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TRANSHUMANISM: A NEW METANARRATIVE

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Natal, RN

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TRANSHUMANISM: A NEW METANARRATIVE

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Orientador: Prof. Dr. Edrisi de Araújo Fernandes

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Aos que resistem à dor

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Me vejo na situação paradoxal. No afã de me dedicar à confecção deste trabalho tão extenuante, me coloquei na situação de que hoje não me ocorre mais a quem agradecer. Se um programa de doutorado representa uma vitória na trajetória de alguém, esta sensação de conquista não se manifestou em mim. Depressão e *Burnout* são os meus troféus. O paradoxo ainda se mantém quando considero que me dediquei tanto a estudar uma filosofia de afirmação da vida quando isso me carece tanto. Talvez tenha sido o melhor tema a que eu poderia ter me dedicado.



JUNIOR, Jared Soares da Silva, *O Legado da Culpa*, 16x22 cm, 2023.

Resumo

Pretendemos, neste trabalho, fazer uma defesa de que o Transhumanismo Tecnoprogredista, desenvolvido por James Hughes e David Wood, pode promover uma nova metanarrativa a partir da qual podemos contemplar um horizonte para uma possível solução ao rol numeroso de atrocidades que culminam no risco existencial. O Transhumanismo não é um movimento filosófico, cultural, político e social monolítico. As subdivisões ocorrem, proeminentemente, em virtude do matiz político que orienta cada submovimento. Além do Transhumanismo Tecnoprogredista, há o Extropianismo, fundado por Max More e inserido no neoliberalismo, e o UpWingers, fundado por FM-2030 – ou seu antigo nome Fereidon Esfandiary –, que expressa uma visão política alternativa à antiga dicotomia direita-esquerda. Criticamos aqui o extropianismo por sua fundamentação ocorrer dentro das bases falidas do neoliberalismo pós-crise de 2008 e por sua inconsistência em adotar uma filosofia de afirmação da vida fundamentada na recorrente prática da austeridade. Discutimos que, embora o transhumanismo tenha raízes no humanismo, suas proposições o transcendem. Apesar dos benefícios que o humanismo nos proporcionou ao inventar o humano e sua dignidade, seus direitos e prerrogativas, tirando-nos da dependência do divino, o movimento também inventou os processos de desumanização. Cabe, então, ao Transhumanismo Tecnoprogredista propor um cenário eutópico onde possamos conceber o fim do sofrimento de humanos e outros animais a partir do uso da tecnologia, extensão de nossa natureza em seus bons aspectos, e de uma filosofia otimista de afirmação da vida.

Palavras-chave: Humanismo; Transhumanismo; Transhumanismo tecnoprogredista

Abstract

In this thesis, we aim to defend the proposition that Technoprogessive Transhumanism, as formulated by James Hughes and David Wood, has the potential to cultivate a new metanarrative. This metanarrative may provide a framework for envisaging solutions to the numerous atrocities culminating in existential risk. Transhumanism is not a singular, all-encompassing philosophical, cultural, political, and social movement. The subdivisions primarily arise due to the political nuances guiding each submovement. Alongside Technoprogessive Transhumanism, there is Extropianism, established by Max More and entrenched in neoliberalism, as well as UpWingers, founded by FM-2030 – or his former name, Fereidon Esfandiary – presenting an alternative political vision to the traditional right-left dichotomy. We critique Extropianism for being grounded in the failed foundations of post-2008 neoliberalism and for its inconsistency in adopting a life-affirming philosophy based on the recurring practice of austerity. We argue that, while transhumanism has its roots in humanism, its propositions surpass it. Despite the benefits humanism provided by introducing the concept of the human and its associated dignity, rights, and prerogatives, thus liberating us from dependence on the divine, the movement also initiated processes of dehumanization. Consequently, it falls to Technoprogessive Transhumanism to propose a utopian scenario wherein an end to the suffering of humans and other animals is envisaged through the use of technology, an extension of our nature in its good aspects, and an optimistic philosophy of life affirmation.

Keywords: Humanism; Transhumanism; Technoprogessive Transhumanism

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Introduction

Transhumanism is a cultural and philosophical movement that promotes reflection on the possibility of surpassing *Homo sapiens* through emerging technoscience. According to Wood, transhumanism (1) recognises that humanity is at a relatively early stage in the evolution of conscious life; (2) observes that there are significant flaws in human nature that, when combined with emerging technological capabilities, could provoke catastrophic destruction; (3) invites urgent collective action to drive the intelligent design of the transhumans and posthumans who are on the verge of emerging, and to upgrade living humans; and (4) can be seen as the culmination of many previous historical forces, including both religion and humanism (Wood, 2021, p. 356).

In our master's dissertation, we investigated the origins and thinking structure of the transhumanist movement to better understand it. Our research leads us to assert the idea that transhumanism has ancient roots and relation to humanism¹.

We discussed that, according to the analysis of Herminio Martins, a Portuguese sociologist, there are two techno-scientific traditions. The Promethean tradition, the first one, is based on the Humanist belief that, through technoscientific progress, we can solve social pathologies. As explained by Braga,

Prometheus is the revolt symbol against the indestructible and unreachable power - real or apparent. It is insubordination against a target that is presented as inevitable. It is an unprecedented challenge: adherence to the human as opposed to the divine. It promised not to plan to dethrone the god of gods, [Zeus] but rebels against him, without the expectation of victory, in a supreme act of nonconformity (1992, p. 1-2, our translation)

The myth of Faust serves as the metaphorical foundation of the second tradition. The Faustian tradition holds that technology is purely an expression of our will, a desire to discover the unknown or a drive for self-interest. There is no ethical

¹ ANTONIO, K. F. *Transhumanismo e suas Oscilações Prometeico-Fáusticas: Tecnoapoteose na era da Tecnociência Demiúrgica*. Natal: UFRN-PPGFIL, 2018.

concern driving techno-scientific advancements; there is only a compulsion for the infinite. As explained by Braga,

Faust is a symbol of dissatisfaction and impermanence, embodying the infinite, the unlimited, and the unknown. It represents an unrelenting pursuit of the new, with a restless creator never pacified, driven by an impetus to penetrate the unknown and an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge and transformation. Faust seeks to escape the ethical world, forging ahead wherever he may, regardless of good or evil, and striving to unravel the universe at any cost. Prometheus challenged the gods. Faust aspires to become one. (1992, p.4, our translation)

Thus, while Prometheus symbolises the will to overcome our natural condition of injustice, Faust embodies hubris and immoderation. According to Martins, techno-scientific improvements can be achieved following either the Promethean or Faustian tradition, either seeking a responsible roadmap or an immoral and infinite compulsion. Therefore, the transhumanist movement can be aligned with either the humanist ideal or Faustian ambitions. We classified different types of Transhumanist movements into two categories: Promethean Transhumanism and Faustian Transhumanism, to analyze their recent behavior.

In 2018, we submitted an article based on our research to the *Posthuman Studies Journal* and some precise criticisms emerged. According to the reviewer, the paper was Manichean and dualistic in its approach, since the dichotomy between Promethean and Faustian Transhumanism was based on belonging to or not belonging to the humanism movement. The point is, we neither satisfactorily defined what humanism is nor presented a critical analysis. The adoption of an unquestionably positive perspective on humanism can imply an uncritical perspective on transhumanism, since the former is often considered the basis of the latter. With this in mind, in this thesis, we aim to discuss what humanism - or humanisms - is and its connection with transhumanism - or transhumanisms. We aim to argue in this thesis that transhumanism is an updated form of humanism since it proposes a new metanarrative.

To understand the transhumanist movement, we need to precisely define what humanisms are. The basic structure of this thesis will be as follows:

1. What is humanism, or humanisms;
2. What is Transhumanism, or Transhumanisms;

3. Which Transhumanism can offer a new metanarrative;
4. What are the major obstacles to be overcome in order to achieve transhumanist proposals.

In addition to defending that transhumanism is an overcoming of humanism, we will discuss some of the main criticisms of the movement. Some scholars argue transhumanism cannot be considered a coherent philosophical movement and instead is a cultural and technological phenomenon. This argument arises from the fact that movement is often confused with other diverse ranges of philosophical and cultural movements as posthumanism and techno-optimism – Jürgen Habermas commits this error (SORGNER, 2021, p. 7). Although transhumanism is mainly concerned with practical and technological issues rather than abstract philosophical questions, the movement cannot be reduced to techno-optimism. The development of technologies such as brain-computer interfaces and genetic engineering, which enhance human capabilities are central to the transhumanist project, however, although transhumanists advocate for the use of technology to overcome human biological limitations, they do not always provide a clear vision of the ultimate goal of transhumanism. So, another criticism is the statement that transhumanism fails in proposing a clear normative framework, that is, to answer the question "human enhancement for what?".

In addition, bioconservatives oppose the idea that human nature can be altered into posthuman nature through beneficial means without serious repercussions. According to Ross, Francis Fukuyama and Leon Kass are the most notable bioconservatives. Similar to transhumanists, bioconservative views differ. Nonetheless, a common concern is that the use of enhancement technology to achieve posthumanity may result in dehumanisation. Bioconservatives have two main apprehensions: firstly, the emergence of a posthuman species could erode human dignity, and secondly, the state of being posthuman itself may be degrading (2021, p. 18). In addition, posthumanists like Francesca Ferrando (2020) are critical of transhumanism since the movement, according to them, is uncritical concerning the disastrous legacies of humanism - as we will see in the following chapter - being just another anthropocentric philosophy. Hence, thus, we can establish four different levels of criticism towards transhumanism:

1. Transhumanism cannot be considered a coherent philosophical movement and instead is a cultural and technological phenomenon;
2. Transhumanism fails to establish an ultimate goal or a normative framework;
3. Transhumanism promotes the emergence of a posthuman species that can erode human dignity and the state of being posthuman itself may be degrading.
4. Transhumanism is uncritical concerning the humanism legacy and maintains the anthropocentrism thought.

We will address the possibilities of this philosophy being formed in a new metanarrative as we respond to these four objections of transhumanism. Transhumanism can be seen as a new metanarrative in the sense that it offers a comprehensive worldview that seeks to explain the meaning and purpose of human existence, as well as the nature of the universe and our place within it. Like other metanarratives, transhumanism offers a grand vision for the future, one in which humans transcend the limitations of their biology and achieve new levels of intelligence, creativity, and longevity through the use of technology.

Notwithstanding, some critics of transhumanism argue it is not a legitimate metanarrative because it is based on a flawed understanding of human nature and the role of technology in society. Some critics argue that transhumanism is overly focused on individual self-improvement and ignores the broader social and political factors that contribute to inequality and injustice. Others worry that the pursuit of transhumanist goals could lead to new forms of oppression and discrimination, as well as a loss of human dignity and autonomy.

It is essential to note that transhumanism is not a monolithic movement, and there is a significant debate within the community about the specifics of its goals and values. Some transhumanists emphasise the importance of individual autonomy and self-enhancement - as the extropianism of the Max More (1990) -, while others prioritise the collective well-being of humanity as a whole – as techno-progressivism of James Hughes (2004) and David Wood (2020, 2021). Technoprogressive Transhumanism is the focus of our thesis.

Therefore, we will be supporting transhumanism, but our approach will be "negative". Rather than defending transhumanism by its hypothetical benefits, we

will defend it by considering it a necessary reaction to existential risks and environmental crises, as we will discuss in Chapter 2. While the term 'transhumanism' currently encompasses a wide range of flavours, some of which differ greatly from one another, our defence will be focused on a specific category of transhumanism within techno-progressivism, which we will address in the second chapter. Let us discuss now humanism.

Part 1

What is Humanism?

1.1 The Philosophy of Humanism

"We have given you, Oh Adam; no visage proper to yourself, nor any endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgment and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine." (PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, 1956, p. 7-8)

There is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers. (FROMM, 2013, p. 17)

Transhumanism, as we discussed briefly in the introduction, is a cultural and philosophical movement that aims to overcome the natural condition of human beings. Surpassing our natural limitations can be achievable through emergent technologies, namely nanotech, biotech, infotech and cognotech. However, the core question transhumanism has to handle is: should we modify ourselves? Or yet, other questions derived from these technological developments, for instance:

Should parents be permitted to choose the sex of their child?
Should mothers be supported, if they wish to bypass the experience of natural pregnancy in favour of ectogenesis?
Should we welcome hallucinogenic substances that can give people profound out-of-the-body experiences?
Should the pursuit of significant extensions of healthspans be embraced, rather than shunned? (WOOD, 2021, p. 364)

None of those questions can be answered by nanotechnologies or by genetic engineering themselves. Science can make available some procedures that cannot by themselves offer reasons for us to accept or not each of them. This is the role of ethics. Let us discuss some ethical paradigms.

Throughout humankind's history, religions have offered a moral source for our actions. Transcendental wisdom, an infallible source of all knowledge and answer for all questions, was achievable only for some prophets, priests, communities' elders, seers, and so forth. The Holy Bible, for instance, was flawlessly written in order to steer our lives by clarifying what is wrong - sin - and what is right. As explained by David Wood, when priestly rulings clashed with human reason, the religious precept took priority, even when there seemed no logical justification for what a priest was asking. "God moves in mysterious ways" was often the best answer for embarrassing mysteries. Considered human limitations, and presumed human sinfulness, our incapacity to comprehend the divine realm seemed unsurprising. Thus, reason would have to take second place to faith (2021, p. 357). Wood (2021) points out two problems in that method. The first is the non-consensual Bible interpretation. On one hand, some will emphasise god's commandment through a very rigid literal Bible interpretation. On the other hand, some Christians can be much more flexible in their theological arrangement through the perspective that God's scriptures are metaphorical. Ergo, it is impracticable to achieve a shared grasping of the Bible's commandments among Catholics and Protestants, to mention just two of almost countless Christian derivations. According to Wood, the second problem crop up in response to trying to make sense of the first problem. Various religious communities might express not only an alignment in transcendental absolutes, but rather a set of human solutions to particular historical circumstances. As stressed by Wood, the way to make sense of these deviating commandments derived from scriptures was not by theological contortions but by the disciplines of sociology and psychology, i.e., that diversity has much more of an idiosyncratic character than of theological divergence (p. 358).

Alternatively to religion, Wood identifies another grand tradition based on a system of natural balance where "humans should live in harmony with nature and with one another, avoiding excesses, accepting responsibilities, and thereby embodying relationships that conform to fundamental archetypes" (WOOD, 2021,

p. 357). Taoism's concept of yin-yang in Chinese philosophy describes how nature's opposite forces may actually be reciprocal, "interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another" (WIKIPEDIA, 2022), that is, there is a fundamental dichotomy in the phenomenal world, nature involving "both brightness and darkness, both summer and winter, both hills and valleys, both male and female, both integration and disintegration, both predator and prey, both life and death, and so on" (WOOD, 2021, p. 357). As highlighted by Wood, there is, in Confucianism, an emphasis on the maintenance of convenient relationships and responsibilities: "ruler and ruled, parents and children, teacher and students, husband and wife, elder sibling and younger sibling, friend and friend" (p. 359). According to him, though these are all admirable sentiments, there are three major reasons "they cannot serve as the basis for hard moral choices in today's world" (p. 360):

1. Just as with the difficulties in trying to ground moral principles from religious traditions that offer conflicting advice, there are fundamental disagreements between different claims about what's "balanced" – and about what's "natural", and about what's "responsible".
2. A system of social roles and responsibilities that preserved societal stability during past circumstances is often found wanting in times of rapid change (...) and a philosophy of passively accepting illness and aging as an inevitable aspect of nature makes less sense once medicine has the ability to combat illness and, probably, aging as well.
3. Third, the more we study nature, the more we recognise it has many aspects that can hardly be elevated as examples for humans to emulate. Nature is full of wanton cruelty. Charles Darwin drew attention to examples of pain inflicted by parasitic wasps "feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars" and by cats playing with mice before killing them. In summary, whilst nature contains many marvels, there cannot be any useful moral principle that simply states humans should "copy nature" or "align with nature". Nor is it sufficient to request that humans should "respect balance" and "promote harmony". These principles leave unresolved the questions of which aspects of nature should be copied, which kinds of balance should be pursued, and which harmonies to preserve. (p. 360-361).

The third approach in which we can ground our actions is not focused on religious transcendental absolute truths, nor on immanent harmonisation with the natural world, but on the human well-being itself, although this does not imply the total exclusion of these two perspectives. This paradigm shift is the basic

structure of humanism. Let us now investigate some definitions of humanism. Definitions sometimes contrasting and even contradictory to each other. It seems clear to us that there is neither a complete nor a definitive definition of humanism. For this reason, we will seek, in the most varied definitions, what they have in common. Accordingly, once we have captured the essence of the concept, we can discover if it approaches or harmonises with the concept of transhumanism.

According to Humanist International, a global representative body of the humanist movement founded in Amsterdam in 1952,

Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. Humanism stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other natural values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. Humanism is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality. (...)

A humanist bases their understanding of the world on reason and scientific method (rejecting supernatural or divine beliefs as bad explanations or ill-formed ideas). A humanist bases their ethical decisions again on reason, with the input of empathy, and aiming toward the welfare and fulfillment of living things.(...) A humanist is someone who recognises that we, human beings, are the most curious and the most capable curators of knowledge in the known universe. (...)

A humanist is someone who recognises that we, human beings, are by far the most sophisticated moral actors on the Earth. We can grasp ethics.(...) This does not mean we are the only moral objects. For example other animals deserve moral consideration, too, and perhaps the environment as a whole. (...) We respect other people not because we are made "in the image" of something else (we are a product of evolution, not the product of a divine plan), but because of what we are. We are a sentient, feeling species, with value and dignity in each individual, and that is worthy of respect. (...) For a humanist, there is no divine plan or purpose. The humanist recognises that we make our own purposes, tell our own stories, set our own goals. This gives life meaning. (HUMANIST INTERNATIONAL, 2022)

Some of the same problems, as Wood recognised, in the two other potential moral guides, religion and natural balance, might seem to apply also to humanism: "'a more humane society', 'the welfare and fulfilment of living things', 'a good life in the here and now', 'fairness and justice', and 'human wellbeing'. Once again, differences of opinion are possible (p. 362). However, given that in humanism humans confer value and decide which value to confer, at one level this problem does not occur. Notwithstanding, if distinct humans have divergent ideas on how best to achieve human wellbeing, it would be natural to expect the

existence of varied forms of humanism. There are, then, humanisms. We need now to investigate some other definitions or conceptualisations of humanism.

According to Nicola Abbagnano in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards, humanism is the philosophical and literary movement that originated in Italy in the fourteenth century which recognises the value or dignity of humans making them the measure of all things, or somehow taking human nature, its limits, or its interests, as its theme (1967, p. 70). In the historical context, as elucidated by Abbagnano, humanism emerges as a pivotal facet of the Renaissance. Renaissance thinkers endeavoured to reintegrate humanity into the spheres of nature and history, interpreting human existence within this contextual framework (p. 70). The term "humanism", as interpreted by Abbagnano, is rooted in "humanitas", a concept during the eras of Cicero and Varro that denoted the education of humanity itself, aligning with the Greek notion of "paideia". This form of education was championed by those who perceived the liberal arts as distinctive disciplines for humans, setting them apart from other animals - see Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* (Attic Nights) XIII, 17 (p. 70). Abbagnano posits that humanists believed in the revival of a spirit prevalent in classical antiquity, lost during the Middle Ages, through engagement with classical literature. This spirit, characterised by freedom, served as a justification for humanity's assertion of rational autonomy, enabling individuals to perceive themselves as integral parts of nature and history, capable of making these domains their own. Abbagnano's interpretation of the humanist concept of a "return to antiquity" emphasises that it does not entail a mere replication of the ancient past but involves the resurrection and expansion of capacities and powers perceived to have been lost in the Middle Ages (p. 71). In advocating for such a return, Abbagnano highlights that humanists rejected the medieval legacy in favour of embracing classical ideals. The emphasis Abbagnano places on the humanities – encompassing poetry, rhetoric, history, ethics, and politics – rests on the conviction that these disciplines alone could educate humanity and empower individuals to exercise their freedom effectively (p. 71).

Furthermore, Abbagnano describes humanism as an assembly in which each part is fundamentally integrated into the whole. Let us check it more deeply:

- **Freedom:** Humanists consider the exaltation of freedom, in both nature and society, to be a significant theme. In contrast, the medieval world's core institutions (the church, the empire, and feudalism) were viewed as guardians of a cosmic order that people had to accept and could not modify. These institutions emphasised that all the material and spiritual benefits humans could desire, from basic necessities to truth, were derived from the order they belonged to. This order was maintained by hierarchies that acted as interpreters and custodians of the cosmic order. Humanism, however, was born in cities and communes that fought and continued to fight for autonomy. These communities saw traditional hierarchical orders as hindrances rather than as helps to essential goods for humans. Therefore, humanism defended man's freedom to project his life independently in the world. Gianozzo Manetti (1396-1459), Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), and Pico Della Mirandola (1463-1494) exalted freedom and praised man's ability to shape, modify, and improve his world.
- **Naturalism:** The humanists firmly believed that humans are an inseparable and essential part of nature, and that their realm is within it. Man's body, needs, and sensations are so crucial to him that he cannot separate himself from them or overlook their importance. Even though humanists celebrated the soul for its freedom, they never forgot the importance of the body and its associated elements.
- **Historical perspective:** Humanism's emphasis on the "return to antiquity" had a significant impact on one of its key achievements - the recognition of the historical perspective of events.
- **Religion:** Humanism did not display any hostility toward religion or Christianity. Instead, its focus on defending the value and freedom of humans prompted it to engage in discussions on traditional topics like God and providence, the soul and its immortality and freedom. These debates often reached conclusions similar to those accepted in the medieval tradition. However, these discussions took on new significance within the context of humanism since their

purpose was to understand and justify human initiative in the world. This capacity for human initiative was defended even in the religious sphere, as religious discussions among humanists centered around two primary themes: the civil function of religion and religious tolerance.

- **Tolerance:** Humanism's religious beliefs were deeply infused with the spirit of tolerance. While the modern concept of tolerance emerged in response to the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which promoted peaceful coexistence among various religious denominations that remained distinct and could not be reduced to a single faith, the humanist approach to tolerance was different. For humanists, tolerance stemmed from their belief in the fundamental unity of all religious beliefs held by humankind, which made universal religious peace possible.
- **Science:** Renaissance humanism played a significant role in the emergence of modern science. The "return to antiquity" brought back old ideas and writings that had been forgotten for a long time, like the heliocentric beliefs of the Pythagoreans and the works of Archimedes and other ancient physicians. The Platonism and Pythagoreanism revived by humanists led to the thesis proposed by Leonardo, Copernicus, and Galileo that nature can be understood through mathematics. To encourage people to investigate the "book of nature" directly through experimentation, instead of blindly following Aristotle's works, the trust in Aristotle's authority had to be weakened. Meanwhile, the belief that man is a natural being and can understand and control nature with the tools it provides, such as the senses, was affirmed (1967, p. 69-72).

Besides, beyond these six-core aforementioned features, humanism can be considered a set that houses some other doctrines, being, in that way, an umbrella term for:

1. Communism, in that it would abolish man's alienation from himself, which is a product of private property and capitalist society;

2. Pragmatism, because of its anthropocentric view which, as Protagoras did, makes the man "the measure of all things";
3. Personalism (also called spiritualism), which affirms man's capacity to contemplate the eternal truths or, in general, to enter into a relationship with transcendent reality;
4. Existentialism, which affirms that "there is no other universe than the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity".²³ (1967, p. 72).

In his 1966 interview titled "The Disappearance of Man", Michel Foucault identifies humanism - the larger set in which Marxism and Existentialism shall form an integral part thereof - as Man's inventor.

Interviewer: What's your idea of man?

Foucault: I believe Man has been, if not a bad dream or spectre, at least a very particular figure, very much historically determined and situated within our culture. It's an invention! In the 19th and first half of the 20th century, it was believed that Man was the fundamental reality of our interests. One had the impression that the search for the truth of Man since the beginning of basically the Greek age had animated all our searches, perhaps of science, certainly of morality and for sure of philosophy. But if we look at things more closely, we have to wonder if this idea that Man basically always existed and was there waiting to be taken up by science and philosophy. We have to wonder if this idea isn't an illusion from the 19th century. Actually, until the end of the 18th century, until roughly the French Revolution, we never dealt with Man as such. It's curious that the notion of humanism which we attribute to the Renaissance is a very recent notion. You can't find the term 'humanism' earlier because humanism is an invention of the 19th century. Before the 19th century, one can say Man didn't exist. What existed were a number of problems, various forms of knowledge and reflection, where it was a question of nature, a question of truth, a question of movement, a question of order, a question of imagination, a question of representation and so forth. But it wasn't actually a question of Man. Man is a figure constructed near the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th, and gave rise to what has been and still are called the 'human sciences'. This new notion of Man invested near the end of 18th century also gave rise to humanism, the humanism of Marxism, and of Existentialism, which are the most clear expressions at present. But I believe that, paradoxically, the development of the human sciences is now leading to a disappearance of Man rather than an apotheosis of Man. (FOUCAULT, 2020)

²Abbagnano suggested some essential books to go more profoundly on these humanism ramifications:

Personalism as humanism:

Jaeger, Werner. *Humanism and Theology*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1943.

Maritain, Jacques. *Humanisme Intégral*. Paris, 1993.

Communism as humanism:

Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, translated by Martin Milligam. Moscow and London, 1959. Part III.

Existentialism as humanism:

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *L'Existencielisme est un Humanisme*. Paris, 1946.

Pragmatism as humanism:

Schiller, F. C. S. *Humanism*. London, 1903.

Schiller, F. C. S. *Studies in Humanism*. London, 1907.

In this interview, Foucault argues that the concept of "Man" – a term used to refer to humans, although "man" and "woman" were also historically constructed categories – is a relatively recent invention and that it is being supplanted by the human sciences. He traces the history of the concept of "Man" back to the 19th century, when it was used to refer to a universal human nature that could be studied by science. However, Foucault argues that this notion of a universal human nature is an illusion. He says that there is no such thing as a single, essential human nature. Rather, human beings are constituted by the different discourses and practices that surround them. Thus, humans invented humanism, and humanism, in turn, shaped humans.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* written by Simon Blackburn (2008, p. 219), humanism is a philosophy concerned with highlighting human values, interests, dignity and welfare, supporting a positive view of the potential human reason and of its nature. During Renaissance, humanism was consistent with religious belief, becoming later a more appropriate term for anti-religious social and political movements. In the late 20th century, however, humanism gained a negative/pejorative sense by postmodernists, feminist writers postcolonial, anti-racist critical theory, environmental activists, disability rights advocates, queer and LGBTQIA+ theorists (2008, p. 219) and posthumanists - Francesca Ferrando (2020), for instance. We will discuss negative or pejorative humanism, as well as its criticisms, in the next section.

So, maybe, from this definition, we can establish three different moments of humanism's conceptualisation:

1. Humanism is consistent with religious beliefs;
2. Humanism has an anti-religious, social and political meaning;
3. Humanism has a negative/pejorative meaning in a contemporary context.

The term 'humanist' precedes the term 'humanism'. According to Copson, while the first term appeared in English in 1589, the first appearances of 'humanism' in this language in print were in the nineteenth century (2015, p. 1). According to him,

In Germany this word had been and was still deployed with a range of meanings in a wide variety of social and intellectual debates. On its entry into English it carried two separate and distinct meanings. On the one hand, in historical works like those of Jacob Burckhardt and J. A. Symonds, it was applied retrospectively to the revival of classical learning in the European Renaissance and the tradition of thought ignited by that revival. Its second meaning referred to a more contemporary attitude of mind. It is 'humanism' in this second sense that we are concerned with here. Throughout the nineteenth century the content of this latter 'humanism', the holders of which attitude were now also called 'humanists', was far from systematized, and the word often referred generically to a range of attitudes to life that were nonreligious, non-theistic, or non-Christian. The term was mostly used positively but could also be disparaging. (COPSON, 2015, p. 1-2)

In the same way as Copson, we will focus here on the second definition, i.e. 'humanism' as a mental attitude. This sense of 'humanism' means taking the lead in our existence, manipulating nature according to our interests. In fact, it represents a comprehension change in how we should act and what is the role human being has in the world.

There are two different attitudes in face of our existential condition – or "two theories of the world". The first is the theistic view, "which holds that the world is under the control of a supernatural being (...) and that without his will nothing can be done". The second is the humanistic view, which states "that everything that is done in this world is done by human under the laws of nature (...); it depends upon man what the world shall be like". For a humanist, if a "man wants more water, he must build reservoirs and lay pipelines; if he wants freedom from pestilence, he must develop medical science; if he wants food, he must cultivate the soil". Likewise, if a man "fears natural forces, like fire and water, he must devise his protection, build dikes and form fire companies; if he would eliminate his woes, he must do it himself" (DIETRICH, 1931).

These two aforesaid theories, theistic and secular humanism, share the same ground: both are human-centred theories. Whether awaiting a celestial intervention or manipulating the world by our will and with our hands, in that way, maybe the assertion 'humanism is anthropocentrism' is unquestionable (we will check it later). For Lamont (1997), humanism is not only a kind of theory, a thought or a comprehension of which is our role in the world; for him, it also has a philosophical status. He states that "since the earliest days of philosophic reflection in ancient times, thinkers have advanced the simple proposition that the chief end of human life is to work for the happiness of humans upon this earth

and within the confines of the Nature that is our home" (p. 3). This philosophical way to enjoy, develop and make "available to everyone the abundant material, cultural, and spiritual goods of this natural world" has deep implications very understandable to common sense. For Lamont, this human-centred theory of life – disregarded for a long time – is the best philosophy "to liberate the creative energies of humankind and to serve as a common bond between the different peoples of the earth is that way of life most precisely described as Humanism". Thus, "the philosophy of humanism represents a specific and forthright view of the universe, the nature of human beings, and the treatment of human problems" (1997, p. 3-12).

Further, this philosophy is not restricted to academic spheres or to a kind of thinking merely for professional philosophers. In general, humanism is also a credo for average humans seeking to lead happy and useful lives (Lamont, 1997, p. 13). In other words, humanism supports the idea that humankind is the absolute source of all authority and meaning. According to Lamont, although humanism looks upon reason as the final criterium of "what is true and good and beautiful, it insists that reason should fully recognise the emotional side of human beings. Indeed, one of humanism's main functions is to set free the emotions from cramping and irrational restrictions" (1997, p. 13). According to Lamont, we can summarise the principles of humanism at the following points:

1. Humanism believes in a naturalistic metaphysics or attitude toward the universe that considers all forms of the supernatural as myth; and that regards Nature as the totality of being and as a constantly changing system of matter and energy which exists independently of any mind or consciousness;
2. Humanism, drawing especially upon the laws and facts of science, believes that we human beings are an evolutionary product of the Nature of which we are a part; that the mind is indivisibly conjoined with the functioning of the brain; and that as an inseparable unity of body and personality we can have no conscious survival after death;
3. Humanism, having its ultimate faith in humankind, believes that human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision;
4. Humanism, in opposition to all theories of universal determinism, fatalism, or predestination, believes that human beings, while conditioned by the past, possess genuine freedom of creative choice and action, and are, within certain objective limits, the shapers of their own destiny;
5. Humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this - earthly experiences and relationships and that holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress - economic, cultural, and ethical - of all humankind, irrespective of nation, race, or religion;
6. Humanism believes that the individual attains the good life by harmoniously combining personal satisfactions and continuous self-development with

significant work and other activities that contribute to the welfare of the community;

7. Humanism believes in the widest possible development of art and the awareness of beauty, including the appreciation of Nature's loveliness and splendour, so that the aesthetic experience may become a pervasive reality in the lives of all people;

8. Humanism believes in a far-reaching social program that stands for the establishment throughout the world of democracy, peace, and a high standard of living on the foundations of a flourishing economic order, both national and international;

9. Humanism believes in the complete social implementation of reason and scientific method; and thereby in democratic procedures, and parliamentary government, with full freedom of expression and civil liberties, throughout all areas of economic, political, and cultural life;

10. Humanism, in accordance with scientific method, believes in the unending questioning of basic assumptions and convictions, including its own. Humanism is not a new dogma, but is a developing philosophy ever open to experimental testing, newly discovered facts, and more rigorous reasoning. (1997, p. 14-15)

Whilst Lamont intends to highlight the humanism fundamental basis on these ten points above, he goes beyond with the statement that "this philosophy can be more explicitly characterised as scientific Humanism, secular Humanism, naturalistic Humanism, or democratic Humanism, depending on the emphasis that one wishes to give" (1997, p. 15), that is, leaning on more in one of these

qualifiers depending on the discussion. At the beginning of the first chapter, the author offers the following diagram (LAMONT, 1997, p. 2.):



Lamont's explanation is accurate about contemporary humanism, but he does not address other forms of the movement - religious, for instance. If all humanism is secular, as a corollary of the previous Lamont's ten points, it would be inconceivable a religious humanism, being contradictory the first of our three 'humanist moments'. In the above diagram, Lamont pointed to religions as just one – tighter with seven other - of the humanism roots. However, religion is not only a part of or a subset of the set 'contemporary humanism'. Could the term

'religious' serve as a significant enough characteristic to classify a category under humanism? Is it conceivable, beyond a 'humanism consistent with religious' belief (as explained earlier in the Oxford Dictionary), that there is a distinct form of humanism specifically rooted in religious principles? Copson clarified this point very well. For him, it is common for the use of both 'humanist' and 'humanism' to be unqualified, that is, without an adjective that would determine certain aspects of each humanism form (2015, p. 2). According to him,

To some extent these usages are the result of false etymological or historical assumptions (a conflation between the earlier and later usages of the word 'humanist' outlined above, for example); but there is often something polemical involved. The word '-secular' seems first to have been added to 'humanism' as an elaborator intended to amplify disapproval, rather than as a qualifier, but it was after it appeared as a phrase in the U.S. Supreme Court's 1961 judgment in *Torcaso v. Watkins* that it was taken up as a self-description by some (mainly US-based) humanist organizations. However that may be, the usage encouraged a tendency which was already establishing itself of adding religious adjectives to the plain noun. The hybrid term 'Christian humanism', which some from a Christian background have been attempting to put into currency as a way of co-opting the (to them) amenable aspects of humanism for their religion, has led to a raft of claims from those identifying with other religious traditions - whether culturally or in convictions - that they too can claim a 'humanism'. The suggestion that has followed – that 'humanism' is something of which there are two types, '-religious humanism' and 'secular humanism', has begun to seriously muddy the conceptual water, especially in these days when anyone with a philosophical axe to grind can, with a few quick Wikipedia edits, begin to shift the common understanding of any complicatedly imprecise philosophical term. Language, of course, is mutable over time, but there are good reasons to try to retain coherence and integrity in the use of the nouns 'humanist' and 'humanism' unqualified. Subsequent to their earlier usage to describe an academic discipline or curriculum (whose followers, obviously, might well be religious), 'humanism' and 'humanist' have been used relatively consistently as describing an attitude that is at least quite separate from religion and that in many respects contrasts and conflicts with religion(s). (2015, p. 2-3)

The article *10 Myths About Secular Humanism* written by Matt Cherry & Molleen Matsumura intends to eradicate some distortions made by some religious people, for instance, that humanism is a religion since the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that secular humanism is a religion. In consonance with Cherry & Matsumura,

In the 1961 *Torcaso v. Watkins* decision, Justice Hugo Black comments in a footnote, "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism, and others." Such footnotes, known as "dicta," are written to provide factual background to the legal principles in a

decision. These dicta never have the force of law. They are merely comments. The claim that secular humanism can be considered a religion for legal purposes was finally considered by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Pelozo v. Capistrano School District*. In this 1994 case, a science teacher argued that, by requiring him to teach evolution, his school district was forcing him to teach the "religion" of secular humanism. The Court responded, "We reject this claim because neither the Supreme Court, nor this circuit, has ever held that evolutionism or secular humanism are 'religions' for Establishment Clause purposes." The Supreme Court refused to review the case; they refused to reverse a ruling that secular humanism is not a religion. (SECULAR HUMANISM, 2022)

Further, even if humanism were a religion for legal purposes, it would not effectively imply that humanism was a religion. Justice⁴ Hugo Black was partly wrong, for *Cherry & Matsumura*, about "Buddhism because some branches of Buddhism do worship the Buddha as a deity. And he was wrong about secular humanism" (SECULAR HUMANISM, 2022).

Moreover, although Copson states that "many of the values associated with this humanism can be held and are held by people as part of a wider assortment of beliefs and values, some of which beliefs and values may be religious (people are complicated and inconsistent)" (2015, p. 3), the apparent corollary (or in non-categorical terms, 'can be the case') is that the 'religious humanism' category is inevitably an oxymoron. As Copson clarifies, "there may also be people who self-identify as 'Christian' ('Muslim', 'Jewish', or whatever) for ethnic or political reasons but who have humanist convictions and no religious beliefs", however, this is not a good reason for "dismembering such a useful single conceptual category as 'humanism' is in practice, especially when there are words more suitable to combine with the religious qualifiers that would lead to no such verbal confusion" (2015, p. 3).

