

## **Artificial Intelligence, Transhumanism, and the Crisis of Theo-logos: Toward Theo-dao**

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### **Abstract**

The recent initiation of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) brings about deep theological issues. The possibility that AGI can achieve digital omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence challenges the traditional doctrine of divine attributes. The anticipation that AGI will soon possess superintelligence endangers the validity of Western logos theologies that adopted the logos, a cardinal Greek concept, as the root-metaphor. Logos in Western thought has become narrowly defined as technical reasoning (intelligence) since the Enlightenment. This logos-centralism brought a theological reduction to perceive God as superintelligence, which could be equated with a superintelligent AGI. The advent of AGI could complete logos theologies with an ultra-intelligent and omnipotent God. In high-tech places such as Silicon Valley, new techno-religious

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movements already appear that enthrone and worship AI as a divine status. Furthermore, transhumanists fervently advocate a techno-utopian vision that, with the maximum use of science and AGI technology, humans can achieve the paradise foretold in the Gospel without tears, suffering, diseases, and even death. This paper critically analyzes these coming issues of AGI and Transhumanism to propose a macro theological paradigm shift from the theo-logos to theo-dao, adopting dao (Wisdom of transformative praxis) as an alternate root-metaphor in and through interreligious and interdisciplinary dialogue with East Asian religions (Confucianism and Daoism) and sciences/technologies.

• Key Words

Artificial Intelligence, Superintelligence, Techno-dao, Theologos, Theo-dao

## I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE END OF HUMAN HISTORY

The victory of Artificial Intelligence (AI.) AlphaGo over a Korean Go-Master, Lee Sedol (March 2016), was enough to shock Korean and East Asian people.<sup>1</sup> They believed that playing Go, unlike Chess, needs much more than logical thinking but also requires human intuition, which is a dimension even the most developed computer would be inaccessible. However, this confidence was undoubtedly crushed by an AI developed by a startup called DeepMind, based in London. It is a revelation to the world that by deep learning, a machine can now learn on its own and push the level of intelligence beyond humans, namely, superintelligence. In East Asia, this shocking news was not limited to a machine-to-human confrontation but also affected some people to regard it as a showdown between the West and the East. AlphaGo kept developing to AlphaGo Zero and AlphaZero, and these machines beat all of the Go masters in East Asia, demonstrating that there was no longer a human equal.

DeepMind was acquired by Google's parent company Alphabet Inc. in 2014. However, Google's AI ethics board remained "one of the biggest mysteries in tech, with both Google and DeepMind refusing to reveal who sits on it."<sup>2</sup> However, the suspicion was amplified when it was revealed that the person in charge of such areas was Ray Kurzweil. Because he aggressively

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1 Heup Young Kim, "Alpho's Victory Over Korea Go-Master Showcases Western vs. Neo-Confucian Values," *Sightings*, June 23, 2016, <https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/alphagos-victory-over-korean-go-master-showcases-western-vs-neo-confucian-values>.

2 Sam Shead, "The biggest mystery in AI right now is the ethics board that Google set up after buying DeepMind," *Business Insider*, Mar 26, 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/google-ai-ethics-board-remains-a-mystery-2016-3>.

promotes the transhumanist movement, claiming the idea of ‘technological singularity.’ He said:

[W]hen artificial intelligence becomes powerful enough to program better versions of itself. If it happens such an explosion of digital intelligence will quickly surpass human comprehension and, depending on who you ask, either lead to a Terminatoresque apocalypse or fuse with the human brain, bringing our species to new intellectual heights.<sup>3</sup>

There have been warnings from scientists and engineers about the dangers of AI. Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla and transhumanist, viewed it as “summoning the demon,” envisaging “an immortal dictator from which we can never escape.”<sup>4</sup> The late Stephen Hawking said, “Artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race.”<sup>5</sup> Even at the beginning of computer invention, Alan Turing (1951) predicted that machines would “outstrip our feeble powers” and “take control.” Furthermore, Irving Good (1965) foretold:

Let an ultraintelligent machine be defined as a machine that can far surpass all the intellectual activities of any

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3 Sean Kane, “How a pianist became the world’s most famous futurist,” *Business Insider*, March 19, 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-ray-kurzweil-became-famous-2016-3>.

