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Singularity believers and the new utopia of transhumanism

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Abstract

Transhumanism is a cultural and philosophical movement born in the United States during the 1980s as a product of the technological revolution represented by the mass distribution of information technology and cybernetics, as well as by the first scientific studies on nanotechnologies. Transhumanism preaches the possibility of a technological enhancement of the human body, both through the use of technological prosthesis that by means of a life extension made possible by the use of genetics, biomedical engineering and nanotechnology. The ultimate goal of transhumanism is to completely overcome the need of a biological hardware through the integral fusion between man and machine made possible by the mind-uploading, a technique that would pour out on a digital infrastructure the entire contents of the human mind.

In this paper I intend to analyze the assumptions of transhumanism from a perspective of "technological imagination", claiming that this cultural movement represents a new kind of utopia, if not even a modern New Age-style religion that blends techno-optimistic statements of scientific and technological research with the collective imagination of cyberculture, resulting in a kind of mystique of technological development. The concept of "singularity", preached by the theorists of transhumanism (Ray Kurzweil, Nick Bostrom, Max More and others) seems quite similar to the Christian idea of the "end of times", after which it is expected the emergence of a new type of humanity.

In particular, the argument that transhumanism can be considered a new kind of "technological" religion is based on the analysis of the role that the issue of death plays within the transhumanist discourse. As in most religions and utopian narratives, transhumanism believes that it is possible to defeat death, in this case through the use of scientific and technological progress. Transhumanism supporters are willing to put their bodies into hibernation to wait the future resurrection in a world where death has been defeated. Therefore, transhumanism can be considered a cult of our times, a product of a particular social imaginary of the techno-scientific development.

Keywords

Transhumanism / Technological Singularity / Posthuman / Utopias / Technological Imagination / Re-Enchantment.

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1. A technocratic ideology

When asked by physicist Stephen Hawking which fundamental question in science he would give an answer, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said: «What will enable us to live forever? How do we cure all diseases?» (see D'Onfro, 2015): an answer that may perplex those unfamiliar with Silicon Valley's ideology. In recent years, the quest for radical life extension, i.e. the search for the formula of eternal youth, has become an obsession for digital gurus. The influential venture capitalist and former PayPal's founder Peter Thiel is funding with more than generous checks a number of scientists engaged in the research on aging through one of its nonprofit organizations, Breakout Labs, which aims to provide financial support to start-ups active in the areas at the edge of biology and biomedical engineering. «I've always had this really strong sense that death was a terrible, terrible thing. I think that's somewhat unusual», Thiel admitted in a recent interview with *Washington Post*'s journalist Enjung Cha (2015). «Most people end up compartmentalizing, and they are in some weird denial and acceptance about death, but they both have the result of making you very passive. I prefer to fight it».
In this struggle, Thiel is in good company. British biochemist Aubrey de Grey founded in 2009 in Mountain View, at the heart of Silicon Valley, the SENS Foundation, a nonprofit organization that operates in the quest for immortality. His book *Ending Aging* (2007) significantly affected the debate on radical life extension, dropping many taboos on the inevitability of death and convincing many new economy's entrepreneurs that invest in the fight against aging is not an oddity. In 2011 Russian billionaire Dmitry Itskov sent to a number of his richest colleagues worldwide a letter pushing them for investing in the search for immortality. Later that year, he founded the 2045 Initiative, a project that aims to achieve, by that date, the biggest dream of transhumanism: the mind-uploading, that is the transfer of human consciousness on an eternal and unbreakable digital support.
Ray Kurzweil is the main guru of transhumanism, a school of thought risen in the latest years to philosophy and which today enjoys the highest esteem among Californian CEOs. An engineer, inventor, writer, lecturer, since 2013 Kurzweil is in Google's payroll, leading a top-secret project on human-machine interfaces. Every day Kurzweil sits at the table and consumes his breakfast, the only meal of the day. Calories are carefully calculated: 85 from berries, 170 from dark chocolate infused in coffee, 100 calories of smoked salmon and mackerel, 100 calories of vanilla soy milk, between 150 and 350 calories of porridge and a cup of green tea. Instead of sugar, he uses stevia, a natural sweetener that lately is becoming trendy. For the rest of the day, pills are enough. "Enough" is a mildly, as he swallows more than a hundred every day, some of which are experimental and not yet placed on the market. Such a diet costs to Kurzweil, 67 years old, a few thousand euro a day, but he is one who can afford it: he made millions by patenting some frontier

technologies, from the OCR text to the new voice recognition systems. A successful futurist, his bestseller *The Singularity is Near* (2005) sold millions of copies and he earns around $50,000 for each conference. At Google, he can now completely devote himself to the realization of his greatest dream: to teach the semantics of human language to the machines, in order to accelerate the development of more sophisticated artificial intelligences. A goal which, according to Kurzweil, will be reached by 2040, when the machines will surpass human intelligence, paving the way for a new era, that of technological Singularity.