According to Copson, Karl Popper preferred to use the term 'humanitarianism' - urging cooperation between 'humanists' and religious 'humanitarians' - to avert inaccuracy (2015, p. 4). Two other applications of the term 'religious humanism' are still conceivable:

(1) that humanism is their religion, using the word 'religion' somewhat archaically and expansively, in the manner of George Eliot, Julian Huxley, or Albert Einstein, to denote the fundamental worldview of a person, or (2) that they themselves

⁴ Justice is an honorific style and title traditionally used to describe a jurist who is currently serving or has served within a supreme court or some equal position, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_\(title\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_(title))), accessed in 11/11/2023.

participate in humanist organizations in a congregational manner akin to the manner in which a follower of a religion may participate in such a community. The first of these usages is so obviously metaphorical as to need no further attention; the second is more diverting. (...) Now this use of the words 'religious humanism' is extinct almost everywhere, although the phenomenon of non-theistic 'congregations' that the phrase describes is not entirely exhausted. The congregational model was consciously and deliberately abandoned by humanist organizations in most of Europe. It does still have purchase in the United States, where the idea of humanist congregations is actively promoted by some humanist organizations, but it is not widespread anywhere, and it remains to be seen whether present attempts to revive it will bear fruit. (COPSON, 2015, p. 3-4)

We do not intend to exhaust all possibilities to conceive a religious humanism. It seems plausible to assume that the mainstream of contemporary humanism's meaning is a non-theistic, non-religious, naturalistic approach to life. Humanism is, in fact, a memento that we are mundane beings. According to Lamont, "in an era of continuing crisis and disintegration like that of the twentieth century, we face the temptation of fleeing to some compensatory realm of make-believe or supernatural solace". Exactly in that atmosphere, "humanism stands uncompromisingly" against defeatism and fatalism tendencies. Humanism or the humanist philosophy unflinchingly reminds us that our only home - and hope - is in this mundane world. There is nowhere else to go in order to achieve happiness and fulfilment. Therefore, "we human beings must find our destiny and our promised land in the here and now" since "humanism is interested in a future life, not in the sense of some fabulous paradise in the skies, but as the ongoing enjoyment of earthly existence by generation after generation through eternities of time" (1997, p. 16). So, perhaps this is the essence of humanism's thought.

In that way, humanism can be considered a life-affirmation, an endorsement of our natural condition, a breach with divine tutelage. Thus, whether to achieve pleasure or to avoid pain, whether to fulfil wishes or overcome obstacles, it all depends on ourselves and any other possibilities to handle it are unfeasible. We are sovereigns and we are condemned to this sovereignty (or condemned to our freedom, as written by Sartre). Moreover, as Lamont continued,

on the ethical and social side Humanism sets up service to all humankind as the ultimate moral ideal. It holds that as individuals we can find our own highest good in working for the good of all, which of course includes ourselves and our families. In this sophisticated and disillusioned era Humanism emphatically rejects, as psychologically naïve and scientifically unsound, the widespread notion that human beings are moved merely by self-interest. It repudiates the constant

rationalization of brute egoism into pretentious schemes on behalf of individuals or groups bent on self-aggrandizement. It refuses to accept the reduction of human motivation to economic terms, to sexual terms, to pleasure-seeking terms, or to any one limited set of human desires. It insists on the reality of genuine altruism as one of the moving forces in the affairs of human beings. (1997, p.16)

In the previous quotation, we can observe that humanism is not just an ethical or existential orientation for humans; this philosophy is inscribed in an anthropologic proposal, i.e. a human characterisation. Humanism is a human-centred philosophy with the pretension to pave a human full accomplishment roadmap or to provoke an unrestricted blossoming of its nature. This philosophy describes humans as sovereign rational beings, effectively capable of rationally deliberating which existential path to take.

In accordance with Sorgner, the word "humanism" (that has a multitude of meanings) derives from the Latin word *humanitas* - particularly in Cicero's writings - and was identified in ancient times with the Greek term *paideia* (παιδεία), for instance, in *De Oratore* written by Cicero. In this tradition, the word *humanitas* includes both ethical and logical elements, also applicable to the word *dignitas*, which Cicero was the first to attribute unhesitatingly to all humans in his book, *De Officiis* (2021, p. 33). In fact, according to Sorgner, Cicero developed this use of the word *dignitas* from the term *humanitas*. *Dignitas* was used not only to highlight the distinction of certain individuals, but also to confer dignity status to all people whether humans or rational beings, identical categories for the philosopher. Hence, for Cicero, all people are rational and possess dignity, which is why they should also be treated with particular consideration by other people (SORGNER, 2021, p. 33). Moreover, In this way, from this relation to *humanitas* and *dignitas*, Sorgner continues:

Cicero's concept of dignity was later taken up by Kant and is especially influential in the present, considering that Kant's concept of dignity inspired the concept of dignity in the German Constitution. This term is an ontological one since it implies a certain anthropology. However, it is also an ethical one since the respective entities should also be treated ethically in a particularly good way. This diversity of meaning is similarly contained in the concept of *humanitas*. On the one hand, it implies a categorically dualistic ontology that entails a categorically special position for humanity. The term *paideia* has analogous connotations, which can be seen in Plato's analogy of the divided line in the Republic. Cicero's case for the immortal soul illustrates parallel structures with regard to his concept of *humanitas*. Such dualistic views are firmly rejected within secular, naturalistic, atheistic, or evolutionary variations of humanism, which is why it can be doubted

whether they are aptly named forms of humanism. However, there is still an ethical dimension to *humanitas* that has traditionally suggested the goal of self-perfection. This goal is evident in Plato's characterization of the philosopher king and in the description of the Stoic wise man, who is always virtuous. Although a strong concept of ethical perfection is not necessarily associated with transhumanism, such an orientation can be described as the predominant concept of good within transhumanism. I will later speak out in favor of a weaker idea of the good—namely, the radical plurality of goodness, which can also function in accordance with transhumanism. At this point, though, it is crucial for me to point out that transhumanism does indeed go beyond humanism and, like secular, naturalistic, or evolutionary humanism, is not really in the tradition of humanism if the etymology of that word is still relevant to its current meaning. (2021, p. 33-34).

As Sorgner stated, an anthropological dualistic approach is one of the characteristics that determines humanism to be what it is. As explained by Hayes, in Cicero's philosophy there is a clear-cut dualism in human nature borrowed from Plato and Aristotle. For Cicero, a person becomes human only by mastering his passions and placing them in the service of reason. Humanity is the result to be achieved through moral struggle and self-discipline. Humans have to be moulded into humanism or to learn how to become human. "To be human is not a birthright, it is not a state or condition of the natural, undisciplined self; and it does not consist primarily in feeling but in reason, which guides the feelings to human ends or purposes" (HAYES, 1939, p. 284). For the Roman philosopher, the adjective *humanus* connotes not so much "humane" - though this idea is included too - as "humanised," "civilised." *Humanitas* is the quality that one gains in developing the best that there is in human nature. A humanised person rather than wild, brutal, or bestial will be gentle, merciful, benevolent, loyal to duty, and virtuous (RAND, 1932, p. 207).

On such an understanding, as said by Sorgner, we can consider a philosophy as a humanism only if it has dualistic anthropology since humanism was developed through the body/soul approach.

Erich Fromm is an indispensable thinker to understand humanism. Fromm's manuscripts reveal he studied Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill and William James, Heidegger, Sartre, Bloch and Habermas. Fromm, however, finds himself deeply connected to thinkers such as the philosopher Maimonides, Cohen and Cassirer, Aristotle, Spinoza and Marx, and later also to Thomas Aquinas (FUNK, 2010, p. 4).

Uncertainty, Fromm states, "is the very condition to impel man to unfold his powers". So, "if he faces the truth without panic he will recognise that there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by the unfolding of his powers, by living productively". So, "only constant vigilance, activity, and effort can keep us from failing in the one task that matters - the full development of our powers within the limitations set by the laws of our existence" (2000, ePub, n.p.). Pursuant to Fromm, something is "good" or "bad" whether this is beneficial or harmful to humans – or 'men' because he does not use a neuter pronoun – and in order to identify it we should know human nature. This is the "art of living" or humanistic ethics, that is, the "science of man". Moreover, as in other arts, the distinction of one's achievement ("virtus") "is proportional to the knowledge one has of the science of man and to one's skill and practice. But one can deduce norms from theories only on the premise that a certain activity is chosen and a certain aim is desired" (FROMM, 1990, ePub, n.p.).

For Fromm, as written by Funk, the paramount concept of humanism is the idea that humanity (*humanitas*) is not an abstraction, but a reality, in such a way that in each individual the whole of humanity is contained. Each individual embodies all humanity, and therefore all humans are equal – not in terms of their aptitudes and talents, but in their basic human qualities (2010, p. 3).

Fromm's mixture of essentialist and constructionist aspects, which directly resulted from his policy of refined continuation concerning classical humanist thought - particularly as he saw it as manifested in Judaism, Marxism, and Freudianism -, is potentially greatly instructive in recovering the vital categories of humanist thought. Writing in the middle part of the last century, and spurred on by the intellectual challenge of grappling with and accommodating the divergent imperatives of a wide variety of thought systems, Fromm advances a qualified form of essentialism compatible with the fundamental ideas of constructionist thought that have increasingly dominated large swathes of the academy. Fromm retakes the concept of human nature which is, however, variously manifested in different social and cultural contexts; he seeks to account for the idea of a basic psychological dynamism that underlies human experience and that figures as a fundamental variable in the social process (DURKIN, 2014, p. 2).

According to Durkin's explanation, *radical humanism* - because Fromm seeks to go to the root of the movement - is a humanism that pursues consistency

and that is self-consciously instantiated on a metaphysical realism/essentialism "that recognises the existence of the human being as an entity possessed of certain properties, the said properties constituting the ground upon which value for human beings exists and upon which the very idea of ethics makes sense" (2014, p. 2). Humanism is, so, centrally driven by a commitment to the belief in the dignity and unity of humankind and in the possibility of development of the perfection of human nature: the expansion of the characteristically human powers of the individual that are compatible with flourishing and well-being (DURKIN, 2014, p. 4).

So far, certain humanist movement categories were taken by irreconcilable, contradictory terms or even oxymorons, whether 'religious humanism' (COPSON, 2015) or 'secular humanism', 'naturalistic humanism' or 'evolutionary humanism' (SORGNER, 2021). Tom Flynn, in his article *Secular Humanism Defined*, proposes a distinction between different types of humanism:

Secular humanism's cognitive thrust lies in its naturalistic worldview; its emotional or affective thrust lies in its positive ethical outlook. Each element is equally essential to secular humanism; neither stands alone. I submit that this meaningfully differentiates secular humanism from religious humanism, and from simple atheism as well. (...) Secular humanists necessarily disbelieve in [Judeo-Christian] God (naturalism) and just as necessarily oppose thuggery and tribalism on principle (an outgrowth of ethics). Of course, many atheists, agnostics, and religious humanists do the same. But when atheists and agnostics adopt positive ethics, they do so for reasons independent of their atheism or agnosticism. When religious humanists defend naturalism, they do so for reasons outside the boundaries of their religious humanism. Only for the secular humanist do both commitments arise organically within his or her life stance. (SECULAR HUMANISM, 2022)

Regardless of this kind of categorisation, all the aforementioned thinkers considered humanism as a philosophy that seeks the flourishing of humans, that is, all authors do not disagree that 'humanism is a philosophy'. However, can humanism be understood in a non-philosophical way?

1.2 The Religion of Humanism

We almost all accept, as the inarticulate assumption behind much of our experience and conviction, that human life in all its forms is sacred — that it has intrinsic and objective value quite apart from any value it might have to the person whose life it is. For some of us, this is a matter of religious faith; for others, of secular but deep philosophical belief. (DWORKIN, 1993)

Matt Cherry and Molleen Matsumura in the aforementioned article *10 Myths About Secular Humanism* reject the postures in which secular humanism can be taken as a religion. For both, secular humanism does not fit into the category of religion in any sense: There are no beliefs in the supernatural, no set creeds that all humanists must adhere to, no revered texts or obligatory ceremonies. Humanists are not obliged or expected to have faith in the words of any authority figure, whether alive or deceased, human or supernatural. Individuals may discover their values and sense of purpose through either humanistic or religious perspectives. However, religions assert that purpose stems from a deity or the supernatural, whereas humanists ground their values and purpose in the natural world. Secular humanism is a naturalistic, non-religious worldview (CHERRY & MATSUMURA, 2020). Hence, according to Cherry and Matsumura, any claim that secular humanism can be a religion is inconceivable. To conceive religious humanism does not imply that humanism is a religion. Religious humanism is a philosophy upon which the transcendental is embedded. However, Yuval Noah Harari built humanism conceptualisation in a very distant way. For him, humanism can also be understood from a non-philosophical perspective. Harari's grasp of humanism is much more based on a historical perspective than a philosophical one. Instead of considering humanism as an assembly of pro-social values, humanism for him is restricted to the central idea of 'cult to the humans'. Thus, for the author (2014, 2016), humanism can be considered a religion. For him, 'religion' can be defined as

a system of human norms and values that is founded on a belief in a superhuman order. This involves two distinct criteria:

1. Religions hold that there is a superhuman order, which is not the product of human whims or agreements. Professional football is not a religion, because despite its many laws, rites and often bizarre rituals, everyone knows that human

beings invented football themselves, and FIFA may at any moment enlarge the size of the goal or cancel the offside rule.

2. Based on this superhuman order, religion establishes norms and values that it considers binding. Many Westerners today believe in ghosts, fairies and reincarnation, but these beliefs are not a source of moral and behavioural standards. As such, they do not constitute a religion.

(...) Today religion is often considered a source of discrimination, disagreement and disunion. Yet, in fact, religion has been the third great unifier of humankind, alongside money and empires. Since all social orders and hierarchies are imagined, they are all fragile, and the larger the society, the more fragile it is. The crucial historical role of religion has been to give superhuman legitimacy to these fragile structures. Religions assert that our laws are not the result of human caprice, but are ordained by an absolute and supreme authority. This helps place at least some fundamental laws beyond challenge, thereby ensuring social stability. (HARARI, 2014, p. 241-242)

According to Harari, while theist religions focus on the worship of gods, humanist religions worship *Homo sapiens*. So, "humanism is a belief that *Homo sapiens* has a unique and sacred nature, which is fundamentally different from the nature of all other animals and of all other phenomena" claiming that the "unique nature of *Homo sapiens* is the most important thing in the world, and it determines the meaning of everything that happens in the universe. The supreme good is the good of *Homo sapiens*." Nature only has value when it is considered as a resource for our own benefit (2014, p. 264). For Harari, "the antidote to a meaningless and lawless existence was provided by humanism, a revolutionary new creed that conquered the world during the last few centuries". According to him, "the humanist religion worships humanity, and expects humanity to play the part that God played in Christianity and Islam, and that the laws of nature played in Buddhism and Daoism". Hence, he continues, "whereas traditionally the great cosmic plan gave meaning to the life of humans, humanism reverses the roles, and expects the experiences of humans to give meaning to the great cosmos" (2016, p. 256). To Harari,

According to humanism, humans must draw from within their inner experiences not only the meaning of their own lives, but also the meaning of the entire universe. This is the primary commandment humanism has given us: create meaning for a meaningless world. Accordingly, the central religious revolution of modernity was not losing faith in God; rather, it was gaining faith in humanity. It took centuries of hard work. Thinkers wrote pamphlets, artists composed poems and symphonies, politicians struck deals – and together they convinced humanity that it can imbue the universe with meaning. (2016, p. 256).

Similarly to other authors, Harari does not recognise humanism in a monolithic way. For him, although all humanists worship humanity, they do not agree on its definition. Actually, "humanism has split into three rival sects that fight over the exact definition of 'humanity' (2014, p. 265): liberal humanism, socialist humanism and evolutionary humanism. Let us check the image present in one of Harari's books (2014, p. 268):

Humanist Religions - Religions that Worship Humanity		
Liberal humanism	Socialist humanism	Evolutionary humanism
<i>Homo sapiens</i> has a unique and sacred nature that is fundamentally different from the nature of all other beings and phenomena. The supreme good is the good of humanity.		
'Humanity' is individualistic and resides within each individual <i>Homo sapiens</i> .	'Humanity' is collective and resides within the species <i>Homo sapiens</i> as a whole.	'Humanity' is a mutable species. Humans might degenerate into subhumans or evolve into superhumans.
The supreme commandment is to protect the inner core and freedom of each individual <i>Homo sapiens</i> .	The supreme commandment is to protect equality within the species <i>Homo sapiens</i> .	The supreme commandment is to protect humankind from degenerating into subhumans, and to encourage its evolution into superhumans.

Liberal humanism, explains Harari, "believes that 'humanity' is a quality of individual humans, and that the liberty of individuals is therefore sacrosanct. According to liberals, the sacred nature of humanity resides within each and every individual *Homo sapiens*". Thus, he explains "the inner core of individual humans gives meaning to the world and is the source for all ethical and political authority". In front of a political or ethical dilemma, we must "look inside and listen to our inner voice – the voice of humanity" since "the chief commandments of liberal humanism are meant to protect the liberty of this inner voice against intrusion or harm. These commandments are collectively known as 'human rights'⁵ (2014, p. 265).

⁵ For an excellent investigation on Human Rights' basis, see BILETZKI, Anat. *Philosophy of Human Rights: A Systematic Introduction*, Routledge, 2019.

Socialist humanism, according to Harari, believes that 'humanity' is an attribute conferred by the collective rather than individuals once "they hold as sacred not the inner voice of each individual, but the species *Homo sapiens* as a whole". Disparately to liberal humanism, which seeks as much freedom as possible for individual humans, socialist humanism pursues equality between all humans. Thus, according to socialists, "inequality is the worst blasphemy against the sanctity of humanity, because it privileges peripheral qualities of humans over their universal essence". For instance, as explained by Harari, "when the rich are privileged over the poor, it means that we value money more than the universal essence of all humans, which is the same for rich and poor alike". Despite diametrical groundwork, both liberal humanism and socialist humanism are built on monotheist foundations. "The idea that all humans are equal is a revamped version of the monotheist conviction that all souls are equal before God" (2014, p. 266).

For the author, "the only humanist sect that has actually broken loose from traditional monotheism is evolutionary humanism, whose most famous representatives are the Nazis". Evolutionary Humanism, according to Harari, mainly represented by Nazis (maybe not, as we will address in the next chapter), was deeply influenced by the theory of evolution⁶. They believed that "humankind is not something universal and eternal, but rather a mutable species that can evolve or degenerate." Thus, "man can evolve into a superman, or degenerate into a subhuman" (2014, p. 266-267). As summarised by Harari,

The main ambition of the Nazis was to protect humankind from degeneration and encourage its progressive evolution. This is why the Nazis said that the Aryan race, the most advanced form of humanity, had to be protected and fostered, while degenerate kinds of *Homo sapiens* like Jews, Roma, homosexuals and the mentally ill had to be quarantined and even exterminated. The Nazis explains that

⁶ For Weikart, although "historians disagree about whether Nazis embraced Darwinian evolution (...) my analysis help us understand better the rationale behind Nazi racial policies, which were intended to improve the human species biologically, but it will also help illuminate the interaction between German science and Nazi ideology. Despite many recent studies showing the close rapport of the Nazi regime and German scientists, and despite many recent works rejecting the notion that Nazi ideology was pseudoscientific, as most historians used to think, even today some scholars are still loathe to entertain the idea that key elements of Nazi ideology could have been in harmony with the thinking of leading German scientists. Indeed the Nazi embrace of Darwinism in their racial ideology demonstrates the influence of science on Nazi ideology. Nazi racial ideology was largely consistent with the scholarship on race taught at German universities. This makes even clearer why so many German anthropologists and biologists supported Nazi racism—they were already committed to it before the Nazis came to power" (2013, p. 537-539).

Homo sapiens itself appeared when one 'superior' population of ancient humans evolved, whereas 'inferior' populations such as the Neanderthals became extinct. These different populations were at first no more than different races, but developed independently along their own evolutionary paths. This might well happen again. According to the Nazis, Homo sapiens had already divided into several distinct races, each with its own unique qualities. One of these races, the Aryan race, had the finest qualities – rationalism, beauty, integrity, diligence. The Aryan race therefore had the potential to turn man into superman. Other races, such as Jews and blacks, were today's Neanderthals, possessing inferior qualities. If allowed to breed, and in particular to intermarry with Aryans, they would adulterate all human populations and doom Homo sapiens to extinction. (2014, p. 267).

However, according to Harari, "genetic research conducted after 1945 has demonstrated that the differences between the various human lineages are far smaller than the Nazis postulated", debunking their racial theory (2014, p. 267). Notwithstanding, as highlighted by Harari,

these conclusions are relatively new. Given the state of scientific knowledge in 1933, Nazi beliefs were hardly outside the pale. The existence of different human races, the superiority of the white race, and the need to protect and cultivate this superior race were widely held beliefs among most Western elites. Scholars in the most prestigious Western universities, using the orthodox scientific methods of the day, published studies that allegedly proved that members of the white race were more intelligent, more ethical and more skilled than Africans or Indians. Politicians in Washington, London and Canberra took it for granted that it was their job to prevent the adulteration and degeneration of the white race, by, for example, restricting immigration from China or even Italy to 'Aryan' countries such as the USA and Australia. (...) These positions did not change simply because new scientific research was published. Sociological and political developments were far more powerful engines of change. In this sense, Hitler dug not just his own grave but that of racism in general. When he launched World War Two, he compelled his enemies to make clear distinctions between 'us' and 'them'. Afterwards, precisely because Nazi ideology was so racist, racism became discredited in the West. But the change took time. White supremacy remained a mainstream ideology in American politics at least until the 1960s. The White Australia policy which restricted immigration of non-white people to Australia remained in force until 1973. Aboriginal Australians did not receive equal political rights until the 1960s, and most were prevented from voting in elections because they were deemed unfit to function as citizens. (2014, p. 267-269)

As Harari concludes, rather than abhor humanity [all members of homo sapiens] the Nazis combated "liberal humanism, human rights and Communism precisely because they admired humanity [Aryans] and believed in the great potential of the human species". However, according to Darwinian evolution's

logic, the Nazis claimed that natural selection must be allowed in order to eradicate unfit individuals, allowing only the fittest to survive and reproduce. Hence, for Harari, "by succouring the weak, liberalism and Communism not only allowed unfit individuals to survive", allowed them to reproduce, "thereby undermining natural selection. In such a world, the fittest humans would inevitably drown in a sea of unfit degenerates. Humankind would become less and less fit with each passing generation – which could lead to its extinction" (2014, p. 269). Through Harari's analyses, humanism - cult to the human - can thread even the nefarious way to genocide and dehumanisation since adopting a distorted scientific approach.

Cherry and Matsumura, insofar as they address secular humanism, vehemently reject the idea that humanism replaces gods with humans, that is, since Christians worship Christ, humanists would have to worship humans. For them, secular humanism is not a religion and humanists worship nothing. According to the authors, "we are far too realistic to worship humanity. While we recognise that all human beings have the potential to do good, we also realise that the potential exists for acts of great evil. Humanity's constant challenge is to understand itself and improve itself" (CHERRY & MATSUMURA, 2020). If secular humanism is a naturalistic philosophy and is therefore based on the biological science of evolutionism - which best describes biological reality -, perhaps the movement has a narrow horizon in terms of ethics. If secular humanism starts from the description of how the world is, what would be his basis for proposing how the world should be? How something is and how it should be are different spheres. Further, there is an assumption in the idea that human beings have the potential to do good and evil, as stated by the authors. The idea that a wild boar would have this same potential, to do both good and evil, would hardly be defensible. But if the question involved not a wild boar but a chimpanzee or a bonobo, the answer would no longer be so easy⁷. The assumption is: humans

⁷ According to an article published in *The Human Journey*, "characteristics thought to be "moral" and therefore exclusive to us have existed for millions of years. This is not so surprising when one considers that elementary moral behaviour is an important foundation of co-operative societies. Collaboration at least in rudimentary form has been noted even in plant life and certainly in animal societies. As we noted before, sharing is obviously beneficial to chimps and bonobos, and it follows that they would also have a sense of fairness. Frans de Waal's "Fairness Study" clearly shows this to be true with Capuchin monkeys. In an article entitled *Morals without God*, de Waal clarifies: "These primates will happily perform a task for cucumber slices until they see

are detached enough from nature, free from their instincts enough to make it possible to choose to do good or do evil - whatever they mean by good and evil. Harari could argue that to base a philosophy on the human himself and his characterisation and his exceptionality is to praise - or to realise - him as the only way. So far we have seen that humanism is based on the human being itself, whether understood as philosophy or religion. But what human is this?

1.3 Humanism, only for [a few] humans

Experience has shown that the human sciences, in their development, led to the disappearance of man rather than to his apotheosis. (FOUCAULT, 1996, p. 13)

The white world, the only honourable one, barred me from all participation. A man was expected to behave like a man. I was expected to behave like a black man or at least like a nigger. I shouted a greeting to the world and the world slashed away my joy. I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged. (FANON, 2011, p. 114-115)

The notion that white Europeans could jump in their ships and go colonizing the rest of the world was based on the premise that there was an enlightened humanity that had to go in search of the benighted humanity and bring those savages into their incredible light. This call to civilization was always justified by the idea that there is a right way of being in the world, one truth, or concept of truth, that has guided the choices made down through history. Now, at the start of the twenty-first century, collaborations between thinkers with distinct visions derived from different cultures are enabling us to critique that idea: Are we really a humanity? How can we justify calling ourselves a humanity when 70 percent of us are totally alienated from even the minimal exercise of being — when the

others getting grapes, which taste so much better. The cucumber-eaters become agitated, throw down their measly veggies and go on strike. A perfectly fine food has become unpalatable as a result of seeing a companion with something better. ... We called it inequity aversion, a topic since investigated in other animals, including dogs. A dog will repeatedly perform a trick without rewards, but refuse as soon as another dog gets pieces of sausage for the same trick." Interestingly de Waal notes that Sarah Brosnan, a team member in the study, reported an unexpected twist to the inequity issue. While testing pairs of chimps, she found that also the one who gets the better deal occasionally refuses. It is as if they are satisfied only if both get the same. De Waal points out that "Such findings have implications for human morality. According to most philosophers, we reason ourselves towards a moral position. Even if we do not invoke God, it is still a top-down process of us formulating the principles and then imposing those on human conduct." He goes on to ask: "... would it be realistic to ask people to be considerate of others if we had not already a natural inclination to be so? Would it make sense to appeal to fairness and justice in the absence of powerful reactions to their absence? Imagine the cognitive burden if every decision we took needed to be vetted against handed-down principles. Instead, I am a firm believer in the Humean position that reason is the slave of the passions. We started out with moral sentiments and intuitions, which is also where we find the greatest continuity with other primates. Rather than having developed morality from scratch, we received a huge helping hand from our background as social animals". (<https://humanjourney.us/ancestors/7-traits-that-we-share-with-bonobos-and-chimpanzees/> Accessed in 11/10/2022)

majority of us are denied any real agency because the world we are living in does not want or require our input, only our custom? (KRENAK, 2020, p. 25-26)

In the previous subchapters, we addressed some narratives or perspectives about humanism. There is not a correct one, but a plethora of them in a multitude of classifications. Our intention, rather than exhaust all possible meanings, is to capture the essence, and the basic idea can be summarised in the sentence 'humanism worships humans.' However, which humans does humanism exalt? What humans are worshipped? Or yet, a more relevant question to pose: what is human?

Human is an animal belonging to Kingdom: *Animalia*, Phylum: *Chordata*, Class: *Mammalia*, Order: *Primates*, Suborder: *Haplorhini*, Infraorder: *Simiiformes*, Family: *Hominidae*, Subfamily: *Homininae*, Tribe: *Hominini*, Genus: *Homo*, Species: *Homo sapiens*, Subspecies: *Homo sapiens sapiens* - according to taxonomical classification. The detailed description of the human being as an animal does not help us grasp which human humanism exalts because the movement does not worship the biological human, but the 'human humanness'. Humanness cannot be found in the biological human. Humanness is assigned to the human on his social birth. Humanness birth does not coincide with *Homo sapiens*' emergence. At some point in human history, humanness was produced. But who invented humanness and why? Humanness establishes a differentiation between sapiens. In human history, just a few sapiens own humanness, and it permits the emergence of the 'non-human'. In other words, if a sapiens owns humanness, he or she will be considered a human. Conversely, if not, he or she will be considered non-human.

According to Braidotti, "over the last decades, while the academic humanities circles lived through the fallout of philosophical post-structuralism and deconstruction, and their respective brands of critical anti-humanism, many new developments also took place". She states that numerous theories including "feminist, postcolonial and anti-racist critical theory, environmental activists, disability rights advocates, queer and LGBT theorists questioned the scope, the founding principles, and the achievements of European humanism" as well as, she explains, "its role in the project of Western modernity" (BRAIDOTTI, 2020, p. 13). These movements

questions more specifically the idea of the human that is implicit in the humanist ideal of "Man," as the alleged "measure of all things." This ideal combines individual physical perfection with intellectual and moral perfectibility. Over the centuries, it also has turned into an exceptionalist civilizational standard that claims privileged access to self-reflexive reason for the human species as a whole and for European culture more specifically. Faith in reason ties in with the teleological prospect of the rational progress of a Eurocentric vision of humanity through the deployment of science and technology. According to Foucault's sharp analysis of the *Death of Man* written in 1966, even Marxism, through the method of historical materialism, continued to assign to the subject of European thought a royal place as the motor of human social and cultural evolution. Moreover, rational self-assurance has also played a major historical role in both justifying and paving the ground for a civilizational model which equated Europe with the universal powers of reason and progress, a claim that became central to the colonial ideology of European expansion. (BRAIDOTTI, 2020, p. 13)

In *Philosophical Posthumanism* (2020), the feminist and posthumanist philosopher Francesca Ferrando discusses some historical human construction processes. For her, 'human' is not a noun, is a verb. Thus, 'to human' is the historical performance act of which humans emerged that was denied to some *Homo sapiens*. In other words, some humans were excluded from the notion of the human since throughout *sapiens* history "the recognition of the human status has been regularly switched on and off" (p. 118). Ferrando mentioned four cases in order to exemplify how the humanising and dehumanising processes occur concomitantly.

Chattel slavery, the first one, is a social institution that legally dehumanises people into chattels (personal property) owned by the enslaver (WIKIPEDIA, 2022). A system where humans are depleted to property, chattels, and commodities. According to Ferrando, the settlers on the American continent "responded to the natives' different cultures through the paradigm and the semiotics of the 'Other'" (p. 119).

It is common to see these cultural clashes as encounters with "the other." The question of otherness is not simply a distinction between being human and being other. It is more complex. It begins with wondering whether these people are like us or not like us. And if they are not like us, if they are something else, or other, then what are they? Are they human—still a question whether, in some way at least, they are like us—or are they less than human? (...) in nearly all cases "not like us" meant "less than us." (O'ROURKE, 2005, p. 15).

Dichotomies are the dehumanisation hatcher. The binary thought "us/them" or "civilised versus the savage", where "savages" is defined by what

they lack, that is, by the varying attributes that the civilised regard as essential to being fully human, is at the same time one of the dehumanising and humanising processes. In Greco-Roman antiquity, Aristotle's theory of natural slavery⁸ was the most influential justification of dehumanisation, fundamental in the Spanish conquest of America to justify the enslavement of the Native Americans (STUURMAN, 2021, p. 39-41).

In that context of Spanish invasion of America, the Valladolid debate concerning Native Americans occurred led by Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566) and the Renaissance humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1494–1573). According to Sepúlveda - that never encountered a Native -, Native Americans were subhumans, naturally inferior beings, barbarians to be civilised and Christianised (FERRANDO, 2020, p.119). The fact that he has never found a native can be decisive. Although we are not offering an epistemological assumption where "who have empirical experience knows better than who have not", it is crucial to mention that a pillar of Western philosophical thought, Immanuel Kant, shares a very similar opinion. For him, Native Americans are a semi-race atrophied in its development because their ancestors "migrated to a different climate before they had fully adapted to their earlier environment". Thus, "they are weak, inert, 'incapable of any culture'; and they occupy the lowest level of the racial hierarchy that Kant claims to have determined" (KLEINGELD, 2007, p. 574). According to Kant,

That their natural disposition did not achieve a perfect suitability for any climate, can be seen from the circumstance that hardly another reason can be given for why this race, which is too weak for hard labour, too indifferent for industry and

⁸ Although there are relevant points of comparison between New World slavery and Romano-Grecian slavery, it is undeniable that the differences are stark as well (KNAP, 2011, p. 109). In line with Knap,

"This cultural reality provides the guide to seeing slaves living out their lives. Slavery does not so much reduce the slave to a dehumanized 'thing,' as it creates a different order of existence, an environment in which the slave is 'rehumanized' in a social or cultural role. Romans never denied the 'humanity' of slaves, their 'personhood' as men, not beasts, no matter how much they compared them to beasts as chattel property, or spoke of them as morally inferior, weak human beings. They just wanted them to be socialized to their slavish role. From the slave's perspective, his or her life as negotiation of that slavish role reveals what it meant to be a human in an enslaved condition." (2011, p. 109)

incapable of any culture⁹ - although there is enough of it as example and encouragement nearby [namely, the example set by the European colonial settlers] - ranks still far below even the Negro, who stands on the lowest of all the other steps that we have named as differences of the races.(KANT, 2007, p. 221)

The Königsbergian humanist states in his *Lectures on Anthropology* that 'whites' occupy the top level of this hierarchy:

There are Four Races on Earth; these are

1)The American people acquires no culture. It has no incentives; because affect and passion are absent in it. They are not in love, thus they are also not fertile. They hardly speak at all, do not caress one another, also do not care for anything, and are lazy, they paint their faces in an ugly manner.

2) The Negro race, one could say, is exactly the opposite of the American; they are full of affect and passion, very lively, talkative and vain. They acquire culture, but only a culture of slaves; that is, they allow themselves to be trained. They have many incentives, are also sensitive, afraid of beatings, and also do many things out of honor.

3) It is true that the Hindus have incentives, but they have a strong degree of composure, and they all look like philosophers. Despite this, they are nevertheless very much inclined toward anger and love. As a result they acquire culture in the highest degree, but only in the arts and not in the sciences. They never raise it up to abstract concepts; a great Hindustani man is the one who has gone very far in deceit and who has a lot of money. The Hindus always remain as they are, they never bring culture further, although they began to cultivate themselves much earlier.

4) The white race contains all incentives and talents in itself; as a result it must be considered in a bit more detail. (KANT, 2012, p. 320)

Did the *kategorischer Imperativ* embrace American Natives, "Negroes" or even "Hindus", so "similar to philosophers"? This question also could include women since "man is created in order to rule over nature; and woman, in order to govern man" (KANT, 2012, p. 320)¹⁰. Abbatista highlighted that under the mask of progress and modernity and behind discernment and wisdom European veil,

⁹ According to Kleingeld, "the term 'culture' here could refer to agriculture or to development generally"(2007, p. 574)

¹⁰ Kleingeld would answer to this question positively. According to her, "During the 1780s, as Kant was developing his universalistic moral theory, he published texts in which he defended the superiority of whites over non-whites. Whether commentators see this as evidence of inconsistent universalism or of consistent inegalitarianism, they generally assume that Kant's position on race remained stable during the 1780s and 1790s. Against this standard view, I argue on the basis of his texts that Kant radically changed his mind. I examine his 1780s race theory and his hierarchical conception of the races, and subsequently address the question of the significance of these views, especially in the light of Kant's own ethical theory. I then show that during the 1790s Kant restricts the role of the concept of race, and drops his hierarchical account of the races in favour of a more genuinely egalitarian and cosmopolitan view". (2007,p. 573)

the dehumanises processes adopted the public exhibitions known as "human zoo":

From the early 19th century and for a long time after, with increasing frequency from the 1850s onward, and at a time when the struggle against slavery and the slave trade was approaching its end, the white, modern, progressive Western world held public performances dehumanizing exotic human beings—variations of which are still detectable within the logic of contemporary communication and spectacle. Those dehumanizing practices consisted in the regular, systematic, unscrupulous, insensitive, and even brutal public exhibitions of human beings belonging to non-European ethnic groups—what were commonly termed 'races.' (ABBATISTA, 2021, p. 83)

Contrary to humanists Sepúlveda and Kant (at least after Kant changed his mind), for de las Casas, who had direct contact with Native Americans and stepped in New World land, "natives were fully human and thus, they had the right to be treated with dignity" since "Americans were not barbarians but rational beings, and that their laws and costumes equalled or even surpassed those of the ancient Western civilisations, such as the Greeks and the Romans" (FERRANDO, 2021, p. 119).

