11 Ιανουαρίου 2024

International Scientific Conference – POST-HUMANISM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Ξένες γλώσσες / In English



POST-HUMANISM AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

International Scientific Conference

PHAICON 24

Athens, Greece, 18 – 21 Nov. 2024

Co-organizers

Saint Maxim the Greek Institute

Office of the Orthodox Church at the European Union

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

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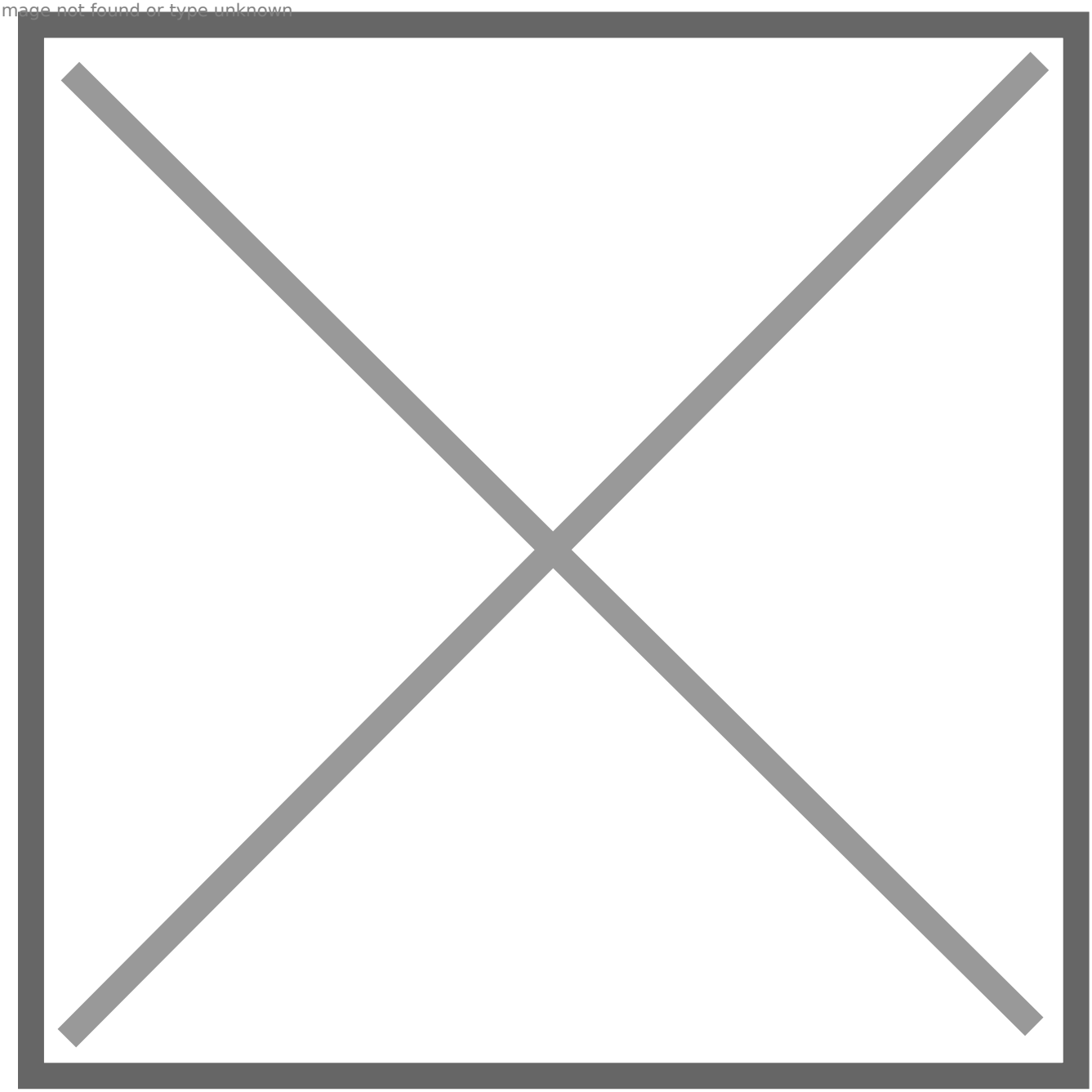
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Fr. Gregory Stamkopoulos, Associate Professor of Applications of Information Technology, School of Social Theology and Christian Culture, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Dr. George Giannakopoulos, Researcher, SKEL lab, Institute of Informatics and Telecommunications of NCSR Demokritos, co-founder and CEO of SciFY, a not-for-profit AI organization bringing AI results to society.