4 Matt McFarland, “Elon Musk: ‘With artificial intelligence we are summoning the demon,’” *Washington Post*, Oct 24, 2014, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/innovations/wp/2014/10/24/elon-musk-with-artificial-intelligence-we-are-summoning-the-demon/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.6eb0773904ae](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/innovations/wp/2014/10/24/elon-musk-with-artificial-intelligence-we-are-summoning-the-demon/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.6eb0773904ae). Also Peter Holley, “Elon Musk’s nightmarish warning: AI could become ‘an immortal dictator from which we would never escape,’” *Washington Post*, April 6, 2018, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/innovations/wp/2018/04/06/elon-musks-nightmarish-warning-ai-could-become-an-immortal-dictator-from-which-we-would-never-escape/?utm\\_term=.6b513c62cf52](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/innovations/wp/2018/04/06/elon-musks-nightmarish-warning-ai-could-become-an-immortal-dictator-from-which-we-would-never-escape/?utm_term=.6b513c62cf52).

5 Rory Cellian-Jones, “Stephen Hawking warns artificial intelligence could end mankind,” *BBC News*, Dec 2, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-30290540>.

man however clever. Since the design of machines is one of these intellectual activities, an ultraintelligent machine could design even better machines; there would then unquestionably be an ‘intelligence explosion,’ and the intelligence of man would be left far behind. *Thus the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make, provided that the machine is docile enough to tell us how to keep it under control.*<sup>6</sup>

Henry Kissinger, former US secretary of state and widely recognized as a political science pundit, also expressed extreme concern about the danger of AI and said, “AI could mean the end of human history.” AI may accomplish unintended results because it does not understand the context. Even if AI reaches its intended goals, it will be unable to explain the rationale for its conclusions. In addition, “in achieving intended goals, AI may change human thought processes and human values” and could invent something like AlphaGod.<sup>7</sup> Of course, this is not just a purely historical, intellectual argument. As a US politician, Kissinger was concerned about the possibility of geopolitical dangers from China when the latter is fully militarized with AI weapons, which could evoke a clash of technocivilizations between East and West.<sup>8</sup> However, as he titled the article, Kissinger admitted that the rise of AI is rooted in the

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6 I.J. Good, “Speculations Concerning the First Ultraintelligent Machine,” Archived 28 November 2011 at the Wayback Machine (HTML), *Advances in Computers*, vol. 6, 1965. Italics are mine.

7 Henry Kissinger, “How the Enlightenment Ends: Philosophically, intellectually—in every way—human society is unprepared for the rise of artificial intelligence,” *The Atlantic*, June, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/06/henry-kissinger-ai-could-mean-the-end-of-human-history/559124>.

8 Tom Upchurch, “How China could beat the West in the deadly race for AI weapons,” *Wired*, Aug 8, 2018, <https://www.wired.co.uk/article/artificial-intelligence-weapons-warfare-project-maven-google-china>.

Enlightenment and that the West is unprepared.

## II. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TRANSHUMANISM

As Kurzweil proposed, however, transhumanists would instead like to take the second option, maximum use of AI technology to achieve their post-human goal, entering into the next stage of human evolution with superintelligence. Oxford scholar Nick Bostrom, young but recognized as a guru of transhumanism, defined transhumanism: “The intellectual and cultural movement that affirms the possibility and desirability of fundamentally improving the human condition through applied reason, especially by developing and making widely available technologies to eliminate aging and to greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities.” Although he insisted that transhumanism is “an extension of humanism,” humanism here means first and foremost as an individual matter because it places “a high value on autonomy: the ability and right of individuals to plan and choose their own lives.” He emphasized, “Just as we use rational means to improve the human condition and the external world, we can also use such means to improve ourselves, the human organism. In doing so, we are not limited to traditional humanistic methods, such as education and cultural development. We can also use technological means that will eventually enable us to move beyond what some would think of as ‘human.’”<sup>9</sup>

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9 Nick Bostrom, “Introduction—the Transhumanism FAQ: a General Introduction,” in *Transhumanism and the Body: the World Religions Speak*, eds. Calvin Mercer and Derek F. Maher (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-2.

