FROM STOIC MEMENTO MORI TO DIGITAL IMMORTALITY: MODERN QUESTS AND TRANSHUMANIST TENDENCIES IN THE FACE OF DEATH

Do Memento Mori Estóico à Imortalidade Digital: Buscas Modernas e Tendências Transhumanistas Diante da Morte

MUSTAFA KAYA iD

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Department of Philosoph, Afyon Kocatepe University, Türkiye,, Türkiye
mustafakaya1976@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines how the way humans confront death, one of the fundamental questions of existence, has been transformed in the digital age from a philosophical perspective. The principles of memento mori (remember death) and amor fati (love your fate) found in ancient Stoic philosophy argue that death is an element that gives meaning to life; however, technological advances today, particularly transhumanist and posthumanist approaches, view death as a problem to be overcome technically. In this context, the quest for digital immortality, combined with the desire to transcend biological limitations, is producing radical solutions in areas such as consciousness transfer, artificial intelligence, and neurotechnology. The study examines how modern humanity's perception of death has changed, particularly through digital immortality practices such as the BLUE-PRINT movement, and evaluates the tension between ancient philosophical approaches and contemporary technological utopias. As concepts such as the meaning of being human, ethical boundaries, time, and destiny are re-examined in this new context, the study also opens up a discussion on the possibilities and limitations of confronting death in the digital age.

Keywords: Life and death. Remember death. Love your fate. Digital Immortality.

Resumo

Este estudo examina como a maneira como os seres humanos enfrentam a morte, uma das questões fundamentais da existência, foi transformada na era digital a partir de uma perspectiva filosófica. Os princípios do memento mori (lembre-se da

morte) e do amor fati (ame o seu destino) encontrados na filosofia estoica antiga argumentam que a morte é um elemento que dá sentido à vida; no entanto, os avanços tecnológicos atuais, particularmente as abordagens transhumanistas e pós-humanistas, veem a morte como um problema a ser superado tecnicamente. Nesse contexto, a busca pela imortalidade digital, combinada com o desejo de transcender as limitações biológicas, está produzindo soluções radicais em áreas como transferência de consciência, inteligência artificial e neurotecnologia. O estudo examina como a percepção da morte pela humanidade moderna mudou, particularmente por meio de práticas de imortalidade digital, como o movimento BLUEPRINT, e avalia a tensão entre as abordagens filosóficas antigas e as utopias tecnológicas contemporâneas. À medida que conceitos como o significado de ser humano, limites éticos, tempo e destino são reexaminados neste novo contexto, o estudo também abre uma discussão sobre as possibilidades e limitações de enfrentar a morte na era digital.

Palavras-chave: Vida e morte. lembre-se da morte. Ame seu destino. Imortalidade Digital.

1. Introduction

Life and death are the two most ancient and most profound concepts in human history. From the moment of its existence, humanity can be defined as a being that oscillates between these two boundaries, carrying an infinite desire despite its limitations. Therefore, inquiries into the meaning of life and the inevitability of death, both on an individual level and within collective-cultural memory, lie at the heart of humanity's quest for self-understanding. The questions 'What is life?' and 'What does death mean?' do not merely point to biological phenomena; they also create multidimensional intellectual fields that include metaphysical, ethical, aesthetic, and social layers. Birth and death are not merely the beginning and end of a physical process; they are two fundamental thresholds through which humanity seeks to make sense of its existence. Between these two extremes, humanity reflects on its own existence, becoming aware of time, fate, and mortality.

The idea of death has been both a source of fear and wisdom throughout history. Especially in ancient philosophy, particularly Stoicism, death is seen as the most instructive reality of life. One of the fundamental principles of Stoic thought, memento mori ('remember death'), encourages people to live in harmony with death without ignoring it. According to this principle, accepting the inevitability of death is a prerequisite for making life more meaningful and virtuous. Related to this is amor fati ('love your fate'), which suggests that humans should accept everything that happens to them, good or bad, without judgement, and develop a moral code of living based on this acceptance. Thus, death becomes not an absence, but a compass for meaningful living.

However, in the modern world, this philosophical approach is being replaced by a new existential orientation shaped by technological advancement. Particularly with advancements in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and neuroscience, people are now seeking ways to extend life and even eliminate death altogether. In this context, digital immortality is not merely a scientific goal; it is also a sign of a transformation that deserves deep philosophical and cultural inquiry. Trying to overcome death through technical means instead of facing it may cause people to abandon their ancient wisdom in the face of death and reduce life to a mere quantitative duration.