The second dehumanisation process exemplified by Ferrando was the genocide. The genocide creates the 'us' against 'enemies' atmosphere. This doom atmosphere humanises the "Us" insofar as dehumanises the "enemies". "Us" can be a state, a city, an ethnicity, an empire. As far as vanquished enemies were taken as inferior humans, the winners ("us") were taken as superior ones (STUURMAN, 2021, p. 41). According to Stuurman,

For the Romans, the friend versus enemy dichotomy was probably the most important one. They not only killed enemies in battles but also frequently exterminated entire tribes and cities. But the conviction that the victors wielded an arbitrary power over the lives, lands, and goods of the vanquished was found in all continents and climes. Slavery was then theorized as the reward of the victors for not killing the vanquished. (STUURMAN, 2021, p. 41)

According to Gregory Stanton, President of *Genocide Watch*, all cultures create divisions between people using categories of "us and them." Such a distinction occurs by ethnicity, race, religion or nationality, for instance, German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi. According to him, Bipolar societies that lack mixed categories, such as Rwanda and Burundi, are the most likely to have genocide. According to Genocide Watch, "genocide is a process that develops in ten stages

that are predictable but not inexorable. At each stage, preventive measures can stop it." The genocide process is not linear. These stages may occur simultaneously. "Each stage is itself a process. Logically, later stages are preceded by earlier stages. But all stages continue to operate throughout the process". Ten stages are: I. Classification; II. Symbolisation; III. Discrimination; IV. Dehumanisation; V. Organisation; VI. Polarisation; VII. Preparation; VIII. Persecution; IX. Extermination; X. Denial (GENOCIDE WATCH, 2022).

Nazis not only exalted the "Arian" superiority but also downgraded some humans to the point of complete debasement, considering them below some animals. As Kete points out,

The Nazis worked within a new paradigm. Accepting the logic of modernism, they abolished the line separating human and animal and articulated a new hierarchy based on race, which placed certain species – races - of animals above "races" of humans - eagles and wolves and pigs in the new human hierarchy were placed above Poles and rats and Jews. (2002, p. 20)

Ferrando claims that with both slavery and genocide, which we already discussed, some categories of humans are subjected to a symbolic dehumanisation through the division "us/them". Nonetheless, in the historical process of dehumanising, not every human that was diminished to a less-than-human or non-human, excluded from the hegemonic notion of the human, is a result of this type of dualistic procedure. As an example, the third one, Ferrando mentioned a classic study, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (1978), written by Leslie Fiedler, that addresses how the "freak"¹¹ has historically challenged the "us/them" paradigm (2021, p. 121). According to Fiedler, the long exclusion of "freaks" converged with "exploitation by other humans, who defining them thus [as freaks] have by the same token defined themselves as 'normal'" (1978, p. 13), that is, "human" is defined through "freaks" and "freaks" are defined through "human" since "freaks" (dwarfs, for example) "were considered beast/human hybrids" (1978, p. 78). The "freaks" are "exceptional examples of human physical anomalies, oddities, prodigies, deformities, and monstrosities"

¹¹ According to Leslie "we live at a moment when the name "freaks" is being rejected by the kinds of physiologically deviant humans to whom it has traditionally been applied: Giants, dwarfs, siamese twins, hermafrodites, fat ladies and living skeletons" (1978, p. 13).

that were exhibited in "freak shows"¹². These persons were affected by "abnormal or pathological physical conditions, such as gigantism, dwarfism, hypertrichosis, bearded women, hermaphroditism, Siamese twins, hydrocephalus, anomalous skin pigmentation, and other dermatological pathologies" (ABBATTISTA, 2021, P. 84). For Fiedler,

The true Freak (...) stirs both supernatural terror and natural sympathy, since, unlike the fabulous monster, he is one of us, the human child of human parents, however altered by forces we do not quite understand into something mythic and mysterious. (...) Only the true Freak challenges the conventional boundaries between male and female, sexed and sexless, animal and human, large and small, self and other, and consequently between reality and illusion, experience and fantasy, fact and myth (1978, p. 24).

In Ferrando's reading of Fiedler's book, she "underlines the symbolic significance of the 'freak' in Western culture, as that human which cannot be reduced to a fixed entity, but represents the bridge, the dissolution of strict binaries" (FERRANDO, 2021, p. 121).

The last Ferrando's example of dehumanising processes was Witch-hunting, likely the most neglected. During the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period, around sixty thousand people, mostly women, were executed in that atrocity (FERRANDO, 2021, p. 122). However, this is not a social illness surpassed. Pursuant to Santana,

More than five centuries have passed since 'witchcraft' appeared in the legal codes of many European countries, and women reputed to be witches became the target of a mass persecution. Today most governments in countries where women are assaulted and murdered as witches do not acknowledge the crime. Nevertheless, at the roots of the new persecution we find many of the same factors that instigated the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century witch hunts, with religion and the regurgitation of the most misogynous biases against women providing the ideological justification. (...) [Nowadays] in Tanzania alone, it is calculated that more than five thousand women a year are murdered as witches, some macheted to death, others buried or burned alive. In some countries, like

¹² "During the late 19th century and the early 20th century freak shows were at their height of popularity; the period 1840s through to the 1940s saw the organized for-profit exhibition of people with physical, mental or behavioral rarities. Although not all abnormalities were real, some being alleged, the exploitation for profit was seen as an accepted part of American culture. The attractiveness of freak shows led to the spread of the shows that were commonly seen at amusement parks, circuses, dime museums and vaudeville. The amusement park industry flourished in the United States by the expanding middle class who benefited from short work weeks and a larger income. There was also a shift in American culture which influenced people to see leisure activities as a necessary and beneficial equivalent to working, thus leading to the popularity of the freak show." (WIKIPEDIA, 2022) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freak_show , accessed in 03/08/2022.

the Central African Republic, the prisons are full of accused witches, and in 2016 more than a hundred were executed, burned at the stake by rebel soldiers, who, following in the footsteps of sixteenth-century witch finders, have made a business of the accusations, using the threat of a pending execution to force people to pay. (2019, p. 5)

Witch-hunting, black enslavement, the extermination of indigenous people and the colonisation of the Americas were essential to the primitive accumulation of capital, staying these dehumanising processes in the fabric of capitalism. All were neglected by Marx (SANTANA, 2019, p. 10). Santana shows how the "current fencing and privatisation process creates the environment and social motivations so that women engaged in the preservation of the common land are accused, throughout the world, of witchcraft". Furthermore, she states that there is a profound relationship between witch-hunting and fencing the women's bodies through control of women's sexuality and their reproductive autonomy" (SANTANA, 2019, p. 10). Thus, she emphasises that witch-hunting has little to do with witchcraft. De facto, in the vast majority of cases, 'witch' is an adjectival employed as a pretext to get rid of subversive poor women. Witchcraft so intensively pursued is a two-way form of discrimination: misogyny and classism. Misogyny, racism, ableism, xenophobia and classism are contemporaneous concepts that may not always be clearly involved with the dusty cellar of humanism.

John H. Evans, Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of California San Diego, investigated the meaning of the "human" in the public imagination in Western societies in his book "What Is a Human: What the Answer Mean for Human Rights". According to him, "I cannot tell you what a human truly is from sociological research, but I can say what the public thinks a human is" (2016, p. 2). In order to do it, Evans pervades the definition of human - for him, the 'Anthropologies' - throughout the Western intellectual and cultural tradition. So, Evans pointed out:

So, what are humans in the Western intellectual and cultural tradition? Are humans those who have speech, reason, or some other trait? This is the philosopher's approach. Are humans those who are made in the image of God? That is the theologian's approach. Are humans those who have a typically human DNA sequence? That is the biologist's approach. (2016, p. 3)

Each of these 'approaches' is dealt with as 'Anthropologies', three specifically: Christian Theological Anthropology, Philosophical Anthropology and Biological Anthropology. In the first one, humans are those who are made in the image of God - the *Imago Dei* in concert with the Bible.

Then God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. (Genesis,1:26 - 28)

In the second, Philosophical Anthropology, in an ethical and bioethical debates, philosophers are concerned about a 'person' and not a 'human'; a 'person' is entitled to be treated like we treat all persons. Thus, "proponents accept the biological definition of humans and other animals, but these biological divides have little moral significance" (2016, p. 7). Peter Singer, for instance, claims that "the concept of a person is distinct from that of a member of the species *Homo sapiens*, and that it is personhood, not species membership, that is most significant in determining when it is wrong to end a life" (SINGER, 2009).

Following Evans's argumentation, the paramount component of this anthropology is "that certain clusters of properties are sufficient" to make something a person (2016, p. 7). In other words, to consider an entity as a person, this entity should have certain properties that without which he would no longer be a person. Hence, the adoption of which properties an entity should have to be considered a person is *de facto* the bioethical debate. Let us consider, for instance, this excerpt of Michael Tooley's chapter from the book "A Companion from Bioethics" (2009):

What properties suffice to make something a person? That certain clusters of properties are sufficient is almost universally accepted among philosophers. Consider, for example, a being that (1) possesses consciousness, (2) has preferences, (3) has conscious desires, (4) has feelings, (5) can experience pleasure and pain, (6) has thoughts, (7) is self-conscious, (8) is capable of rational thought, (9) has a sense of time, (10) can remember its own past actions and mental states, (11) can envisage a future for itself, (12) has non-momentary interests, involving a unification of desires over time, (13) is capable of rational deliberation, (14) can take moral considerations into account in choosing between possible actions, (15) has traits of character that undergo change in a reasonably

non-chaotic fashion, (16) can interact socially with others, and (17) can communicate with others. Few would disagree that such an entity is a person. (TOOLEY, 2009, p. 133)

Adopting 'person' as a criterion instead of 'human' becomes a wider ethical proposal since it embraces other animals.

Returning to Evans's Anthropologies categorisation, the last one is Biological Anthropology. According to him, the central element of biological anthropology is genetic reductionism - "the belief that Darwinism explains everything important about being human", thus "humans either 'are' their genes, or in milder version, anything important to know about humans is in their genes" (2016, p. 8). As we discussed at the beginning of this subchapter, we are animals, mammals, sapiens. We are nothing but other animals, merely expressions of our genes, just like a capybara or a boar. The following text, written by West, is illustrative:

"In the last ten years we have come to realize humans are more like worms than we ever imagined," declares biologist Bruce Alberts, former president of the National Academy of Sciences. Geneticist Glen Evans at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center agrees. Genetically speaking, he reports, "the worm represents a very simple human." (...) "In essence, we are nothing but a big fly," insists Charles Zuker, genetic researcher and professor of biology at the University of California at San Diego. Or perhaps humans beings are merely overgrown mice. After all, "we share 99 percent of our genes with mice, and we even have the genes that could make a tail," claims British scientist Jane Rogers. (...) "We humans appear as only slightly remodeled chimpanzee - like apes," insists Morris Goodman of Wayne State University, coauthor of a 2003 study which concluded that "chimpanzees are more closely related to people than to gorillas (...) and probably should be included in the human branch of the family tree." Goodman complains about the traditional view of human beings that "emphasizes how very different humans are from all other forms of life," deriding it as contaminated by "anthropocentric bias." In reality, according to Goodman, "the molecular genetic view (...) places all the living apes (gibbons, orangutans, gorillas and chimpanzees) with humans in the same family and within that family barely separates chimpanzees from humans. (WEST, 2007, p. 3-4)

The human-almost-worm described previously has a scientific name, *Homo sapiens*. Before we investigate its origin, we need to pervade its "nickname", 'human'. 'Human' in the Western intellectual and cultural tradition was born in Ancient Rome. Martin Heidegger, in his "Letter on Humanism", indicates that

Humanitas, explicitly so called, was first considered and striven for in the age of the Roman Republic. Homo humanus was opposed to homo barbarus. Homo

humanus here means the Romans, who exalted and honored Roman virtue through the "embodiment" of the *Paideia* [education] taken over from the Greeks. (1998, p. 244)

Therefore, ancient Romans are the 'human' inventors, referring to themselves as *Homo humanus* - through the opposition from gods, animals and barbarians - and by the recognition in education. 'Humanus' arises from the Scipionic Circle (a group of Roman intellectuals), named after their patron, the politician Scipio Aemilianus (185-129 BCE) (FERRANDO, 2020, p. 136). According to Ferrando, Greek culture fascinated the thinkers of this Circle, philosophers such as Cicero and playwrights such as Terentius. The Scipionic Circle would bring about the blending of Greek and Roman culture, which would define the notion's birth of the 'human', merging *philantropia* (that is, the love and compassion for humanity) and *paideia* (that is, education and culture) with Roman values (FERRANDO, 2020, p. 138). The Roman notion 'Humanitas' is a revisitation of the Greek notion of 'Paideia'. That is not for another reason that there is a relation between 'human' and 'culture', 'reason' and 'civilization'. The term 'humanus' is present in "early Latin comedy by playwrights such as Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 250 BCE–184 BCE), Staius Caecilius (c. 230 BCE–c. 168 BCE), and Publius Terentius Afer (c. 185 B.C.–159 BCE)", however, it was much more developed by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BCE) (FERRANDO, 2020, p. 139).

According to Davies (1997, p. 15–20), as explained by Ferrando (2020, p.140), "Cicero's notion of humanitas provided a guide of ethical conduct and equanimity, not only in the daily practices of living, but also when exercising political power". In that way, "his take on humanitas emphasised the interrelation between being moral, educated, and actively involved in public life"; a fundamental concept in the development of Renaissance Humanism. Notwithstanding, Cicero, nor any of his contemporaries, ever questioned the institution of slavery or the subordinate condition of Roman women (KNAP, 2011 p. 108; POSNER, 2011, p. 23). Posner highlights the following point:

The Greek *paideia*, for instance, was designed to help students become distinct from those whom the Greeks called barbarians; it centred on the faculties of reading and writing as well as philosophical argument in small dialogue circles; and it excluded non-Greeks, women, and slaves.

The Roman *humanitas* demanded the teaching of everything that distinguishes humans from animals; it centred on the faculties of remembrance (*memoria*), verbal formulation (*enunciatio*), and public speech (*oratio*); and it was accessible to the free men of all nations, but again, not to women or slaves. (2011, p. 23)

Following Ferrando, the "latin notion of *humanitas* was delimited not only through its explicit borders (for instance, the *homo barbarus* to civilise), but also its implicit ones", humans' categories "who did not have access to the discussion (for instance, women, children, and slaves)", that way, "the roots of the word "humanity" have been mostly traced by free adult male intellectuals implicitly referring to other free adult male intellectuals" (2020, p. 140). And, as she concluded,

The values introduced by such a notion in the ancient world, if compared, for instance, to the *mos maiorum* (that is, the traditional Roman values), should be regarded as an important paradigm shift toward a comprehensive account on the human, by emphasizing, for instance, the universal human connection. And still its implicit and explicit restrictions, which would result in patronizing practices and colonizing policies, did not radically question the status quo, and should be equally accounted for in this archaeological enquiry. (2020, p. 140-141).

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2022), 'human' as a noun means 'a man, woman or a child'. 'human' is also an adjective in which the meaning is: (1) "being, relating to, or belonging to a person or to people as opposed to animals"; and (2) "having the qualities, faults, and feelings that people have, as opposed to gods, animals, or machines". However, we argue that 'human' is not a neutral term. In the Western tradition, 'human', either as an adjective or a noun, was attributed to few humans. 'Human' meaning was opposed not only to gods, animals and machines but to 'non-humans' such as slaves, witches, Amerindian peoples, black peoples, "freaks" and so forth. Even currently, being a 'human' is still a privilege for a few. But, is being human also a privilege only for a few sapiens?

1.4 Humanism, only for [a few] sapiens

*Deus creavit, Linnaeus disposuit.*¹³(LINNAEUS APUD FERRANDO, 2020, p.142)

Man is the animal which the Creator found worthy of honoring with such a marvelous mind and which he wanted to adopt as His favorite, reserving for him a nobler existence; God even sent His only son to save him.

But all this, he concludes,

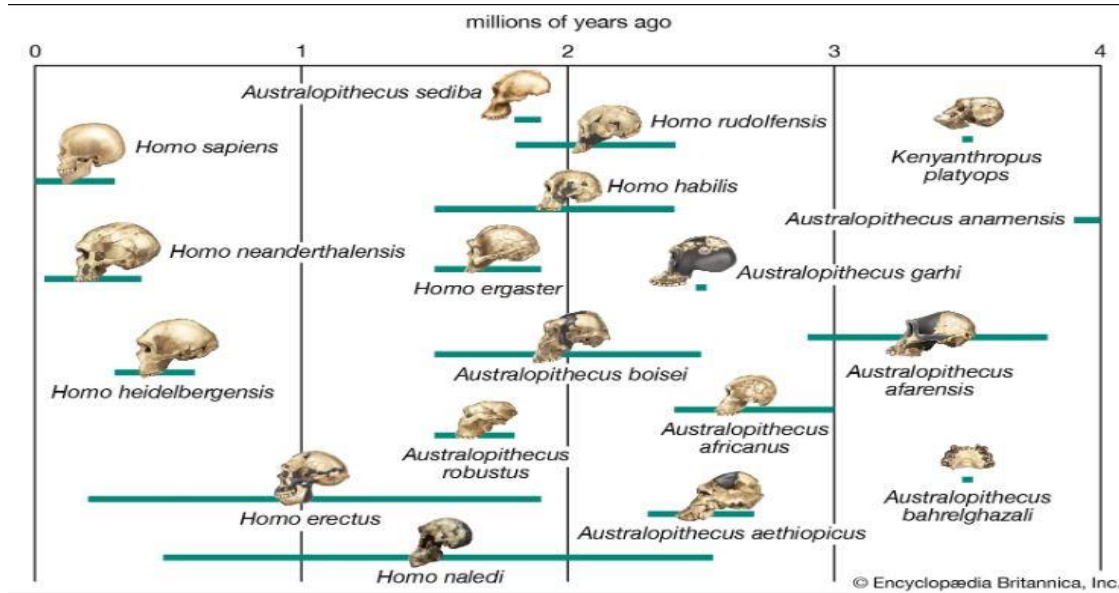
belongs to another forum; just as the shoemaker sticks to his last, I must remain in my workshop and consider man and his body as a naturalist, who hardly knows a single distinguishing mark which separates man from the apes, save for the fact that the latter have an empty space between their canines and their other teeth. (LINNAEUS, 1955, p. 4-5 APUD AGAMBEN, 2004, p. 23-24)

Homo sapiens sapiens, in anthropology and palaeontology, is the subspecies of *Homo sapiens* (Latin: "wise man"), the only living members of genus *Homo*. They are, in fact, the more specific term for modern human beings. Palaeontologists and anthropologists used this subspecies designation to separate modern human beings from more-archaic members of *Homo sapiens* (BRITANNICA, 2022) - Herto Man or *Homo sapiens idaltu*, for instance. However, in the updated taxonomical classification, the term *Homo sapiens sapiens* is no longer in use¹⁴. The common term in use is *Homo sapiens*. Let us see the following image (WIKIPEDIA, 2022)¹⁵.

¹³ "God created, Linnaeus organized"

¹⁴ There is a discussion among academics about whether we should use the subspecies in order to classify other hominids. For example, if Neanderthals ought to be considered *Homo sapiens Neanderthals* - considering them as a subspecies of species *Homo sapiens* - or *Homo Neanderthalensis*. - considering them as another species different from *Homo sapiens*. The term in use now to refer to modern human is *Homo sapiens*. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_taxonomy#Subspecies, accessed in 03/21/2022).

¹⁵ Ibid.



Carl Linnaeus, the father of modern biological classification - taxonomy - applied the name *Homo sapiens* in 1758. It had long been known that "human beings physically resemble the primates more closely than any other known living organisms, but at the time it was a daring act to classify human beings within the same framework used for the rest of nature". Linnaeus, however, concerned only with similarities in bodily structure, dealt with only the "problem of distinguishing *Homo Sapiens* from apes (gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, and gibbons), which contrast from humans in many bodily as well as cognitive features" (BRITANNICA, 2022).

In the twelfth edition of his classic *Systema Naturae* (1766), the "second Adam", as Linnaeus referred to himself by giving true names to God's creatures, divided the genus *Homo* into two subgenera: *Homo nocturnus* and *Homo diurnus*. The first, "otherwise known as the 'Troglydote', refers to the chimpanzees, orangutans, and other anthropoids reportedly sighted by early explorers in Africa and Asia". The second comprises three species: "the normative *Homo sapiens*, distinguished by its characteristic skin, temperament, and location as European, American, Asian, or African, followed by the inferior *Homo monstrosus* and *Homo ferus*" (DOUTHWAITE, 2002, p.15). Linnaeus classified the Americans, Asians, Africans and "freaks" as a different species of

Homo in a hierarchy in which European was considered superior. Concerning "freaks":

Homo monstrosus embraces a number of hotly debated human anomalies, such as the Patagonian giant, the dwarf of the Alps, and the monorchid Hottentot. Homo ferus, or "feral man," on the other hand, covers a number of unfortunate individuals whose existence was well documented. Distinguished by bestial traits such as muteness, quadruped locomotion, and hairiness, the Homines feri listed by Linnaeus include the wolf-boy of Hesse (*Juvenis lupinus hessensis*), Peter of Hanover (*Juvenis hannoveranus*), and the wild girl of Champagne (*Puella campanica*). (DOUTHWAITE, 2002, p.15)

In the tenth edition of *Systema Naturae* (1759), besides *Homo Monstrosus*, Linnaeus (1740) established the following taxa: Europeans (*Europaeus albus* - white) are sanguine, brawny, gentle, and inventive; Americans (*Americanus rubescens* - red) are choleric, obstinate, content, and free; Asians (*Asiaticus luridus* - yellow) melancholy, rigid, haughty, and covetous; Africans¹⁶ (*Africanus niger*, black) phlegmatic, crafty, indolent, and negligent (VAUGHAN, 1982, p. 945-946). As Vaughan explains further, "the Indians, to be sure, fared far better than Africans and Asians in this Linnaen glossary, and Linnaeus even hinted at the Noble Savage image ("content," "free") that was rapidly gaining favour among European intellectuals". However, according to him, "an unavoidable message in Linnaeus's highly subjective and immensely influential treatise was that American Indians were naturally red and somewhat inferior to whites". Moreover, in accordance with Fluehr-Lobban (2006, p. 11), as quoted by Ferrando (2020, p. 145), whilst Europeans were considered being "governed by laws", Africans were "governed by caprice", Asians were "ruled by opinion", and Americans "by customs". This racial hierarchical classification was aligned with "the ideological paradigm of the Enlightenment, emphasised reason in contrast with tradition, superstition, or opinion, and so accorded the moral primacy to the government by law, characteristic of the Europeans" (FLUEHR-LOBBAN, 2006, p. 11 APUD FERRANDO, 2020, p. 145). The construction of racial theories until now was, to a great extent, occurred by Linnaeus's

¹⁶ According to Curran (2011, p.158), African women was considered "without shame".

taxonomical classification (FLUEHR-LOBBAN, 2006, p. 11 APUD FERRANDO, 2020, p. 145).

Giorgio Agamben, in his *The Open: Man and Animal* (2004), clarified that the major of Linnaeus's hardship was not to insert humans and apes in the same primates order; the primary task was to identify which is the specific human identity. That difficulty was at the same time embarrassing and the foundation of 'human' invention from the European perspective. According to Agamben,

In truth, Linnaeus's genius consists not so much in the resoluteness with which he places man among the primates as in the irony with which he does not record—as he does with the other species—any specific identifying characteristic next to the generic name Homo, only the old philosophical adage: *nosce te ipsum* {know yourself}. Even in the tenth edition, when the complete denomination becomes Homo sapiens, all evidence suggests that the new epithet does not represent a description, but that it is only a simplification of that adage, which, moreover, maintains its position next to the term Homo. It is worth reflecting on this taxonomic anomaly, which assigns not a given, but rather an imperative as a specific difference. An analysis of the Introitus that opens the Systema leaves no doubts about the sense Linnaeus attributed to his maxim: man has no specific identity other than the ability to recognize himself. Yet to define the human not through any nota characteristic, but rather through his self-knowledge, means that man is the being which recognizes itself as such, that man is the animal that must recognize itself as human to be human. Indeed, Linnaeus writes that, at the moment of birth, nature has thrown man "bare upon the bare earth," unable to know, speak, walk, or feed himself, unless all this is taught to him (*Nudus in nuda terra ... cui scire nichil sine doctrina; non fari, non ingredi, non vesci, non aliud naturae sponte*). He becomes himself only if he raises himself above man (*o quam contempta res est homo, nisi supra humana se erexerit*). (2004, p. 25-26)

Whether in the taxonomical classification *Homo sapien's* identity was the self-recognition and this self-recognition was embedded in a biased Eurocentric view in which some *Homo sapiens* were less-than-humans due to dehumanisation processes, the corollary is the European human primacy. Europeans are the humans that correspond entirely to the criterion to be Homo sapiens. As Ferrando stressed, "*Homo sapiens* kept the biased assumptions of its Latin etymology intact, since such a self-recognition was still relying upon sexist, racist, and ethnocentric schemata" where (humanus, the plus, barbarus, the minuss male, the plus, female, the minus; able, the plus, differently abled, the minus, and so on)". Thus, as she concluded further, the coining of the term "*Homo sapiens* marks an important attempt to relocate the human among all the other organisms; and still, considering that not all humans have been equally

accounted for under this category", thus the presumed universality of *Homo sapiens* is undermined by its own hierarchical configuration (2020, p. 147).

In addition to the biased term *Homo sapiens*, Linnaeus coined the term 'Mammalia', one of the six animal classes in which we are part. However, why did Linnaeus select mammary glands in order to create this class? Linnaeus's animal division embraces six classes: *Mammalia*, *Aves*, *Amphibia*, *Pisces*, *Insecta*, and *Vermes*. Although Linnaeus "had based important aspects of plant taxonomy on sexual dimorphism, the class *Mammalia* was the only one of his major zoological divisions to focus on reproductive organs and the only term to highlight a characteristic associated primarily with the female". If we analyse the criteria to coin the names of his other classes, originated from Aristotle, we will see: "*Aves* simply means bird; *Amphibia* emphasises habitat; *Insecta* refers to the segmentation of the body. *Vermes* derives from the colour (red-brown) of the common earthworm". Thus, in the eighteenth-century scientific nomenclature was a conservative enterprise; "suitable terms tended to be conserved and new terms derived by modifying traditional ones. Linnaeus, however, broke with tradition by creating the term Mammalia" (SCHIEBINGER, 1993, p. 384). According to Londa Schiebinger, Professor of History of Science in the History Department at Stanford University,

It is possible, however, to see the Linnaean coinage as a political act. The presence of milk-producing mammae is, after all, but one characteristic of mammals, as was commonly known to eighteenth-century European naturalists. Further, the mammae are "functional" in only half of this group of animals (the females) and, among those, for a relatively short period of time (during lactation) or not at all. Linnaeus could have derived a term from several equally unique, and perhaps more universal, characteristics of the class he designated mammals, choosing *Pilosa* (the hairy ones-although the significance given hair, and especially beards, was also saturated with gender), for example, or *Aurecaviga* (the hollow-eared ones). (1993, p. 383-384).

Linnaeus, besides being a botanist, was also a physician, a vigorous advocate of breastfeeding and a father of seven children. There were "immediate and pressing political trends that prompted Linnaeus to focus scientific attention on the *mammae*". Linnaeus exalted the maternal breast when doctors and politicians had extolled the virtues of mother's milk; milk, to a large extent produced by wet nurses (SCHIEBINGER, 1993, p. 383). In the eighteenth century, it became very popular in Europe employment of wet nurses - women

who mostly belonged to the lowest classes - in order to nurture upper and middle-class babies. As a result of these defiant poor living conditions, this practice provoked high infant mortality of poor babies. Therefore, Linnaeus combined his racist and ethnocentric biases with gender assumptions (FERRANDO, 2020, p. 145). Thus, *Homo sapiens*, as Ferrando concludes, is a contaminated term, created in a profound and incontrovertible ethnocentric atmosphere. Rather than a universalist intention, humanism is an Eurocentric, "malecentric", "whitecentric", "ablecentric" and "heterocentric" view got from a historical production of humans – in which some are more humans than others. The 'human' which humanism exalts is neither the abstract human nor the pure-mundane *Homo sapiens sapiens*. This human is an invention and a process. This human is a historical and social construction very delimited.

Notwithstanding, Sapiens do not restrict their poison to the social fabric. Their effects surpass human society and pervade most remote locations. When humans worship humans (few of them), creating humanism, they do it to the detriment of nature. Nature is also an invention of humans, and this invention occurred when we were removed from it. We addressed that humanism was made by humans for a few humans. Is it humanism made for any non-human?

1.5 Humanism for no non-human

Most projections of climate change presume that future changes -greenhouse gas emissions, temperature increases and effects such as sea level rise - will happen incrementally. A given amount of emission will lead to a given amount of temperature increase that will lead to a given amount of smooth incremental sea level rise. However, the geological record for the climate reflects instances where a relatively small change in one element of climate led to abrupt changes in the system as a whole. In other words, pushing global temperatures past certain thresholds could trigger abrupt, unpredictable and potentially irreversible changes that have massively disruptive and large-scale impacts. At that point, even if we do not add any additional CO₂ to the atmosphere, potentially unstoppable processes are set in motion. We can think of this as sudden climate brake and steering failure where the problem and its consequences are no longer something we can control. (MALINA, 2014, p. 14-15)

C'est une triste chose de songer que la nature parle et que le genre humain n'écoute pas. (HUGO, 1968, p. 145)

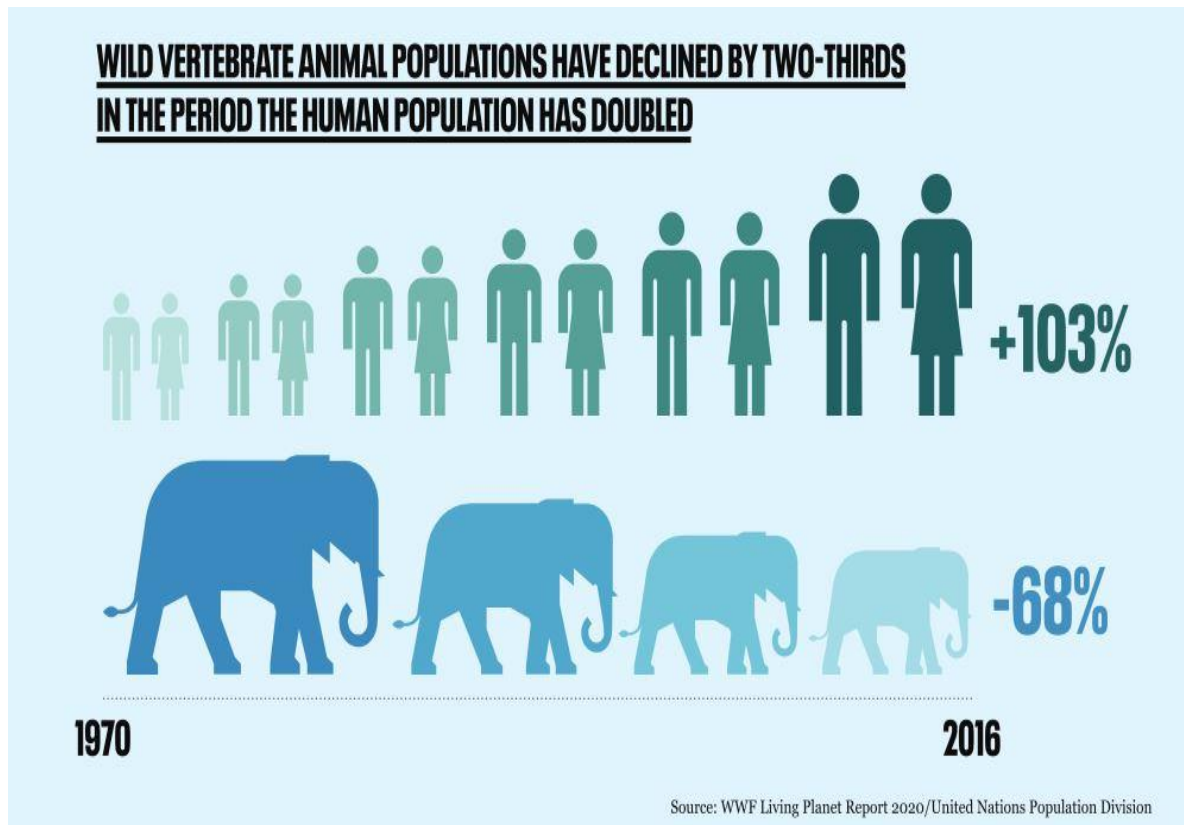
As we discussed in the previous sub-chapters, humanism is not just a writ of emancipation from the shackles of divine tutelage; it is the construction of the human being from the less-than-human or non-human's building. As we have seen, the nefarious atmosphere of ethnic and racial discrimination is associated with the process of creating the non-human. However, humans are not the only ones harmed in the course of *Sapiens'* actions in the world. Suffering, devastation, and extinction permeate recent Earth history.

Human beings have existed for just 200,000 years, yet our impact on the planet is so inordinate that scientists, philosophers and thinkers in general are considering our period as the *Anthropocene*, "demarcated from the 1950s (or 1780s depending who read), named by Paul Crutzen in 2002 and ratified in 2014" (MACCORMACK, 2020, p. 21) that is, the age of humans. According to Patel and Moore, there is a

problem in naming our new geological epoch the Anthropocene. The root, *anthropos* (Greek for "human"), suggests that it's just humans being humans, in the way that kids will be kids or snakes will be snakes, that has caused climate change and the planet's sixth mass extinction. It's true that humans have been changing the planet since the end of the last ice age. A hunting rate slightly higher than the replenishment rate over centuries, together with shifting climate and grasslands, spelled the end for the Columbian Plains mammoth in North America, the orangutan's overstuffed relative the *Gigantopithecus* in east Asia, and the giant Irish elk *Megaloceros giganteus* in Europe. Humans may even have been partly responsible for tempering a global cooling phase twelve thousand years ago through agriculture-related greenhouse gas emissions. (2018, p. 15)

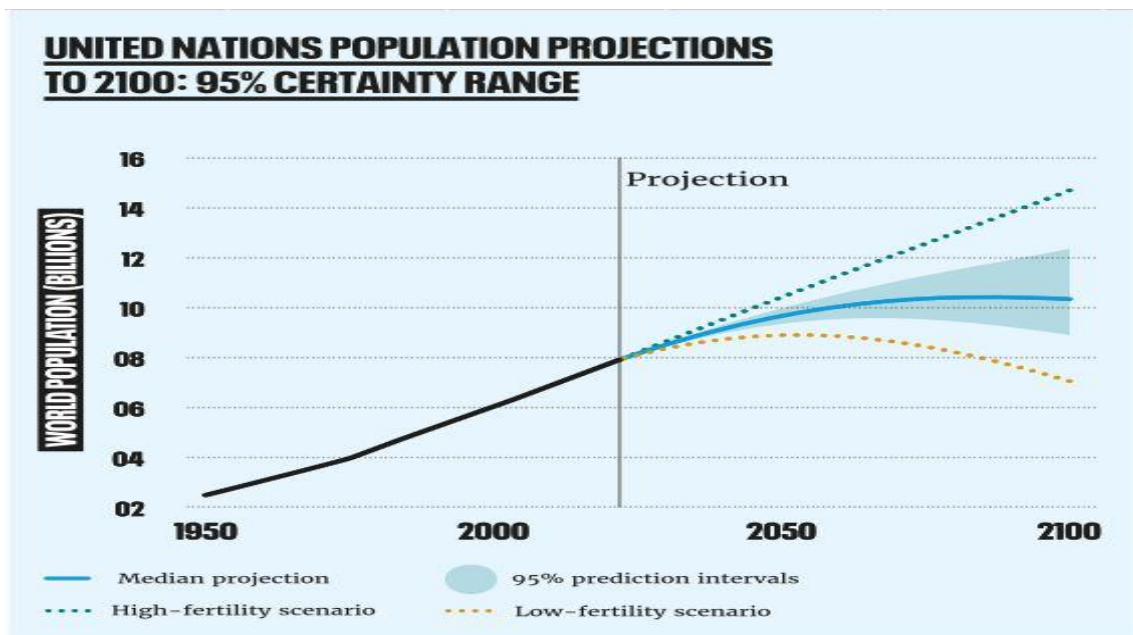
According to Population Matters, 2000 years ago, there were less than a billion people on Earth. In 1970, there were 3,9 billion and right now we have 7.9 billion and our population is still growing. As reported by the United Nations, the human population has a 50% chance of a peak at 10,43 billion in 2086. Further, its medium projection is for a population of 9,7 billion in 2050, and 10.4 billion in 2100 - with a 95% certainty range of 8,9-12,4 billion (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022). *Sapiens* place demands upon planet Earth - the very demands that have triggered the changes that threaten us, other animals, plants, and other forms of life. Conforming to recent evaluations, species are becoming extinct at least 1,000 times faster than they would without human impacts; 67% of populations of wild animals have declined since 1970, while

the human population has more than doubled; only five times before in Earth's history have so numerous species and so much biodiversity been lost so quickly - the fifth was when the dinosaurs were wiped out (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022). Let us check the following graph (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022):

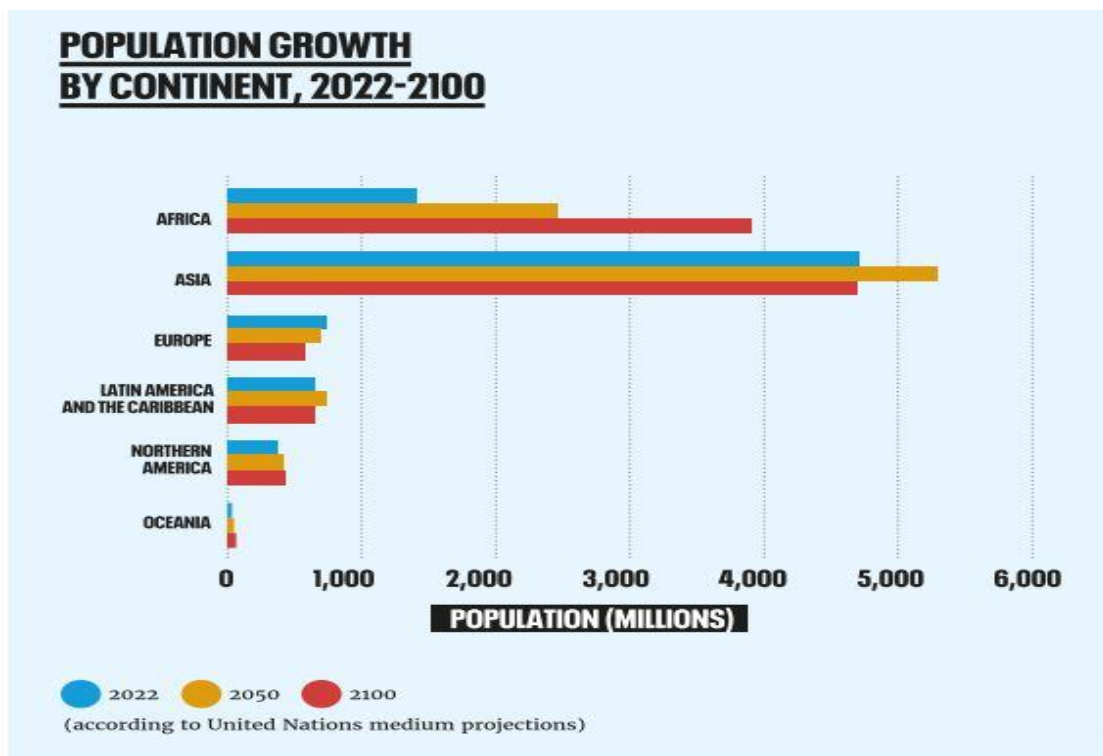


As Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler highlight, one in four mammals is at risk of extinction, while 90% of the large fish are already obliterated. Our aquifers are drying up, and our soil is becoming too salty for crop production. We are running out of oil and running low on uranium. Even phosphorus - one of the main ingredients in fertilisers- is in short supply (2012, p. 23). Furthermore, [poor] humans and other animals are also paying the price: In the time it takes to read this sentence, one child will die by starvation, and in the time it takes to read this paragraph, another will be dead from thirst or from drinking dirty water to satiate that dehydration. For Diamandis and Kotler, all of

that is just the warm-up round (2012, p. 23). Let us also check the following graphs (DIAMANDIS & KOTLER, 2012, p. 23):



Source: United Nations, 2022



Source: United Nations, 2022

The human population growth is not homogeneous and unspecific. While "population growth is highest in the Global South, and relatively low in most parts of the Global North, consumption, resource use and carbon emissions are far greater in the richest parts of the world". Thus, the global environmental "impact on nature and biodiversity of each individual in wealthy countries is far higher than that of each individual in poor countries" (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022).