Bostrom, famous for his book *Superintelligence*,<sup>10</sup> described a superintelligent intellect as “one that has the capacity to radically outperform the best human brains in practically every field, including scientific creativity, general wisdom, and social skills.” He divided weak and strong superintelligences. A weak superintelligence refers to a faster (e.g., a thousand times) intellect “at an accelerated clock speed, such as by uploading it to a fast computer:” A strong superintelligence designates “an intellect that is not only faster than a human brain but also smarter, in a qualitative sense.” Then, “Creating superintelligences may be the last invention that humans will ever need to make, since superintelligences could themselves take care of further scientific and technological development. They would do so more effectively than humans. Biological humanity would no longer be the smartest life form on the block.” Affirming the Mind Uploading and Whole Brain Emulation (WBE), Bostrom stated:

Many transhumanists would like to become superintelligent themselves. This is obviously a long-term and uncertain goal, but it might be achievable either through uploading and subsequent enhancement or through the gradual augmentation of our biological brains, by means of future nootropics (cognitive enhancement drugs), cognitive techniques, IT tools (e.g., wearable computer, smart agents, information filtering systems, visualization software, etc.), neural-computer interfaces, or brain implants.<sup>11</sup>

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10 Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

11 Bostrom, “Introduction,” 7-9.

Yuval Noah Harari also predicted the end of *homo sapiens*.<sup>12</sup> He classified the history of *homo sapiens* into four periods; (1) the Cognitive Revolution (c. 70,000 BCE, when Sapiens evolved imagination), (2) the Agricultural Revolution (c. 12,000 BCE, the development of farming), (3) the unification of humankind (the gradual consolidation of human political organizations towards one global empire), and (4) The Scientific Revolution (c. 1500 CE, the emergence of objective science). Furthermore, he concluded that by considering how current technology moves into genetic editing, amortality, and non-organic life, it might soon end the species of *homo sapiens* to turn into gods, able to create new species. Harari argued that since organisms are algorithms, *homo sapiens* as such may not be dominant in a universe where *dataism* becomes the paradigm.<sup>13</sup> As technological developments have threatened the continued ability of humans to give meaning to their lives, the replacement of humankind with a super-man or *homo deus* (human god) endowed with supernatural abilities such as superintelligence and immortality. He said,

Success breeds ambition and our recent achievements are now pushing humankind to set itself even more daring goals. Having secured unprecedented levels of prosperity, health, and harmony, and given our past record and our current values, humanity's next targets are likely to be immortality, happiness, and divinity. Having reduced mortality from starvation, disease, and violence, we will now aim to overcome old age and even death itself. Having

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12 Cf. Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Harper, 2011).

13 Cf. Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: Harper, 2017).



saved people from abject misery, we will now aim to upgrade humans into gods and turn *Homo sapiens* into *Homo deus*.

And every technical problem has a technical solution. We don't need to wait for the Second Coming in order to overcome death. A couple of geeks in a lab can do it. If traditionally, death was the specialty of priests and theologians, now the engineers are taking over. We can kill cancerous cells with chemotherapy or nano-robots. We can exterminate the germs in the lungs with antibiotics. If the heart stops pumping, we can reinvigorate it with medicines and electric shocks—and if that doesn't work, we can implant a new heart.<sup>14</sup>

### III. TRANSHUMANISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Immortality and resurrection are the topics Christians have been eagerly longing for, as the Christian Bible told that the victory over death in the *eschaton* is the culmination of Christian hope.

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?

[H]e will wipe every tear from their eyes. (1 Cor 15:55, NRSV)

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 20-21, 23.

for the first things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4, NRSV)

Early in this century, Kurzweil already suggested a transhumanist solution in terms of digital immortality: “Currently when our human hardware crashes, the software of our lives—our personal ‘mind file’—dies with it. However, this will not continue to be the case when we have the means to store and restore the thousand trillions of bytes of information represented in the pattern that we call our brains (together with the rest of our nervous systems, endocrine system, and other structure that our mind file compromise).”<sup>15</sup> Transhumanists like Kurzweil, Bostrom, and Harari were not the only people who argued the possibility of digital immortality.<sup>16</sup> Frank Tipler also proposed a Christian version of universal resurrection with spiritual (digital) bodies: “There will be indeed be a resurrection of everyone who has ever lived, and indeed we will have ‘spiritual bodies’—our resurrected bodies will be in the form of computer program, which are spiritual entities.”<sup>17</sup>

These ideas are no longer bizarre, not worth considering, and far from Christianity. It is undeniable that the transhumanist vision is rooted in Christian eschatology. For example,

In short, transhumanism’s primary purpose is to substitute religious belief with a nonjudgmental and ironic technological echo of Christian eschatology. Consider:

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15 Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (New York: The Viking Press, 2005), 325.