Transhumanism aims to promote scientific research and technological development in the fields of life extension and human enhancement, in order to obtain in the future a "post-human" species, whose members can theoretically live forever thanks to breakthrough findings in medicine, biotechnology, nanotechnology, computer science and artificial intelligence. Actually, even if posthumanity will enjoy an improved body free from disease and aging, this physical body will always be threatened by accidental events. Therefore, the ultimate goal is to get rid of hardware by transferring the whole content of our brains inside of supercomputers, so to preserve the software, i.e. our consciousness, untouched. This technique, called mind-uploading, is the final frontier of transhumanism, the total fusion between humans and artificial intelligences.

Not all transhumanists share this belief of a future merging with artificial intelligence. Although the Singularity (defined by its detractors as the "rapture of the nerds", the ending point of transhumanist eschatology) is theorized by people like Kurzweil or Itskov, some prefer to keep their physical body forever, albeit enhanced by genetic engineering, rather than transfer their minds in cybernetic supports and break away the biological hardware forever. Another widespread belief among transhumanists is the need to use cryonics as a means to preserve their bodies after biological death, in order to wait for the moment - considered imminent - when we will find a way to cure aging and other fatal illnesses, so to bring back people in a state of artificial hibernation to a healthy life.

Predictably, over the years the transhumanist movement has been the subject of many attacks. The members of the movement generically call their critics "bio-luddites", believing that at the basis of their considerations there are irrational fears linked to the development of science and technology in the biotechnology sector. This definition applies in particular to those who support the thesis systematized by Francis Fukuyama (2002) whereby the American political scientist calls for a close regulation of all the research and methodologies in the field of biotechnology «whose point of arrival is the "tailored" child».

Some successful novels have quite recently popularized principles and aims of transhumanism, although depicting it in a very negative light. In Michel Houellebecq's *The Possibility of an Island* (2005), the values of transhumanism are read in a nihilistic perspective, similar to what predicted by Fukuyama: posthumans in the novel, despite living hundreds of years and enjoying immortality through cloning, live without any

stimulus, locked in their homes and plunged into idle philosophical reflections, besieged by the pain of living that they do not want recognize.
According to Francesco Paolo Adorno (2010), a professor of moral philosophy and bioethics at the University of Salerno, the problem of what he calls "post-human ideology" is in fact the rejection of Heidegger's concept of "being-towards-death". Individuals acquire their own identity and their responsibility for their own existence through the awareness of the finite nature of their lives. Learning to die is therefore that which gives form to the "life project" of each of us. Immortality makes the existence meaningless and leads to the extreme nihilism in which Houellebecq's posthumans are buried.
Dan Brown's techno-thriller *Inferno* (2013) depicts transhumanism as a dangerous sect of fanatics, ready to radical solutions, such as stopping population growth through mass sterilization, in order to facilitate the fulfillment of their utopia.

2. The Final Utopia?

A large part of the sociological and philosophical critics to the transhumanist phenomenon focused on this term, "utopia". In his essay *Reinventing Cockaigne*, University of Exeter's philosopher and sociologist Michael Hauskeller (2012:42) reads the transhumanist discourse from a critic point of view. The basic assumption of the transhumanists, he writes, is that «through the convergence of nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science, we would soon be able to solve all the world's problems», so that «technological progress would result in "world peace" and "evolution to a higher level of compassion and accomplishment"», as well as in «a "golden age of prosperity" and "economic wealth on a scale hitherto unimaginable"». These statements, according to him, are not far from the utopian narratives of the past as the ones of Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, where science and technology solved all the problems: «Just like the medieval Land of Cockaigne, in which food and drink rain down from the sky, sexual restraints no longer exist, and nobody has to die or fall ill, or the Fountain of Youth, which occurs in one form or another in countless legends and has the power to return to us the lost youth we often sorely miss, the transhumanist account of posthuman existence is an obvious wish-fulfilment fantasy».
Hauskeller believes that these utopias derive from techno-optimistic and techno-deterministic discourses recurring in the scientific community working at the frontiers of science and technology research, and which in turn derive from the belief in human perfectibility emerged during the ages of Enlightenment and Positivism. It is the faith expressed, for example, by the Marquis de Condorcet (1955) in his 1794 *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, in which he affirmed that the liberation of man «from the empire of fate» and «from the enemies of its progress» will enable