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ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Nikos Gouraros (Head of OC),

Fr. Pawel Cecha, **Fr. Gennadios Manolis**,

Eleni Xanthaki, **Sofia Kolokotroni**

AIM AND PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

From the humanism of Modernity and the Enlightenment there sprang great confidence in the ability of human reason and the potential of the human spirit to define not only the course of our life but also our codes of values. What followed in the twentieth century did not confirm the anthropological optimism of modernity. Despite significant scientific achievements and social gains, humanity emerged deeply wounded from two world wars, from holocausts, genocides, ethnic cleansings, divisions, totalitarian regimes and the cold war.

Modern societies recognize the need for science and ethics to make common progress. Ethics is, however, unable to keep pace with the rapid developments in bio-medical technology, the digital eco-system, cybernetics and robotics, all of which are factors which create new actualities for life and reality and which foster expectations which are ever less likely to be regarded as scenarios from science fiction. Artificial intelligence, the latest achievement of scientific applications, has already taken over a large number of everyday functions, meeting human needs through the digital eco-system and automation. However, the prospect that it may be linked to human nature itself and to the human person poses huge questions for the fields of ethics, anthropology, science, philosophy and theology.

The deductions by modern intellectuals who link AI to the evolution of the human species have introduced new terms such as trans-human and post-human. These terms have already been the subject of extensive scientific, philosophical and theological reflection. Without doubt, they will soon come under the scrutiny of politics and the law.

Of particular concern is the outbreak of a kind of deconstructionist and hostile rightsism which has become marked in the world, known as wokeism. Already, important thinkers have noted the reversal and traducement of commonly accepted values, and even of common sense, at the altar of a new attitude to life and a theory. The latter, either through fear-engendering hysteria or through a skillfully veiled mask, changes the concepts of anthropology, the socially accepted and the politically correct and thus abolishes every universal criterion of exactitude. This attitude, which a misinterpretation, misuse and abuse of the foundation of human rights, may bring with it disastrous results if it forms the anthropological basis for the espousal of artificial intelligence and what is characterized as post-humanism.

It should be stressed that Orthodox Christian Theology does not have human rights as its main theme, but rather the rights of God. Nevertheless, Orthodox Christian theologians do talk about human rights, and have put forwards certain improvements or additions to the existing theories. These do not seem to have moved or to move people to any great extent. Today we have arrived at ‘Woke Culture’.

Wokeism is perhaps particularly topical for theology. But here, being woke must be of an entirely different nature. If wokeism for post-modern people aims at their liberation from all natural, human and social restrictions, by abrogating them and consenting to absolute contrariness and wantonness, for Orthodox Christian theology it should aim at our total liberation, which is achieved through submission to the will of the Incarnate Word. Although this truth exists in Orthodox Christian theology, it is not sufficiently emphasized in its encounter with everyday reality. The total manumission proposed by wokeism removes their humanity from people, in essence leading to the destructuring of society and death at its own hand. This is easy and can be applied comfortably in everyday life, as witnessed by its wide-spread acceptance. Complete adherence to the will of the Incarnate Word is difficult, however, and is achieved through everyday sacrifice. But that does, indeed, lead to absolute freedom, to the freedom of God Who is unable to do evil, that is to deny Himself. This is our absolute freedom: the freedom of deification.