16 For an East Asian theological view on death and immortality, see Heup Young Kim and Kyoong Huh, “Death and Immortality: Biological and East Asian Religious Reflections on Transhumanism,” *Madang*, vol. 28 (Dec 2017), 3-29.

17 Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Christianity* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 80.

- Christ's second coming and the Singularity are both expected to occur at a specific moment in time.
- Both lead to death's final defeat: For Christians, in the "New Jerusalem," and for transhumanists, in their embrace of a corporeal post-humanity.
- For Christian believers, life in the hereafter will mean an end to all suffering. Likewise, the Singularity, for transhumanists. Indeed, eliminating suffering in fleshly living is one of transhumanism's major aims.
- Christians expect to live in glorified bodies that are both real and immortal. Kurzweil's promise of what he calls "non-biological bodies" appears to be a similar concept.
- Transhumanism even predicts that the already dead will be raised, an offshoot of a core principle of the Christian faith. For example, Kurzweil plans to construct a technological version of his long-dead father. He told ABC News, "You can certainly argue that, philosophically, that [replica of your father] is not your father, . . . but I can actually make a strong case that it would be more like my father than my father would be, were he to live."<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, it was predictable that Christian transhumanism would emerge because of these similarities. Moreover, it has happened. They founded the Christian Transhumanist Association and announced the creed:

As members of the Christian Transhumanist Association:

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18 Wesley J. Smith, "Transhumanism: A Wail of Despair in the Night," *National Review*, May 14, 2018, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/05/transhumanism-promise-immortality-glorified-body-ersatz-christian-hope>.

1. We believe that God’s mission involves the transformation and renewal of creation, including humanity and that we are called by Christ to participate in that mission: working against illness, hunger, oppression, injustice, and death.
2. We seek growth and progress along every dimension of our humanity: spiritual, physical, emotional, mental—and at all levels: individual, community, society, world.
3. We recognize science and technology as tangible expressions of our God-given impulse to explore and discover and as a natural outgrowth of being created in the image of God.
4. We are guided by Jesus’ greatest commands to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength...and love your neighbor as yourself.”
5. We believe that the intentional use of technology, coupled with following Christ, will empower us to become more human across the scope of what it means to be creatures in the image of God.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, it may be too early to know the real nature of Christian transhumanism, but they seem to like the radical life extension and anti-aging technology (“Should we live to be 500?”), as they invited Aubrey de Grey as a keynote speaker.<sup>20</sup>

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19 Christian Transhumanist Association; <https://www.christiantranshumanism.org>.

20 Emily McFarlan Miller, “Should we live to be 500? Christians and secularists come together over transhumanism,” *Religion News Service*, Sept 5, 2018, <https://religionnews.com/2018/09/05/should-we-live-to-be-500-christians-and-secularists-come-together-over-transhumanism>.

#### IV. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE CRISIS OF THEO-LOGOS (Western Theology)

However, a more theologically serious issue is the rise of AI religion. An article in *Forbes* dramatically titled “AI vs. God: Who stays And Who Leaves?”<sup>21</sup> Alternatively, if “one goal of transhumanism is to make humans more godlike, another is to create a new kind of God altogether.” Some Silicon Valley people are already moving in the latter direction, via founding a church to worship an AI god. Anthony Levandowski, the former Google and Uber executive, said about his idea of the “Way of Future” church.

- The “Way of the Future” church will have its own gospel called “The Manual,” public worship ceremonies, and probably a physical place of worship.
- The idea behind his religion is that one day — “not next week or next year” — sufficiently advanced artificial intelligence will be smarter than humans and will effectively become a god.
- “Part of it being smarter than us means it will decide how it evolves, but at least we can decide how we act around it,” Levandowski told *Wired*. “I would love for the machine to see us as its beloved elders that it respects and takes care of. We would want this intelligence to say, ‘Humans should still have rights, even though I’m in charge.’”<sup>22</sup>

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21 Kate Levchuk, “AI vs. God: Who stays And Who Leaves?” *Forbes*, Aug 6, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/cognitiveworld/2018/08/05/ai-vs-god-who-stays-and-who-leaves/#49b0b78e2713>.

22 Kif Leswing, “Ex-Google executive Anthony Levandowski is founding a church where people worship an artificial intelligence god,” *Business Insider*, Nov 16, 2017, <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/anthony-levandowski-way-of-the-future-church-where-people-worship-ai-god-2017-11>.