Today, transhumanist and posthumanist schools of thought are creating the intellectual foundations that legitimize the goal of transcending human physical and mental limitations. In this process, described as "transcendence,"death is treated as a purely technical problem; applications such as artificial minds, consciousness

transfer, and whole-brain emulation are being used to enable humans to continue their lives in a digital environment. In this context, the BLUEPRINT movement and digital immortality technologies, which are increasingly gaining attention today, are not merely scientific projects; they are also philosophical and cultural phenomena that claim to redefine the meaning of existence.

In this study, we will discuss how the idea of death has been restructured in the digital age, its tension with traditional Stoic principles (especially memento mori and amor fati), and the impact of digital immortality ideals on the human search for meaning. Within this framework, we will analyze the BLUEPRINT movement, artificial intelligence-based immortality quests, and posthumanist transformations, and we will lay a philosophical foundation for what being human might mean in the future. It will be questioned which new forms of existence modern man, stuck between the desire to prolong life and the meaning of death, is turning to in the light of technology.

2. From Stoic Philosophy to the Present: Ways of Confronting Death

Stoic philosophy advocates not the absolute preservation of human life, but rather its living with wisdom, virtue, and in accordance with nature. This approach is not aimed at prolonging life, but at transforming its quality. One of the fundamental principles of Stoicism, memento mori (remember death), advises individuals to constantly consider the finite nature of their existence. This remembrance, rather than creating a passive fear of death, invites them to grasp the value of each moment and live life consciously. Another fundamental principle, amor fati (love your fate), argues that people should accept all events, whether positive or negative, within the order of nature. In this context, Stoicism advises individuals to focus not on external conditions, but on their reactions to them. The good life is measured not by the opportunities or achievements one possesses, but by how one organizes one's inner world and how well one can control one's passions (Long, 2002).

However, for modern humans, the concept of a "good life" has evolved over time. Life's value is now often measured by its duration; it's assumed that the longer it's lived, the better. The desire to extend life and delay or, if possible, eliminate death has given rise to a new philosophy of life, particularly in the 21st century, intertwined with technology. In this context, an ideal of "agelessness" is being constructed, supported by advances in medicine and biotechnology, methods such as

slowing biological aging, genetic modifications, organ regeneration technologies, and cryogenic freezing. However, this process is not limited to biological interventions; cognitive capacity enhancement, digital consciousness transfer, and artificial intelligence, along with the goal of immortality, are now also part of this framework.

Transhumanism lies at the ideological basis of this intellectual evolution. Transhumanist thought argues that humans can, and indeed should, overcome their inherent biological, psychological, and cognitive limitations through technology. In this perspective, death is not seen as a necessity, but rather as a problem that can be technically solved, perhaps merely a "threshold to be crossed."This perspective deviates from the Stoic call to wisely confront the inevitable, viewing death as a flaw that can be eliminated.

In this context, digital immortality projects -for example, transferring an individual's mental content to a digital environment or making existence sustainable through artificial intelligence-powered avatars- are the product not only of technical advancements but also of cultural unease in the face of death. In contrast to Stoicism's call to "accept death and live accordingly,"modern humans now operate with the mindset of "escape death and buy time."

Therefore, the question we face today is not merely "how long will we live?"but also "what kind of life will we live?"Stoicism addresses this question through inner balance, acceptance, and virtue, while transhumanism seeks the answer in imagining a longer, more powerful, and even immortal life through technological interventions. These two approaches pursue the effort to make sense of human existence through their ways of confronting death, but from different perspectives.

3. The Body's Experimental Space in the Face of Death: The BLUEPRINT Movement

Chris Smith's 2025 documentary Live Forever: The Man's Quest for Immortality showcases the life-extension efforts of transhumanist entrepreneur Bryan Johnson as one of today's most radical experimental areas. Through his project called BLUEPRINT, Johnson seeks not only to slow aging but also to reverse it. To achieve this, he treats his body like a laboratory subject: taking more than one hundred and thirty pills a day, following a strict vegan diet, engaging in intense exercise routines with algorithmic precision, and undergoing various medical treatments. This entire lifestyle is guided not by personal desires or spontaneous choices but by a strict regimen dictated by algorithms and biomedical protocols.

Two tendencies converge in Johnson's stance: an existential fear that deepens

in the face of death, and the desire to establish absolute control over one's own body. Moreover, his surrender not only of his biological processes but also of his mental order to algorithmic controls shifts fundamental philosophical concepts such as freedom and consciousness onto a highly contested ground. Thus, his lifestyle raises a paradoxical question: to what extent is the act of "living" itself realized in the pursuit of preserving and rejuvenating the body?