The greatest legacy of the human species so far is featured and produced the Sixth Mass Extinction of the planet Earth. For the first time in history, a single animal was able to provide a biological assessment comparable - or even greater - to colossal natural catastrophes like the meteor that killed the dinosaurs.

The NGO Population Matters points out some aims, Sustainable Development Goals - SDG - on which we should focus (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022, bold type our):

- End poverty and **reduce inequality**;
- Provide universal access to high-quality education;
- Women's empowerment;
- Access to and uptake of modern family planning.

Although the NGO has ranked these four topics, the document *The biodiversity crisis: why population matters: A population matters briefing*, available on the official website (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022), is worried mainly about population growth – it does not discuss the other three topics. Pursuant to the NGO,

Significant results from any action intended to slow global population growth will take at least a generation to manifest, but will have permanent and irreversibly positive effects throughout this century and beyond. Action to ensure future population growth does not endanger the Earth's biodiversity is therefore essential now. This action is positive, voluntary, in line with people's aspirations, and consistent with global demographic trends. Coercive and reprehensible "population control" methods are as unnecessary as they are unacceptable. For example, Bangladesh reduced its fertility rate from above 7 in the early 1970s to 2.2 in 2014 through a creative and ethical family planning programme. Fertility rates are declining almost everywhere, but more can and must be done. The UN projects about a 50% chance of global population peaking by the end of the century, while an estimated 270 million women of

reproductive age worldwide are still in need of but without modern contraception. This is an increase of 40 million since 1990, due to the provision of services failing to match population growth. More must therefore be done to plug this shortfall through greater funding and political will. Mechanisms to secure lower fertility and sustainable populations through voluntary means are positive and effective. (POPULATION MATTERS, 2022)

Concerning coercive and reprehensible population control, the most nefarious case of top-down population control was the Nazis' eugenics program (BACHRACH, 2004, p. 417), although not the only one. India, for instance, executed tubal ligations and vasectomies on thousands of people throughout the middle 1970s. While some were paid for the sacrifice; others were forced into these practices (DIAMANDIS & KOTLER, 2012, p. 23). Moreover, China has spent thirty years under a one-child-per-family policy - while it is often debated as a wide program, this policy extends to only approximately 36% of the population. In consonance with the government, the results have been 300 million fewer people (DIAMANDIS & KOTLER, 2012, p. 24). In accordance with Amnesty International, the Chinese population control resulted in an increase in bribery, corruption, suicide rates, abortion rates, forced sterilisation procedures, and persistent rumours of infanticide (DIAMANDIS & KOTLER, 2012, p. 25) - rumours hold that newborn girls are being murdered since boys are preferable; girls make up the devastating majority of abandoned children and of those living in orphanages throughout China¹⁷ (SHALEV, 2001, p. 23).

All top-down population control is dismal, either because of the practice itself or because it is intended to mask an even more tricky issue. More problematic than population growth is the lifestyle of the richest countries. Let us go back to the goals set by Population Matters. Albeit the document states praiseworthy solutions for our moribund planet, after all the environmental issue is central, the NGO avoids, perhaps on purpose, from critically discussing the effects of capitalism. Before *Sapiens* – as a biological category -, the destroyers of the planet are humans – as a sociological/anthropological/philosophical category - living in a capitalist system. There are, on the United Nations website, the Sustainable Development Goals divided into 17 goals (SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 2022, bold type our):

¹⁷ We were unable to locate other sources to corroborate this information. Therefore, they may be nothing more than rumours.

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: Zero Hunger
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Quality Education
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy
- Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10: **Reduce inequality** within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
- Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
- Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

We will not discuss all these points, notwithstanding let us quote directly and entirely Goal 10 of the United Nations Website:

Reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind are integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Inequality within and among countries is a persistent cause for concern. Despite some positive signs toward reducing inequality in some dimensions, such as reducing relative income inequality in some countries and preferential trade status benefiting lower-income countries, inequality still persists. COVID-19 has deepened existing inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest. It has put a spotlight on economic inequalities and fragile social safety nets that leave vulnerable communities to bear the brunt of the crisis. At the same time, social, political and economic inequalities have amplified the impacts of the pandemic. On the economic front, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased global unemployment and dramatically slashed workers' incomes. COVID-19 also puts at risk the limited progress that has been made on gender equality and women's rights over the past decades. Across every sphere, from health to the economy,

security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex. Inequalities are also deepening for vulnerable populations in countries with weaker health systems and those facing existing humanitarian crises. Refugees and migrants, as well as indigenous peoples, older persons, people with disabilities and children are particularly at risk of being left behind. And hate speech targeting vulnerable groups is rising. (SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 2022)

The approach adopted by the United Nations takes inequality almost as if it were a mere feature of nature and not an effect of capitalism intensified by neoliberal austerity policies. Let us examine the first of Population Matters' four points, and Goal 10 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, both abovementioned and in bold. In both cases, the expression 'reduce inequality' appears. Why not "eradicate inequality"? Is inequality so inconceivable even in these two optimistic discourses? Goals are always set above what we actually can achieve. If a goal is reached, it is no longer a goal. Thus, a new goal is proposed, replacing the previous one. Goals, when in the interior of a business scenario, are levers to increase profit. Goals, when in scenarios such as solutions to problems, for instance, climate crisis, famine and inequality, should always be optimistic, limited only to plausibility. Poverty, starvation and lack of decent housing conditions are, of course, evil to be fought. But what about the super-rich?

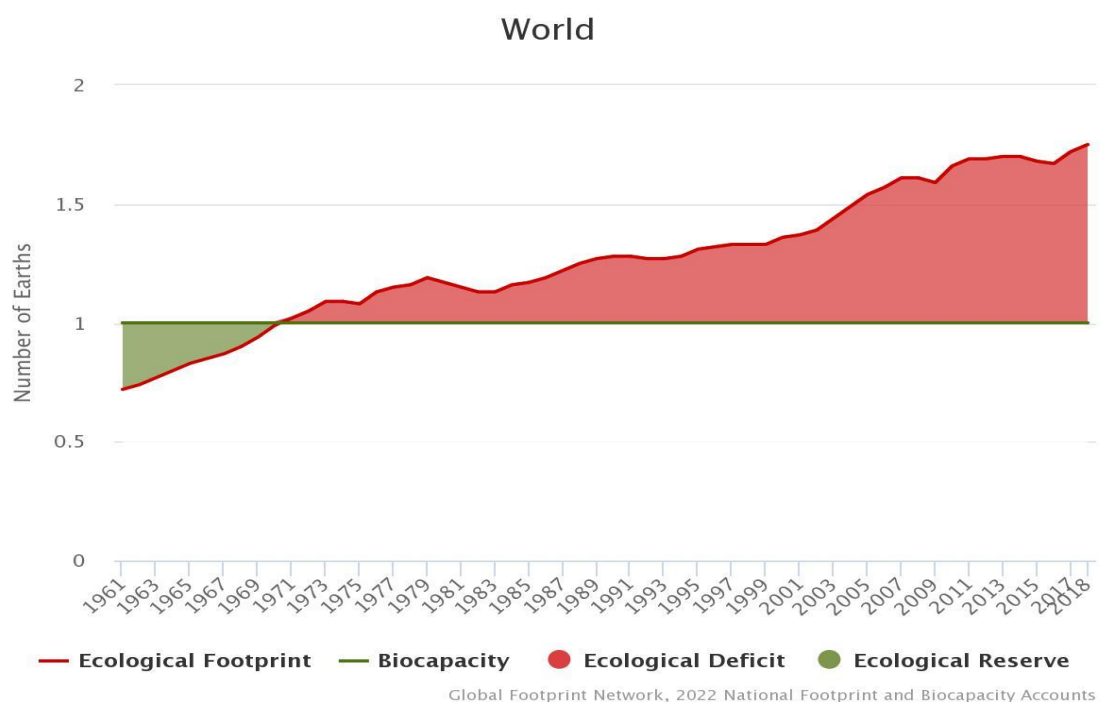
The core of Global Footprint Network, an international nonprofit organisation founded in 2003, is an applicable and universal shared sustainability metric. Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees created it in the early 1990s as part of Wackernagel's PhD research at the University of British Columbia (FOOTPRINT NETWORK, 2022). According to the official website:

Over the years, the Ecological Footprint concept has grown to become a household phrase around the world. The term "footprint" has become synonymous with human behaviour and its impact on our planet. It applies to humanity, countries, cities, companies, communities, and individuals. It allows us to grapple with overshoot¹⁸, possibly the largest risk for humanity in the 21st century. Global Footprint Network's key strategy has been to make available

¹⁸ In 2023, Earth Overshoot Day falls on August 2. Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity has exhausted nature's budget for the year. For the rest of the year, we are maintaining our ecological deficit by drawing down local resource stocks and accumulating carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. We are operating in overshoot. (<https://www.footprintnetwork.org/our-work/earth-overshoot-day/>, accessed in 11/10/2023).

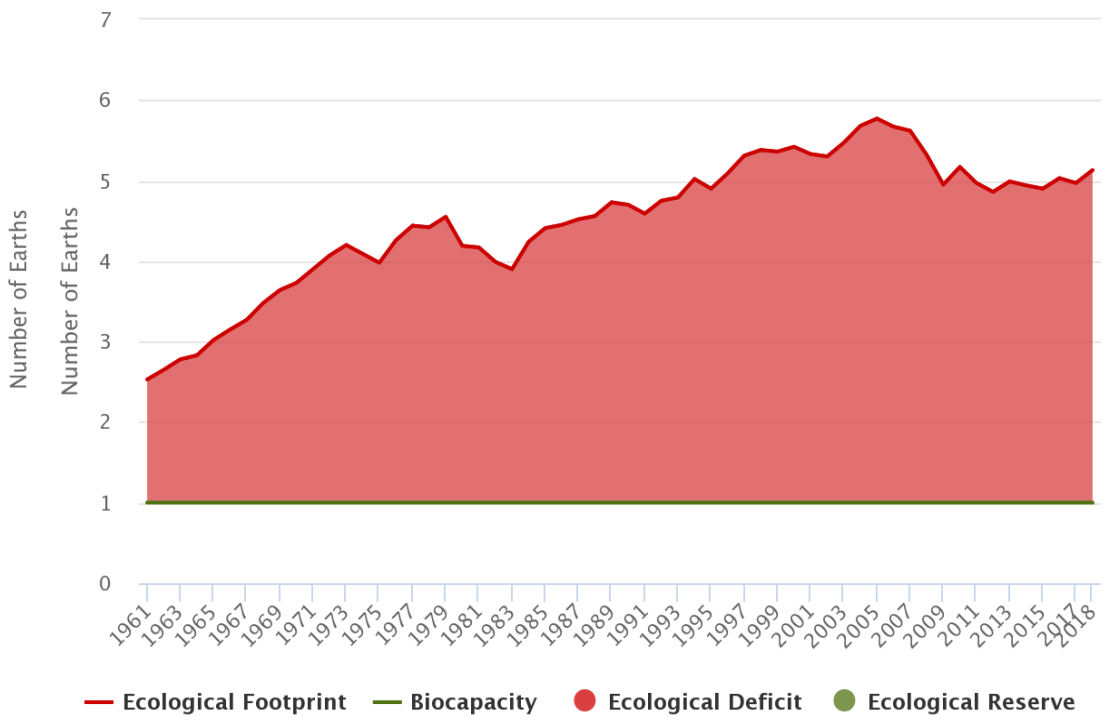
robust Ecological Footprint data. The Ecological Footprint continues to be the only metric that comprehensively compares human demand on nature against nature's capacity to regenerate. It is based on simple, straightforward accounting – not on arbitrary scoring. Since its inception, Global Footprint Network has calculated Footprints of countries for each year that UN data has been available. Currently this means 1961 to 2018. Together with our partners, we have made every annual edition more transparent and more accurate. This has included rigorous reviews by government institutes and advisory committees. (FOOTPRINT NETWORK, 2022)

Let us check the following data, demonstrating the ecological footprint, biocapacity, ecological deficit and ecological reserve from 1961 to 2018:



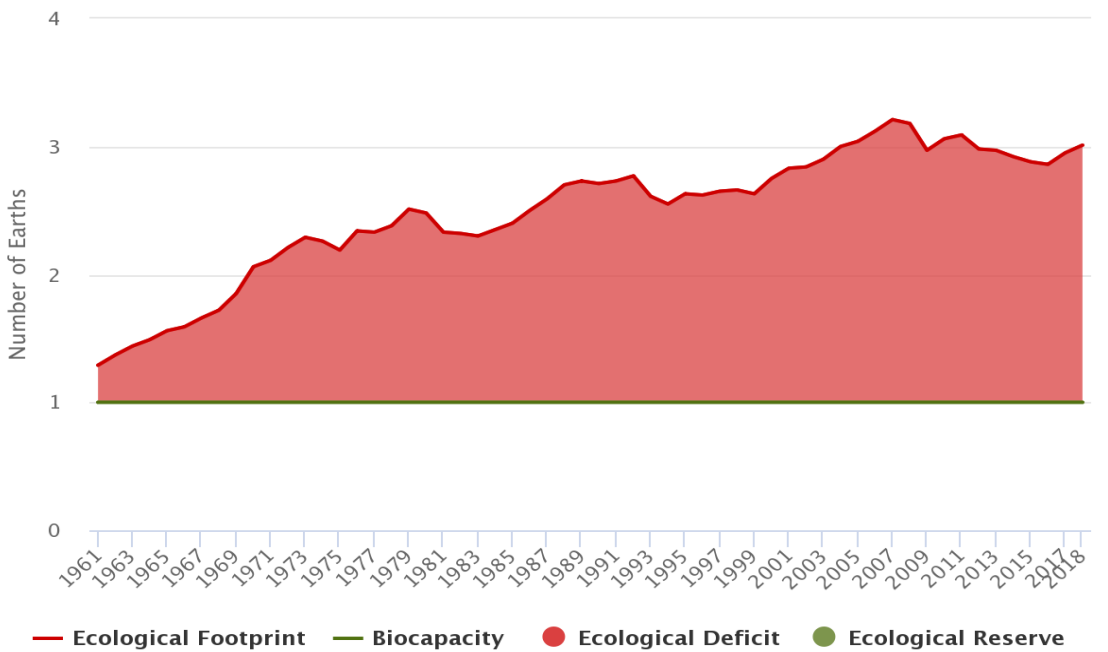
According to Global Footprint Network data, although biocapacity - the ability of ecosystems to regenerate what people demand from nature - has kept steadfast, considering the entire world, we are using ecological resources as if we lived on 1.75 Earths. The more we increase our footprint, the smaller our ecological reserve becomes. However, analysing the entire world is not fair since countries behave in different ways. Let us observe some comparisons between continents (FOOTPRINT NETWORK, 2022):

North America



Global Footprint Network, 2022 National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts

Europe



Global Footprint Network, 2022 National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts

Europe and North America, even in the 1960s already consumed almost 2 Earths. In 2018, although there has been a subtle decrease – in Europe, declining from 3.21 in 2007 to 3.01 in 2018; in North America, decreasing from 5.77 in 2005 to 5.13 in 2018 - the data are still extremely worrying. Some countries may reduce their impact for a while, but then worryingly increase it again. This is the case in Qatar. In 2007, the country consumed 9.56 Earths, and this decreased to 7.14 in 2013. However, their consumption achieved 9.02 Earths in 2018. According to the World Bank, in 1990 the CO₂ emission in the entire world were 20,625,273 kt (kiloton). In 2019, however, the emission achieved 34,334,006 kt (THE WORLD BANK, 2020). Are humans guilty of this catastrophe?

The term "Anthropocene" can be problematised. The etymological root, *anthropos* - "human" in Greek - in "Anthropocene" suggests that humans are inexorable: humans are what they are and in the unique way that they could be. Hence, humans exercising their nature have caused climate change and the planet's sixth mass extinction. We are the same since the first *sapiens* emerged. Our biological structure has not changed since then, albeit our social life has changed colossally. Human nature is the same. Human society is not. Pursuant to Patel and Moore,

Humans have indeed been altering the earth since the end of the last ice age. A hunting rate slightly higher than the replenishment rate over centuries, together with shifting climate and grasslands, spelled the end for the Columbian Plains mammoth in North America, the orangutan's overstuffed relative the *Gigantopithecus* in east Asia, and the giant Irish elk *Megaloceros giganteus* in Europe. Humans may even have been partly responsible for tempering a global cooling phase twelve thousand years ago through agriculture-related greenhouse gas emissions. Hunting large mammals to extinction is one thing, but the speed and scale of destruction today can't be extrapolated from the activities of our knuckle-dragging forebears. Today's human activity isn't exterminating mammoths through centuries of overhunting. Some humans are currently killing everything, from megafauna to microbiota, at speeds one hundred times higher than the background rate. We argue that what changed is capitalism, that modern history has, since the 1400s, unfolded in what is better termed the Capitalocene. (2017, p. 14-15)

Thus, Capitalocene is a concept more appropriated to describe what is the specificity of this geological epoch. For some people, transcending capitalism is

inconceivable. "It is easier for most people to imagine the end of the planet than to imagine the end of capitalism" (FISHER, 2009, p. 7). The new Netflix movie *Don't Look Up*¹⁹, directed by Adam McKay, translates it sarcastically and cleverly.

The Italian Marxist philosopher Franco "Bifo" Berardi, one of the most prominent thinkers focused on discussing the post-industrial society²⁰, states:

The post-bourgeois capitalist class does not feel responsible for the community and the territory because financial capitalism is totally deterritorialized and has no interest in the future well-being of the community. On the other hand, the post-Fordist worker no longer shares the same interest as his/her colleagues, but, on the contrary, is forced to compete every day against other workers for a job and a salary in the deregulated labour arena. Within the framework of this new precarious organization of labour, building solidarity becomes a difficult task. During the last three decades social movements have tried to re-establish the conditions of modern ethics and to reaffirm the values that were the foundations of the bourgeois civilization: democracy, job security and the respect of law. Unsuccessfully. While the Neoliberal wave, taking advantage of new technology-based lifestyles, was transforming cultural and political expectations, the Left has been defending the ethical rules of the past and the established political institutions. Driven to an inherently conservative position, the leftists lost their character and their identity. Now, it is finally crystal clear: resistance is over. Capitalist absolutism will not be defeated and democracy will never be reinstated. That game is over. What will be the game to come? (2015, p. 204)

The great and classic alienating centres, religion and traditional media, were supplanted. Instead of persuading the proletariat to adopt bourgeois principles, it is more effective to divide them and make them feel disconnected from their worker identity. Social media behaves like a pendulum. On one hand, Instagram, for instance, depoliticises its users by inserting bubbles of quick, fleeting, and empty entertainment. On the other hand, the Instagram algorithm reinforces the same interests already reported by users, thus creating isolation bubbles. Thus, Instagram either depoliticises, providing a virtual world of funny videos without the anguish of politics, or it traps users in bubbles that only

¹⁹ For a good review written by Amari Gaiter entitled "*Don't Look Up*" *Exposes How Capitalism Won't Save Us* see : <https://www.autostraddle.com/dont-look-up-review/> accessed in 10/01/2022).

²⁰ Post-industrial society is marked by a transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy, that is, the service sector starts to generate more wealth than the manufacturing sector. (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/postindustrial-society>, accessed in 10/01/2022).

hypertrophy their convictions. Our concern may become even much greater when we consider the research of neuroscientist Michel Desmurget.

In his book *The Digital Cretin Fabric* – the title is suggestive -, Desmurget presents an almost-catastrophic scenario. Within capitalism, capital always seeks its own growth. Capitalists always seek profit. The history of capitalism shows that health, the environment, and ethics were never an obstacle to getting capital increase. Day after day, we poison human and non-human populations with pesticides, cigarettes, and asbestos. We contaminate the soil, air, and lakes, rivers, seas, and oceans. It would be no different in the digital age and a gloomy consensus on children's use of digital screens is emerging in silicon valley (DESMURGET, 2021, p.120) Of course, It seems obvious that the children of Monsanto's directors only eat organic food. Similarly, as Guillaume Erner said, give your children screens and screen makers will continue to give their children books (DESMURGET, 2021, p. 95). Children and teenagers spend a lot more time in front of these screens than we used to believe:

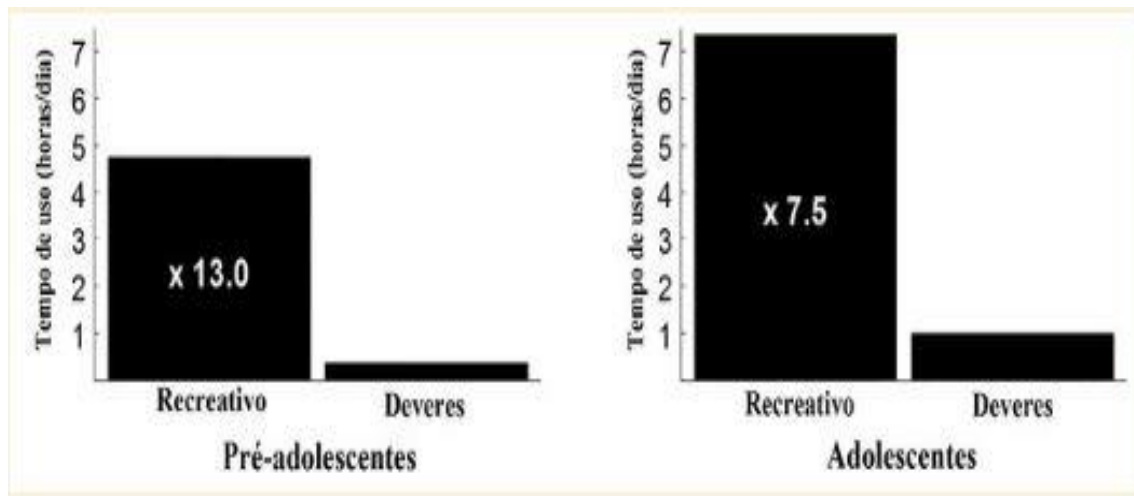
From the age of 2 onwards, children in Western countries spend almost 50 minutes in front of the screen daily. Between 2 and 8 years old, this time is 2h45min. Between 8 and 12 years old, children spend approximately 4h45min. Between 13 and 18 years old, they spend around 7h15min. At the end of one year, this totals over 1,000 hours for a preschool student (1.4 months), 1,700 hours for an elementary student (2.4 months), and 2,650 hours for a high school student (3.7 months). Expressed as a fraction of daily waking time, this results in 20%, 32%, and 45%, respectively. Over the first 18 years of life, they represent the equivalent of almost 30 years of schooling, or, if you prefer, 15 years of full-time employment. (DESMURGET, 2021, p. 45)²¹

Some might argue that although they spend so much time in front of digital screens, this data does not consider that this time may be spent not only on Instagram or TikTok. Cell phones or tablets have extraordinary features that can assist in cognitive and educational development. However, the scenery is

²¹ Our translation from:

“A partir dos 2 anos, as crianças dos países ocidentais acumulam diariamente quase 50 minutos diante da tela.* Entre 2 e 8 anos, esse tempo é de 2h45min. Entre 8 e 12 anos, os jovens passam aproximadamente 4h45min diante dela. Entre 13 e 18 anos, eles chegam perto de 7h15min. Ao fim de um ano, isso totaliza mais de 1.000 horas para um aluno da pré-escola (1,4 mês), 1.700 horas para um estudante do nível fundamental (2,4 meses) e 2.650 horas para alunos do ensino médio (3,7 meses). Expresso em fração do tempo diário de vigília, isso resulta, respectivamente, em 20%, 32%, 45%. Ao longo dos 18 primeiros anos de vida, eles representam o equivalente a quase 30 anos letivos, ou, se preferirmos, 15 anos de um emprego em tempo integral”.

not positive - except for Apple, Samsung, Xiaomi and other tech giants. Let us see the following graph:



According to graph above, when using their digital screens, 8-12-year-olds preteen spend 13 times more time having fun than studying (284 minutes versus 22 minutes). For 13-18-year-olds teenagers, the mark is 7.5 times (442 minutes versus 60 minutes) (DESMURGET, 2021, p. 336). Although the research does not cover the time spent on digital screens by other age groups, it would be reasonable to assume that something similar occurs, albeit at a lower level. Moreover, although the new generations are known for their alleged digital fluency concerning the use of social networks, research shows that they are heartbreakingly incompetent in handling the large flow of information present on the web. According to Desmurget and the study's authors, the problem is of such significance that it could endanger democracy (2021, p. 310).

Thus, the post-industrial society made possible a new form of depoliticisation and alienation: putting people in virtual social bubbles of entertainment, disconnected from the real political field and incapable of handling a rapid and intense flux of information.

Some thinkers, agreeing with the idea of the indissolubility of capitalism and its nasty effects, derive shocking corollaries. According to Patricia MacCormack, an Australian scholar, feminist, antinatalist, atheist, abolitionist

vegan²² and professor of Continental Philosophy at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, "life, the world and human practice are always in flux, but the homogenous and simultaneously endlessly adaptable blanket of capitalism frustratingly offers up as many of its own resistances as minoritarians attempt" (2020, p. 13). She is against not only colonialism, capitalism, sexism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity and ableism. Her focus is to fight against human exceptionalism and anthropocentrism – illegitimate authorisation, given by us and for ourselves, to do with the world and other animals. According to MacCormack,

I call for an end to the human both conceptually as exceptionalized and actually as a species. Ultimately, The Ahuman Manifesto is a call to activism for the other at the expense of the self, not as a form of martyrdom but because life in this book is understood ecosophically as a natural contract. We humans are simply parts of a thing known as earth. For many, the idea of the cessation of human existence as an absurd claim prevents any engagement with both its possibility and its validity. This is understood as being the immediate response to The Ahuman Manifesto. If the history of philosophy itself has been a somewhat narcissistic but also politically invaluable tool in knowing human subjectivity, where often posthumanism is simply a different perpetuation of humanist egoism, then even the death of human exceptionalism is unthinkable. There is nothing martyr-like about devaluing humanity. Ending the privileging of humanity may for some lead to suicide and for others to antinatalism, but neither is a privation demanding acclaim. The greater effects of human absence are more important than dying for a 'cause', so configuring human absence as martyrdom returns the activism to anthropocentrism. Just as the other is 'sacrificed' for human ends in countless human practices – without consent, without a contract – and thus can only be called a martyr by the perpetrators to ameliorate guilt, a manifesto that calls to action is not asking for martyrs because ahumans are willing and vitalistic parts of the assemblage, each with a singular and unrepeatable capacity to act and activate differently. This manifesto is emphatically optimistic and life-affirming; it simply sees the distribution of the value of life differently to the anthropocentric understanding of the world. (2020, p. 15-16)

²² Abolitionist veganism goes beyond traditional veganism by advocating for the complete abolition of animal use for human benefit. It asserts that animals, like humans, have inherent rights and should not be treated as commodities. Abolitionist vegans argue that systemic societal change is necessary to recognise and respect animal rights, contrasting with incremental reforms favoured by traditional veganism. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism_\(animal_rights\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abolitionism_(animal_rights)), accessed in 10/01/2022).

Human is just one of the great vertebrates. We are not exceptional lives except for what we do to other animals and the planet. Therefore, concludes the philosopher, the human and its exceptionality must be denied in favour of the beneficial consequences that this provides for the planet and the other animals that we annihilate, torture and exploit.

Let us go back to "Don't Look Up". The criticism delivered by the film has international politics as its main target, especially in the emergence of the new right-wing in the United States - under Donald Trump's government - and in Brazil - personified in Jair Bolsonaro's [mis]government. Both have exhaustively and systematically denied scientific predictions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. Perhaps there is a more subtle and profound critique present in the film: human mediocrity and, with it, the limits of humanism. Even scenarios that are extraordinarily different from those of our daily lives are not enough to recalculate our own road. We are always caught in the shackles of the capitalist socio-economic weft. Faced with catastrophic scenarios, we always do what we usually do. Anaesthetized by consumption and lethargic when changes are imperative. The spirit of revolution proved narcoleptic.

On September 11th, during the *16th Annual NYC Anarchist Bookfair*, Sonia Guajajara - Brazilian indigenous activist, environmentalist, and politician, member of the leftist Socialism and Liberty Party (PSOL) - and Noam Chomsky - whose presentations are dispensable - presented the talk named *Anarchism and Indigenous struggle in Brazil*. Albeit there is no meteor close to colliding with Earth, as in the mentioned film, Chomsky warns about something serious. According to him, although it can sound crazy, "we have to keep in mind the next two months are the most important in all of human history. It's hyperbolic, madness but correct". Elections are coming up in Brazil, the most important country in the world, according to him, and "the outcome of this election may well determine whether human history will persist". It is not an exaggeration, he highlighted. Chomsky stated that recent studies have shown that because of irresponsible and uncontrolled Amazon deforestation, the rainforest Tipping Point can be exceeded. If Jair Messias Bolsonaro - candidate for the PL (Liberal Party) and current Brazilian president of the extreme far-right - is reelected, this can occur since he represents the interests of miners, and illegal logging and

makes constant attacks on indigenous peoples. If the tipping point is surpassed, Amazon can no longer be able to produce moisture to sustain the forest. As it can be irreversible, Amazon can turn to Savannah and the global impact would be colossal (ANARCHIST BOOK FAIR, 2022). Very shocking, isn't it? There are some curious comments for this video on YouTube, such as this one in Spanish:

Qué pena que este anciano se preste para el ecofascismo progresista...cuando se exagera el discurso del cambio climático, con consecuencias apocalípticas. Por muchas décadas las esferas de poder más altas y parásitas han intentado vender la narrativa de distintas formas para tratar de manipular el crecimiento poblacional. (YOUTUBE, 2022)

We can remain sceptical, like in "Don't Look Up", that there is a "meteor about to explode Earth" - or all malls of the world if that is more convincing - believing it to be an alarmist speech, just like the author of the above comment regarding the Amazon rainforest, or we can move. Like numerous people in the film, many of us are doing nothing, hoping that "someone will do something" or that "something miraculous will happen". How will your life change when you learn this? Will you remain sceptical? Do you believe it is "progressive eco-fascism", whatever that means?

Let us return to Patricia MacCormack. Maybe, in our perception, the author is not very convincing. It is a challenging endeavour to persuade individuals that their existence is an unavoidable quandary, primarily through the employment of excessively difficult English. However, at least one thing is crystal-clear: she is sceptical regarding the human capacity to resolve the almost-inscrutable hurdle that we created. According to her, humans and their indispensable anthropocentrism are the problems and collective death can be a solution. Nevertheless, we contend that anthropocentrism is not inherently evil because we can take full responsibility for all of the problems we have created and resolve them with the advancement of technology. Transhumanism may offer a more interesting path without the price of human life - a price almost no one is willing to pay.

Part 2

Transhumanism

2.1 We are not capybaras.

All animals must be allowed to have ideas, since all animals have senses; they even combine their ideas to a certain degree, and, in this respect, it is only the difference of such degree, that constitutes the difference between man and beast: some philosophers have even advanced, that there is a greater difference between some men and some others, than between some men and some beasts; it is not therefore so much the understanding that constitutes, among animals, the specific distinction of man, as his quality of a free agent. Nature speaks to all animals, and beasts obey her voice. Man feels the same impression, but he at the same time perceives that he is free to resist or to acquiesce; and it is in the consciousness of this liberty, that the spirituality of his soul chiefly appears: for natural philosophy explains, in some measure, the mechanism of the senses and the formation of ideas; but in the power of willing, or rather of choosing, and in the consciousness of this power, nothing can be discovered but acts, that are purely spiritual, and cannot be accounted for by the laws of mechanics. (ROUSSEAU, 2004, epub version).

When he began sliding in to feet-up landings on the beach, then pacing the length of his slide in the sand, his parents were very much dismayed indeed.

"Why, Jon (Jonathan Livingston Seagull), why?" his mother asks. "Why is it so hard to be like the rest of the flock, Jon? Why can't you leave low flying to the pelicans, the albatross? Why don't you eat? Son, you're bone and feathers!" "I don't mind being bone and feathers, mom. I just want to know what I can do in the air and what I can't, that's all. I just want to know." (BACH, 1994, p.7)

So far, we have investigated and discussed some definitions of humanism. We emphasised its proposal of the development of 'sapiens' into a 'human' through intellectual and cultural development. We also emphasised that to promote the construction of the human, its antagonist, the inhuman, or the less-than-human, emerges. This praise of the human to the detriment of the less-than-human as a crucial characteristic of modernity, that is, anthropocentrism, masks the fact that in the shadows of the spotlight aimed at

the human – white heterosexual European man – are the Inhumans, diminished people, discriminated as black, indigenous, women, gays, and so on. We also discussed some of the mass destruction we cause on the planet. Is humanism, therefore, irrevocably condemned by its effects? Could these be side effects? Let us investigate a little more.

Baby sea turtles, when they break their eggs and come out of the hole in the sand on the beach, are born ready. These mini turtles snorkel on seawater and face the complicated life that awaits them. They already know what they must eat, and what they must not, know predators and animals that can offer a good and secure company. They can locate themselves with great precision and can swim incredible distances. Sea turtles are much more made up of innate skills than social ones. Likewise, are the cat and the pigeon, as explained by Rousseau in his 1755 classic work *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*. A cat is born with specific innate attributes without which it would cease to be a cat. The "catness" becomes a clear way to identify a better life to be lived. This awesome natural disposition to act in an appropriate form in order to guarantee the species' survival has its side effects. Albeit a strong instinct can avert some doubts or social development dependency - let us take the sea turtle as an example -, there is little left for volition. Only in the volition field improvisation can emerge. Strong instinct is in inverse relation to volition. For no other reason, a cat, be it a kitten or older, even in severe starvation, would languish on a hip of fruit or corn. Slave to their instincts, they could not consider, making an exception in their food preferences, eating pineapple. The same occurs with a pigeon: it would starve near a dish of the best flesh meat. Sapiens does not suffer from this type of limitation (ROUSSEAU, epub version, np, 2014).

Humans, whether on extreme occasions (WIKIPEDIA, 2022) or ritualistic ones (WIKIPEDIA, 2022), can even commit anthropophagy. Likely volition or improvisation is not the exclusive ability of sapiens. Albeit there are taxonomical differences between sea turtles and Sapiens, from a naturalistic perspective – one of the pillars of transhumanism- there is no ontological difference between them - contrary to the metaphysics of Christianity.