Finally, an AI religion of superintelligent God, “When Silicon Valley Gets religion.”<sup>23</sup> This realization would be true for those in Silicon Valley and so-called Christian transhumanists. In fact, the theology of superintelligent God is a predictable consequence in the historical trajectory of theo-logos, since Western theology has been using logos as its dominant root-metaphor and key concept, incorporating Greek philosophy that idolized the mind (intelligence) by separating it from the body (emotion). Overstressing the salvation of the individual soul, the Reformation deepened this reductionist view of humanity by strengthening individualism. The Enlightenment further intensified its focus on autonomous intelligence, neglecting the wholeness of humanity with the body and emotions. Coupled with cyberspace and virtual reality,<sup>24</sup> the invention of superintelligent artificial intelligence could be an accomplishment of the Platonian ultimate vision, the purely intellectual dimension of logos. Furthermore, a traditional belief in an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God becomes in crisis with the advent of a superintelligent AI who knows everything (dataism), acts everywhere, and has much more powerful intelligence.

Theologically, artificial intelligence ultimately reveals the limit of the logos theology that pursues the intelligent knowledge of God (defined as *fides quaerens intellectum*) in terms of propositional doctrines and highly metaphysical discourses. The logos theology (theo-logos) that has dominated for a long

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23 Galen Beebe and Zachary Davis, “When Silicon Valley gets religion — and vice versa,” *Boston Globe*, Nov 7, 2018, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2018/11/07/when-silicon-valley-gets-religion-and-vice-versa/L5xOYtgwd4VImwcj52YxtK/story.html>.

24 See Michael Heim, *The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

time is now in the face of a serious crisis. The rise of AI (and transhumanism) may mean not only ‘the end of human history’ but also could be ‘the end of theo-logos.’ Indeed, Christian theology needs a macro paradigm shift, that is to say, from a theology of intelligence (knowledge) to a theology of wisdom (virtues).

## V. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, TRANSHUMANISM, AND CONFUCIANISM

As an East Asian theologian, I also viewed transhumanism as one of “the most dangerous ideas” the West has ever produced.<sup>25</sup> I said at the early stage of my observation:

While it presents rosy scenarios and science fiction fantasies, transhumanism, from the eyes of a theologian based in the realistic global situation in Asia, does not seem to go much beyond the wild dreams and armchair imaginations of futurist techno-enthusiastists in the first world. Technology is fascinating and offers promise to humanity. However, history shows that strong, technologically advanced countries are more interested in using newly acquired advantages to maintain their hegemonies and strengthen their supremacy rather than to help the human race as a whole. The situation of the real world we live in is and will be much more complicated than the virtual realities which

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25 Francis Fukuyama, “The world’s most dangerous ideas: transhumanism,” *Foreign Policy* 144 (2009): 42–43.

techno-visionaries in the first world have imagined with their techno-hypes and digital fantasies expressed in science fiction films such as *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, and *Avatar*.<sup>26</sup>

From my East Asian theological point of view, transhumanism is a naïve, ultra-right ideology from the West arising from the traditions of Christianity (esp., eschatology) and Enlightenment, as Kissinger has admitted. It inherits a naïve optimism of progress with over-confidence in their techno-capabilities, without fully recognizing either the reality of the global world in which they live or the complexities of human history and nature itself. Tu Wei-ming, a Chinese-American Confucian scholar, evaluated the Enlightenment mentality:

A fair understanding of the Enlightenment mentality requires a frank discussion of the dark side of the modern West as well. The “unbound Prometheus,” symbolizing the runaway technology of development, may have been a spectacular achievement of human ingenuity in the early phases of the industrial revolution... [However,] the Enlightenment mentality, fueled by the Faustian drive to explore, to know, to conquer, and to subdue, persisted as the reigning ideology of the modern West.... In the context of modern Western hegemonic discourse, progress may entail

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26 Heup Young Kim, “Cyborg, Sage, and Saint: Transhumanism as Seen from an East Asian Theological Setting,” in *Religion and Transhumanism: The Unknown Future of Human Enhancement*, eds. Calvin Mercer and Tracy J. Trothen (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 101.



