effects of the transhumanistic understanding of humanity and the world, and the associated digitalisation, can be felt in all areas of life. There is no area that can escape these questions, no research question that remains untouched by them. Thus, from the research project on the humanisation of human beings through literature, in which the topic of the image of the human being is a partial aspect, the question of the aims pursued by the transhumanists has crystallised.

Relevance and Perspective

Every day there is news about new inventions and developments in the field of AI Technology, which continues to use, promote, support and complement our existence, work, leisure and communication in ever wider areas, in ways that are mostly misunderstood, and which increasingly shape our habits and the habits of our children. Increasing mechanisation affects everyone, both



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in the workplace and in the private sphere. Thus, raising awareness of the ubiquitous presence of technology and learning techniques will enable us to deal with it in a meaningful way.

Approach, Cooperation and Time Frame

Three conferences were held on this topic (2018, 2019, 2023) and a book in German *Das Ende des Menschen? Wege durch und aus dem Transhumanismus*, and in two issues of the journal *STIL* [in German] Michaelmas 2022 and 2023. For the past three years, an interdisciplinary colloquium has been held on these issues, together with the Natural Sciences Section and experts from media education, computer science, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, literary studies, visual arts and eurythmy.

There is further collaboration within the Section with the research group on sensory physiology, as well as with the Visual Arts Section and the Section for the Performing Arts in relation to the necessity and effectiveness of art in today's society.

Literature (selection)

A. Eichenberg, Chr. Haid (Hrsg.): *Das Ende des Menschen? Wege durch und aus dem Transhumanismus*, Dornach 2020. (In German) [*The End of Man? Ways through and out of Transhumanism]; T. Fuchs: *Verteidigung des Menschen. Grundfragen einer verkörperten Anthropologie*, Berlin 2020. (in German) [*Defence of the Human Being. Basic Questions of an Embodied Anthropology]; E. Hübner: *Menschlicher Geist und Künstliche Intelligenz. Die Entwicklung des Humanen inmitten einer digitalen Welt*, Stuttgart 2020. (in German) [*Human Spirit and Artificial Intelligence. The Evolution of the Human in the Midst of a Digital World]. *The Human Spirit and Artificial Intelligence*, Edwin Hübner, Andreas Luckner, Christiane Haid, Goetheanum, 3 May 2021, {<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e7u9vQPgBYc>}