humans to improve themselves to the point of extending life indefinitely and achieving higher levels of «truth, virtue and happiness». Hauskeller (2012:42) notes that the same beliefs about the need to free humans from religious dogmas and get rid of those transhumanists call "bio-luddites" or "techno-luddites" are the basis of transhumanist creed. He concludes: «What drives transhumanists and their persistent call for radical human enhancement is the same old desire that expresses itself in ancient myths and modern utopias: the desire for overcoming natural restraints, for a life not limited by things that we cannot control. What has changed is merely that for the first time in history, mainly due to the rapid development of the biosciences and related technologies, it actually seems possible that we will very soon achieve all this».

Other scholars have pointed out that transhumanism could be compared to a new religion. It seems clear, for example, that the idea of technological Singularity has much in common with religious eschatology. Hauskeller (2012:42) defines the Singularity «the final utopia», even if he does not come to read it from a theological point of view. The Singularity represents the culmination of an accelerated transformation of humanity under the influence of techno-scientific progress, and its own definition implies the impossibility to describe the post-singularity future. The analogy with the Christian vision of the world that will come after the final judgment is clear: even there it is impossible, as Christ says in the Gospel, to describe to those who live before the end of times how the "New Jerusalem" and the resurrection of the dead will be like. Many transhumanists await the Singularity as some sort of "second coming". Kurzweil, its main supporter, believes that it will happen around 2040. It is worthwhile to underline that prediction of dates relating to an epochal change is typical of the Christian messianism, especially the American evangelical one.

According to Joel Dinerstein (2006:58), professor of cultural studies at Tulane University in New Orleans, progress would have secularized the concept of Christian redemption inventing the idea of "future" as a sort of metaphysical reality to come where all the utopian dreams of man will be fulfilled. Therefore, futurists and transhumanists as well (Dinerstein consider them a kind of sectarian offshoot of the firsts) should be seen as secular theologians committed to develop theodicies for the forthcoming "technological offspring". He also points out a fundamental difference between the classical utopias and the transhumanist utopia: while the first ones hypothesized the improvement of society, leaving the human person substantially unchanged, transhumanism considers as its ultimate goal the enhancement of the human being as an individual, placing its social dimension into the background.

As one can imagine, transhumanism's theorists do not share this criticism. Although one of the founding fathers of the movement, Max More, admits a filiation from medieval and Renaissance utopias - European alchemists, he writes, can be considered "proto-transhumanists", and their modern quest for the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life is carried on with scientific methods - he rejects the idea that transhumanism can be called a

religion. More (2013) prefers to use the term "eupraxsofia", coined by American philosopher Paul Kurtz, a member of secular humanism: this term refers to a non-religious philosophy of life that rejects the faith and the supernatural. More highlights the eminently social nature of transhumanism, based on cogent moral and ethical values and on the aim of improving humanity even before man as individual.

Dinerstein (2006:58) disagrees and writes: «GNR [acronym for genetics, nanotechnology and robotics] enthusiasts assume technological progress will produce social progress. Yet even if GNR technologies come on-line as predicted, why would this produce a better society rather than just health, hedonism, and mobility for the upper classes? It won't; that's just how the myth works. Technological progress is the quasi-religious myth of a desacralized industrial civilization; it is sustained through new technological products, not empirical social change».

One of the first supporters of this vision of transhumanism as a postmodern mystique was Erik Davis, a pioneer of cultural studies on technological mythologies and author of TechGnosis. Above all, Davis (2001) deconstructs the assumptions of extropianism, the leading transhumanist avant-garde when he wrote his book. He criticizes its hyper-liberal assumptions - he defines transhumanists, indeed, "techno-libertarians" - and brands Max More a "spiritual leader", accusing transhumanism to be nothing more than a scientifically accurate New Age movement: «Extropians have spent a lot of time plotting out neo-Darwinian future scenarios dominated by artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, smart drugs, weird physics, and massive government deregulation. […] But in doing so, they resurrect patterns of identity and desire that resemble the most transcendental of mysticisms, and it's the simultaneous commitment to cold hard reason and speculative fancy that makes their techgnosticism more compelling than most varieties found in the digital wing of the New Age».