Cameron Buckner, assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Houston, states in an article published in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* "that a wide range of animal species exhibit so-called "executive

control" when it comes to making decisions, consciously considering their goals and ways to satisfy those goals before acting" (KEVER, 2017). According to him, numerous empirical research indicating flexible cognition in animals and young infants has raised the discussion on the possibility of rational decision-making even in the absence of language. Against Classical Inferentialism, which supports nonlinguistic agents are incapable of rational inferences, Buckner defends a model of nonlinguistic inferences that shows how some animals could be practically rational (BUCKNER, 2019, p. 697). Although he recognises that language, in some sophisticated forms of metacognition, is crucial, Buckner concludes that a wide variety of animals – elephants, chimpanzees, ravens and lions, among others – engage in rational decision-making. In that way, "these data suggest that not only do some animals have a subjective take on the suitability of the option they are evaluating for their goal". So, he states, "they possess a subjective, internal signal regarding their confidence in this take that can be deployed to select amongst different options" (KEVER, 2017). Recognising a rational status and subjectivity in other animals does not necessarily invalidate Rousseau's philosophical anthropology.

Jonathan Livingston Seagull is a fable in novella form, written by American author Richard Bach, about a seagull who is trying to transcend his condition in an incessant search for self-perfection. Every morning, seagulls fly over boats in pursuit of fish trapped in fishing nets. Hundreds, thousands of seagulls vie for these fishes. Some are satisfied, others starve. Some crash, others are devoured by birds of prey, their only predators. Despite the difficulties, the seagulls perceive their lives as good ones. They are always united in large groups, keeping excellent communication and have a long lifespan of 35/40 years. Jonathan, however, has another perception. Day after day, he watches in anguish the miserable life the seagulls must undergo in order to survive. Jonathan is a nonconformist seagull. He is a symbol of outrage against the seagull's nature; against the inexorable behaviour derived from this nature. He intends to develop his flying abilities beyond the ordinary seagull's capabilities. Jonathan intends to be like an eagle or maybe to go beyond. Capybaras, otters or seagulls are what they are and just how they could be. We are not urging essentialism. Even from an evolutionary perspective, modifications demand millions of years of natural selection. A contemporaneous

capybara is not able to reject his "capybaraness". However, Jonathan, our friend seagull, - and this is possible because the story is a fable – expresses the liberty to build himself. Jonathan is what he wants and struggles to be. He is the expression of anti-fatalism. He expresses the supreme rejection of his nature/social imposition. This is the essence of humanism. In Jonathan Livingston's story, "seagull-ism" is humanism. Jonathan Seagull is not like Rousseaus's cat and pigeon. Jonathan is like a human, capable of paving his road or crossing the sky on his own. He represents the desire to push himself to new heights.

"See here, Jonathan," says his father, not unkindly. "Winter isn't far away. Boats will be few, and the surface fish will be swimming deep. If you must study, then study food, and how to get it. This flying business is all very well, but you can't eat a glide, you know. Don't you forget that the reason you fly is to eat."

Jonathan nodded obediently. For the next few days he tried to behave like the other gulls; he really tried, screeching and fighting with the flock around the piers and fishing boats, diving on scraps of fish and bread. But he couldn't make it work.

It's all so pointless, he thought, deliberately dropping a hard-won anchovy to a hungry old gull chasing him. I could be spending all this time learning to fly. There's so much to learn! (BACH, 1994, p. 8)

Jonathan is a 'humanist' philosopher, maybe, a Transhuman (or a 'Trans-seagull').

2.2 Natural Humans invent Artificial Humans.

Here is the actual threshold of our study: the human being, who, with the first equipment, the work of his own hands, discards his historical test piece to become the altogether historical human being, situated within the progress of self-consciousness. The human being is the only secure starting point for thoughtful reflection and for orientation in the world. This is because the human being is absolutely certain first and foremost of himself. Occupying the center between the twin goals of research - the geological beginnings and the teleological future - is the human being: the fixed point from which thinking proceeds, forward and back, to expand the boundaries of knowledge, and to which it returns, in renewed health, from those regions to which research has no access because subjective interpretation has led it there astray. (KAPP, 2018, p. 33)

Why did humans make a fist axe? Because their hands were too weak and too blunt in order to cut wood. Why did they come up with the idea of a spear?

Because their arms were too short and their legs were too slow in order to catch a running animal. Why did they invent pots to store food? Because they only had two hands on their body, and there was a lot of food to be stored. Why did they invent lenses? That was because their eyes were not capable of seeing very small things, or things that were very far away. Likewise all technical artifacts can be explained to be extensions of natural human organs, according to Kapp. At first sight this seems quite reasonable. But as technologies get more complex, it is more difficult to see in what sense they are extensions of our human organs. (DE VRIES, 2005, p. 68)

Natural things, in contrast to artificial ones, come into existence and persist regardless of humans. Human beings themselves are natural; they are self-made and made both biologically and socially. However, this is not a description exclusive to humans. In fact, saying that humans are 'made both biologically and socially' can be a redundancy. Where does the social emerge from if not from nature itself? By the way, how can we describe dolphins, elephants and bonobos if not as social animals? Humans and other animals differ rather by a matter of level than a matter of essence. Humans are more flexible in their nature. Because of this flexibility, the artificial field comes into existence.

A chair, a microphone or a fountain are artificial things made by humans. Even though they were made in a completely automated industry, humans made the machines that produce the chair. And whether other machines made these chair machines, at least humans made the first machine of the production chain. Further, humans are self-made. Humanism is precisely the praise for human self-making. If humans are self-made and everything humans made is artificial, hence humans are artificial. Therefore, natural/artificial does not seem to be a dichotomy in this case since humans are inscribed in both fields. Notwithstanding, when a beaver builds a dam, can we say that its construction is something artificial? If we consider that only human constructions are artificial entities, in contrast to beavers and their dams, we would claim, to some extent, from an ontological difference between humans and beavers, or humans and other animals. In other words, the idea - an inheritance of Christianity although it is not only in it - that humans are special beings, dissimilar from other animals, persists. Supporting this kind of ontological difference currently is unsustainable and implausible given the biological knowledge we have today. According to Anibal Monasterio Astobiza, the "natural-artificial distinction is a false dichotomy, pseudo-problem

or ill-posed distinction and that technology is a dimension of nature rather than an artificial creation of human beings" (2020, p. 8). According to him, the "natural-artificial distinction is an abstract metaphysical question dedicated to classifying and differentiating between entities and phenomena that occur in nature from human-made objects"; it is also vital to the philosophy of technology (2020, p. 1). As well summarised by Monasterio Astobiza,

The natural-artificial distinction is an old debate. It dates back to the fifth century B.C. For example, Aristotle's *Physics* differentiated between natural things and artifacts (*physis* and *poiesis*) and discuss the notion of craftsmanship as an imitation of nature. For many, it is the first ethical debate in Western philosophy (p. 675). The debate focused on the terms *physis* (nature) and *nomos* (culture): Do laws have a natural basis and you must obey them because that is how things are, or are laws a matter of convention and cultural tradition? This first appearance of the antithesis between the natural and the artificial in the philosophical debate suggests questions about the meaning of "nature" and its role in ethics, the social origin of laws and the value of justice. Supporters of one or the other camp debated the distinction, while others tried to overcome and transcend the dichotomy. Nonetheless, the natural-artificial distinction itself is philosophically problematic. First and foremost, because it is very difficult to draw a line between the "natural" and the "artificial". (2020, p. 2)

In classical Aristotle's distinction, humans are *ποίησις* (*poiēsis*, "production, composition") (WIKTIONARY, 2022); we are autopoietic beings. Humans are animals capable of producing things and themselves. But, what means 'natural'? According to Monasterio Astobiza,

Modern physical sciences lack a clear concept of "nature" and natural objects. Even so, since Newton, physicists consider that what makes a situation "natural" is that it can be described in two parts: (1) the configuration of the system, characterizing its state in a particular time (*t*), and (2) the dynamic laws that govern its evolution. It is very difficult for physicists to quantify the dynamic laws that govern the behavior of a system or situation, but whatever the ultimate constituents of the universe, it is assumed or believed that unlike artificial entities, natural entities and their behavior are not created by humans. Natural entities have no function or at least physical theories do not make use of teleological concepts to describe natural entities. On the other hand, artificial objects have been created by technology to fulfill an instrumental function or practical purpose. Let's think about cars, bicycles, chairs (...) However, artificial objects, as physical objects, ultimately obey physical laws. That is why they have a dual nature: as physical objects they do not have a teleological nature, but at the same time they condense a physical design thought by humans to fulfill a practical purpose. (2020, p. 3)

Let us discuss Monasterio Astobiza's teleological distinction. From a scientific perspective, a cave, a canyon, a fern or a camel do not have finality or purpose. All of them result from geological, physical, chemical and biological processes. Artificial entities, unlike these, are produced to attend to some human purposes - albeit, artistic objects do not seem to have finality or pragmatic purpose or function as clearly established as a drawer. Considering humans as autopoietic beings, we could pose the following question: Do humans have purpose or finality? Humans confer purpose to themselves. It would be plausible to consider that teleology is a human invention attributable to humans themselves or other artificial entities, motivated by, for instance, religions. If we consider this proposition true, could we consider also the existence of a Beaver's teleology conferred to dams? If we do not admit teleology created by other animals, we would presume an ontological difference between humans and beavers - or other animals; and this kind of ontology does not make sense anymore in a post-Darwinian world. Looks like teleology is not efficient to sustain the natural-artificial distinction. According to Astobiza,

The natural-artificial distinction is ambiguous because the distinction is mainly genetic, say, of origin. In the design of an artificial object created by technology a practical reason is wanted to be fulfilled, but then this artificial object is placed in a causal network in relation to other natural entities, obeying the physical laws. On the other hand, it is very likely that the natural-artificial distinction does not take into account human beings as part of nature and at the same time as co-creators of his own nature or of their second nature: culture. (2020, p. 3)

Resulting from millions of years of natural selection, *sapiens* have become able to expand their nature through the development of techniques - manipulation skills to transform rocks, bones and leather into tools. However, techniques and technology predated our humanness. Many other hominids used tools millions of years before *sapiens*. Currently, like beavers and their dams, chimpanzees, termites, birds, and ants also produces tools. Chimps make hunting tools from thin sticks to extract termites from mounds and slamm rocks to break nuts; termites build massive towers of mud for their homes, birds, ants and octopus can also be examples (KELLY, 2010, p. 30). According to Kevin Kelly,

The strategy of bending the environment to use as if it were part of one's own body is a half-billion-year-old trick at least. Our ancestors first chipped stone scrapers 2.5 million years ago to give themselves claws. By about 250,000 years

ago they devised crude techniques for cooking, or predigesting, with fire. Cooking acts as a supplemental stomach—an artificial organ that permits smaller teeth and smaller jaw muscles and provides more kinds of stuff to eat. Technology-assisted hunting, as opposed to tool-free scavenging, is equally old. Archaeologists have found a stone point jammed into the vertebra of a horse and a wooden spear embedded in a 100,000-year-old red deer skeleton. This pattern of tool use has only accelerated in the years since. All technology, the chimp's termite-fishing spear and the human's fishing spear, the beaver's dam and the human's dam, the warbler's hanging basket and the human's hanging basket, the leaf-cutter ant's garden and the human's garden, are all fundamentally natural. We tend to isolate manufactured technology from nature, even to the point of thinking of it as antinature, only because it has grown to rival the impact and power of its home. But in its origins and fundamentals, a tool is as natural as our life. Humans are animals—no argument. But humans are also not-animals—no argument. This contradictory nature is at the core of our identity. Likewise, technology is unnatural—by definition. And technology is natural—by a wider definition. This contradiction is also core to human identity. (2010, p. 30-31).

The history of the development of organisms has an inextricable connection with the history of technology. As occurs with 'humans', we are not able to categorise 'technology' on the disjunction 'artificial or natural' – if we take 'technology' in a broader sense. David Wood, for instance, proposes the following definition:

Technology, defined: The practical application of science and engineering in order to augment human capability. Systems of tools and machines that take on a life of their own due to positive feedback and accelerating performance. The forces that have made the biggest difference to the human condition, and which are poised to make even larger differences in just a few additional decades. (2021, p. 291)

Let us analyse the abovementioned definition. The first proposition – "the practical application of science and engineering in order to augment human capability" – evokes a much more common sense concerning technology than we are intending to do: it excludes the technological production of other animals; denounces an anthropocentric discourse; presupposes the prior existence of science and engineering for the technological applications. The mentioned definition is not as broad as we are proposing. Much more than a practical application, technology is inscribed in our genes and is a fundamental part of our nature.

The American-German philosopher Ernst Kapp (1808-1896) was the pioneer of the still-young philosophy of technology. According to the philosopher, technology is an external extension of our internal organs. As explained by Kapp,

The Greek word *organon* designates, in the first place, a member of the body; in the second, its after-image, the tool; and in the third, the material, the tree or the wood of which it is made. In the German language, the words organ and tool are used more or less interchangeably, at least in the field of physiology, where, for instance, it makes no difference whether one refers to the respiratory organ or to the respiratory apparatus, whereas in the field of mechanics one speaks exclusively of tools. The more precise definition rightly concedes the organ to physiology and the tool to technology. In the internal organization of the body, the structures responsible for providing nourishment and conserving vital energy are called organs, as are those located at body's threshold that permit our sensible perception of things. Likewise, in the external organization of the body, the limbs, or bodily extremities should also be classed as organs. (2005, p. 35)

The human hand, according to Kapp, is a natural technology with a triple application: (I) it is the human being's inborn tool; (II) it attends as the prototypal image for all his mechanical tools; (III) because of its substantial involvement in the material's production after-image, it is, in Aristotle's words, the *tool of tools* (2005, 35). Further, "the first hand tools contribute directly in the manufacture of all other tools and all equipment generally and, as such, are the condition of their possibility" (KAPP, 2005, 36). The human-hand, the tool of tools, is also the model from which the first tools such as the hammer emerge. The forearm with the clenched fist is a natural hammer, the first one. Albeit it is not strong enough on most occasions, hammers can be reinforced by a stone in the hand and attached to a wooden shaft. Moreover, "hammer, hatchet, knife, chisel, drill, saw, and pliers are all primitive tools, "working tools" as it were, the first founders of civil society and its culture". Like all primitive tools, hammers, knives, drills and so forth, are organ projections, or the mechanical rebuilding of an "organic form with which the human being extends at will the natural power of his arm, intensified by the hand's dexterity" (KAPP, 2005, p. 36-37). Hence, as explained by Kapp,

Lazarus Geiger, in his work *Toward a Developmental History of humankind*, expresses the hammer's significance as follows: "No matter how great the difference may seem between the modern steam engine and the most ancient stone hammer: one must imagine that creature who first armed itself with such a tool, who perhaps for the first time in this way extracted a nut from its shell, was touched by the same breath of spirit that the inventor in our own day experiences as the flash of inspiration (KAPP, 2005, p. 36-37).

Although complex technological apparatus is deeply different from primitive tools, the underlying principle is the same. Hammers or computers are expressions of our consciousness; we interpret the world from our bodily sensitivity and enhance our capabilities through technology. Whether a branch used to reach fruit or a Mach 3 aeroplane, both technological devices are an expression of human will always based on human corporeity. As Kapp states,

however brightly the conscious creative works of technology may shine before our eyes, we know this light to be reflected from out of the depths of the unconscious, indeed to be no more than the consciousness first unbound in primitive tools! And so we find ourselves pressed further and further along the trodden path of actual empiricism, to the ineluctable conclusion *ab interiori* that everything emanating from the human being is in fact his own nature - human nature - which he disperses throughout the world and which is displayed before him as the system of human needs. Authentic consciousness then comes about as a result of his gathering together *ab exteriori* his own dispersed nature to rediscover in bodily being the unifying point of departure. (KAPP, 2005, p. 92).

Thus, besides Kapp's proposition that technology is an extension of our organs, we can also derive a corollary, reinforcing what we had already discussed: the unsustainability of the natural/artificial distinction since, according to Kapp's abovementioned claim, "the ineluctable conclusion *ab interiori* that everything emanating from the human being is in fact his own nature - human nature - which he disperses throughout the world and which is displayed before him as the system of human needs". Even though Kapp's parallel between human organs and technological artefacts can become misty if we consider the internet or a particle accelerator, his philosophy of technology can help us in order to comprehend the maximum expression of technology: transhumanism.

2.3 Disillusionment

Evolution

What strikes me, at the sight of a monkey, is not that it was our past: it is this presentiment that it will be our future. (QUINTANA, 2013, p. 473, our translation)

Let us recapitulate: (I) Albeit humans and other animals do not differ ontologically, humans are more flexible in their nature and, because of that, (II)

Humans could be an expression against fatalism, that is, humans can build themselves according to their volition regardless of any divine tutelage; (III) Although sapiens are not the inventors of technology, they are the animals that most developed technology; (IV) Technology is not on the artificial or anti-natural field since it is an extension of our nature, an enhanced version of human organs - technology is also natural.

Humanism, as we discussed in the previous chapter, is an anthropocentric view of reality - in contrast to theocentrism and environmentalism - from which human lay down the foundation of his own life, both in terms of existence and social issues. We consider humanism as a metanarrative as it offers a foundation for thinking about reality and how we can act to improve ourselves. The main contrast between a metanarrative and a narrative is primarily determined by the magnitude and comprehensiveness of their scope. Although a narrative may pertain to a specific history, situation, or set of events, a metanarrative aims to illuminate the entirety of history, society, or human existence. While a narrative can be specific and contextual, a metanarrative strives for universality. Marxism and liberalism, for instance, can be considered as metanarratives, given that they offer comprehensive explanations of society and history, rooted in distinct political ideologies. In opposition, a narrative can be a precise account of a historical event, a personal experience, or a particular circumstance, without the intent of clarifying all aspects of human life or existence. While a comprehensive exploration of the term "ideology" is necessary to fully grasp its meaning, a parallel can be drawn between this concept and the concept of narrative. Accordingly, metanarratives can be understood as the narratives or ideologies that encompass other narratives.

Jean-François Lyotard devoted much of his work to the diagnosis of Western societies in contemporaneity. In *La Condition Postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* (1979) - a short but influential book originally written as a report to the *Conseil des universités du Québec* - Lyotard analyses the epistemology of postmodern culture as the termination of metanarratives, which he highlighted as a quintessential feature of the end of modernity. In his studies, Lyotard works on the concept of 'postmodernity' that, according to him, expresses the unbelief concerning metanarratives (1979, p. 7). As stated by him:

Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements—narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive, and so on [...] Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside? (1979, p. xxiv).

Hence, metanarrative ('grand narrative' or 'mater narrative') is characterised by an ideal of legitimizing science which, according to the philosopher, is philosophy itself (1979, p. 7). Pursuant to Woodward's description, metanarratives are stories that give meaning to human life by explaining it as part of a historical process with an ultimate goal. They are, therefore, structures of thought founding conceptual references to the social organisation, morality and forms of government (2011, p. 286). Woodward points to a few examples: "Christian history of personal salvation through the redemption of sin; Hegelian history of the progressive development of the *Geist* (spirit) toward the Absolute;" Marxist history "about the meaning of history as a class struggle whose purpose is a society without classes", and finally" the Enlightenment's history of the emancipation of human life through a progressive development of reason" (2011, p. 287).

According to Lyotard, metanarratives in the contemporary postmodern era have suffered a significant loss of their legitimacy. In other words, he highlights the postmodern condition's growing scepticism towards the totalizing nature of metanarratives and its reliance on some form of "transcendent and universal truth" (BRANCO, 2014, p. 1). The phenomenon of people being hesitant to trust metanarratives can be attributed to several factors. One of them is the growing diversity and complexity of contemporary society, which has resulted in inherent weaknesses and contradictions within traditional metanarratives. Additionally, the shifting cultural landscape, along with social and political changes such as the decline of major ideologies in the 20th century, the rise of globalisation, the dissemination and fragmentation of cultural paradigms, and the emergence of new technologies has contributed to this hesitancy (GODINHO, 2016, p. 97). According to Lyotard, this acknowledgement indicates a rejection of comprehensive explanations that aim to encompass all of reality. As a result,

there has been a reduction in universalist discourses and a decentralisation of knowledge. Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the multiplicity of viewpoints and narratives inherent within contemporary society (BRANCO, 2014, p. 1). Lyotard advocates for a departure from the pursuit of singular, totalising explanations of reality. Instead, he advocates for the celebration and acknowledgement of the diversity of voices, discourses, and narratives that characterise contemporary society. He advocates for a more circumspect approach towards grand narratives, proposing a more pluralistic and decentralised framework for the acquisition of knowledge and comprehension of reality (BRANCO, 2014, p. 1). Consequently, the end of metanarratives does not imply a cessation of narrative construction or the quest for meaning. Rather, it signals a rejection of the all-encompassing and universalist ambitions inherent within traditional metanarratives, advocating for an appreciation of the multiplicity, complexity, and contingent nature of human experience.

The shattering of metanarratives can set humans adrift in an existential void, especially the last one expressed in modernity under the Humanist movement. As Bauman warned, "what has come to be associated with the postmodern notion of morality is very often the celebration of the death of the ethical, the substitution of ethics for aesthetics, and the 'ultimate emancipation' that follows" (1993, p. 3). Modernity brought humans to the leading role. By extolling rationality, humans hold themselves off from what marked their existence: the myth, the magic, and the transcendent. Max Weber notes in modern science, in the hyper-rationalisation characteristic of this moment, the creation of a "disenchantment of the world." According to him,

Thus the growing process of intellectualization and rationalization does not imply a growing understanding of the conditions under which we live. It means something quite different. It is the knowledge or the conviction that if only we wished to understand them we could do so at any time. It means that in principle, then, we are not ruled by mysterious, unpredictable forces, but that, on the contrary, we can in principle control everything by means of calculation. That, in turn, means the disenchantment of the world. Unlike the savage for whom such forces existed, we need no longer have recourse to magic in order to control the spirits or pray to them. Instead, technology and calculation achieve our ends. This is the primary meaning of the process of intellectualization. (WEBER, 2004:12-13, our translation)

This intellectualisation or rationalisation has as a corollary, as elucidated by Weber, a modification of the idea of how life is conceived and, therefore, of its

end and value. According to Weber, Tolstoy works on this question of "whether or not death has a meaning" and its response, Weber continues, was that it had no meaning for a civilised person. His reasoning for this was that because the individual civilized life was situated within 'progress' and infinity, it could not have an intrinsically meaningful end (2004, p. 13).

According to the Weberian analysis, a civilised man, however, who is inserted into a never-ending process by which civilisation is enriched with ideas, knowledge, and problems may become "tired of life", but not fulfilled by it. In this way, Weber goes on, civilised man can seize hold of only the minutest portion of the new ideas that the life of the mind continually produces, and what remains in his grasp is always merely provisional, never definitive. For this reason, death is a meaningless event for him" and, as a consequence of that, "because death is meaningless, so, too, is civilised life, since its senseless "progressivity" condemns death to meaninglessness" (WEBER, 2004, p. 13). Based on Lyotard and Weber, it is possible to attribute to the contemporary world a crisis of humanist ideals which is what shapes the postmodern atmosphere. The correlation we are suggesting between these two concepts is rooted in the idea that both the "disenchantment of the world" and the "end of metanarratives" indicate a diminishing trust in all-encompassing and universally applicable explanations of reality. Both proposals advocate for a departure from the notion of a singular metanarrative that provides a comprehensive explanation, while recognising the intricate and varied nature of human experiences. In this sense, they both reflect a shift in how humans understand and interpret the world around them.

David Harvey criticises Lyotard regarding this notion of the end of metanarratives. According to him, if we place full trust in the significant proposition of embracing alterities, other voices, and the micro-narratives advocated by postmodernism, we are compelled to acknowledge within this embrace an inherent limitation. Whilst the rejection of metanarratives, the grand universal narratives, creates room for minor narratives, for micronarratives, it constrains them within a ghetto of opaque alterity, within the specificity of an alternative language game. Such approaches disenfranchise these voices within a world of asymmetrical power relations. The intricate language used by an international banking cartel might be inscrutable to us; nevertheless, it cannot be

equated with the equally impenetrable language of inner-city black communities in terms of power dynamics (HARVEY, 2013, p. 112).

In 1989, as it became clear the USA and their allies had won the Cold War, the philosopher Francis Fukuyama wrote an essay titled 'The End of History?' for *The National Interest*, a North American bimonthly international relations magazine edited by American journalist Jacob Heilbrunn - founded in 1985 by American columnist and neoconservatism advocate Irving Kristol (the "grandfather of neoconservatism") (WIKIPEDIA, 2023). In the article, Fukuyama wrote:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. (1989, p. 5)

Fukuyama contended that, as commented by Bastani, while the world would carry on, no new ideas would emerge - or metanarrative - capable of challenging the *status quo* (2020, p. 21). For Bastani,

In making this extraordinary claim, he referenced the unlikely authorities of Karl Marx and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In their different ways both had claimed that history had a final destination. Now, with the end of the Cold War, they were proven right – only rather than the Prussian state or the downfall of capitalism, the twilight of ideology was Big Macs and Coca-Cola. (2020, p. 22)

In 1992, Fukuyama published his book *The End of History and the Last Man*, strengthening his core hypothesis contrasting how history is primarily driven by ideas constantly competing with one another. From 1990 onwards, liberal democracy and market capitalism reigned supreme since no viable alternatives were remaining. Accordingly, for Fukuyama the end of history signalled a world defined by economic calculation and "the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands" and continue to be, "defined by challenges such as rising temperatures, technological unemployment, income inequality and societal ageing - to name just a few - this poses questions which extend beyond mere technical competence" (BASTANI, 2020, p. 21). So, as Bastani outlines, whether Fukuyama's words were naïve in the 90s, "then in the decade that followed the financial crisis of 2008 they became positively ridiculous. Indeed, he admitted as much in a book he published on identity in 2018" (2020, p. 22).

According to Paulo Ghiraldelli (2023), Fukuyama's book was misunderstood by numerous critics, particularly those on the left who read it with bias due to Fukuyama's self-identification as a conservative. While the book's title was ridiculed by some, Ghiraldelli argues that the true message was overlooked by many, including some who wrote reviews that lacked intellectual rigour. In contrast, thinkers like Richard Rorty and Peter Sloterdijk correctly understood that the book did not claim the end of history or the eternal nature of capitalism, but rather argued that a certain conception of history that progressivism allied with determinism had died. This idea no longer has the same influence among intellectuals, and our imagination has been constrained by the historical perspective that Fukuyama claimed had come to an end. While some still identify as "progressives" in politics, the term no longer conveys the same meaning of moral improvement through historical progress. Today, as we face the challenge of envisioning a world beyond capitalism, Fukuyama's message remains relevant (2023, p.17-19).

Yuval Noah Harari, in his book *21 Lessons For the 21st Century*, describes the present as a moment of disillusionment. For Harari, "humans think in stories rather than in facts, numbers or equations, and the simpler the story, the better" (2018, p.17). As we discussed in the 1.2 sub-chapter, "humanism is a belief [a story] that Homo Sapiens has a unique and sacred nature, which is fundamentally different from the nature of all other animals and of all other phenomena" (2014, p.264). Until the 1990s, there were two competing humanisms, the socialist and the liberal one. The end of the Cold War represented the atrophy of socialist humanism and the "liberal story remained as a dominant guide to the human past and the indispensable manual for the future of the world - or so it seemed to the global elite" (2018, p. 22). As explained by Harari,

The liberal story celebrates the value and power of liberty. It says that for thousands of years humankind lived under oppressive regimes which allowed people few political rights, economic opportunities or personal liberties, and which heavily restricted the movements of individuals, ideas and goods. But people fought for their freedom, and step by step, liberty gained ground. Democratic regimes took the place of brutal dictatorships. Free enterprise overcame economic restrictions. People learned to think for themselves and follow their hearts, instead of blindly obeying bigoted priests and hidebound traditions. Open roads, stout bridges and bustling airports replaced walls, moats and barbed-wire fences. The liberal story acknowledges that not all is well in the world, and that there are still many hurdles to overcome. Much of our planet is dominated by

tyrants, and even in the most liberal countries many citizens suffer from poverty, violence and oppression. But at least we know what we need to do in order to overcome these problems: give people more liberty. We need to protect human rights, to grant everybody the vote, to establish free markets, and to let individuals, ideas and goods move throughout the world as easily as possible. According to this liberal panacea – accepted, in slight variations, by George W. Bush and Barack Obama alike – if we just continue to liberalise and globalise our political and economic systems, we will produce peace and prosperity for all. (2018, p.18)

Liberal humanism - or liberal story - became a global mantra in the 1990s and 2000s. Numerous governments from Brazil²³ to India adopted liberal recipes to join the unescapable march of history. Notwithstanding, subsequently the global financial crisis of 2008, the liberal story begins to languish and people all over the world have become progressively disenchanted with it (HARARI, 2018, p.21). Furthermore, Harari highlighted:

Walls and firewalls are back in vogue. Resistance to immigration and to trade agreements is mounting. Ostensibly democratic governments undermine the independence of the judiciary system, restrict the freedom of the press, and portray any opposition as treason. Strongmen in countries such as Turkey and Russia experiment with new types of illiberal democracies and downright dictatorships. Today, few would confidently declare that the Chinese Communist Party is on the wrong side of history. (HARARI, 2018, p. 19)

Liberal humanism languishing is rejected by some people in power that still view Fukuyama's hypothesis as sacrosanct. Even though three decades have passed since the end of the Cold War, the legacy of Fukuyama's thinking is a political 'common sense' that vigorously obstructs us from addressing the great challenges we face (BASTANI, 2020, p. 22). According to Bastani,

almost two decades after Fukuyama's false prophecy, that decisively changed: a banking crisis, a debt crisis, a deficit crisis – all culminating in the imposition of

²³ Fernando Henrique Cardoso was president of Brazil for two terms, from 1995 to 2003, for the PSDB - Brazilian Social-Democracy Party -, a political party in which he is affiliated until today at the age of 93. The PSDB, founded in 1988 and definitively registered in 1989, although - as the name suggests - was aligned to the centre-left, Social-Democracy, became centre-right by adopting liberal measures in line with the international atmosphere. Although Cardoso has written important manuscripts about Social Democracy, the famous phrase attributed by entrepreneurs to him - "forget what we wrote in the past, because the world has changed and the reality today is different"- was first published by Folha de São Paulo in a report by João Carlos de Oliveira and Antonio Carlos Seidl on 6/5/93. (<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/1996/10/13/mais/7.html>, accessed in 11/04/2022)

austerity, from Greece to California. Alongside that was war in Georgia, the flowering of the Arab Spring, uprising in the Ukraine, insurrection – and then the most bloody of civil wars – in Syria. Elsewhere previously low-intensity conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan deteriorated further, soon joined by similarly hazy struggles in Libya and Yemen. In early 2014 the Russian Federation added new territory for the first time as it annexed Crimea following a local referendum. A few months later, straddling Syria and Iraq in an area the size of the United Kingdom, insurgents declared a caliphate, the Islamic State. But even amid all this it was events in Western Europe, a heartland of capitalist realism, which proved most surprising: a heightened cycle of protest and riot in England after 2010 was followed by a failed but surprisingly close referendum on Scottish independence four years later. Even that paled into insignificance, however, when in 2016 Britain voted to leave the European Union, becoming the first member-state in its history to do so. (2020, p. 25)

Capitalist realism abovementioned, states Bastani, is the comprehension in which this economic system is the unique viable and coherent alternative. Mark Fisher's sentence, we mentioned earlier, 'it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism' captures the essence of capitalist realism: after all, how can you propose an alternative to reality itself? (BASTANI, 2020, p.22).

Yet pursuant to Bastani, despite the fact "Brexit was the most important political moment in Europe for a generation, it was soon outdone by events across the Atlantic when, just a few months later, Donald Trump was elected the forty-fifth President of the United States". Moreover, as stated by Bastani, "less than a decade after the collapse of Lehman Brothers²⁴ in 2008". An expansionist Russia - until the present moment in War against Ukraine -, "isolationist Britain and broken economic model had all been outdone by a reality TV star becoming the most powerful person on Earth. History was back" (2020, p. 26).

In agreement with Harari's perception, 2016 signified the moment when this tidal wave of disillusionment reached the central liberal states of western

²⁴ "Lehman Brothers filed for bankruptcy on September 15, 2008. Hundreds of employees, mostly dressed in business suits, left the bank's offices one by one with boxes in their hands. It was a somber reminder that nothing is forever—even in the richness of the financial and investment world. At the time of its collapse, Lehman was the fourth-largest investment bank in the United States with 25,000 employees worldwide. It had \$639 billion in assets and \$613 billion in liabilities. The bank became a symbol of the excesses of the 2007-08 Financial Crisis, engulfed by the subprime meltdown that swept through financial markets and cost an estimated \$10 trillion in lost economic output".

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/economics/09/lehman-brothers-collapse.asp#:~:text=Lehman%20Brothers%20filed%20for%20bankruptcy,the%20financial%20and%20investment%20world.> Accessed in 11/04/2022.