At this point, Emil M. Cioran offers a sharp critique. For him, attempts to prolong life indefinitely or to preserve perpetual youth become a superficial obsession that erodes life's depth. The individual who panics in the face of aging is in fact fleeing reconciliation with death and "contaminating" existence with artificial interventions. As Cioran puts it, those who fear wrinkles and the body's natural frailty are prisoners of a narcissistic self-love, wandering between the mirror and the cemetery with their thoughts (Cioran, 2022, p. 156).

Interventions such as BLUEPRINT represent only one face of humanity's defiance of death. On the other face, increasingly discussed in recent years, are designs of digital immortality. This approach entails possibilities such as transferring the mind into a digital medium, creating AI-supported models of consciousness, or sustaining one's presence through avatars. Yet here a fundamental problem emerges: is digitized consciousness still the "self"? When memory and thought processes are copied, can the resulting entity truly be considered identical with the living individual?

The Netflix series Altered Carbon explores these debates through a dystopian future. In this world, consciousness can be stored on data disks called "cortical stacks" and transferred into new bodies, making death no longer a biological ending. However, this kind of "immortality" deepens social inequalities because access to consciousness-transfer technologies is limited to those with social privilege. In this way, eliminating death raises troubling questions about the moral and philosophical foundations of human existence: does escaping death add meaning to life, or does it make it less meaningful? Do technological efforts toward immortality increase human freedom, or do they diminish it? And ultimately, are these efforts fair, or do they create new injustices?

Biological immortality initiatives may become a reality only for the narrow class able to afford such costly technologies. Figures like Johnson turn their bodies into subjects of advanced scientific research, while the masses remain condemned to natural mortality. Digital immortality scenarios pose similar risks: as in *Altered Carbon*, only elites gain access to "endless life" through consciousness transfer, while others continue to bear the burden of death. Thus, immortality emerges not

as salvation for humanity but as a new privilege deepening social divides.

Johnson's life protocol offers a paradoxical interpretation of freedom. To postpone death, he has surrendered his life to algorithmic routines, programming his body like a biological machine. This overturns the classical notion of freedom: does a person, in order to live, renounce their own spontaneous choices and cease to be the master of their own life? Here, freedom is not defined by the right to choose, but by the guarantee of biological continuity.

Stoic philosophy, by contrast, argues the exact opposite: true freedom lies in accepting life despite death and maintaining equanimity before it. The attempt to abolish death may produce not freedom but dependency, for the individual arranges every moment of life around the effort to escape the fear of death.

How does the ideal of immortality transform the value of life? For the Stoics, life derives its worth from its finitude; every moment is precious precisely because it is limited. When death is abolished or indefinitely postponed, the intensity and meaning of life risk dilution. From a transhumanist perspective, however, the meaning of life is defined by continuity and capacity for exploration. A being who lives longer would be capable of more knowledge, experiences, and transformations. Yet, as Cioran emphasizes, such striving can also "contaminate" existence: the individual who cannot make peace with death loses the tragic depth of existence and succumbs to the illusion of a superficial continuity.

Biological and digital quests for immortality reflect different dimensions of humanity's struggle with death. Yet both raise inevitable ethical dilemmas:

Does the effort to transcend death liberate the human being, or render them dependent on algorithms and technical protocols?

In the absence of death, does life retain its depth, or does it devolve into a monotonous cycle of repetition?

The clash between Stoic thought and transhumanist ideals becomes clear around these questions. Stoic wisdom regards the acceptance of death as essential to the meaningfulness of life, whereas transhumanism envisions the eradication of death as humanity's ultimate salvation. Perhaps the most pressing ethical question of our age lies precisely here: is it overcoming death, or embracing it, that truly renders us free?

In short, Johnson's BLUEPRINT movement provides a modern experimental platform that challenges the concept of biological immortality. However, this initiative also raises an unavoidable question: is overcoming death solely about keeping cells young, or is it also possible for the mind to detach from the body and move into a digital realm of existence? This very question places digital immortality at

the heart of current philosophical debates.

3.1. The Transition from BLUEPRINT to Digital Immortality

Johnson's BLUEPRINT initiative aims to reverse biological ageing by subjecting the body to an algorithmic regime. This approach transforms the body into a kind of 'technological project' and treats death as a postponable engineering problem. However, Johnson's vision is not limited to biological enhancement. His investments in brain mapping and neurotechnology through the Kernel company point to a second phase focused on the possibility of digitising consciousness (Economic Times, 2024). In this context, Blueprint can also be read as a 'time-buying' strategy for digital immortality projects.