Among the "techgnosis" elements Davis (2001) attributes to the transhumanist movement, we find the same assumptions recalled by later critics: from the Singularity, «a term poached from the science of nonlinear dynamics and injected with millennialist yearning», to the cult of anti-aging pills, from transhumanists' urge to «scour technical journals and websites for signs that DNA's planned obsolescence may be forestalled», to their passion for cryonics and the dream of transferring their consciousness into a computer.

This latter theory, according to Davis, shows that transhumanist mysticism is more similar to Gnosticism. While the Christian belief is based on the incarnation of God in a human body that suffers, dies and resurrects, historical Gnosticism, indeed, questioned the incarnation and assumed that Christ manifested himself to mankind through a mere simulation of bodily form. Davis (2001) quotes philosopher and anthropologist William Irwin Thompson's *The American Replacement of Nature* (1991) where he writes: «With its detestation of the imprisonment of the soul in matter, its imagery of mind as light, male, and informational, a logos spermaticos, and the flesh as dark, female, and entrapping,

Gnosticism is a basin of attraction that awaits those naive technologists who step outside modern society's conventional worldview».

Recounting the impressions resulting from a Humanity+ meeting, philosopher and professor of bioethics at the University of Minnesota Carl Elliott (2003) also stresses the religious inspiration that characterizes the transhumanist culture. It is based, he says, even on authentic "sacred texts", as Eric Drexler's *The Engines of Creation* (1986), in which the capacity of the next nanotechnology revolution to defeat death was advocated for the first time; or Hans Moravec's *Mind Children* (1990) - that Davis (2001) defines «an Extropian classic so full-on that it's sometimes tough to believe the author is serious» - who first debated the theme of mind-uploading. In addition, Elliott writes, like all religious fundamentalists, transhumanists divide the world in believers and unbelievers (the "bio-luddites") and support the needs of mass evangelism.

Elliott (2003) also affirms that the belief in the Singularity is very similar to the messianic expectation in the end of time shared by many sects and religions. However, considering the fact that the majority of transhumanists is «openly hostile to organized religions», he suggests, like Hauskeller, «that transhumanists are old-fashioned utopians». The cultural growth medium of their beliefs should be identified in the Silicon Valley ideology, founded on liberalism and the «idealistic faith in the power of technology to make the world a better place», although Elliott (2003) claims that transhumanists underestimate the possible negative consequences of a certain type of technological development on social: «The transhumanist enthusiasm for scientific research represents an extreme version of the kind of idealism that will need to be tempered by an effective system of research regulation», he states.

In a recent article, Oxford Internet Institute's philosopher Luciano Floridi (2015: 14) stood up against what he calls the "Singularitians", as opposed to those he calls "Altheists". The essence of Floridi's argument is that theorists of artificial intelligence (AI) divide into two different camps, those who believe in the possibility of creating the so-called strong artificial intelligence, that is self-conscious, and those who believe this goal unachievable. Actually, Floridi misunderstands the speeches of so-called "Singularitians" because he includes among them both personalities that belong to the transhumanist movement, like Nick Bostrom, and those who do not belong to it and indeed seem to fear the Singularity hypothesis (e.g. Bill Gates, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, who recently took a stand against the prospect of a superintelligence). According to Floridi (2015: 14), all of them are part of what he calls the "Church of the Singularity", whose aim would be «to ensure that the Singularity either does not happen or, if it does, it is benign and will benefit humanity». Here the confusion of Floridi's argument is obvious, since transhumanists - that certainly should be included among the members of this "Church of the Singularity" - actively support the Singularity scenario, and never would operate to prevent its realization.

However, the interesting part of his consideration consists in counterpoising "Singularitians" to "Altheists", i.e. the atheists of AI, who do not share the "article of faith"

of the feasibility of a self-conscious AI. As Floridi (2015: 14) says: «Both Churches seem to have plenty of followers in California, the place where Hollywood sci-fi movies, wonderful research universities like Berkeley, and some of the most important companies in the digital world live side by side. This may not be accidental, especially when there is a lot of money involved. For example, everybody knows that Google has been buying AI tech companies as if there were no tomorrow». Therefore, while Floridi misunderstands the basic goals of transhumanism, he locates in the Singularity the core of a new faith, especially prolific among Californian digital gurus.