Europe and North America, provoked by the Brexit vote in Britain and the rise of Donald Trump in the United States (2018, p. 19). Furthermore,

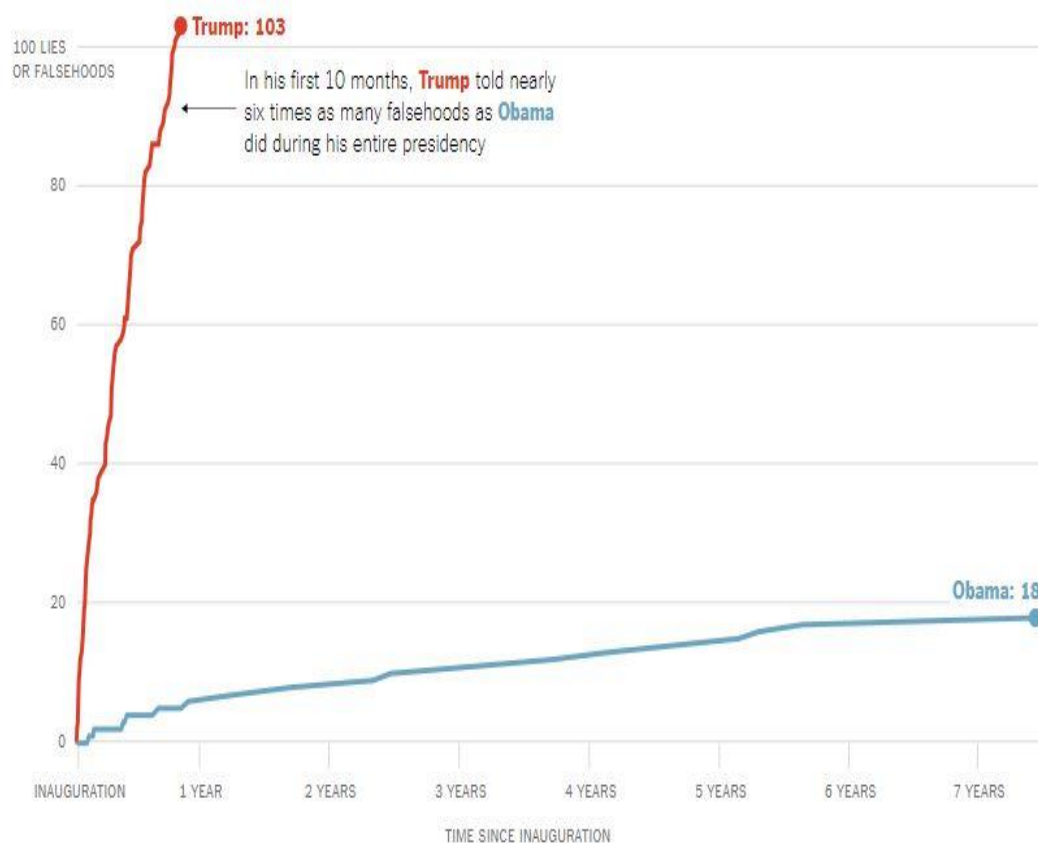
Whereas a few years ago Americans and Europeans were still trying to liberalise Iraq and Libya at the point of the gun, many people in Kentucky and Yorkshire have now come to see the liberal vision as either undesirable or unattainable. Some discovered a liking for the old hierarchical world, and they just don't want to give up their racial, national or gendered privileges. Others have concluded (rightly or wrongly) that liberalisation and globalisation are a huge racket empowering a tiny elite at the expense of the masses. (HARARI, 2018, p. 20)

Donald Trump is perhaps the symbol of the paradigm shift in contemporary politics. Uninterrupted speech that the system was deteriorating ordinary Americans' lives, that there was social decay, and that nationalism was undermined became his immediate signature in office (BASTANI, 2020, p. 26). Steve Bannon, former head of Breitbart News and chief strategist for Donald Trump, says in 2018, "Democrats don't matter; the real opposition is the media". And the way to handle it is "to flood the zone with shit". This idea is not original, but Bannon has articulated it as best he could. Preferably, the press should filter fact from fiction and provide the public with the information needed to make conscious policy choices based on the facts. If this process is interrupted by saturating the ecosystem with misinformation and overloading the mediation capacity of the media, democratic process can be compromised. Contemporary politics is being poisoned by a new form of advertising that was not really possible until the digital age. And it works not by creating consensus around a specific narrative, but by confusing the waters so that consensus is not possible (DAGOBAH, 2022). Trump adopted this practice as a supreme principle from day one of his campaign. *Washington Post Fact Checker* team took on the difficult task of cataloguing Trump's false or misleading claims. According to the newspaper,

We recorded 492 suspect claims in the first 100 days of his presidency. On Nov. 2 alone, the day before the 2020 vote, Trump made 503 false or misleading claims as he barnstormed across the country in a desperate effort to win reelection. This astonishing jump in falsehoods is the story of Trump's tumultuous reign. By the end of his term, Trump had accumulated 30,573 untruths during his presidency — averaging about 21 erroneous claims a day. What is especially striking is how the tsunami of untruths kept rising the longer he served as president and became increasingly unmoored from the truth. Trump averaged

about six claims a day in his first year as president, 16 claims day in his second year, 22 claims day in this third year — and 39 claims a day in his final year. Put another way, it took him 27 months to reach 10,000 claims and an additional 14 months to reach 20,000. He then exceeded the 30,000 mark less than five months later. (THE WASHINGTON POST, 2021)

Some Trump supporters could say, "but lying or rhetoric is inherent in politics and in democratic processes it could not be different. Who has never lied, throw the first stone". However, mistakes, slips or inaccuracies in speech differ from lies systematically told and repeated intending to compromise the dissemination of journalistic truth. *The New York Times* published on December, 14 of 2017, after a little less than one year of Trump's government, a comparison between lies told by Trump and Obama. Let us see the following graph (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2017):



According to the newspaper, the same conservative standard was applied to Obama and Trump, counting only demonstrably and substantially false statements. "The result: Trump is unlike any other modern president. He seems

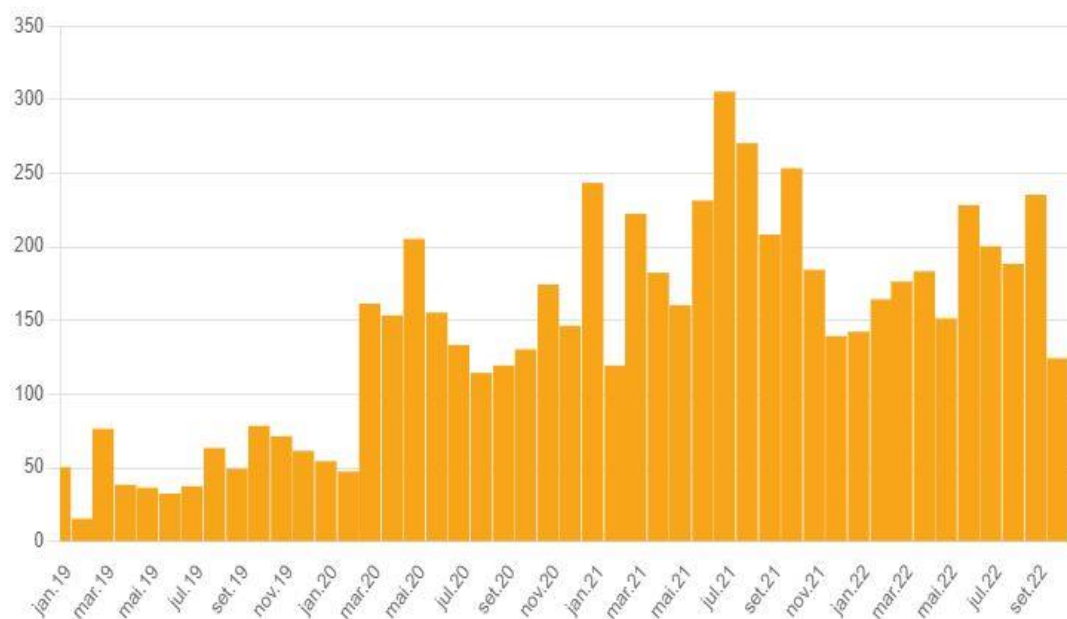
virtually indifferent to reality, often saying whatever helps him make the case he's trying to make", after all, "in his first 10 months in office, he has told 103 separate untruths, many of them repeatedly. Obama told 18 over his entire eight-year tenure. That's an average of about two a year for Obama and about 124 a year for Trump" (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2017). According to the New York Times,

If we had used a less strict standard, Trump would look even worse by comparison. He makes misleading statements and mild exaggerations – about economic statistics, his political opponents and many other subjects – far more often than Obama. We left out any statement that could be plausibly defended even if many people would disagree with the president's interpretation. We also left out modest quantitative errors, such as Trump's frequent imprecision with numbers. We have used the word "lies" again here, as we did in our original piece. If anything, though, the word is unfair to Obama and Bush. When they became aware that they had been saying something untrue, they stopped doing it. Obama didn't continue to claim that all Americans would be able to keep their existing health insurance under Obamacare, for example, and Bush changed the way he spoke about Iraq's weapons capability. As for Obama: His falsehoods tended to be attempts to make his own policies look better or to overstate a problem he was trying to solve. In a few cases, they seemed to be careless exaggerations he avoided repeating. Over all, Obama rarely told demonstrable untruths as president. And he appears to have become more careful over time. We counted six straight-up falsehoods in his first year in office. Across his entire second four-year term, we counted the same number, six, only one of which came in his final year in office. In all, we found 18 different bald untruths from Obama during his presidency. Trump told his 18th separate untruth in his third full week in office, and his list keeps growing. (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2017)

The New York Times conclusion is that Trump is different. "When he is caught lying, he will often try to discredit people who are telling the truth, be they judges, scientists, F.B.I. or C.I.A. officials, journalists or members of Congress". Hence, "Trump is trying to make truth irrelevant. It is extremely damaging to democracy, and it's not an accident. It's core to his political strategy" (THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2017).

Steve Bannon - sentenced to four months in prison and a fine for contempt of Congress after declining to heed intimation from a committee investigating the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol - is also an influential figure in President Jair Bolsonaro's close circle (UOL, 2022). The supreme Bannon's principle "to flood the zone with shit" was also adopted by the "Trump of the tropics".

According to *Aos Fatos*²⁵, in 1,396 days as president, Bolsonaro made 6,504 false or distorted statements. This database aggregates all declarations made by Bolsonaro from the day of his inauguration as president. The *Aos Fatos* team carries check out weekly, and the last update - until the data of our access - occurred on October 28, 2022. Let us see the following graph showing the lies told by Bolsonaro monthly (AOS FATOS, 2022):



Jair Bolsonaro makes use of the same practice as Trump: compulsively and systematically propagating lies - spread in application groups such as WhatsApp and Telegram - to jeopardise the dissemination of truthful information by the media (EL PAÍS, 2022). Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro represent yet another significant barrier to global capitalism. As Bastani very well comments,

(...) in a strange way, despite their markedly different forms of presentation, Obama and Trump shared a similar faith in the unique ability of markets to find solutions. After all, anything else is tantamount to heresy in a world of capitalist realism – where the end of the world is more plausible than the end of capitalism.

²⁵ "Aos Fatos is an independent fact-checking news site. It was created in July 2015 with the focus of verifying what is false and what is real in political speeches. It is inspired by the Argentinian Chequeado and PolitiFact, a Pulitzer Prize-winning website in 2008". https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aos_Fatos, accessed in 11/04/2022

This condition presents arguably the most pressing crisis of all: an absence of collective imagination. It is as if all humanity has been afflicted by a psychological complex, capitalist realism making us believe the present world is stronger than our capacity to remake it – as if it were not our ancestors who created what stands before us now. As if the very essence of humanity, if there is such a thing, is not to constantly build new worlds. In its defence, capitalism can point to an impressive record, at least so far. Having faced crises almost every decade for two centuries, amid the ferocious pace of constantly accelerating change, it has always found ways of extracting profit and, eventually, improving living standards. Capitalism has survived, evolved and prospered through the Industrial Revolution, the Great Depression, protectionism, two World Wars, the end of the gold standard and the demise of the Bretton Woods Agreement²⁶. (2020, p.27)

Moreover, 2016 was the year that this tsunami of disillusionment reached the liberal heartlands of Western Europe and North America, as evidenced by the Brexit vote in Britain and the ascent to power of Donald Trump in the US (HARARI, 2018, p.18). Thereby, "in 1938 humans were offered three global stories to choose from, in 1968 just two, in 1998 a single story seemed to prevail; in 2018 we are down to zero²⁷" (HARARI, 2018, p. 19). In the three books we consulted, Harari's works do not establish a clear differentiation between liberalism and neoliberalism.

According to Dardot & Laval, the consequences of the First World War and subsequent crises led to a deep reconsideration of nineteenth-century liberal

²⁶ In the early 1960s, the fixed value of the U.S. dollar against gold, as per the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates, was perceived as being too high. The considerable increase in domestic spending on President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs, coupled with escalated military expenses due to the Vietnam War, gradually exacerbated the overvaluation of the dollar. The Bretton Woods system disintegrated between 1968 and 1973. In August 1971, U.S. President Richard Nixon declared the "temporary" suspension of the dollar's convertibility into gold. While the dollar had faced challenges throughout much of the 1960s within the established parity at Bretton Woods, this crisis marked the breakdown of the system. An attempt to revive fixed exchange rates proved unsuccessful, and by March 1973, major currencies began floating against each other.

(<https://www.imf.org/external/about/histend.htm#:~:text=End%20of%20Bretton%20Woods%20s,The%20system%20dissolved&text=In%20August%201971%2C%20U.S.%20President,th,e%20breakdown%20of%20the%20system.>)

²⁷ **1938:** In this year, during the rise of Nazism and the outbreak of World War II, the three global stories Harari refers to likely represent the major ideological options or narratives available to people amidst the geopolitical turmoil. These could include democratic values, fascist ideologies, and, potentially, communist narratives.

1968: During the late 1960s, a period marked by significant social and cultural upheaval, the two remaining global stories may have been associated with the ideological divide of the Cold War era—capitalism versus communism. This was a time of civil rights movements, anti-Vietnam War protests, and a broader questioning of established norms.

1998: By the late 20th century, with the end of the Cold War and the dominance of liberal democratic capitalism, the single prevailing story could be interpreted as the triumph of Western liberal democracy and free-market capitalism as the predominant global narrative.

2018: Harari suggests that by 2018, no single prevailing global narrative remained. This could be indicative of a fragmentation of ideologies, the rise of populism, and a multiplicity of narratives and worldviews competing for attention and influence on the global stage.

doctrines. In light of the apparent disruption of social and economic equilibrium, concerns have been raised regarding the feasibility of conventional notions of free trade. The vulnerability of liberal democracies is underscored by recurring economic downturns, speculative activities, and social and political upheavals. The prevailing crisis has resulted in a general skepticism towards economic doctrines that endorse unrestricted market freedom. The *laissez-faire* principles were considered outdated, even by proponents of liberalism. Apart from a resolute core of academic economists who strictly follow classical doctrine and resist state intervention, there has been a rising sentiment in favor of reforming the capitalist liberal system, aiming to salvage it rather than dismantle it. The perception grew that the state was the sole entity capable of addressing the dire economic and social circumstances (2017, p. 70).

Dardot & Laval argues that the "crisis of liberalism" has unveiled the inadequacy of the dogmatic principle of *laissez-faire* in governing matters. Among those who continue to embrace the tenets of classical liberalism, two distinct forms of response have been formulated, necessitating differentiation, despite occasional historical convergence. The first one, in terms of chronology, refers to the ideology of "new liberalism," whereas the second one relates to "neoliberalism" (2017, p. 83-84). "New liberalism", as manifested in Keynesian economic theory, entailed a comprehensive reconsideration of the legal, moral, political, economic, and social instruments required to achieve a society characterised by individual freedom and benefiting all members. Two key proposals encapsulate this approach: Firstly, state policies should surpass the constraints imposed by *laissez-faire* dogmatism to safeguard the fundamental advantages of a liberal society. Secondly, these novel policies must practically challenge the reliance on market self-regulation mechanisms and the assumption of equality in contractual justice between individuals (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2017, p. 85). "Neoliberalism" subsequently emerges, presenting itself as both a decantation of "new liberalism" and an alternative to the economic intervention and social reform advocated by its predecessor. It broadly corresponds with the initial proposition of giving priority to state intervention as proposed by "new liberalism". However, despite acknowledging the need for state involvement and rejecting governmental inactivity, neoliberals oppose actions that impede competition among private interests. State intervention takes on an opposite

purpose: rather than restraining the market through state correction or compensation, it aims to develop and refine the competitive market through meticulously tailored legal frameworks. The focus shifts from assuming spontaneous agreement among individual interests to creating optimal conditions for competitive rivalry to serve collective interests. In rejecting the latter proposition, neoliberalism combines a renewed appreciation for public intervention with a market conception centred on competition (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2017, p. 85-86).

According to Mason, neoliberalism supports the notion of unregulated markets. It argues that the most advantageous route to achieving prosperity is through individuals actively pursuing their own self-interest, and that the market is the exclusive avenue for articulating this pursuit (2016, p. 9). Mason argues that neoliberalism asserts that the state should be minimal (except concerning its riot police and secret police); that financial speculation is beneficial; that inequality is beneficial; and that the natural state of humanity is to be a horde of unscrupulous individuals competing against each other (2016, p. 9). Nevertheless, neoliberalism extends beyond being a mere economic doctrine. It emerges from the construction of the individual and the perpetuation of this construction: a fragmented individual with weakened social connections, subordinate to the principle of competition, diminished social empathy, and even limited existential experiences due to mental confinement within the "just make it happen" principle and the concept of being one's own entrepreneur.

Neoliberalism is characterised not only as an economic doctrine but also as a framework for managing psychic suffering, rooted in moral and psychological assumptions underlying economic actions. The reasoning behind these actions goes beyond their economic efficiency, encompassing their perceived moral correctness in promoting social freedom, particularly based on an expansive understanding of property rights and liberal conceptions of individual freedom (SAFATLE, SILVA JUNIOR & DUNKER, 2020, p. 6). By reducing freedom to the free exercise of property, society becomes depoliticized and conflicts are criminalized, resulting in the production of subjectivity patterns and, above all, suffering. The correlation between the emergence of neoliberalism in the 1970s and the extensive restructuring of the framework for psychological suffering, via the predominance of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders,

third edition (DSM-III), is not a mere coincidence (SAFATLE *et al.*, 2020, p. 7). The influence of neoliberalism extends beyond economic policy and permeates into the field of clinical psychology, impacting the conceptualization and treatment of mental health problems. This influence is manifested in the prioritisation of certain diagnostic categories, such as depression and personality disorders, and the growing reliance on psychotropic medications, not only for the purpose of alleviating psychological distress, but also to improve workplace performance. These modifications exemplify the overarching neoliberal ideology that permeates multiple societal domains (SAFATLE *et al.*, 2020, p. 7).

According to Safatle *et al.*, the idea of the "manager" of psychic suffering gains importance in two aspects: as the creator and as the supervisor. Neoliberalism is responsible for both the production and management of psychic suffering. Hence, it is imperative to comprehend neoliberalism as a mode of existence encompassing work, language, and desire. Classical liberals, following the legacy of Jeremy Bentham and Stuart Mill, viewed suffering - whether experienced by workers or citizens - as an impediment to productivity, development, and the pursuit of happiness, which they defined as maximising pleasure while minimising pain. In contrast, the neoliberal way of life discovered that more production and more pleasure can be extracted from suffering itself (2020, p. 7). Therefore, finding the best use of suffering at work, maximising exhaustion while minimizing legal risk, and maximising project involvement with minimal reciprocal loyalty to the company, becomes an inherent principle in a life where every relationship requires balance and measurement (SAFATLE *et al.*, 2020, p. 7).

Abandonment of the mythical in favor of the rational, added to the hyper-individualisation promoted by neoliberal discourse of each for themselves, creates an atmosphere of exhaustion and melancholy. This is the backdrop from which the metanarrative of neoliberalism gives rise to the metanarrative appointed by Fisher: capitalist realism. Despite neoliberalism being in crisis, its decline does not seem to diminish the potency of the fatalistic discourse of capitalist realism. Nevertheless, it is possible to verify that in recent years, a new metanarrative has emerged. A new immanent salvationist discourse, a new "absolute", and therefore a new gravitational axis on which we can base our action; or at least an attempt.

2.4 Transhumanism: a new metanarrative?

We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine. (PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, 1956, p. 7-8)

A cosmic upheaval is now surging on Planet Earth.

We are at a major evolutionary milestone. 3 billion years ago the emergence of life in the oceans.

400 million years ago the emergence of life on land. 70 million years ago the primates.

3 million years ago the rise of animal/humans.

Today the emergence of a new concept of life — 1. beyond the animal/human. 2. extending beyond Planet Earth. (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 6)

Transhumanism's roots are almost as old as humanism. The search for overcoming our natural condition, such as immortality, is present in one of the oldest literary works ever written: the *Epic of Gilgamesh* -1700 B.C. (ANTONIO, 2019, p. 71). During the Middle Ages, alchemists also developed similar ideas. Names such as Paracelsus (pseudonym for Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493-1541) and Nicolas Flamel (1340-1418) - both influenced by Hermes Trismegistus, who would have been the creator of alchemy - were very influential in spreading the human ambition of overcome its natural condition (ANTONIO, 2019, p. 62).

French physician and philosopher Julien Offray de La Mettrie (1709-1751), contributed to building the transhumanist atmosphere. For La Mettrie, we are machines, composed of muscles, organs and bones. We are organised matter. No soul or spirit coordinates the machine or substantiates our "I". We are pure

organic matter, such as any animal. Humans and other animals differ only by intellection or thought (located in the brain and, therefore, devoid of a metaphysical character since it is restricted to matter) (1962, p. 39). According to the philosopher, every attribution of the soul is addressed to the body. As Sibilia states, "by eliminating the last great refuge of the sacred in the human being, La Mettrie extended the foundations of universal mechanism". For him, as Sibilia explains, the human body "comprised a set of springs and gears governed by purely mechanical laws" (SIBILIA, 2015, p. 81-82, our translation). La Mettrie attributed a mechanistic constitution to the human's which desecrates them. The desacralisation of the human makes the idea of studying and manipulating human's own body conceivable. Furthermore, this process of denying the existence of the transcendent soul removes humans from any element related to the miraculous. Thus, the body becomes a mere scientific object of manipulation.

La Mettrie's mechanistic vision opens the way for a new look at humans and, therefore, allows other ways to nurture the ambition for surpassing the human condition. If human beings are integrally made up of matter that obeys the same laws of physics that operate outside of us, then it must, in principle, be possible for us to learn to manipulate human nature as we do with external objects (BOSTROM, 2005, p. 4).

The etymological origin of the term 'Transhumanism' is usually attributed to Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia*, published in 1312. Dante uses the term '*transhumanare*' meaning to go beyond of the human, however, its use was around spiritual/religious transcendence (MORE, 2013, p. 8). In T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party*, published in 1935, the term 'transhumanised' is used. However, its use also restricts spiritual enlightenment. It was not until 1951, in Julian Huxley's *New Bottles For New Wine*, that the term 'transhumanism' appeared effectively in the sense that was close to the contemporary one.

English biologist Julian Huxley²⁸, - less known than his brother Aldous Huxley, writer of classical science fiction *Brave New World* (1932) - states that if

²⁸ Julian Huxley, in addition to being a member of the *British Eugenics Society*, presiding over it for several years (SORGNER/GRIMM, 2012, p. 13), was the first director general of UNESCO, founder of the *World Wildlife Fund* (BOSTROM, 2001, p. 7), was also a member of the Cambridge Heretics Society, a group of Cambridge students and other intellectuals who challenged traditional and religious authorities. Founded by CK Ogden in 1909, the group held meetings until 1932. Many prominent intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell, John Maynard Keynes, George

he was asked about the most remarkable developments of the 21st century, although "most people would say the automobile and the aeroplane, or the cinema, the radio and TV, or the release of atomic energy, or perhaps penicillin, and the antibiotics", his answer would be quite different: "the man's unveiling of the face and figure of the reality of which he forms a part, the first picture of human destiny in its true outlines" (1959, p. 11). Huxley announces an evolutionary Humanism, or as he preferred, a Transhumanism:

The human species can, if it wishes, transcend itself – not just sporadically, an individual here in one way, an individual there in another way – but in its entirety, as humanity. We need a name for this new belief. Perhaps transhumanism will serve: man remaining man, but transcending himself, by realizing new possibilities of and for his human nature. "I believe in transhumanism": once there are enough people who can truly say that, the human species will be on the threshold of a new kind of existence, as different from ours as ours is from that of Peking man. It will at last be consciously fulfilling its real destiny. (HUXLEY, 1959, p. 17)

In addition to the praiseworthy expandable potential of the human, Huxley identified in the human a potential that can be extended. The thinker sees the human as responsible for the direction or management of evolution. Thus, the human becomes the determining axis of its own evolution, being the last stronghold of itself (Huxley, 1959, p. 13-14). For Huxley, human life, given the history we know about it, is a miserable improvisation immersed in the abyss of ignorance and obscurantism, captured by the tentacles of superstition. But the human can surpass himself, he can choose a life founded on the enlightenment of knowledge and understanding (1959, p. 16).

In a review written for the *American Anthropologist Journal*, David Bidney states

New Bottles For New Wine constitutes a serious attempt to formulate a philosophy of culture and life based on the principles of progressive evolution and the unity of knowledge. Metaphysically, it may be characterized as monistic, naturalistic, and atheistic. It is monistic in the sense that Huxley categorically rejects all forms of dualism and especially the dualism of the natural versus the supernatural, and of the material versus the spiritual. Like Spinoza and contrary to the Marxists, Huxley regards mind as an essential attribute of nature and hence as a potent factor in nature's creative advance. But unlike the philosophy of Spinoza, which is theocentric and identifies God and Nature, Huxley's philosophy

Bernard Shaw, John Burdon Sanderson Haldane, Charles Elton and Sigmund Freud were associated with the Heretics Society where they held several lectures. (<http://carihovanec.com/>, accessed in 04/26/2023).

is characterized by himself as "evolutionary humanism" or "transhumanism." (1958, p. 1211-1212)

Furthermore, according to Bidney, "accepting in principle Frazer's and Freud's scheme of man's religious evolution from a state of magic through animistic religion to science, Huxley finds that he no longer needs the hypothesis of God" (1958, p. 1212). Huxley was convinced that God was becoming the erroneous hypothesis in all aspects of reality, including human's spiritual life (HUXLEY, 1959, p. 272).

For Huxley, over the course of aeons of evolution, the universe has gained awareness of itself, able to comprehend its past and potential future. For him,

This cosmic self-awareness is being realized in one tiny fragment of the universe – in a few of us human beings. Perhaps it has been realized elsewhere too, through the evolution of conscious living creatures on the planets of other stars. But on this our planet, it has never happened before (...) Up till now human life has generally been, as Hobbes described it, "nasty, brutish and short"; the great majority of human beings (if they have not already died young) have been afflicted with misery in one form or another – poverty, disease, ill-health, over-work, cruelty, or oppression. They have attempted to lighten their misery by means of their hopes and their ideals. The trouble has been that the hopes have generally been unjustified, the ideals have generally failed to correspond with reality. The zestful but scientific exploration of possibilities and of the techniques for realizing them will make our hopes rational, and will set our ideals within the framework of reality, by showing how much of them are indeed realizable. Already, we can justifiably hold the belief that these lands of possibility exist, and that the present limitations and miserable frustrations of our existence could be in large measure surmounted. We are already justified in the conviction that human life as we know it in history is a wretched makeshift, rooted in ignorance; and that it could be transcended by a state of existence based on the illumination of knowledge and comprehension, just as our modern control of physical nature based on science transcends the tentative fumbings of our ancestors, that were rooted in superstition and professional secrecy. To do this, we must study the possibilities of creating a more favourable social environment, as we have already done in large measure with our physical environment (...) (HUXLEY, 1959, p. 13-17)

According to Wood (2021 p. 433), within the same book, there was an essay from 1951 that was likely the first public statement to support the philosophy of transhumanism. Research by Peter Harrison and Joseph Wolyniak (2015, p. 1) has clarified that the essay in question, entitled "Knowledge, Morality, and Destiny", was originally presented in Washington DC over two evenings in April that year, before appearing in the *Journal of Psychiatry* a few months later.

The language in the essay might be viewed as dated in places, but the sentiment it expresses, from seven decades ago, holds true today:

Our Western world, in this year 1951, is psychologically in a bad way. Our thinking is chaotic, our nerves are jumpy, we are a prey to pessimism and depression, we seem frightened of our human selves. Our half of the world lacks a common faith; the other half has had imposed upon it a dogmatic faith which can never satisfy free men. We in the West have lost our sense of continuity, our long-term hope, and seem only able to concentrate on prospects of immediate disaster or immediate methods of escaping from it. Never was there a greater need for a large perspective, in which we might discern the outlines of a general and continuing belief beyond the disturbance and chaos of the present... Every society, in every age, needs some system of beliefs, including a basic attitude to life, an organized set of ideas around which emotion and purpose may gather, and a conception of human destiny. It needs a philosophy and a faith to achieve a guide to orderly living - in other words, a morality... This brings me... to the emergent idea-system, the new organization of thought, at whose birth we are assisting. It takes account, first and foremost, of the fact that nature is one universal process of evolution, self-developing and self-transforming, and it includes us. Man does not stand over against nature; he is part of it. We men are that part of the process which has become self-conscious, and it is our duty and our destiny to facilitate the process by leading it on to new levels. Our chief motive, therefore, will derive from the exploration and understanding of human nature and the possibilities of development and fulfilment inherent in it, a study which will of course include the limitations, distortions, and frustrations to be avoided. Such a philosophy might perhaps best be called Transhumanism. It is based on the idea of humanity attempting to overcome its limitations and arrive at fuller fruition; it is the realization that both individual and social development are processes of self-transformation. (HUXLEY, 1951, p. 245-246)

Hence, according to Wood (2021, p. 434), humans are greatly influenced by the stories we tell ourselves, and without a compelling and credible narrative, our minds will shrink, making us susceptible to the chaotic forces reshaping society. Transhumanism, for him, has the potential to serve as a counter-narrative (2021, p.434) – or a new metanarrative.

2.4.1. FM-2030

Do we lack the creativity to generate novelty? Are we left with only preemptive apologies when proposing minor reforms for social justice? Does this mean that we are truly experiencing the "end of history"? (GHIRALDELLI, 2023, p. 17, our translation.)

Fereidoun M. Esfandiary or FM-2030 (his new name) was one of the first philosophers to use the terms 'transhuman' and 'post-human' in a course about technology that occurred in 1966 at *The New School For Social Research* in New York. In his book *Up Wingers: A Futurist Manifesto* (1973), FM 2030 supported the idea that humanity's evolution is accelerating as technology advances. According to him, we will overcome old age and death, achieve a life beyond planet Earth and improve ourselves genetically. For him, we will establish a transparent and participatory human culture, where identifications such as families, tribes, races, genders and nation-states will progressively dissolve until we become citizens of the world (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 3). According to FM, most of the projections we make about the future are hazy and pessimistic. In his words:

Western intellectuals in particular, hobbled by puritan guilt and self-doubts, flood the world with books and films and scenarios foredooming the future. To them our successes and potentials are not real. Only our failures. We must develop a bold new philosophy of the future. A hopeful outlook which can embolden people to want to face the future. To want to plan for it. (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 3).

For FM-2030, we do not face death as it should be seen. As he talks in his consecrated book *Countdown to Immortality* "each death is the end of a universe. The greatest tragedy facing each of us is death", because "there is no sorrow more universal, no anguish more profound, no separation more final, no horror more devastating than death" (2011, p. 11).

From the moment of our birth, we are confronted with challenges that persist throughout our lives. As we mature, we encounter obstacles in various aspects of our existence, be it in securing employment or navigating the complexities of personal, public, ethical, or political domains. Even after establishing a sense of stability, we continue to face numerous adversities. Nevertheless, in spite of years of persistent devotion and the attainment of material and even idyllic conditions that create a conducive environment for a contented existence - conditions that for many require decades of strenuous labour - we find ourselves liable to succumb to illness. Our cognitive faculties deteriorate with the onset of conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, erasing cherished memories of joyful moments spent with loved ones. Alternatively, we may experience a decline in motor functions due to Parkinson's disease or

grapple with the effects of cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, or any of the numerous ailments that afflict humanity.

As elucidated by FM-2030, all the fears that pervade our existence come from the fear of death - and it does not have to be the fear of violent death, as Hobbes said. Psychological conditions such as neuroses, anxiety, panic and vices as cowardice, all more directly or distantly, involve the fear of death. For the thinker, this idea evokes a nefarious mist over all our lives (2011, p. 13).

For a better understanding of FM-2030's positioning, let us consider the following situation: a doctor tells a patient, after careful diagnosis, that due to a chronic and incurable illness known as Huntington's disease, their life expectancy will not exceed 17 years. The respiratory system, speech, behaviour, motor skills, and cognition will all deteriorate. An abbreviated life and distressing. The anguish intensifies as the symptoms arise and intensify. The question to be posed here is: What life since the devastating diagnosis this patient would have? More cautious, more restrained? More intense, hedonistic as the Cyrenaics's way? (ANTONIO, 2020, p. 346). Mood disorders affect 60% of patients with Huntington, particularly depression, and many of them commit suicide (HOSPITAL SÍRIO LIBANÊS, 2022)²⁹.

Let us now turn to another similar illness. It is a degenerative congenital disease, progressive and still incurable, affecting all organs and tissues. In the beginning, its symptoms are subtle but gradually affect cognitively and physically. These symptoms characterise senescence syndrome or ageing. We are all affected by this deadly illness. What do we do about it? We have conformed to our condition, unlike patients with Huntington's disease, which because of their illness realise the brevity of life, not by the disease itself, but by the reminder that it prints. Life is short for all of us, having Huntington's disease or not. Brief and singular. However, unlike the patient with this illness, which was strongly shaken by the diagnosis, we naturally accept death, as if there is some sacredness in perishing (ANTONIO, 2020, p. 346).

As stated by the philosopher, we seem resigned to the inevitability of our mortality. Death traumatised us. For millions of years, we were not able to do

²⁹ <https://hospitalsiriolibanes.org.br/hospital/especialidades/nucleo-avancado-dor-disturbios-movimentos/Paginas/doenca-huntington.aspx> , accessed in 11/11/2022.

anything about death. It has made us all fatalistic and helpless. We do not even feel we deserve to live forever (2011, p. 14). As FM-2030 highlighted,

Have you seen television programs of animals in the wilderness? A predator gives chase and hundreds of zebras bolt in all directions. Soon one of the zebras is brought down. As the predator immobilizes and kills its prey the other zebras stand around and watch. They just stand around and watch. Seeing such spectacles I cannot help thinking – why don't these animals band together and chase away the predator? Hundreds of zebras collaborating could even stand off a pack of predators. But they don't. They go through the same gory spectacle hundreds of times and it never occurs to them to band together and protect themselves. How dumb. How programmed. How traumatized. But think of it – are we any different? We stand around like dumb zebras and watch as day after day fellow humans die all around us. We even wait meekly for our own turn to die. If we were not all so traumatized by death we would immediately put aside everything and mobilize our prodigious resources to subdue the predator death. If you succumbed to a serious illness or injury would you just lie back and wait for death or would you do everything in your power to recover? (2011, p. 15)

According to the thinker, thinking death must be the highest priority in solving social problems. How can we abominate, ask him, the social and political oppression and accept death, the most basic and brutal oppression? How can we, he adds, fought so vehemently for gender equality and human rights, and accept death, the ultimate violation of human rights? Engaging in social and political rights facing the inescapable fate of death is like fiercely debating on such rights while we walk for a short line to the death chamber (2011, p. 16). As he indicates, we need to promote awareness of the preciousness of life, because even the loss of one human life is a colossal tragedy. Everything we have done and are still doing to anaesthetize our miserable lives is to create celestial worlds, paradises, places where happiness reigns forever or reincarnations that offer a second chance of life or multiple opportunities. However, these transcendental worlds come at the expense of the concreteness of life in immanence (2011, p. 16).

According to FM-2030, we are living in a colossal rapidly changing world. The asexual creation of enhanced humans, the emergence of cyborgs, space travel, and the manipulation of matter at the atomic level are just some possibilities for the coming years. "These new dimensions in human life defy all our philosophies, all our social-economic political systems, and all our age-old

concepts of life and nature, including Time and Space" (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 6). According to the philosopher, until now, human civilisations throughout the ages have been predicated on the same fixed premises (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 6):

- Nature governs all life on this planet.
- We are bound by the laws of evolution.
- We are confined to flesh and blood bodies.
- We are permanently confined to this planet.
- We are finite — we are born and we die.

For him, "for the first time since the emergence of life on this planet, all these premises are challenged" in face of technological developments. This is the major paradigm shift in human history and "we have no philosophy, no ideology, no conceptual or social system to accommodate this emerging dimension". Thereby, this "new cosmic dimension defies all our human traditions" and we "now need new conceptual frameworks and new visions to guide us as we venture into uncharted spheres which are potentially full of hope" (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 6). Accordingly, in order to handle all emergency new potentialities and "transcend more rapidly to higher levels of evolution, we must begin by breaking out of the confinement of traditional ideologies". After all, politics remains the supreme science, as Aristotle stated. So, this is where the primordial change must occur. For FM-2030, "we are at all times slowed down by the narrowness of Right-wing and Left-wing alternatives":

If you are not conservative you are liberal if not right of center you are left of it or middle of the road. Our traditions comprise no other alternatives. There is no ideological or conceptual dimension beyond conservative and liberal beyond Right and Left. Right and Left — even the extreme Left — are traditional frameworks predicated on traditional premises striving in obsolete ways to attain obsolete goals. The premises of the entire Left are indistinguishable from those of the entire Right. The extreme Left is simply a linear extension of the extreme Right. The liberal is simply a more advanced conservative. The radical Left a more advanced liberal. You can move farther and farther Left to the most radical Left you will still be advancing within an intrinsically orthodox framework. It is no longer only the Right that is conservative. The entire Left is also suddenly conservative. The liberal and the radical Left have fallen behind. But they will not face their new conservatism. They resist and attack the new breakthroughs —

the more they resist the more conservative they grow and therefore the more cynical. There is no cynicism more bitter than that of liberals or radical Left-wingers who sense that they have fallen behind the times. They still like to view themselves and are viewed by others as progressive. This is precisely where the danger lies. This is one of the main reasons for resistances to more rapid progress. In the name of progress the liberal and the radical Left resist progress. They resist because the new breakthroughs do not fit into their highly structured frameworks and confined goals. (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 8).

Pursuant to Rüdiger, for FM-2030 contemporary politics cannot be meant to be the same Left-wing/Right-wing traditional oscillatory movement. Rather, for him, we need to adopt the Up-Wing - or futurism. Thus, "instead of representative democracy or authoritarian totalitarianism, capitalism or socialism, bourgeois nationalism or communist internationalism", explains Rüdiger, the way we have to follow is "direct and decentralised democracy, expanded on a world scale, through the creation of electronic citizenship and automation of social life" (2008, p. 150).

According to FM-2030, in order to advance more quickly towards higher levels of evolution, we must break free from traditional ideologies. The narrowness of Right-wing and Left-wing alternatives constantly slows us down. Our traditions offer no other options beyond conservative and liberal, and there is no ideological or conceptual dimension beyond Right and Left. These frameworks are predicated on traditional premises and strive to achieve outdated goals in obsolete ways (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 8). Left and Right, according to FM-2030, protest that the Space Program is a waste of money and suggest that the funds should be allocated towards more important matters. "Genetic Engineering", they argue, is dehumanising and will lead to the creation of push-button people. Similarly, the notion of reproduction outside of the womb is viewed as hideously impersonal and mechanical. Thus, they believe that modern technology is dehumanising, robbing individuals of privacy and individuality and upsetting the balance of nature. Each breakthrough is seen as a threat and every new idea is viciously attacked as anti-human and simplistic utopian (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 9). Furthermore, for the philosopher, the establishment, both Right and Left, is following in the footsteps of earlier traditionalists who opposed the more modest breakthroughs of the past, such as women's suffrage, cameras, telephones, and birth control. Pursuant to him, liberal and radical Left are the new conservatives, putting up strong resistance to the newest

breakthroughs. FM-2030 emphasises that there are new dimensions emerging that go beyond traditional labels of Right, Left, conservative, and liberal. He asks:

How do you categorize radio astronomers now scanning the galaxies in search of Intelligent Life? Or scientists working on the implantation of devices in the human body enabling the individual to control its own pain and pleasures — emotions and dreams? Or those working on telefarming systems which can provide endless quantities of food? Or computerers developing cybernated systems to free people of the primitive ordeals of perpetual work and of leadership government? Or bio-engineers striving to conquer death? These and other breakthroughs are outside the range of all the traditional philosophical social economic political frameworks. These new dimensions are nowhere on the Right or on the Left. These new dimensions are Up. Up is an entirely new framework whose very premises and goals transcend the conventional Right and Left. (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 9).

Hence, states FM-2030, the establishment, whether on the Right or the Left, is content with maintaining the current state of human evolution. They only seek to improve life within the limitations of our current predicament. Those who are Up, however, refuse to accept any predicament as permanent or any tragedy as irreversible. They believe that no goal is unattainable and reject the traditional concept of linear historical progress as too slow and limiting. To be Up, one must break away from the ideological ties of the establishment and adopt new premises and visionary aims. The Up-dimension will soon become the focus of discussion, rendering traditional labels such as conservatism, liberalism, Left-wing, and radicalism irrelevant. These labels are all conservative and Down, while the Up movement will strive for progress beyond the limitations of the establishment (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 10).