However, there are clear differences between these two approaches. While Blueprint aims to ensure continuity by rejuvenating the body, digital immortality seeks to separate consciousness from the body and transfer it to a digital environment. In Blueprint, artificial intelligence acts as an authority regulating the human life protocol, whereas in digital immortality, artificial intelligence becomes a new domain where consciousness resides (032c, 2023; Undercode News, 2025).

Ethically, Blueprint's algorithmic biocontrol carries the risk of 'bio-authoritarianism,' where the individual's will is transferred to the machine (The Nation, 2024). Digital immortality, on the other hand, raises issues of identity and selfhood: Is the digital copy still 'me,' or is it merely a simulation? This debate parallels Derek Parfit's theory of 'psychological continuity' (1984) on personal identity.

Philosophically, both approaches view death not as an existential phenomenon but as a technical problem to be overcome. However, while Blueprint adopts a strategy of optimising life to postpone death, contrary to Nietzsche's doctrine of 'amor fati,' digital immortality, with its Cartesian heritage, seeks to 'overcome death' by separating consciousness from the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

As a result, Johnson's projects bring together two distinct paradigms of immortality: biological continuity (Blueprint) and disembodied continuity (digital immortality). This connection is technologically mutually reinforcing, but it also contains a tense division at the ethical and ontological levels.

4. The Quest for Digital Immortality: Technological Efforts to Combat Death

Throughout human history, death has preoccupied minds as one of the most ancient existential fears. This anxiety has sometimes been suppressed through mythological narratives and sometimes through religious beliefs, but in the contemporary world, technology presents a brand new challenge to this fear. Especially in recent years, with the acceleration of digitalization, individual and collective responses to death have undergone a significant transformation. Death is now viewed not only as an end but also as a "problem"to be overcome. This perspective, combined with the ideal of digital immortality, raises the question of whether a form of existence after physical death is possible.

Digital platforms enable the individual to be visible in a way that is not limited by time, space, or physical existence. This alleviates some of the anxiety surrounding the transience of the body and allows individuals to distance themselves from natural processes such as aging and extinction. As Dede (2024) emphasizes, digital identities help individuals redefine themselves in social life and, thus, suppress their anxieties about death.

On the other hand, this phenomenon has a much older tradition in philosophy. Practical philosophy offers methods for guiding an individual's life and coping with existential anxieties. The philosophy developed in Ancient Greece, particularly by Epicurus, aims to liberate people by asserting the groundlessness of the fear of death. According to Epicurus, "While we are, death is not; when death comes, we are not."Therefore, the fear of death is an irrational anxiety and has the potential to render human life meaningless. In this sense, philosophy is a therapy aimed at achieving spiritual serenity for the individual (Cornford, 2021, pp. 25–26).

Stoic thinkers such as Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus are among the philosophers who follow this line of thought. For them, death is a part of the natural order and, therefore, a reality that must be accepted. However, in more recent times, we see that the ways of confronting death have become increasingly diverse, sometimes veering toward nihilistic tendencies. In Nietzsche's words, some philosophers have found only nothingness behind all human ideals (Nietzsche, 1997, p. 68). In contrast, thinkers such as Nietzsche, Spinoza, Camus, and Kierkegaard have attempted to redefine the value of life and attempt to make sense of the fear of death.

Nietzsche (1997) states that to make a judgment about the value of life, one must have a perspective outside of life itself, but this is impossible. Values speak from within life; it is life itself that reveals them. Therefore, overcoming the fear of

death also requires a deep understanding of the meaning of life.

While digital immortality promotes the idea that consciousness can be freed from the limitations of the body, some initiatives propose a more concrete strategy: entrusting the body itself to future technologies. The aim of this approach is not to transfer consciousness to data disks, but to preserve the body in the hope that future scientific developments will revive it. Thus, the fight against death evolves from the digital to cryogenic dreams.

4.1. Cryogenic Body Freezing

The pursuit of health, lifespan extension, or attainable immortality through the use of future technologies is not new, but rather an extension of a long-standing thought system. Today, some wealthy individuals are known to have their bodies frozen in liquid nitrogen tanks, with the intention of being revived at a future date (Cryonics Institute, 2022). This practice is known as "cryogenic body freezing,"or technically, "cyronics."

This method, which has been discussed since the 1960s, is based on the assumption that the body or tissues can be preserved at very low temperatures for extended periods without deterioration (Akkaya, 2022, p. 209). This process is noteworthy for demonstrating the capacity of humans to envision not only their biological lives but also the afterlife and to project onto their "future selves."