Having been made in the image of the absolutely personal God, we are stifled by the limitations of our created nature. Our nature has lost its unity. It has become alienated and fractured. The desire for absolute freedom has been undermined by the alienation of our nature. We feel chained to our self and seek total liberation from the outside world. We despair over our naive attempts at self-knowledge and hope to be redeemed through knowledge of and exploitation of the world that

surrounds us. The sciences and technology are constantly discovering means of satisfying our material needs and desires, even while they are also deepening despair, as well as the concern for the tragedy we observe at the depth of our inner world and the state and prospects of our existence. We rejoice at our successes but are also wary of their consequences.

The classical Ancient Greek exhortation ‘Know thyself’ is rather intimidating because, when it is not applied with the façade of hypocrisy and narcissism, it intensifies disappointment and leads to despair. This is where the ascetic tradition of Christianity presents the way of the cross and resurrection, culminating in the charismatic despair of the ascetics. Every person knows that they are not the cause of their existence. Having accepted God as our creator, it is natural that we also seek from him the meaning and purpose of our existence. Christians are called upon to take up their cross and follow Christ ‘wherever he goes’. ‘We commend ourselves and others and all our life to Christ our God’. The common journey in this direction, with a humble outlook, offers people support in their difficulties and imbues their despair with grace.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Would those interested in taking part in the International Conference on Post-Humanism and Artificial Intelligence (ICPHAI-24), please send, by **30 January 2024** , the proposed title of their paper and a brief precis of 250 words, as well as a CV in Greek or English to the following electronic mail address: phaicon24@stmaximthegreek.org. After evaluation, the International Scientific Committee will announce the speakers at the conference.

POTENTIAL THEMATIC AREAS FOR PAPERS SUBMISSION

1. **Artificial Intelligence**
2. History- evolution – social acceptance
3. Scientific parameters: where we are and where we are going
4. Achievements: what we aim to do
5. Socio-economic factors: Who control and who define the way forward and future developments.
6. Philosophical and theological reflections: how far is the human person protected and how far endangered.
7. What ethics and what code of conduct, what policies and legal stipulations can

be applied to issues as they arise.

2. **Trans-humanism and Post-humanism**
3. Definition – evolution – stages
4. Theories concerning trans-humanism and post-humanism
5. Trans-humanism and post-humanism in philosophical thought
6. Trans-humanism and post-humanism in theology
7. The anthropology of trans-humanism and post-humanism (causes, aim-meaning, society, trans-humanist relationships, trans-gender relations).
8. Deconstructive rightsism (Wokeism), trans-humanism and post-humanism
9. Rightsism and self-awareness

3. **Orthodox anthropology and pastoral care**
4. Relations between theology and science
5. Orthodox anthropology: people in the image and likeness of God
6. The human person, the neighbor and society in Christianity
7. Orthodox pastoral approach of the Church and wokeism: Gender Ideology in Society, Authoritarianism, Critical Race Theory, LGBTQIA+ Challenges, Transgenderism, Gender and Human Identity, Christian Parenting and the Public School, Professional life and Christian conscience, Redefinition of Marriage, Aggressive Marketing -Companies/Advertising/Digital Media/TV/Cinema/-)
8. Orthodox pastoral approach of the Church and Artificial Intelligence
9. Orthodox pastoral approach of the Church and post-humanism
10. Orthodox Christian Theology and human rights
11. The rights of God and human rights

The **working languages** of the Conference are **Greek and English**. Papers should not exceed 20 minutes in length. A discussion will take place after the reading of each paper.

Information regarding the acceptance of papers and participation by the chosen speakers at the Conference will be published by **15 February 2024**.

The PHAICON 24 conference will be held on the basis of physical presence but will simultaneously be broadcast over the internet through international digital media.

The Saint Maxim the Greek Institute will cover the expenses of the speakers taking part in the Conference (registration, travel, accommodation, meals).

Nikos Gouraros

Head of the Organizing Committee