The philosopher foresaw two great upheavals looming on the horizon. First, the Historical Breakthroughs (beyond feudal/industrial systems) encompass various societal structures such as exclusive parenthood, marriage, family, school, money, work, leadership, government, and nations. Up-Wingers argue for the total elimination of these outdated systems, not just their modernisation. Unlike traditional Right/Left revolutionaries who seek to overthrow specific governments, Up-Wingers aim to dismantle the very concept of leadership and government, replacing it with cybernated systems (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 10).

Second, regarding the Evolutionary Breakthroughs (cosmic upheaval), Up-Wingers argue that humanity is progressing towards a higher evolutionary stage, necessitating transcending age-old social, economic, and political issues. They emphasise the need to overcome inherent limitations imposed by nature, including the unpredictability of evolution, constraints of the human body, and limitations of Time and Space. Although scientific and technological progress have propelled advancements in space exploration and biology, the Right/Left establishment remains focused on asserting nationalistic and militaristic agendas through space programs, disregarding the evolutionary significance of the Space dimension. As a result, the establishment on the Right and Left is inadequately equipped, both psychologically and ideologically, to handle the shifting dynamics between humanity and Time and Space. Therefore, they vehemently resist this emerging cosmic outlook. Up-Wingers, in opposition to the resigned attitude of the Right/Left, steadfastly refuse to acknowledge any human predicament as permanent or any tragedy as irreversible. They deny the concept of unachievable objectives and persistently work towards advancing (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 10).

Moreover, FM-2030 had ideas beyond just the suggestion of a change in the political axis. He recognised the need for a completely new way of looking at philosophy. The philosopher claimed that we had been living in an era of profound pessimism and gloominess. He attributes this gloomy atmosphere of pessimism to the following causes: Firstly, numerous people suffer from a lack of self-esteem, which stems from their upbringing in destitution or overprotective environments. They develop a belief that nothing ever works out for them, which becomes a lifelong philosophy of pessimism that permeates their views on changes. Secondly, people in Western cultures have been taught puritan values that cause them to feel guilty and believe that they are undeserving of happiness and success. Even if they achieve personal success, they maintain a pessimistic outlook that dwells on failures and discourages optimism, hope, and progress. Thirdly, until recently people did not have the opportunity to witness different cultures at varying levels of technical development. Feudal societies, for example, were not aware that other cultures had advanced, and industrialised societies were seldom aware of the primitivism and backwardness in other lands. This lack of historical perspective led people to believe that nothing was changing and progress was impossible. Finally, throughout history, people have been

conditioned by theologies and philosophies of submission, resignation, fatalism, nihilism and despair. These views were logical given our tragic human situation, limited by time and space. Even recent visionaries like Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and evolutionists were resigned to the inevitability of human mortality and our confinement to this planet. As such, there has never been a philosophy of optimism based on an open-ended future (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 11).

According to him, we are living in the First Age of Optimism. So, in order to achieve progress, we must embrace the philosophy of Optimism and allow it to permeate our consciousness. Optimism serves as a necessary infusion that propels us forward and elevates our self-image. Historically, we have been passive beings, subject to the arbitrary forces of evolution, the ravages of nature, and the oppressive nature of social systems, such as parents, teachers, employers, priests, leaders, and gods. Additionally, we have been weakened by theologies and philosophies that instilled in us a belief that we are inherently wicked and insignificant. These external pressures have left us feeling powerless and contributed to our current crisis of self-esteem, both as individuals and as a species (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 11). FM-2030 states that we are no longer content with our earlier state of complacency and are now taking charge of our destiny. This marks a significant shift in our evolution, as we become active creators of our own future. However, our self-image remains constrained by our past perceptions of ourselves as feeble and passive. Therefore, we require a massive infusion of confidence and a cosmic consciousness- uplifting to break free from these limitations. The philosophy of Optimism serves as a means to update our self-image, aligning it with our expanding role in the universe and allowing us to achieve our full potential (ESFANDIARY, 1973, p. 12).

The philosophy proposed by FM-2030 is an affirmation of immanent life and a negation of the human biological condition. Our physical and mental vulnerability, whether arising from our animality or our cultural manifestations, must be overcome. Catastrophism and fatalism - that is, the belief that everything is just as it could be and that we cannot do anything about it - are significant obstacles, primarily because their thinking develops within the melancholic atmosphere typical of postmodernity, which we need to transcend.

2.4.2. The invisible hand of transhumanism

I'm basically an extropian transhumanist with objectivist inclinations. This means I'm a pro-technology, pro-reason futurist who thinks and acts purposefully, is passionate about freedom, seeks beauty, esteems inventors and wealth creators, and is optimistic about the potential for future progress. I highly value people with integrity and perseverance. I'm a libertarian laissez-faire capitalist. Free-market capitalism is the most natural, practical, and moral approach to social systems, one emphasizing the ultimate responsibility and personal sovereignty of every individual versus the prejudices and hazards of the unbounded State, tribe, or group. I advocate decimating the role of government in our lives. Let's allow people to literally create a better future for themselves and loved ones, largely by producing and trading wealth. (BONSEN, 1996)

In a brief and concise definition, Swedish polymath Anders Sandberg has encapsulated the essence of transhumanism: "Transhumanism is the philosophy that we can and should develop to higher levels, physically, mentally, and socially, using rational methods" (SANDBERG, 1997)

Per Natasha Vita-More - formerly called Nancie Clark -, another prominent transhumanist, the definition of transhumanism is:

commitment to overcoming human limits in all their forms including extending lifespan, augmenting intelligence, perpetually increasing knowledge, achieving complete control over our personalities and identities and gaining the ability to leave the planet. Transhumanists seek to achieve these goals through reason, science and technology. (SANDBERG, 1997)

According to the Transhumanist FAQ from 2003, transhumanism is defined as an intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of significantly improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to combat ageing and greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capabilities (BOSTROM, 2003, p. 4).

Presented below is a formulation from 1990 by the founder of the modern transhumanist movement, the philosopher Max More: "Transhumanism is a class of philosophies of life that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology, guided by life-promoting principles and values" (SANDBERG, 1997). Max More defines his branch of transhumanism as

extropianism. According to More, extropian transhumanism champions an uplifting, energetic, and dynamic outlook on life. The core aspiration, he stated, is to remove any constraints that limit life, intelligence, freedom, knowledge, and happiness. According to this worldview, the tools of science, technology, and reason must be harnessed to advance these extropic values, with the ultimate goal being the eradication of one of humanity's greatest challenges: death itself. In the eyes of extropian transhumanists, death, while unable to halt the collective progress of intelligent beings, extinguishes the individual experience. This philosophy contends that any meaningful approach to life cannot merely celebrate the advancement of intelligent beings while relegating each individual to a fate of eventual annihilation. Rather, it embraces the innate human desire for personal growth and the transcendence of our current limitations. Central to this philosophy is the belief that eliminating the ageing process and, eventually, all causes of death, is imperative for a comprehensive philosophy of optimism and transcendence, particularly when considering the individual's journey (MORE, 1990, p. 10)

Established by Max More (formerly known as Max O'Connor) and Natasha Vita-More (previously Nancie Clark) in the late 1980s, the Extropy Institute represented the earliest incarnation of organised transhumanism (SIRIUS, 2015, p.75). More proposes principles to give direction to the extropian transhumanism. These principles have undergone multiple revisions, and in their latest update, More discusses the following topics:

- **Perpetual Progress:** Extropy embodies the pursuit of increased intelligence, wisdom, and effectiveness, an unbounded lifespan, and the elimination of limits—whether political, cultural, biological, or psychological—that impede ongoing development. It's about continually overcoming constraints on progress and possibilities at the individual, organisational, and species levels, fostering boundless growth in healthy directions.
- **Self-Transformation:** Extropy entails a commitment to ongoing ethical, intellectual, and physical self-improvement through critical and creative thinking, continuous learning, personal accountability, proactive action, and experimentation. It involves using technology

in the broadest sense, seeking physiological and neurological enhancement, as well as emotional and psychological refinement.

- **Practical Optimism:** Extropy involves propelling action with positive expectations, with individuals and organisations persistently taking proactive steps. It advocates a rational, action-oriented optimism, rejecting both blind faith and stagnant pessimism.
- **Intelligent Technology:** Extropy emphasizes the design and management of technology as effective tools for enhancing life rather than ends in themselves. It encourages the creative and bold application of science and technology to transcend limiting aspects derived from our biological heritage, culture, and environment.
- **Open Society - Information and Democracy:** Extropy supports social structures that promote freedom of communication, freedom of action, experimentation, innovation, questioning, and learning. It opposes authoritarian control and unnecessary hierarchy, favouring the rule of law and decentralisation of power and responsibility. It values negotiation over conflict, exchange over coercion, and open communication. Extropy places high value on independent thinking, individual freedom, personal responsibility, self-direction, self-respect, and respect for others.
- **Rational Thinking:** Extropy advocates for reason over blind faith and encourages questioning rather than adhering to dogma. It emphasises understanding, experimentation, learning, challenging, and innovating instead of clinging to fixed beliefs. (MORE, 2003, p. 1-5)

In an earlier version, The Extropian Principles 2.6, More makes his predominant political ideology clearer. More moves from the 90-degree Up Wing of FM-2030 and establishes a "45-degree" transhumanism:

5. SPONTANEOUS ORDER: Supporting decentralized, voluntaristic social coordination processes. Fostering tolerance, diversity, long-term thinking, personal responsibility, and individual liberty. (MORE, 1995, p. 2)

According to More, extropians prioritise self-generated, organic, and spontaneous orders over centrally planned and imposed orders. In line with him, while both types of orders have their appropriate roles, the often underestimated spontaneous variety is deemed essential for social interactions. More contends that there is a harmony of values between extropians and spontaneous orders. According to his statement, spontaneous ordering processes can be seen in many contexts such as biological evolution, ecosystem self-regulation, artificial life studies, memetics, brain function, and neurocomputation (1995, p. 6). Having underscored the remarkable nature of the principle of spontaneity, More advocates for the free market, which is governed by the same principle.

Following More, the principle of spontaneous order is exemplified in the free-market system, a system that, he claimed, has not yet achieved pure form. Our societal evolution is moving away from tribalism, feudalism, authoritarianism, and democracy towards a polycentric system characterised by distributed power shared among autonomous agents, with their plans coordinated through the economic network. The free market fosters the development of complex institutions, promotes innovation, rewards individual initiative, nurtures personal responsibility, encourages diversity, and decentralises power. Market economies drive the technological and social progress that aligns with Extropian philosophy. More reject the technocratic notion of central control by self-proclaimed experts, as no group of experts can fully comprehend and manage the boundless complexity of an economy and society. In conformity with More, expertise is most effectively harnessed and disseminated through the highly efficient medium of the free market's price signals, which encapsulate more information than any individual or organisation could ever amass (1995, p. 7).

Moreover, as More indicates, the attainment of sustained progress and rational decision-making necessitate the presence of diverse fountains of information and diverse perspectives that arise in spontaneous orders. Centralised control of behaviour stifles exploration, diversity, and dissenting viewpoints. Upholding spontaneous order means endorsing voluntary, autonomy-maximising institutions over rigidly hierarchical, authoritarian groups with bureaucratic structures, tendencies to suppress innovation and dissent, and a dampening effect on individual incentives. As More wrote, effectively navigating a spontaneous social system means allowing others to live as they please, just

as we want to live freely ourselves. Mutual progress and fulfilment can arise from a cooperative and benevolent attitude towards all who respect our rights. Embracing diversity and disagreement requires us to exercise control over the innate impulses within the human organism and uphold rigorous standards of rational personal conduct. Extropians base their actions on the study of fields such as strategy, decision theory, game theory, and ethology. These disciplines reveal the benefits of cooperation and promote the long-term thinking befitting individuals seeking an unlimited lifespan (1995, p. 7-8).

In 2013, *The Transhumanist Reader; Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology, and Philosophy of the Human Future* was published, an anthology edited by Max More and Natasha Vita-More. This book provides an extensive collection of essays, articles, and writings from various authors, offering an in-depth exploration of the philosophy and ideas underpinning transhumanism. Some of the notable contributors include Max More himself, Nick Bostrom, Anders Sandberg, Ray Kurzweil, and other leading transhumanist thinkers. Their writings collectively address the intersection of science, technology, and philosophy, providing insights into the potential for human augmentation and transformation.

In the first chapter, More discusses the philosophy of transhumanism. It's worth noting that the subject is multifaceted, with various perspectives. However, core themes and values underpin its distinct identity. Transhumanism, as elucidated by Max More, can be perceived as a multifaceted concept encompassing a life philosophy, an intellectual and cultural movement, and a field of academic study. When characterised as a life philosophy, it exhibits similarities with worldviews such as secular humanism and Confucianism, offering practical implications for human existence devoid of supernatural or transcendent beliefs. In essence, transhumanism represents a non-religious philosophy of life that rejects faith, worship, and the supernatural in favour of emphasising a rational, scientific, progressive, and ethically driven approach to life (2013, p. 22).

At its core, transhumanism can be understood as a fusion of "trans-humanism" and "transhuman-ism." "Trans-humanism" underscores its Enlightenment humanistic roots, highlighting the pursuit of progress, individual responsibility in shaping a better future, reliance on reason, technology, the scientific method, and human creativity, as opposed to faith. While

transhumanism is optimistic about enhancing the human condition, it does not assume progress is inevitable and acknowledges the potential challenges and setbacks arising from powerful technologies. Thus, transhumanists place significant emphasis on rationality, proactive risk management, and mitigating negative consequences (MORE, 2013, p. 22). The term "trans-human" emphasises that transhumanism goes beyond traditional humanism in both means and ends. Unlike humanism, which relies on education and cultural refinement to enhance human nature, transhumanists aim to employ technology to surpass the limitations imposed by our biological and genetic heritage. Human nature is not viewed as an inherent end or perfection; rather, it is regarded as a point in an ongoing evolutionary journey that can be reshaped according to our preferences. Through the careful and bold application of technology, we can transform into something beyond human, known as posthuman. Being posthuman means surpassing the limitations of the less desirable parts of the "human condition", such as disease, aging, and mortality, while enjoying enhanced physical and cognitive capabilities. Additionally, transhumanists are interested in expanding the potential environments for post-human life, including space colonization and the creation of immersive virtual worlds (MORE, 2013, p. 24).

Furthermore, transhumanism relies primarily on technology as the means to bring about change, encompassing a wide range of fields, including information technology, computer science and engineering, cognitive science, neural-computer interfaces, materials science, artificial intelligence, regenerative medicine, genetic engineering, and nanotechnology. To fully comprehend the goals and potential of transhumanism, it necessitates an interdisciplinary approach that integrates the physical and social sciences (MORE, 2013, p. 25).

However, despite the enormous and unprecedented paradigm shift proposed by transhumanism, some things remain without any bold changes. Although FM-2030 has asserted the promotion of an "up" movement, transhumanism has not fully evaded this dichotomy. Transhumanism, similar to humanism, incorporates a variety of moral and political views, creating a far-reaching movement (RANISCH; SORGNER, 2014, p. 2).

The transhumanist movement establishes a new utopia, which is crucial for our current time. However, prominent authors like Max More demonstrate a

clear presence of uncritical neoliberal ideology. The movement envisions enhanced humans - transhumans - extremely enhanced humans - posthumans - in societies profoundly altered by the exponential growth of technology and even space exploration. It is, therefore, a very ambitious movement. Nevertheless, all of this unfolds from the "supreme principles" of the free market, the reduction of the role of the state, and private initiative. Neoliberal ideology has prevented some transhumanists, even in the face of the most ambitious philosophy ever conceived, from imagining the end of capitalism and even neoliberalism.

According to Ghiraldelli, in contemporary times, those of us on the left often encounter challenges when it comes to presenting utopian visions. Authors must prepare extensive justifications for even modest reform proposals to bring them to the forefront. The 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 crisis have made it clear that the neoliberal agenda is failing. Even before these events, the increasing poverty and social injustice were already noticeable and disheartening. Nevertheless, neoliberalism still exerts a powerful inertia. It represents a mindset that promotes conformity, and we continue to be ensnared in its grip. It is worth noting how influential this doctrine was in its early years. Social-democratic parties in Europe and the Democratic Party in the United States, as one might expect, initially rejected neoliberalism. However, this stance was short-lived. It was a prevailing reaction in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Later on, in the 1990s, they shifted their stance and ended up working together to implement neoliberal policies in different countries (2023, p. 16-17).

According to Ghiraldelli, our current political endeavours aim to preserve what neoliberalism has not yet acquired. Alternatively, we aim to reintroduce certain reformist policies, albeit with limited ambition. We strive to implement public policies that can bring about some degree of social justice, but nothing on a grand or revolutionary scale. We contemplate public and free healthcare systems, schools, childcare facilities, or social security programs not tethered to the market. Innovations often focus on the needs of women, Black individuals, the LGBTQ+ community, and other minority groups (2023, p. 19).

The Body Economic: Eight experiments in economic recovery, from Iceland to Greece is a collaborative work by Sanjay Basu and David Stuckler, published in 2014. This book looks at how economic policies can impact health, specifically discussing the effects of austerity measures in times of economic

downturn. Basu and Stuckler posit that economic choices wield significant influence over public health and overall well-being. They support their argument by referencing instances from both historical and contemporary contexts, aiming to demonstrate that austerity, characterised by a reduction in government spending, especially on social programs, can lead to severe and adverse health effects on a population. It is worth quoting this important passage from the book's preface:

Thank you for participating in this clinical trial. You might not recall signing up for it, but you were enrolled in December 2007, at the start of the Great Recession. This experiment was not governed by the rules of informed consent or medical safety. Your treatment was not administered by doctors or nurses. It was directed by politicians, economists, and ministers of finance. During this study, you were assigned, along with billions of others around the world, to one of two major experimental treatments: austerity or stimulus. Austerity is medicine intended to reduce symptoms of debts and deficits, and to cure recessions. It cuts government spending on healthcare coverage, assistance to the unemployed, and housing support. At the start of the trial, its potential side-effects were not well understood. When the austerity experiment began, your prognosis was grim and uncertain. The U.S. housing market bubble burst in 2007, battering economies across the world. Some politicians, such as British Prime Minister David Cameron, decided to pursue austerity to reduce deficits. Elsewhere in Europe, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank pressured governments in Greece, Spain, and Italy to experiment with austerity: cutting billions of dollars from social programs. If you received an experimental dose of austerity, you might have noticed some serious changes to your world. Meanwhile, other politicians chose to invest in health and social safety net programs. If you were in the stimulus group - that is, if you are currently living in Sweden, Iceland, or Denmark - your community was massively affected by unemployment and the recession, but was largely spared from austerity. Instead, stimulus funds were used to bolster health and social safety nets during the recession. If you lived in a stimulus country, you may not have noticed many changes to your neighborhood, waiting lines at the hospital, food prices, or rates of homelessness. This experiment was not the first pitting stimulus against austerity. Eighty years ago, one of the largest such tests took place in the United States. As a way out of the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed a raft of programs known as the New Deal, and Congress adopted them. The New Deal created jobs and strengthened the social safety net. But while many state governments in the US adopted the New Deal programs, others refused to implement them. They experienced wildly different outcomes as a result. Public health improved in pro-New Deal states but not in anti-New Deal states. Two decades ago, austerity was also tested in post-Communist Russia, and in East Asia, with strikingly similar results. These experiments provided critical insights about the central findings in this book: economic choices are not only matters of growth rates and deficits, but matters of life and death. (STUCKER; BASU, 2014, p. 8)

Transhumanism cannot be confined by the "austerity" of neoliberalism, which is both economically inefficient and immoral. Transhumanism also cannot

delve into the ideology that private enterprise alone could make significant investments in emerging technologies for the transformation of society and human enhancement.

Mariana Mazzucato, an economist, is famous for her research on the importance of the public sector in promoting innovation. Mazzucato argues that the public sector is not just fixing market failures, but actually driving innovation and economic growth. Her work demonstrates that the public sector has played a vital role in funding and driving crucial innovations, including the internet, smartphones (MAZZUCATO, 2023), and COVID-19 vaccines (BBC, 2023). She promotes a reevaluation of economic value measurement, urging a greater recognition of the public sector's contribution to innovation and the value of public goods and services.

Mazzucato's contributions are significant as they challenge the prevailing notion of the public sector as a resource drain. Instead, she emphasises its potential as a potent catalyst for innovation and economic advancement. Her insights carry implications for public policy, suggesting a need for governments to actively support innovation. The role of the state transcends mere macroeconomic intervention, encompassing activities beyond "market correction" or passive funding of the public research and development (R&D) sector. The state is also conceptualised as an entrepreneurial entity, assuming risks and instigating market creation. Mazzucato's discourse extends beyond the conventional understanding of governmental functions in recently advanced nations such as Japan in the 1980s or South Korea in the 1990s. Instead, it hones in on the pivotal role of public sector agencies in the United States - the world's wealthiest nation and a proactive advocate of "free markets." These agencies engage in venturesome investments underpinning the development of the internet and provide financial backing to integral components of information revolution trailblazers, such as Google and Apple. The widespread diffusion, sophistication, and acclaim of the iPhone are attributed to state investment (MAZZUCATO, 2014, p. 14).

In her book *Mission Economy: A Moonshot Guide to Changing Capitalism*, Mazzucato argues that only through the audacity of significant state-led high-risk investments can substantial technological advancements be achieved. According to Mazzucato, the Apollo program, costing the U.S. government \$28 billion at the

time (equivalent to \$283 billion in 2020), represented 4% of the American budget and engaged over 400,000 workers across NASA, universities, and contractors. Contrary to current perspectives on public service costs, President Kennedy's emphasis was on achieving the ambitious goal of a successful Moon landing, acknowledging the high financial investment without reservation. Kennedy's approach contrasted sharply with contemporary discussions on public service costs, deficits, and debt, as it prioritised ambition and grand outcomes over financial constraints. In the context of space exploration, the focus was on the result - a successful Moon landing - and the necessary investments and innovations. Kennedy foresaw that the mission's ambition would lead to technological and organisational innovations, which were difficult to anticipate initially. The technology required for real-time data processing in the lunar module's computer stimulated innovations in what we now recognise as software. This also gave rise to new managerial methods breaking down large problems into smaller packages. Later, Boeing adopted this model for the construction of the 747, the world's first large jet-propelled aircraft (2021, p. 21). Mazzucato urges for the application of a similar level of boldness and experimentation to current challenges, including health crises, environmental concerns, and educational disparities. According to her, these "wicked" problems demand not only technological but also social, organisational, and political innovations, resisting simple solutions. The call is to address these challenges, not merely accommodate them, through results-focused public policies. This involves genuine collaboration between the public and private sectors, investing in solutions, envisioning long-term goals, and governing the process to ensure execution in the public interest. The Moon landing exemplified intense problem-solving, with the public sector in the driver's seat, collaborating closely with companies of all sizes in specific situations. The government used its purchasing power to develop concise, clear, and extremely ambitious procurement contracts. Successful endeavours allowed companies to grow by serving new markets opened by government purchases, scaling up with a purpose-driven strategy (2021, p. 23). The transhumanist movement must be grounded in this economic perspective.

2.4.3 Technoproggressivism

Transhumans of all countries, unite! (HUGHES, 2002, p. 21)

According to James Hughes³⁰, political positions until the 20th century were characterised by two axes: cultural and economic. These axes have a binary positioning, either progressive or conservative. A social democrat is progressive in both the economy and culture, while a liberal is culturally progressive but economically conservative. However, as Hughes elucidates from the 21st century onwards, a new axis emerges in the political realm: the biopolitical axis. In this new binary axis, there are the progressives (or Transhumanists) and the conservatives (or bioluddites or bioconservatives - those opposed to the use of technologies in biological alteration of humans) (2002, p.3). The figures below make this clearer (HUGHES, 2002, p. 3-4).

Figure 1: The Political Axes of 20th Century Politics

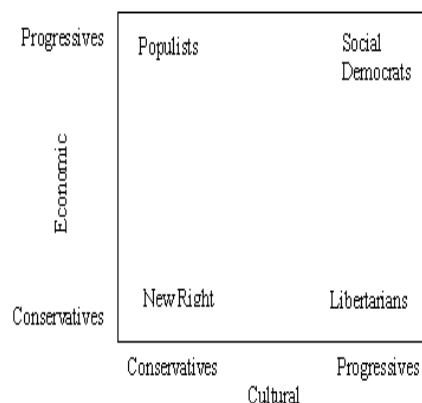
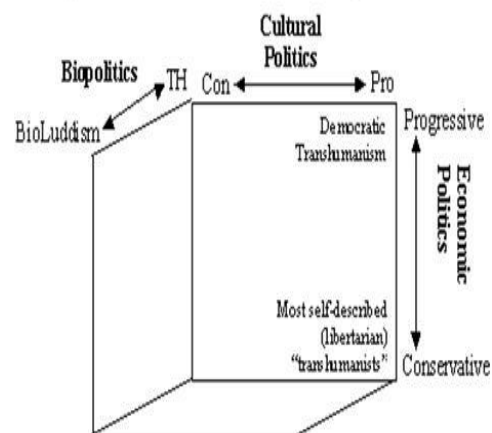


Figure 2: The Political Axes of 21st Century Politics



The failure to acknowledge the establishment of this new political configuration may pose a risk to contemporary political analysis. The rapid advancement of technologies within the transhumanist movement can either enhance the human condition exponentially or conversely, have an equal and detrimental impact, possibly even leading to the extinction of life on Earth.

³⁰ James J. Hughes is a sociologist, bioethicist, and one of the most influential technoproggressive transhumanists. He is the Executive Director of the Institute for Ethics and Emerging Technologies at the University of Massachusetts Boston, as well as the assistant provost for institutional research, assessment, and planning. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hughes_\(sociologist\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Hughes_(sociologist)), accessed on 11/11/2023)

In *Democratic Transhumanism 2.0*, Hughes paves the way for technoproggressivism. The author asserts that the Transhumanist proposal must take on a democratic form, given that (I) state intervention is essential in addressing threats arising from transhumanist technologies; (II) the effectiveness and credibility of state policies are crucial in preventing catastrophic consequences of new technologies and alleviating public apprehension; (III) social policies need to emphatically and explicitly discuss democratic commitments regarding the use of such technologies, considering the immediate concern in the context of human enhancement that biotechnology may exacerbate social inequality; (IV) without intense control over monopolistic practices and excessively restrictive intellectual property laws, there may be significant delays in the development of transhuman technologies; (V) a strong constitutional democratic state, together with coalitions of cultural and biological minorities, will put a stop to the persecution of post-humans (individuals who have been technologically enhanced) and (VI) libertarian transhumanists, who supports the spontaneity of the free market based on its "evolved" "naturalness," appear inconsistent as they are, in fact, "champions of the artificial" (2002, p.2). Furthermore, Hughes delineates the key anchor points for the construction of a democratic transhumanist society:

- (1) Build the transhumanist movement,
- (2) Guarantee morphological freedom and bodily autonomy,
- (3) Defend scientific research from Luddite bans, while embracing legitimate safety and efficacy regulations,
- (4) Protect scientific access to knowledge from overly aggressive intellectual property law,
- (5) Expand federal funding for research into transhuman technologies,
- (6) Create national health plans which include transhuman tech,
- (7) Expand federal support to education,
- (8) Provide job retraining and an income to the structurally unemployed,
- (9) Solidarize with sexual, cultural, and racial minorities, especially with morphological minorities such as the disabled and transgendered,
- (10) Support rights for Great Apes, dolphins and whales,
- (11) Strengthen democratic world government. (2002, p. 2)

Following the perspective of David Wood³¹, an important technoprogressive transhumanist, transhumanism is commonly summarised, especially for the general public, by the following three "Supers":

Super longevity: significantly improved physical health, including much longer lifespans – overcoming human tendencies towards physical decay and decrepitude.

Super intelligence: significantly improved thinking capability – overcoming human tendencies towards mental blind spots and collective stupidity.

Super wellbeing: significantly improved states of consciousness – overcoming human tendencies towards depression, alienation, vicious emotions, and needless suffering. (2018, p. 18)

However, Wood emphasises that his advocacy for technoprogressive Transhumanism adds one more "Super" to the three already mentioned:

Super democracy: significantly improved social inclusion and resilience, whilst upholding diversity and liberty – overcoming human tendencies towards tribalism, divisiveness, deception, and the abuse of power. (2018, p. 19).

According to the author, the central defining axis of the Transhumanist agenda, before being "more technology" or "more health," should be "more humanity," that is, "an increase in human flourishing - with a strong emphasis on quality rather than quantity" (WOOD, 2018 p. 21). For Wood, contemporary politics is broken: perverse economic incentives, regulatory institutions caught in lethargy and inertia, vested interests wielding disproportionate power, self-perpetuating industrial complexes, escalating arms races, among other inexhaustible things to be listed. These manifestations, Wood elucidates, exacerbated by omnipotent technology used in ominous ways, will likely lead, in turn, to a hurricane of adverse consequences - an epic disaster of social

³¹ David Wood, a prominent transhumanist based in the UK, holds various roles and accomplishments. He serves as the Chair of London Futurists, the Executive Director of Transpolitica, and is recognized as a futurist consultant and keynote speaker. Additionally, Wood is a pioneer in the smartphone industry and has authored or edited eleven books, including notable works such as "The Singularity Principles," "Vital Foresight," "RAFT 2035," "The Abolition of Aging," "Transcending Politics," and "Sustainable Superabundance." He also holds the positions of Treasurer and Co-founder at Transhumanist UK, is a fellow of the IEET, and played a role in co-founding H+Pedia. Notably, Wood maintained a blog since 2008, sharing eclectic thoughts on technologies, markets, innovation, openness, collaboration, disruption, risks, and solutions. Furthermore, he served as the Secretary of the Board of Directors of Humanity+ from March 2015 to September 2019. (https://hpluspedia.org/wiki/David_Wood) accessed on 11/11/2023.

disintegration and humanitarian tragedy (2018, p. 13). Therefore, the author clarifies that in the quest to handle the intense pace of the 21st century, we urgently need new structures and worldviews, that is, to go beyond previously dominant patterns of thought, such as economic neoliberalism, market-driven capitalism, worker-led socialism, state conservatism, technological determinism, and eco-primitivism "natural is better." We need, therefore, a twenty-first paradigm that can replace and transcend these predecessors (WOOD, 2018, p. 17).

Technological excesses, unrestrained by current politics, threaten to exponentially intensify environmental destruction, social division, personal alienation, and political chaos. It is necessary to take charge of technological change before technological change takes over. Wood stresses the significance of addressing political issues. Although this is obvious, certain transhumanists focus solely on discussions about the emerging technologies that will enable the emergence of transhumans. If we cannot have rational conversations, we should not be surprised by irrational decisions. Consequently, if our politics continues to be broken, there will be little hope for humanity (WOOD, 2018, p. 24). As Wood explains, the future of politics is inexorably linked to the future of technology. Therefore, we cannot expect to free politics from the destructive pressures it faces: the drowning of collective reason by collective rancour and the industrial-scale manipulation of public mood by nefarious forces behind the scenes - without highlighting, understanding, and actively directing the enormous transformative potential of technology. Thus, Wood emphasises the need to clarify how technology can be used to drastically improve politics, rather than continuing to degrade it (2018, p. 25).

The interconnection of politics and technologies entails existential risks, which have the capacity to diminish humankind's existence or result in complete extinction. *The Transhumanist Declaration*, created and signed by authors from around the world, was crafted in response to these risks. Here is the updated version:

1. Humanity stands to be profoundly affected by science and technology in the future. We envision the possibility of broadening human potential by overcoming aging, cognitive shortcomings, involuntary suffering, and our confinement to planet Earth.

2. We believe that humanity's potential is still mostly unrealized. There are possible scenarios that lead to wonderful and exceedingly worthwhile enhanced human conditions.
3. We recognize that humanity faces serious risks, especially from the misuse of new technologies. There are possible realistic scenarios that lead to the loss of most, or even all, of what we hold valuable. Some of these scenarios are drastic, others are subtle. Although all progress is change, not all change is progress.
4. Research effort needs to be invested into understanding these prospects. We need to carefully deliberate how best to reduce risks and expedite beneficial applications. We also need forums where people can constructively discuss what should be done, and a social order where responsible decisions can be implemented.
5. Reduction of existential risks, and development of means for the preservation of life and health, the alleviation of grave suffering, and the improvement of human foresight and wisdom should be pursued as urgent priorities, and heavily funded.
6. Policy making ought to be guided by responsible and inclusive moral vision, taking seriously both opportunities and risks, respecting autonomy and individual rights, and showing solidarity with and concern for the interests and dignity of all people around the globe. We must also consider our moral responsibilities towards generations that will exist in the future.
7. We advocate the well-being of all sentience, including humans, non-human animals, and any future artificial intellects, modified life forms, or other intelligences to which technological and scientific advance may give rise.
8. We favour allowing individuals wide personal choice over how they enable their lives. This includes use of techniques that may be developed to assist memory, concentration, and mental energy; life extension therapies; reproductive choice technologies; cryonics procedures; and many other possible human modification and enhancement technologies. (HUMANITY PLUS, 2016)

In 2022 Wood published *Vital Foresight: The Case For Active Transhumanism*. In this book, Wood argues that transhumanism is essential to address 21st-century challenges such as global warming, the COVID-19 pandemic, and economic inequality. He contends that transhumanist technologies, including artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and genetic engineering, can assist us in tackling these challenges and building a better future.

According to Wood, human nature possesses both marvels and imperfections. The human condition, with its imperfections and admirable qualities, arises from biological and cultural evolution. Evolution has prepared us for survival in certain situations where our weaknesses can be a problem, or even deadly. However, on the whole, these flaws served us well. The challenge lies in

the fact that these imperfections are now being significantly amplified by technologies resulting from successive waves of industrial revolution. If human nature remains unchanged, there is a substantial likelihood that our instincts could lead us to collective ruin, potentially within the next few decades. Our flaws would no longer merely jeopardise groups but could bring about the demise of humanity as a whole (2021, p. 371).

Despite this, Wood suggests that the very technologies that endanger us also hold the potential to give us more control over our own nature, allowing us to change our fundamental traits. Through this transformation, we can deviate from the sombre trajectory famously articulated by Lord Acton³² – the notion that power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Instead, increased power could manifest as heightened generosity, compassion, and benevolence. If we were smarter, we could show more wisdom instead of being cunning and deceitful. This transformative phase in the development of human nature will unfold in a manner distinct from our historical evolution. Our nature, once shaped by blind forces, can now be consciously redesigned in a matter of decades (2021, p. 373).

In this book published in 2021, Wood establishes changes concerning the "supers" primarily as they now encompass five ideas:

Superlongevity: Transcending current human tendencies toward physical decay and decrepitude; enabling dramatically improved biological health, including the abolition of aging.

Superintelligence: Transcending current human tendencies toward mental blind spots and collective stupidity (cognitive biases); enabling dramatically improved all-round thinking capabilities.

Superhappiness: Transcending current human tendencies toward egotism, depression, alienation, self-loathing, and needless internal suffering; enabling dramatically improved states of consciousness.

Superdemocracy: Transcending current human tendencies toward xenophobia, divisiveness, deception, and the abuse of power; enabling dramatically improved social inclusion and resilience, whilst upholding diversity and liberty.

Supernarrative: Transcending current human tendencies toward small-mindedness or naive fantasies; enabling dramatically improved

³² Lord Acton, whose full name was John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, 1st Baron Acton, 13th Marquess of Groppoli, KCVO, DL, was an English Catholic politician, writer, and historian who lived from 10 January 1834 to 19 June 1902. The statement he made in a letter to an Anglican bishop in 1887 that goes, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," is what makes him most famous. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dalberg-Acton,_1st_Baron_Acton, accessed on 11/11/2023)

engagement and collaboration on a credible, compelling transformational journey (2021, p. 373).

According to Wood, these transformations could also be called "*the five rejuvenations*: the rejuvenation of physical health, the rejuvenation of all-round intelligence, the rejuvenation of emotional health, the rejuvenation of social relationships, and the rejuvenation of vision" (2021, p. 374). However, it is critical to emphasise that the transitions being addressed will result in unparalleled levels of health and well-being, rather than simply restoring earlier degrees of health and well-being. As Wood states, the challenge lies in preserving the truly wonderful aspects of human nature while simultaneously reengineering ourselves to control or eliminate our shortcomings. This is a formidable task, likely the most challenging in the history of humanity, and not something achievable by a small group of people (2021, p. 374).

To attain that aim, the very best of today's human skills and resources will need to be pooled and utilised. In Wood's opinion, we must possess the following: (I) The most comprehensive scientific knowledge about biology, psychology, sociology, and more; (II) The best insights from multiple cultural streams within worldwide human society; (III) Understanding the advantages and constraints of different diversity aspects; (IV) A creative mind that goes beyond the status quo and ponders what could be; (V) Thoughtfully evaluate these imaginative possibilities to determine which ones should receive the greatest attention and which ones should be discarded as unfeasible, perilous, or purely imaginary; (VI) By using step-by-step implementation methods, closely monitoring progress, and making agile interventions (WOOD, 2021, p. 374).