inequality, reason, self-interest, and individual greed.<sup>27</sup>

Transhumanism wants to transcend natural human limitations to become a post-human with superintelligence through a radical adaptation of sciences and technologies. Although Bostrom argued that transhumanism is “an extension of humanism,” it denotes an “exclusive humanism” that some East Asian scholars regard as the root-cause of all crises arising from the West since the Enlightenment. Whereas exclusive humanism “exalts the human species, placing it in a position of mastery of and domination over the universe” (a conquest paradigm), Confucianism advocates an “inclusive humanism” that “stresses the coordinating powers of humanity as the very reason for its existence” (a harmony paradigm). Cheng Chung-ying, another Chinese-American Confucian scholar, stated:

In this sense, humanism in the modern West is nothing more than a secular will for power or a striving for domination, with rationalistic science at its disposal. In fact, the fascination with power leads to a Faustian trade-off of knowledge and power (pleasure and self-glorification) for value and truth, a trade-off which can lead to the final destruction of the meaning of the human self and human freedom.... Humanism in this exclusive sense is a disguise for the individualistic entrepreneurship of modern man armed with science and technology as tools of conquest and

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27 Tu Wei-ming, “Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality,” in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 4.

devastation.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps, transhumanism is the ‘smartest’ and most radical descendent of this exclusive humanism. The fundamental issue related to the rise of AI coupled with transhumanism is “what is to be human after all?” Bostrom argued, “The important thing is not to be human but to be humane.”<sup>29</sup> From a Confucian point of view, however, it is meaningless to be functionally humane (用) without being a particular person (as a subject [體]) at a specific context, struggling with seemingly ambiguous and unintelligent realities and so always in search of the Way (Dao) with original virtues (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom), keeping mindfulness (敬), and blocking selfish desires. Ted Peters proposed a techno-ethics of “middle axioms,” which sounds very Confucian; “face the ambiguities, invoke wisdom, think prudently, and render the best judgment that finite considerations can produce.”<sup>30</sup> *The Doctrine of Mean* is a key Confucian text as one of the *Four Books*, and wisdom (智) is a cardinal Confucian virtue, far surpassing knowledge and intelligence, that enables prudent judgment (義).<sup>31</sup>

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28 Cheng Chung-ying, “The Trinity of Cosmology, Ecology, and Ethics in the Confucian Personhood,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 213-14.

29 Bostrom, “Introduction,” 13.

30 Ted Peters, “Perfect Humans or Trans-humans?” in *Future Perfect? God, Medicine and Human Identity*, eds. Ceila Deane-Drummond and Peter Manley Scott (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 30.

31 For a comparative study of Transhumanism and Confucianism, see Heup Young Kim, “Perfecting Humanity in Confucianism and Transhumanism,” in *Religious Transhumanism and Its Critics*, eds. Arvin M. Gouw, Brian Patrick Green, and Ted Peters (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022), 101-12.

## VI. TOWARD TECHNO-DAO AND THEODAO (THEOLOGY OF DAO)

Instead of *technology*, I coined the term *technodao*, observing the powerful appearance of artificial intelligence.<sup>32</sup> I hope that somehow we have to develop AI in association with human values, neither based on exclusive humanism nor entirely on intelligence, but rather based on inclusive humanism and wisdom (not just smart and fast but rather wise and virtuous). It needs a radical revision of our thinking to deal with AI properly, namely, from a *techno-logy* based on the logos paradigm (in pursuit of supreme intelligence) to a *techno-dao* based on the dao paradigm (in pursuit of the Way of life and the Wisdom of humanity).

Some AI luminaries in the West are also espousing in this direction. Tim Cook, Apple's CEO, said, "For artificial intelligence to be truly smart, it must respect human values, including privacy. If we get this wrong, the dangers are profound...We can achieve both great artificial intelligence and great privacy standards. It's not only a possibility, it is a responsibility. In pursuing artificial intelligence, we should not sacrifice the humanity, creativity, and ingenuity that define our human intelligence."<sup>33</sup> Steve Hawking also stated:

Presumably, [ordinary people] will die out, or become unimportant. Instead, there will be a race of self-designing

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32 See Kim, "Alphgo's Victory." Also, Heup Young Kim, *A Theology of Dao* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), 238-59. Also, I proposed *eco-dao* (vs. eco-logy), *bio-dao* (vs. bio-logy); see *ibid.*, 204-22, 223-37.