3. Singularity's Cosmologies

The ambitious vision of transhumanism goes far beyond the belief in the technological Singularity and in the radical life extension. In 1982, sociologist William Sims Bainbridge penned a manifesto entitled Religions for a Galactic Civilization, in which he advocated a kind of religion to promote the spread of human civilization in the outer space. Twenty years later, the birth of the Order of Cosmic Engineers represented the first fulfillment of Bainbridge's aims (in the meantime, he became Program Director of the Division of Information and Intelligent Systems at the National Science Foundation). According to members of the Order, «its ultimate, very long-term aspiration - its cosmic-scale mission if you like - [is] the permeating of this universe - by means of cosmic engineering interventions such as so-called 'computronium' - with benign intelligence» (see Prisco, 2012).

The motivation behind this cosmological purpose is explained by physicist and computer scientist Giulio Prisco, former executive director of the World Transhumanist Association and co-founder of the Order of Cosmic Engineers, which later he transformed into the "Turing Church". Prisco's main concern is to reverse the gradual heat death of the universe. While the universe, if left to itself, would indeed end in a distant future, under the inexorable pressure of the second law of thermodynamics, to become a dead and uninhabitable place, intelligent life could intervene to prevent this unfortunate fate. In the words of Prisco (2015): «Our descendants – my grand-... -grandchildren, and yours, will go to the stars, evolving beyond imagination, and join the community of Gods. Or perhaps there is no community of Gods yet, in which case we will be the first intelligent life forms to build Gods, and become Gods. Eventually, the Godlike children of intelligent organic life, including our grand- ... -grandchildren, will re-engineer space-time and the fabric of reality and steer them toward a desired outcome».

Ray Kurzweil (2005) asserts that vision, too. He calls the sixth and final age of the universe "The Intelligent Destiny of the Cosmos", the moment when the universe is saturated with intelligence. At that point, as he explains in *The Singularity is Near*, «it will 'wake up', be conscious, and sublimely intelligent. That's about as close to God as I can imagine».

Theology elaborated by the Turing Church on the basis of these beliefs supports the possibility, in the distant future, to reconstruct the information belonging to each living being ever existed, making a real resurrection, if not physical, at least spiritually. Thus the benefits of transcendence will also be extended to all those who have lived before the Singularity. According to Prisco (2015): «Eventually, the Gods will be able to bring the dead back to life, including you and I».

This cosmological vision has been less explored than the most well-known radical utopias relating to the radical life extension and the mind-uploading, but it is an integral part of the transhumanist creed. It does not come from the Silicon Valley techno-utopian ideology, but has its roots in the theories of the Russian mystic and philosopher Nikolai Fyodorov (1829-1903), and his best-known supporter, the pioneer of astronautics Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (1857-1937). Fyodorov's philosophy of Cosmism is at the base of projects such as the Order of Cosmic Engineers and its later incarnation, the Turing Church. The basic idea of Cosmism is that transcendence will not happen in a spiritual world to come, but in our own material universe, thanks to science and its advancements. According to Fyodorov, in the future, humanity would be able to control every atom and molecule of the universe, allowing us to "reassemble" the remains of every human being lived in the past. To achieve this goal, humanity should acquire the capability of travelling in the interplanetary and interstellar space - as Tsiolkovsky preached - where the atoms that belonged to deceased persons will eventually be dispersed over thousands of years. The agreement with Kurzweil's statements is self-evident.

In a recent pamphlet, titled *Against Transhumanism: The delusion of technological transcendence*, physicist Richard A.L. Jones (2016), a lecturer at Sheffield University and author of the influential book *Soft Machines: nanotechnology and life* (quite appreciated among transhumanists), argues that these two aspects of transhumanism, namely the eschatological expectation of the Singularity and the cosmological vision, «converge on the idea of a Millennium – a period, believed to be imminent, when mankind would enjoy a sin-free existence of abundance, not on any spiritual plane, but in this world». Jones locates the common origin of these beliefs in Joachim of Fiore's preaching. In Joachim's vision, after the age of the law, which ended with the advent of Jesus, and the age of the gospel, that is the current one, it would come the age of spirit, a thousand year reign of the saints. Transhumanism would share with the Joachimism the idea of historical inevitability, which turns the traditional messianic expectation in the modern confident expectation of a technological transcendence. According to Jones (2016), in Kurzweil's *The Age of Spiritual Machines* (1999), «one can hear the echoes of Joachite prophecies down the centuries».