This shared knowledge requires cultivation and advancement through an expanding community of advocates and activists. It must be disseminated widely and effectively, a responsibility assigned to transhumanist education. Additionally, it must transition from being merely an "interesting idea" to an active undertaking, a task falling under the realm of transhumanist politics. Despite encountering numerous substantial challenges and encountering innovative concepts, it is crucial to stay focused on prioritised objectives. Wood proposes thirteen core transhumanists principles that must be prioritised. Four statements highlighting the present context: (1) Radical opportunity: The near future holds the potential for significant improvement over the present. There is a significant

opportunity to improve the human condition beyond its evolutionary and historical limitations. (2) Existential danger: The upcoming days may prove to be far worse than our current circumstances. Catastrophic consequences can occur when powerful technology is misused. (3) Human agency: The crucial factor that determines the contrast between these two extreme future alternatives lies in human agency, specifically through intelligent human deliberation and coordinated human intervention. (4) No easy options: In the case that insufficient attention is given by humanity to these radical future options, whether due to distractions, lack of understanding, or intimidation, the probability of an exceedingly negative outcome is substantial. (WOOD, 2021, p. 375)

There are three essential principles that goals must adhere to: (5) Human wellbeing: When making decisions, it is advisable to prioritise actions that result in the improvement of human welfare. Regarding the concept of wellbeing, the methods of measurement and strategies for improvement are subjects that remain open and ongoing. Wellbeing encompasses vitality, freedom, creativity, health, intelligence, awareness, happiness, collaboration, and bliss - yet transcends these individual qualities. With the passage of time, our knowledge regarding the circumstances and potential manifestation of human well-being will undoubtedly progress and refine. (6) Individual wellbeing: The subordination or sacrifice of individual well-being for the sake of collective goals should be avoided. It is imperative that individuals are never used as mere pawns in pursuit of tribal, national, ethnic, religious, or ideological objectives. (7) Mutual responsibility: Safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all individuals in society is a shared objective. Instead of remaining silent about imminent dangers or missed opportunities, we should find ways to voice our concerns, just as we would expect others to do for us in similar situations. Our collective strength is amplified when we unite, as opposed to isolating ourselves or engaging in conflict. (WOOD, 2021, p. 376)

There are three fundamental principles regarding the methods employed in the pursuit of these ends. (8) Science and data: In order to enhance our decision-making, it is crucial to actively pursue, disseminate, and evaluate impartial data, while adhering to the highest scientific standards, instead of blindly accepting the opinions of self-proclaimed experts or public figures. (9) Openness: When considering conflicting insights, it is important not to assign absolute priority

to any book, thinker, or tradition. Society must retain its openness to the notion that our current favoured ideas and methods may be surpassed. It is indeed appropriate to acknowledge and honour the worth of books, thinkers, or traditions that have established themselves as reliable sources of enlightenment. However, that respect should be exercised with caution. The continuity of success can be disrupted, particularly when encountering new circumstances or contexts. (10) Proactive vigilance: In order to maintain proactive vigilance, it is essential that we anticipate unforeseen circumstances by continuously monitoring for both risks and opportunities. Whenever feasible, it is recommended to prioritise actions that can be easily reversed to minimise unexpected outcomes. Considering the potential for plan alterations, it is advisable to develop a design that accommodates change, rather than relying on certainty. (WOOD, 2021, p. 376)

To conclude, the essential generalisations and extensions are as follows: (11) Sustainability (generalising from the present into the future): Our plans must prioritise the promotion of both present and future wellbeing. Hence the need to avoid actions that reduce the possibilities for future wellbeing. (12) Consciousness (generalising the previous principles beyond present-day humans): The preference should be given to actions that promote the growth of consciousness well-being in all decisions. If animal or artificial minds possess fundamental attributes of consciousness, they should receive a certain level of care and support comparable to that given to human minds. This program offers possibility for growth and development, while also aiming to minimise unnecessary suffering. (13) Diversity: Numerous questions remain unanswered by the aforementioned principles. They establish a broad framework capable of accommodating a multitude of viewpoints. The embrace of diversity is an essential endeavour. Thus, the ultimate foundational principle is that within the comprehensive transhumanist framework, we should appreciate and promote a variety of opinions and lifestyles. The emergence of significant insights and experiences is often a result of interactions among diverse subcultures. (WOOD, 2021, p. 377)

The fundamental significance of these thirteen core transhumanist principles extends beyond mere organisational parameters, encompassing pivotal implications for the overall coherence of the movement. A multitude of critiques has been directed towards this philosophical framework, with one of the

foremost emanating from the scrutiny proffered by the political scientist and neoconservative Francis Fukuyama. In accordance with Fukuyama, endeavours by transhumanists to enhance human nature are deemed as inherently naïve. He posits that the remedial measures advocated by transhumanist ideology may yield outcomes more deleterious than the hypothesised maladies attributed to the perceived imperfections in human nature.

Transhumanism's advocates think they understand what constitutes a good human being, and they are happy to leave behind the limited, mortal, natural beings they see around them in favor of something better. But do they really understand ultimate human goods? For all our obvious faults, we humans are miraculously complex products of a long evolutionary process – products whose whole is much more than the sum of our parts. Our good characteristics are intimately connected to our bad ones: If we weren't violent and aggressive, we wouldn't be able to defend ourselves; if we didn't have feelings of exclusivity, we wouldn't be loyal to those close to us; if we never felt jealousy, we would also never feel love. Even our mortality plays a critical function in allowing our species as a whole to survive and adapt (and transhumanists are just about the last group I'd like to see live forever). Modifying any one of our key characteristics inevitably involves modifying a complex, interlinked package of traits, and we will never be able to anticipate the ultimate outcome. (FUKUYAMA, 2009)

In an extensively referenced 2009 article featured in *Foreign Policy*, the political scientist and neoconservative Francis Fukuyama characterised transhumanism as "the most dangerous idea in the world". He elaborated on this assertion in his book titled *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, published in 2002. At this juncture, he is correct. A transhumanism still rooted in neoliberal beliefs could indeed actualise this critique. It is not difficult to envision the emergence of a chaotic world in the face of enhancement technologies driven by the absolute and pure spontaneity of the free market, coupled with recurrent doses of austerity. However, there is no singular transhumanism. There are "transhumanisms". Fukuyama's critique does not apply to technoprogressive transhumanism. In the capitalist system, there is always development in what is profitable. Technological development does not rely on any form of transhumanism to progress.

The purpose of transhumanism - referring now to technoprogressive - is to construct a philosophy that addresses extremely serious issues exacerbated by

the reckless use of disruptive technologies. One of the fundamental concepts of transhumanism is "human enhancement". This concept is consistently juxtaposed with the idea of therapy. Enhancing oneself goes beyond mere therapy, which aims to only recover "what has been lost", such as health. We propose here that transhumanism - technoprogressive - must regress. There are vast and immeasurable "therapies" that must be promoted. Medical and social therapies. How can we contemplate transhumans when there is still so much dehumanisation? Technoprogressive transhumanism is not mere *technophilia*. It seeks to surpass what classical humanism sought as beneficial.

In addition to the criticism from bioconservatives, transhumanism has been scrutinised by posthumanist authors, including Francesca Ferrando, a philosopher extensively referenced at the outset of this thesis. According to her, "while Posthumanism generated out of Postmodernism, Transhumanism seeks its origins in the Enlightenment, and therefore does not expropriate humanism; on the contrary, it can be defined as an *ultra-humanism*" (2020, p. 23). More broadly, Francesca states, if the resilience of the transhumanist perspective lies in its receptivity to the opportunities presented by science and technology, its vulnerability is apparent in a techno-reductionist assimilation of existence and a progressivist approach that allows little room for deconstructionist practices (2020, p. 24). We reject the notion that transhumanism is a form of humanism. Merely engaging in this discussion could warrant another doctoral thesis. However, in a provisional response, we contend that transhumanism represents the transcendence of humanism, with points of convergence and divergence. In the initial stages of this thesis, we explored both the positive principles and the darker aspects of humanism. Technoprogressive transhumanism has the potential to establish a new metanarrative from which we can navigate. This potential arises not only from its propositions but also from the "lack of competition" at a time when narratives are in short supply.

The *U.S. Transhumanist Party* was founded in 2014 and its membership has subsequently expanded to surpass 4,200 and continues to grow. On September 13, 2018, during the *Vanguard Scientific Instruments in Management 2018 (VSIM:18)* conference in Ravda, Bulgaria, Gennady Stolyarov II, Chairman of the *U.S. Transhumanist Party*, examined the fundamental strengths and weaknesses inherent in libertarianism, socialism,

conservatism, and left-liberalism. He delved into the shared shortcomings of these traditional ideologies and explained why transhumanism, with its principled, integrated, and dynamic approach, offers a viable solution for a new era in history. Stolyarov II asserted that transhumanism has the potential to surpass the limitations found in these conventional ideologies (STOLYAROV II, 2018). Thus, transhumanism can, in addition to presenting its own propositions, engage in dialogue with other ideologies:

Transhumanists to libertarians: Emerging technologies and processes can empower and liberate individuals and dramatically change the incentives for institutions to move in the direction of more freedom. (But only if you transcend blanket anti-government rhetoric and focus on long-term futures over short-term gratification.)

Transhumanists to socialists: Technological progress can eliminate poverty, abolish poor working conditions, and achieve the socialist ideal of abundance and leisure for all. (But only if private property, the enabler of unconventional innovation and the means by which abundance can be enjoyed, is preserved and governments do not try to achieve equality of misery.)

Transhumanists to conservatives: We should not accept the destruction of past achievements and the individuals who brought them about and carry their memory. Through technologies, particularly those of life extension, there can be far more preservation and social continuity. (But only if you overcome the fear of new advances, transcend the "natural is good" mentality, and embrace the technological fight against death and decay.)

Transhumanists to left-liberals/progressives: Technology can empower the marginalized and vulnerable and, by enabling new forms of being, dramatically increase both the extent and acceptance of diversity, enhancing the dignity and quality of life for all individuals. (But only if you step out of the trenches of identity politics, accept the norms of civilized debate, and sincerely engage with those of different views.) (STOLYAROV II, 2018, p. 9)

In 2017, James Hughes and his team conducted a comprehensive survey among the IEET (Institute for Ethics and Emergent Technologies) audience, with 455 individuals participating and providing their insights on a diverse array of topics. This survey represented a follow-up to a previous one conducted in 2013, which aimed to answer questions like "Who makes up the community of Technoproggressives?" and "What characterises the audience of IEET?" As they continue to steer the IEET's focus towards nurturing the burgeoning technoproggressive ideological movement, they have revisited the beliefs and values held by those who self-identify as technoproggressives (HUGHES, 2017,

p. 1). In the 2013 survey, 46% of respondents identified themselves as technoproggressives, and this percentage has since increased to 54% in the recent survey. It is noteworthy that the technoproggressive demographic primarily consists of younger individuals and displays a higher likelihood of including members of the LGBT community. In 2013, 46% of the respondents identified themselves as technoproggressives. In the current survey, this figure has risen to 54%. Notably, those individuals adopting the technoproggressive label tended to belong to a younger age group and exhibited a higher likelihood of identifying as members of the LGBT community (HUGHES, 2017, p.1). Although we could not locate more recent research on the ideological distribution of transhumanists, we already have enough evidence to observe how significant this philosophical, cultural, and political movement has become. It has the potential to be predominant in the not-too-distant future.

PostCapitalism: A Guide to Our Future, a seminal work authored by British journalist Paul Mason and published in 2015, presents a comprehensive analysis of the contemporary economic landscape and speculates on the potential future trajectory of capitalism. Mason's central argument posits that the conventional capitalist system, characterised by market dominance and private ownership, is undergoing a profound transformation. He asserts that the advent of digital technologies, automation, and the rise of collaborative and open-source production are ushering in a new phase beyond traditional capitalism. The book delves into the transformative impact of digital technologies, particularly the internet, on the fundamental dynamics of capitalism. It argues that these technologies are diminishing the significance of traditional market forces, giving rise to a more collaborative and networked form of economic organisation. Mason introduces the concept of *postcapitalism*, a hypothetical stage in which the traditional structures of capitalism would have given way to a more socially oriented and technologically mediated system. He envisions a shift towards non-market-based forms of production, with an emphasis on shared resources and collaborative efforts.

In the final chapter, *Project Zero*, Mason outlines the key objectives that we should focus on for the construction of a post-capitalism:

1. Rapidly reduce carbon emissions so that the world has warmed by only two degrees Celsius by 2050, prevent an energy crisis and mitigate the chaos caused by climate events.
 2. Stabilize the finance system between now and 2050 by socializing it, so that ageing populations, climate change and the debt overhang do not combine to detonate a new boom-bust cycle and destroy the world economy.
 3. Deliver high levels of material prosperity and wellbeing to the majority of people, primarily by prioritizing information-rich technologies towards solving major social challenges, such as ill health, welfare dependency, sexual exploitation and poor education.
 4. Gear technology towards the reduction of necessary work to promote the rapid transition towards an automated economy. Eventually, work becomes voluntary, basic commodities and public services are free, and economic management becomes primarily an issue of energy and resources, not capital and labour.
- (2016, epub version, unpagged)

While Wood and Hughes do not reference Mason, nor does Mason mention Wood or Hughes, the relationship between the two schools of thought is perceptible. It is crucial for transhumanism to incorporate the discussions presented by Mason and other authors speculating on the potential end of the capitalist system, whether in favour of adopting an infocapitalism or any other economic system. Only through a concerted effort to maintain a broad social discourse can this philosophy genuinely lead to drastic social changes.

Conclusions

This thesis, like many, particularly when dealing with a recent philosophy, represents merely another atom in this expanding universe. We have diligently endeavored to discuss transhumanism from a perspective not yet predominant. Whilst technological development, particularly that of new disruptive technologies, may profoundly transform both human and non-human life - there is a chronological list of life on Earth containing some predictions for the future as an Appendix at the end of this thesis - through the concept of 'enhancement', our focus here was different. Our argument served the purpose of highlighting that transhumanism is a philosophy that surpasses the mere proposal of using technology to overcome the limitations in physicality, morality, and cognition of Homo sapiens. This philosophy has the potential to embody a novel metanarrative, serving as a new perspective through which the human condition can be comprehended, thus presenting a potential horizon. To accomplish our aim, we dedicated the initial phase of our study to analyzing a range of definitions that are relevant to the concept of humanism. A comprehensive analysis was conducted on its historical significance, taking into account the belief in sapiens' capability to tackle challenges autonomously, without the need for divine intervention. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight that humanism emerges from the consolidation of human reason as the central tenet, dictating all deliberation, as a result of liberating oneself from superstition and the authority of the divine. Humanism is thus anthropocentric. However, humanism did not confer primacy upon the human species. We posit that the term 'human' cannot be considered neutral. Within the Western tradition, the term 'human', whether used as an adjective or a noun, was ascribed to only a select few individuals. The term 'human' was not only used in contrast to gods, animals, and machines but also to 'non-humans' like slaves, witches, Amerindian peoples, black peoples, and "freaks". Even in the present day, the privilege of being classified as a 'human' is limited to a fortunate minority. The emergence of humanity can be traced back to the emergence of the non-human, and different manifestations of dehumanisation continue to exist. Furthermore, as we engage in these processes of dehumanisation, we cannot overlook the fact that we have also been complicit

in the mass destruction of countless animal and plant species, and have played a significant role in the acceleration of climate change. In our misguided attempt to place ourselves at the epicenter of existence, we have wreaked havoc on the environment, decimating forests and engaging in unsustainable levels of consumption.

In the second part of our thesis, we put forth the argument that technology is perceived as an inherent progression of human evolution. Despite the fact that humans are responsible for the creation of numerous technologies, which can be categorized as artificial, we argue that the innate characteristic of our species is the capacity to invent and employ technology. The dichotomy between natural and artificial fades away. Within this context, technology is regarded as an innate aspect of the human evolutionary progression, allowing us to mold and amplify our own abilities, and potentially surpass biological confines. While transhumanism recognises technology as an essential tool for surpassing our limitations, this philosophy adopts a stance of resistance towards particular aspects of nature, including suffering and mortality.

Although Humanism acknowledges human nature and the human condition, placing emphasis on comprehending and accepting human nature, as well as promoting human dignity, autonomy, and potential, transhumanism, in contrast, strives to surpass the present human condition and nature by means of technological augmentation. Although it does not explicitly deny human nature, transhumanism seeks to surpass certain constraints of human biology and cognition, including aging, illness, and even death. Transhumanists endorse the idea of employing technology to enhance human capabilities, potentially resulting in a post-human condition. Thus, transhumanism can be seen as a surpassing or evolution of humanism. While humanism traditionally focuses on the dignity, worth, and potential of human beings without necessarily advocating for radical changes to human nature, transhumanism takes this concept further by actively seeking to enhance and transform humanity through technology.

In the latter part of our thesis, we delved into the concept of metanarratives, which are totalizing discourses aiming to comprehensively explain reality, and the contrasting phenomenon of micronarratives, which are fragmented discourses lacking any totalizing ambitions. Within this context, the notion of the "end of history" enabled us to recognize the enduring presence of

two metanarratives: neoliberalism and capitalist realism (which serves to legitimize and reinforce the neoliberal discourse). In the face of the seemingly perpetuated neoliberal policies, the left has become exhausted. The contemporary world witnessed the establishment of capitalist realism, extensively discussed in Mark Fisher's seminal work (2009). Today, we experience the prevailing sentiment that the precarization of labour, the removal of rights, the Uberization, intermittent work, massacres, discriminations, poverty, and the overwhelming pressure of social life are inexorable elements of reality. Fisher narrates his academic and professional trajectory, his anguish, and his precarious work in his book. The reading becomes even more bitter when we learn that the author committed suicide, joining the ranks of over 700,000 people who die by suicide each year (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2023).

In a reality where 1 in 8 people, or nearly 1 billion people worldwide, live—many wishing not to live—with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders being the most common (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2023) how can a new metanarrative emerge? This new metanarrative arises as an ultra-affirmation of life. It is a quest for a just and happy society, fairer and happier than we have ever conceived. Unlike "utopia," which can connote something unattainable, transhumanism establishes a eutopia, designating a place where human society and natural conditions are so ideally perfect that there is complete contentment (COLLINS DICTIONARY, 2019).

Similar to humanism, transhumanism is not a monolithic movement. In this thesis, we critique transhumanisms that propagate themselves as diffusers of eutopia, when, in reality, they are based on the rusty and perverse foundations of neoliberalism. We argue here that technoprogressive transhumanism has the potential to compose a new metanarrative rejecting the neoliberal mantra.

Wood introduces a groundbreaking perspective on "supers," incorporating five essential notions: superlongevity, superintelligence, superhappiness, superdemocracy, and supernarrative. The objective of these concepts is to surpass existing human limitations, encompassing physical deterioration, cognitive limitations, emotional suffering, societal fragmentation, and closed-mindedness. Wood underscores the significance of these transformations, alternatively labeled as "the five rejuvenations," which will result in unmatched levels of health and well-being, exceeding previous standards. To accomplish

these objectives, it is necessary to combine the most advanced scientific knowledge, cultural insights, diverse perspectives, creative imagination, critical evaluation, and strategic implementation methods. Wood highlights the importance of fostering a diverse community of advocates and activists, disseminating knowledge through transhumanist education, and engaging in transhumanist politics to translate these ideas into actionable initiatives despite facing obstacles. Additionally, Wood outlines thirteen key tenets of transhumanism, highlighting the imperative of giving these principles high priority. His introductory remarks consist of emphasizing four pivotal statements pertaining to the prevailing context, accentuating the profound possibilities for either advancement or deterioration in the imminent future, contingent upon human agency and attentive consideration of transformative potentials. Wood subsequently delineates three essential principles for the pursuit of goals, placing emphasis on the improvement of human welfare, the safeguarding of individual wellbeing, and the shared obligation to safeguard and uplift all members of society. Wood explores three principles in relation to the methods used to achieve these goals: prioritizing the use of scientific evidence and data in decision-making, embracing new ideas and approaches, and actively monitoring for emerging risks and opportunities. To summarise, Wood applies these principles to overarching generalizations: placing sustainability as a top priority to safeguard future wellbeing, advocating for increased wellbeing for all conscious entities, and embracing diversity within the transhumanist framework. Wood maintains that these principles play a vital role in organizing the transhumanist movement and shaping its overall coherence and implications (2021, p. 373-377).

It is important to note that this does not constitute a complete metanarrative. At present, there exists a discourse in formation that aspires to be comprehensive. This differs from Lyotard's perspective, where metanarratives give way to micronarratives. Its aim is to integrate diverse discourses, incorporating the viewpoints of liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and environmentalism, with the goal of collectively overcoming processes of dehumanization, environmental catastrophe, neoliberal discourse, and the potential crisis of democracy caused by the deliberate production of fake news observed in the administrations of Trump and Bolsonaro.

Transhumanism can be regarded as an necessary expression of anthropocentric thinking. It is imperative that humans assume a central role in the world, considering the detrimental impact this creature has had on the planet and all living beings. Nevertheless, it is imperative for this entity to create circumstances that will facilitate the repair of the immense harm suffered by all life forms on this pale blue dot. By harnessing technology in a thoughtful manner, we have the opportunity to bring about a monumental shift in the course of our planet's history - the empowerment of collective well-being for all living beings, supported by an optimistic philosophy that celebrates life.

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Appendix: Big Chronology of Life on Earth³³

To put into perspective a complete chronology and evolution of life on our tiny planet Earth, we summarize here what we consider the most relevant information from the very distant past to our immediate future. The objective is to reach a better understanding about the long-term evolution of life, considering also the nature of exponential changes. Big History is a new discipline that allows us to analyze with a multidisciplinary focus the way events follow each other throughout time. Starting with a huge time scale from the faraway past to the present, we can see that there is an acceleration of the speed of changes, that should continue now thanks to exponential technologies. The great futurist Ray Kurzweil, in his best-seller *The Singularity is Near*, explains very well the acceleration of these changes, and that is why we use some of his predictions to the end of the twenty-first century.

Millions of Years Ago (Ma)

~13,800 Ma

Big Bang and formation of the known Universe

~12,500 Ma

Milky Way Galaxy formation

~4600 Ma

Solar System formation

~4500 Ma

Earth formation

~4300 Ma

First water concentration on Earth

~ 4000 Ma

First unicellular life (prokaryotes without cellular nucleus)

~ 4000 Ma

LUCA, our Last Universal Common Ancestor, was born

~ 3500 Ma

Oxygen concentration rises on Earth atmosphere

~ 3000 Ma

First photosynthesis in simple unicellular organisms

~ 2000 Ma

Evolution of unicellular prokaryotes (without nucleus) into eukaryotes (with nucleus)

~ 1500 Ma

First multicellular eukaryote organisms

³³ (CORDEIRO; WOOD, 2023, p. 211-219)

- ~ 1200 Ma
- First sexual reproduction (germinal and somatic cells appear)
- ~ 600 Ma
- First invertebrate marine animals
- ~ 540 Ma
- Cambrian explosion and appearance of multiple species
- ~ 520 Ma
- First vertebrate marine animals
- ~ 440 Ma
- Evolution from marine life to terrestrial life (first plants on dry land)
- ~ 360 Ma
- First terrestrial plants with seeds, and first crabs
- ~ 300 Ma
- First reptiles
- ~ 250 Ma
- First dinosaurs
- ~ 200 Ma
- First mammals, and first birds
- ~ 130 Ma
- First angiosperm plants (with flowers)
- ~ 65 Ma
- Extinction of dinosaurs and development of primates
- ~ 15 Ma
- Hominidae family (big primates) appears
- ~ 3.5 Ma
- First tools made of stone
- ~ 2.5 Ma
- Homo genus appears
- ~ 1.5 Ma
- First use of fire
- ~ 0.8 Ma
- First time cooking was used
- ~ 0.5 Ma
- First time clothes were used
- ~ 0.2 Ma
- Homo sapiens species appears
- ~ 0.1 Ma
- Homo sapiens sapiens comes out of Africa and starts colonizing planet Earth
- Thousands of Years Ago
- ~ 40,000 BC
- Rock paintings appear, symbols of deities, fertility and death
- ~ 20,000 BC
- Lighter skin evolution due to migration to regions with less solar exposure
- ~ 5000 BC
- Neolithic proto-writing appears
- ~ 4000 BC
- Possible invention of the wheel in Mesopotamia
- ~ 3500 BC
- Egyptians invent hieroglyphs and Sumerians cuneiform writing
- ~ 3300 BC
- Documented use of herbology and physiotherapy in China and Egypt
- ~ 3000 BC
- Papyrus is invented in Egypt and clay tablets in Mesopotamia

~ 2800 BC
 Chinese emperor Shennong compiles a text with acupuncture techniques

~ 2600 BC
 Imhotep, priest and doctor, is considered the God of Medicine in Egypt

~ 2500 BC
 Documented use of Ayurveda medicine in India

~ 2000 BC
 The Code of Hammurabi establishes rules to exercise medicine in Babylon

~ 650 BC
 Assurbanipal compiles 800 tablets about medicine in the library of Nineveh

~ 450 BC
 Xenophanes of Colophon examines fossils and speculates about the evolution of life

420 BC
 Hippocrates writes the Hippocratic Treaties and creates the Hippocratic oath

350 BC
 Aristotle writes about evolutionary biology and tries to classify animals

300 BC
 Herophilos of Chalcedon makes medical dissections on humans

100 BC
 Asclepiades of Bithynia imports Greek medicine to Rome and funds the Methodic School

First Millennium AD

180 AD
 Greek doctor Galen of Pergamon studies the connection between paralysis and the spinal cord

219 AD
 Zhang Zhongjing publishes the Shanghan Lun (Treatise on Cold Damage Disorders) in China

250 AD
 Foundation of a school of tribal medicine in Monte Alban, Mexico

390 AD
 Oribasius of Pergamon compiles the Medical Collections in Constantinople

400 AD
 First Christian hospital founded by Saint Fabiola in Rome

630 AD
 Isidore of Seville compiles his great work The Etymologies

870 AD
 Persian doctor Ali ibn Sahl Rabban al-Tabari writes a medical encyclopedia in Arab

910 AD
 Persian doctor Rasis identifies the difference between smallpox and measles

1000–1799 AD

1030
 Persian polymath Avicenna writes the Cannon of Medicine that would be used until eighteenth century

1204
 Pope Innocent III organizes the first Holy Spirit hospital in Rome

1403
 Quarantine against the Black Death pandemic in Venice (after already killing million in Europe)

1541
 Swiss doctor Paracelsus made great progress in medicine (surgery and toxicology)

1553
 Spanish doctor Miguel Servet studies pulmonary circulation (and is burnt at the stake for heresy)

1590
 Microscope is invented in the Netherlands and makes medicine move forward faster

1665
 English scientist Robert Hooke uses the microscope to identify cells (and popularizes that name)

1675

Dutch scientist Anton van Leeuwenhoek starts microbiology with microscopes

1774

English scientist Joseph Priestley discovers oxygen and starts modern chemistry

1780

US polymath Benjamin Franklin writes about curing aging and human preservation

1796

English doctor Edward Jenner develops the first effective vaccine against smallpox

1798

English scholar Thomas Malthus argues about food production and human overpopulation

1800–1899 AD

1804

Global population reaches 1,000,000,000 people

1804

French doctor René Laennec invents the stethoscope

1809

French scientist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck proposes the first theory of evolution

1818

English doctor James Blundell performs the first successful blood transfusion

1828

German scientist Christian Ehrenberg coins the word bacterium ("cane" in Greek)

1842

US doctor Crawford Long accomplishes the first surgery with anesthesia

1858

German doctor Rudolf Virchow publishes his cell theory

1859

English scientist Charles Darwin publishes *The origin of species* in London

1865

Austrian monk Gregor Mendel discovers the laws of genetics

1869

Swiss doctor Friedrich Miescher discovers DNA for the first time

1870

Scientists Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch publish the microbial theory of infections

1882

French scientist Louis Pasteur develops a vaccine against rabies

1890

Walter Flemming and others describe the chromosome distribution during cellular division

1892

German biologist August Weismann proposes the "immortality" of germ cells

1895

German physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovers X rays and their medical uses

1896

French physicist Antoine Henri Becquerel discovers radioactivity

1898

Dutch scientist Martinus Beijerinck discovers the first virus and starts virology

1900–1959 AD

1905

English biologist William Bateson coins the term "genetics"

1906

English scientist Frederick Hopkins describes vitamins and associated illnesses

1906

German doctor Alois Alzheimer describes the disease named after him

1906

Spanish scientist Santiago Ramón y Cajal receives the Nobel Prize for his studies about the nervous system

1911

Thomas Hunt Morgan demonstrates that genes reside in chromosomes

1922

Russian scientist Aleksandr Oparin proposes a theory about the origin of life on Earth

1925

French biologist Edouard Chatton coins the words prokaryote and eukaryote

1927

Global population reaches 2,000,000,000 people

1927

First vaccines against tetanus and tuberculosis

1928

English scientist Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin (first antibiotic)

1933

Polish scientist Tadeus Reichstein synthesizes a vitamin for the first time (vitamin C, ascorbic acid)

1934

Scientists working at Cornell University discover caloric restriction for life extension in mice

1938

A coelacanth (considered a "living fossil") was fished in the south of Africa

1950

First synthetic antibiotic is developed

1951

Artificial insemination of cattle starts with cryopreserved semen

1951

HeLa (Henrietta Lacks) cancer cells are discovered to be "biologically immortal"

1952

US doctor Jonas Salk develops a vaccine against poliomyelitis

1952

US chemist Stanley Miller conducts experiments about the origin of life

1952

First cloning experiments with frog eggs

1953

Scientists James D. Watson and Francis Crick demonstrate DNA's double helix structure

1954

US doctor Joseph Murray transplants the first human kidney

1958

US doctor Jack Steele coins the word "bionic"

1959

Global population reaches 3,000,000,000 people

1959

Spanish scientist Severo Ochoa receives the Nobel Prize for his work about DNA and RNA

1960–1999 AD

1961

Spanish biochemist Joan Oró advances his theories about the origin of life

1961

US scientist Leonard Hayflick discovers a limit on cellular division

1967

US academic James Bedford becomes the first patient in cryopreservation

1967

South African doctor Christiaan Barnard makes the first human heart transplant

1972

Discovery that the DNA composition in humans and gorillas is almost 99% similar
1974

Global population reaches 4,000,000,000 people
1975

Different scientists finally discover the structure of telomeres (first considered in 1933)
1978

First human being is born thanks to artificial insemination (Louise Brown in England)
1978

Stem cells discovered in the blood of an umbilical cord
1980

World Health Organization declares smallpox officially eradicated worldwide
1981

First stem cells (from mice) developed "in vitro"
1982

Humulin (drug for diabetes) is the first biotech product approved by the FDA
1985

Australian-American biologist Elizabeth Blackburn identifies the telomerase enzyme
1986

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is identified as the cause of AIDS
1987

Global population reaches 5,000,000,000 people
1990

Human Genome Project starts as a great effort lead by several governments
1990

First gene therapy is approved to treat an immune disorder
1990

FDA approves the first genetically modified organism (Flavr Savr tomato)
1993

US biologist Cynthia Kenyon increases several times the lifespan of *C. elegans*
1995

US scientist Caleb Finch describes negligible senescence in some animals
1996

Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut clones Dolly, the first cloned mammal (a sheep)
1998

First embryonic stem cells isolated in young human embryos
1999

Global population reaches 6,000,000,000 people
2000–2022 AD

2001

US scientist Craig Venter announces his sequence of the human genome (based on his own DNA)
2002

First artificial virus (polio virus) is completely created by scientists
2003

Human Genome Project ends officially, with both public and private participation and projects
2003

English scientist Aubrey de Grey and his colleagues create the Methuselah Foundation
2004

SARS epidemic is contained a year after its start (genome sequenced in months)
2006

Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka generates induced pluripotent stem cells in Kyoto
2008

Spanish biologist María Blasco announces the life extension of mice at CNIO in Madrid

2009

English scientist Aubrey de Grey and his colleagues create the SENS Research Foundation

2009

Nobel Prize on Physiology and Medicine for studies on telomeres and telomerase

2010s

First Bridge towards indefinite lifespans using current technologies (Ray Kurzweil)

2010

US scientist Craig Venter announces the creation of the first artificial bacterium (Synthia)

2010

Nobel Prize on Physiology and Medicine for the development of in vitro fertilization

2011

Global population reaches 7,000,000,000 people

2011

French researches achieve the rejuvenation of human cells "in vitro"

2012

Nobel Prize on Physiology and Medicine for cloning and cell reprogramming (pluripotent cells)

2013

First rat kidney produced "in vitro" in the USA

2013

First human liver produced with stem cells in Japan

2013

Google announces the creation of Calico (California Life Company) to cure aging

2014

IBM expands the use of its intelligent medical system called Doctor Watson

2014

Korean-American doctor Joon Yun creates the Palo Alto Longevity Prize

2015

First vaccine against the virus of Ebola hemorrhagic fever

2016

Facebook chairman Mark Zuckerberg announces that it will be possible to cure "all diseases"

2016

Microsoft scientists announce that they should be able to cure cancer within 10 years

2016

German entrepreneur Michael Greve founds the Forever Healthy Foundation

2017

Spanish scientist Juan Carlos Izpisua announces that his Salk Institute team has been able to rejuvenate mice 40%

2018

First commercial treatment with gene therapy using CRISPR

2018

Birth of first CRISPR babies to avoid HIV infections in China

2019

FDA approval of the first senolytic treatments for life extension

2019

Nature magazine carries the report "First hint that body's 'biological age' can be reversed" featuring the TRIIM trial led by Greg Fahy

2020

Covid2019 virus genome is sequenced in weeks and new mRNA vaccines are developed in days

2020

AlphaFold (AI developed by Google's DeepMind) solves the protein folding in biology

2020

Nobel Prize on Physiology and Medicine for CRISPR research

2020

Eyes of blind mice rejuvenated with epigenetic reprogramming by Australian biologist David Sinclair at Harvard University

2021

American Jeff Bezos, Russian Yuri Milner and other billionaires create Altos Labs to reverse the human aging process

2021

First transplant of a pig's kidney into a brain-dead human showed that xenotransplants can work

2021

Largest vaccination campaign in history to contain the Covid19 pandemic after the production of more than 9 billion vaccines in 1 year

2022

First transplant of a pig's heart into a human showed that xenotransplants worked

2022

FDA approves

Certainly! Here is the text with the spaces between the lines removed:

2022

Saudi Arabia announces the creation of Hevolution (Health+Evolution) Foundation to finance billions into aging research

2022

English scientist Aubrey de Grey and his colleagues create the LEV (Longevity Escape Velocity) Foundation

2022

Global population reaches 8,000,000,000 people

2023 AD–2029 AD (Some Possibilities)

2023

First experimental clinical trials with mRNA vaccines for cancer

2024

First experimental clinical trials with mRNA vaccines for malaria and HIV

2025

Robust Mouse Rejuvenation is achieved in trials sponsored by LEV Foundation

2025

Molecular assemblers (nanotechnology) become possible (Ray Kurzweil)

2020s

Second Bridge towards indefinite lifespans using biotechnology (Ray Kurzweil)

2020s

Human clinical trials for longevity with metformin and rapamycin

2020s

Worldwide eradication of poliomyelitis

2020s

Worldwide eradication of measles

2020s

Successful vaccines approved against malaria and HIV

2020s

Cure for the majority of cancers

2020s

Cure for Parkinson's disease

2020s

3D bioprinting of simple human organs

2020s

Commercial cloning of human organs with own cells from patients

2020s

Beginning of commercial rejuvenation treatments with stem cells and telomerase

2020s

AI and robot doctors complement and supplement human doctors
2020s

Telemedicine spreads worldwide
2020s

First manned trips to Mars (Elon Musk)
2029

Longevity Escape Velocity (LEV) or the "Methuselahry" is reached (Ray Kurzweil)
2029

An advanced AI finally passes Alan Turing's test (Ray Kurzweil)
After 2030 AD (More Possibilities)
2030s

Third Bridge towards indefinite lifespans using nanotechnology (Ray Kurzweil)
2030s

Cure for Alzheimer's disease
2030s

Worldwide eradication of malaria
2030s

Worldwide eradication of HIV
2030s

Consolidation of the first human colony in Mars (Elon Musk)
2037

Global population reaches 9,000,000,000 people
2039

Mental transfer from brain to brain becomes possible (Ray Kurzweil)
2040s

Final Bridge towards indefinite lifespans and immortality using AI (Ray Kurzweil)
2040s

Interplanetary Internet connects to Earth, Moon, Mars and spaceships
2045

Ageing is cured and death becomes optional (Ray Kurzweil)
2045

The Singularity: AI surpasses all human intelligence (Ray Kurzweil)
2049

Distinction between reality and virtual reality disappears (Ray Kurzweil)
2050

Humanoid robots win English football cup (British Telecom)
2050s

First reanimations of cryopreserved patients (Ray Kurzweil)
2072

Picotechnology starts (pico is one thousand times smaller than nano, Ray Kurzweil)
2099

Femtotechnology starts (femto one thousand times smaller than pico, Ray Kurzweil)
2099

Lifespan becomes irrelevant in a world of "amortality"