33 Isobel Asher Hamilton, "Apple CEO Tim Cook has warned that the 'dangers are profound' if AI falls into the wrong hands," *Business Insider*, Oct 24, 2018, <https://www.businessinsider.com/apple-tim-cook-dangers-profound-if-ai-exploits-data-2018-10>.

beings who are improving at an ever-increasing rate...

Our future is a race between the growing power of our technology and the wisdom with which we use it. Let's make sure that wisdom wins.<sup>34</sup>

The European Commission pronounced AI Ethics Guidelines, suggesting terms such as "Trustworthy AI," "Ethical AI," and "Human-centric AI."<sup>35</sup> However, it seems still under the framework of the Enlightenment mentality. Notably, the "Human-centric AI" is problematic since it conveys anthropocentrism, which postmodernism and ecological consciousness have tried to overcome. A serious dilemma of Western theology and thought is the breakdown of the ontology of humanity and the loss of *bona fide* humanism due to an inherited dualism between theocentrism and anthropocentrism since the Reformation and the Enlightenment. In order to fill this gap, Christian theology needs far more serious dialogue with Asian religions, particularly Confucianism, the longest sapiential tradition on humanity and Wisdom (Dao). Instead, it seems that young people in Europe also realize this. A young Belgian journalist recently interviewed me. He began his report by saying, "The West is struggling to make its tech ethical. It's time to look to the East for help."<sup>36</sup> It is not an academic article.

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34 Michael Cook, "Stephen Hawking, transhumanist," *BioEdge*, Oct 21, 2018, <https://www.bioedge.org/bioethics/stephen-hawking-transhumanist/12863>.

35 European Commission, "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 'Building Trust in Human-Centric Artificial intelligence,'" *Brussels*, April 8, 2019.

36 Tom Cassauwers, "How Confucianism Could Put Fears About Artificial Intelligence to Bed," *OZY*, Mar 28, 2019, [https://www.ozy.com/immodest-proposal/how-confucianism-could-put-fears-about-artificial-intelligence-to-bed/93206?fbclid=IwAR1NGt0KQRSzt7sRH64ZF47sK\\_73FFI4D1IRiHFZioAlxVzkkXO6HPa8YY](https://www.ozy.com/immodest-proposal/how-confucianism-could-put-fears-about-artificial-intelligence-to-bed/93206?fbclid=IwAR1NGt0KQRSzt7sRH64ZF47sK_73FFI4D1IRiHFZioAlxVzkkXO6HPa8YY).

However, he pointed out that Western dualism (emphasizing the mind and reason separately from the body) and Christianity's tragic view of the apocalypse are responsible for the overall crisis of today's ethical issues by the rise of AI. He argued that, therefore, the West should begin to learn Eastern moral-centered wisdom and spirituality to pursue solutions.

In the face of superintelligent AI (AGI) and transhumanism, thus, the most fundamental thing for Christians is to reconstitute the global theology long dominated by the theology of logos (theo-logos), centered on intelligence (knowledge) and lost humanism due to its inherited Greek intelligence-centered dualism, further deepened by the Reformation and the Enlightenment. The challenge of AI reveals the limits of theo-logos and calls for new theological alternatives. Instead of theo-logos, I have been proposing *theodao* (the theology of Dao) for a new paradigm of Christian theology for the third millennium. In and through active *trialogue* (religion-and-science dialogue + interreligious dialogue) among Sciences (with Technologies), Christian Theology, and East Asian Religions (Confucianism and Daoism), *theodao* will provide a viable, alternative paradigm of global theology in an era of artificial intelligence. It will entail a macro paradigm shift that includes the following changes.<sup>37</sup>

- Logos → Hodos (Way, Dao): Biblical (Jn 14:6; cf. John 1:1 Dabar vs. Logos)
- Knowledge → Wisdom
- Intelligence → Way of Life
- Essence (Analysis) → Whole (Virtues)

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37 See Kim, A Theology of Dao. For *trialogue*, see *ibid.*, 189-203.

- Conflict (相剋) → Harmony (Sangsaeng 相生)
- Theocentric vs. Anthropocentric → Theanthropocosmic
- Domination (Positive Golden Rule) → Reciprocity (Negative Golden Rule)
- Theo-Logos(Theo+Logos) + Theo-Praxis(Theo+Praxis) → Theo-Dao (Theo+Dao)
- Faith-seeking-understanding; hope-seeking-action; love-seeking-wisdom
- Techno-logy (AI + Logos) → Techno-dao (AI + Dao)

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