Therefore, is not by chance if, just recently, several members of the Catholic Church in Italy have shown their interest in the transhumanist phenomenon. With its technologically tangible (apparently, at least) promise of immortality available to all, not only to the righteous and the chosen ones, its idea that you can transfer your consciousness into a

computer, irrelevant of the Christian concept of "soul", and finally its own cosmologies, transhumanism poses a clear challenge to Church's dogmas.

One of the most prominent stances is that of Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture. In an article on the cultural columns of the influential Italian newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore, Ravasi has remembered as the first theorist of transhumanism, the biologist Julian Huxley, coined this new word in a book unequivocally entitled *Religion without Revelation* (Huxley, 1927). By arguing that transhumanism is «basically obedient to the experimental system of science and technology, without asking - at least on a systematic level - inquiries and premises of a philosophical nature, let alone theology» Ravasi (2015) criticizes the transhumanism's reductionist approach, its rejection of Cartesian body-mind dualism and its emphasis on the first term, the body, considered in an evolutionary perspective as a freely-improving prosthesis.

Ravasi's editorial is just the latest in a series of stands taken by the Christian religious circles against transhumanism. In an interview on the subject in 2010, American theologian Robert Gahl, professor of Ethics at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome, called transhumanism bluntly «an anti-Christian concept», openly criticizing the aims of those «transhumanists anti-Christian materials, mostly Americans and Britons» who «seek immortality on Earth, extending life forever, being eternal», and pointing out: «But this is not a better life, with a beatific vision of God» (see Viglione, 2010). More recently, Cardinal Angelo Bagnasco, president of the Italian Episcopal Conference, has connected the Catholic bogeyman of "gender ideology" to the goal of «building a "transhuman" in which man appears as an aimlessly nomad without an identity» (see Santomiero, 2015). Quoting Bagnasco's sentence, leading editor of the Catholic online magazine "Aleteia" Luca Massacaro (2015) declared that «if today there really was an ideology which fights against the very idea of humanity created in the image and likeness of God (with its symbolic importance and value), then this would be transhumanism».

Although there are attempts at convergence between transhumanism and some Christian churches (including examples such as the Mormon Transhumanist Association, founded in 2007, which sees transhumanism as the fulfillment of Mormon prophecy), the reasons behind the incompatibility are obvious. Both transhumanism and revealed religions claim to have the Truth on aspects such as mortality, life after death, and even the purpose of the universe and its ultimate fate. According to Abou Farman (2012), whose researches at Princeton University focus on the relationships between religion and secularism, «the Singularitarian vision responds to and arises through science's own aporias», namely the impossibility, for science, «to account for meaning and purpose in the universe, the metaphysical extremities». Transhumanism, therefore, would represent an ideal example of the re-enchantment of the world, a phenomenon which is opposed to the growing secularism: «By deploying the concepts of information and intelligence in particular ways, it proposes a science-based cosmology – addressing questions about destiny and purpose which science and secularism, in their disenchanting mode, have been unable, and

unwilling, to answer. The universe it imagines through the technoscientific trope of information is not just cold and meaningless; that universe is intentional, it's about something, even if it's not simply about us humans».
A recent survey (Paura, 2015) on transhumanism in Italy reveals interesting data to support this hypothesis. Although, indeed, a 75% of respondents (belonging to the three main existing groups of transhumanists in Italy) strongly or quite agree with the statement "religions are the main obstacle to the techno-scientific development", thereby showing a deep-rooted mistrust of religious beliefs, some answers to other questions demonstrate the existence of authentic dogmas of faith shared by transhumanists. A 68% believes that a way to prevent biological death will be found within the span of their lives. A similar percentage of respondents are confident that it will be possible to transfer the contents of the human mind on an artificial support within the foreseeable future. And a 59% supports the idea of hibernate his/her own body or brain immediately after death or at the approach of death (which at present is not legally permitted), in the belief that scientific research will solve the problem of death in the future.
Transhumanists argue that these certainties are based on the continuous improvement coming from science and technology, although the majority of the scientific community is deeply skeptical about all three of these hypotheses (ending aging, mind-uploading and the ability to revive hibernating people). It is rather the reading of texts produced by the transhumanist community (e.g. the ones of Kurzweil or de Grey) to consolidate their faith in these utopias. In addition, rely on cryogenic preservation waiting to be revived in the future sounds, ultimately, very similar to the idea expressed in the Eucharistic prayer with the statement "remember also our brothers and sisters who have fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection".

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