

## OPINION

About Sechil Yuzergan's dissertation on the topic

### **IN THE SEARCH OF A POSTHUMAN ERA**

### **A CRITIQUE ON MERGING HUMAN BIOLOGY WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

for awarding the scientific-educational degree "Doctor of Philosophy"

The dissertation has a volume of 208 pages and is divided into an introduction, five chapters, a conclusion and a bibliography. The latter consists of 109 titles in Latin, covering publications mainly in English, with some in Turkish. As a volume of text and literature, the dissertation meets the usual requirements for such a work.

It is clear from the introduction that, although not explicitly stated, the aims of the dissertation are to "examine the impact of modern technology on our lives" (page 4 of the dissertation). This very general formulation is expected to be fleshed out in the further text of the introduction, but from it we learn only that philosophical and ethical questions will be asked about this influence. One of these is whether digitization changes our ontology and related questions about changes in human perception of time, space, reality, existence and our relationships with ourselves and others (*ibid.*).

The idea is to achieve a deeper understanding of contemporary processes shaped by technological progress and to clarify such concepts as transhumanism and posthumanism. Thus, it is clear that expressing skepticism regarding the benefits of technological progress, raising questions about our modern existence related to the development of artificial intelligence, and introducing a historical context or background for the formation and modification of such ideas.

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related to the development of artificial intelligence, and to introduce a historical context or background for the formation and modification of such ideas.

From this, as well as all the text that follows, I conclude that the dissertation is an overview of some contemporary ideas about the nature and role of technology in human existence and tracing them back to certain thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. I do not deny the need for such reviews, but they mainly support the educational part of the Doctor of Philosophy degree and much less its scientific component. As the title suggests, it is a question of a critical view, and not of explanations of the processes in question.

This also explains the structure of the work: the chapters are divided, so to speak, "wholesale", and even where the claim to the construction of an argument is raised, its typical components cannot be found. For example, Chapter II is said to make the following argument (I quote): The advent of evolutionary theories in the 19th century, notably Darwin's theory of natural selection, challenged prevailing beliefs by proposing a worldly, rather than divine, origin of species.“ (p. 11 of the abstract and p. 74 of the dissertation). There is no argument here, just a finding that needs explanation and defense. In fact, everywhere in the text where arguments are discussed, things look like this. The conclusion that can be drawn is that it is about the so-called narrative argumentation, which, by outlining an alternative perspective to the researched one, should show that other interpretations are also possible. The point is, however, that they be properly justified.

If we take a closer look at the individual chapters, we will see that the first deals with the delineation of the evolving technological landscape, which is again a series of descriptions due to an unexplained perspective. The historical references here are to the development of the series of industrial revolutions that occurred in certain periods of Western culture.

In the second chapter we find several definitions of basic concepts, such as that of "technology". The claim is made to outline different philosophical perspectives from which this concept is "seen" differently, but they are not sufficiently specified,

reduced to only three, nor are the authors who defend them criticized in depth. The main emphasis is on the views of Martin Heidegger, which are said to be relevant today, nearly 100 years later, but this relevance needs further justification. Next we find an analysis of the concept of "human nature" which, given the limited volume of the section, is nowhere near as informative as claimed. However, given the task of placing this understanding of human nature in relation to the nature and functions of artificial intelligence, this limitation can be admitted.

The third chapter is devoted to examining the reservations about human enhancement and the arguments in favor of enhancement. It is constructed in the form of a dialogue between proponents and opponents, with Savulescu's and Bostrom's views best highlighted. Not only the individual but also the social consequences of the introduction of the brain-computer interface and other supposed enhancements of human nature and cognitive abilities are discussed. I can define the author's position here as "withhold judgment", which is more typical of journalistic articles than a dissertation. However, such is the overall style of the work.

The fourth chapter deals with two high-profile contemporary intellectual movements called transhumanism and posthumanism, with connections made to Nietzsche's views at the end of the chapter. The difference is explained quite well, but needs some structuring. Again, we do not find a conclusion that the author defends with arguments. This once again confirms the overview nature of the text.

The fifth chapter finally comes to a question called in the abstract "central" to the study (p. 17 of the abstract and p. 133 ff. of the dissertation). Here we also find a thesis defended by the author, namely that digitalization is not a radical change in human ontology, but a continuation of the embodiment of consciousness. For the latter, justification is again resorted to through the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, the abundant contemporary literature on the subject being completely ignored. Acquaintance with it would very likely lead to modifications in the thesis and would certainly contribute to a classical type of argumentation.

It is only in the conclusion that the title of the dissertation first finds its justification in the separate section on criticism of the fusion of artificial intelligence with human biology (page 195 of the dissertation). It is not typical for the conclusion to introduce new topics and new arguments that are not developed in the text. Moreover, it largely repeats the introduction and appears to be the basis of the chapter summary in the abstract.

The content of the dissertation does not show the individual subheadings in the five chapters, and this is mandatory.

The contributions confirm the overview nature of the text. I am not sure that the sixth contribution, namely "to encourage further research and debate" (p. 24 of the abstract) is authentic. The rest are somewhat acceptable and adequately reflect the content of the work.

Everywhere in this opinion I have in mind the English version of the author's abstract.

The language is good, a bit wasteful, but still the author manages to express her ideas clearly enough. I repeat that this is a thesis about ideas and views, not about theses and arguments (and reasoning).

Based on the above, I will vote "yes" to the awarding of Sechil Yuzergan the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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