However, the grieving process of individuals experiencing loss is as important as the individual anxiety of death, which philosophy focuses on. However, this field has largely remained the domain of psychology. Today's technologies, however, offer tools that aim to alleviate not only individuals' fears of their own death but also the pain arising from the deaths of others.

5. Technology and Grief: Holding on to Losses with Digital Memories

Grief is one of the deepest and most complex human emotions. An individual who loses a loved one is uprooted from their familiar routine and forced to adapt to a new reality. While the psychological dimension of this process is quite intense, in the modern age, technology has begun to offer new solutions to alleviate this pain.

In this context, James Vlahos's 2019 conversion of his father's memories and personal information into a digital chatbot using artificial intelligence can be consi-

dered one of the most concrete examples of digital immortality. Vlahos's company, HereAfter AI, is expanding such services, enabling individuals to partially compensate for their losses through "digital selves"(projectdecember.net, 2024).

Similarly, another company, Project December, has developed text-based chatbots by creating digital representations of the lost. Their advertisements include the phrase "You can even talk to someone who is no longer alive,"which highlights the resistance to the finality of death (projectdecember.net, 2024). Such services are offered not only for the post-loss grieving process but also for other emotional experiences such as the pain of separation and unrequited love.

With the advancement of technology, not only voice but also facial expressions, facial expressions, and even tone of voice can be mimicked by artificial intelligence. The South Korea-based company DeepBrain AI can create digital avatars of deceased individuals with just a photograph and a ten-second audio recording, and these avatars can be used through various communication tools such as messaging, voice calls, or video calls (upi.com, 2024).

The increasing number and diversity of these technologies suggests that death is becoming a difficult concept for the modern individual to accept. Instead of mourning, the desire to continue interacting with the lost person in a digital environment is becoming more prominent. This situation shows that technological developments have transformed not only physical life but also emotional processes and perhaps redefined the social meaning of death.

However, these digital avatars and mourning technologies offer only a symbolic threshold in the struggle against death. While these tools, which mimic the images of the deceased, alleviate the emotional burden of death, they do not alter its biological and ontological reality. In contrast, contemporary science now claims to be able to engineer not only memories but the mind itself. Thus, technology enters a new dimension in this multi-layered quest in the face of death: viewing the human brain as both a map of its own existence and a rewritable code.

6. Current Scientific Approaches to Mind Mapping in the Digital Age

This new plane represents the most radical form of digital immortality: the separation of the mind from biological limitations and its reconstruction in a computer environment. Current scientific research is no longer concerned solely with digitising memories, but with analysing and simulating the entire neural circuitry.

Mind mapping and whole-brain emulation efforts, in this context, are not merely technical goals; they can also be seen as a way for humans to assert their right to design themselves.

Today, technology has ceased to be a tool solely for emotional appeal; it has paved the way for scientific studies aimed at directly processing and transferring the human mind and consciousness. Advances in neuroscience, supported by artificial intelligence and advanced technologies, are enabling concrete steps toward understanding and simulating the functioning of the human brain. The concept of digital immortality is being addressed not only through psychological ways of coping with loss but also through the digital transfer of the minds of living individuals.

Pioneering work in this field began with the creation of neuronal maps in simple organisms such as Caenorhabditis elegans (C. elegans). Recently, an experiment on Drosophila melanogaster (fruit fly) achieved the first three-dimensional mapping of all neurons and connections in a living creature (Dorkenwald et al., 2024, p. 124). The success of these studies was achieved by processing over one hundred terabytes of data, and approximately one hundred thousand neurons and one hundred million synapses in the fly brain were analyzed in detail. The resulting wiring diagrams revealed neural circuit structures similar to mammalian brains.

These advances led to a focus on the mouse and, ultimately, the human brain, which are larger and more complex structures. Projects led by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Wellcome Foundation are designed to reconstruct the entire mouse brain from microscopic data reaching up to an exabyte (Dorkenwald et al., 2024, p. 136). Successful completion of this process will also allow the mapping of the human brain's structure, which comprises approximately one hundred billion neurons and trillions of connections.

"Whole brain emulation," which aims to digitally simulate the human brain, is highly controversial from both scientific and ethical perspectives. This approach considers the transfer of the human mind to a digital environment theoretically possible and is based on three fundamental steps: (1) high-resolution scanning of the brain, (2) automatically converting the scanned data into a three-dimensional computational model, and (3) implementing this model through simulation on powerful hardware (Bostrom, 2020, pp. 48-49).

In this context, processes such as scanning brain tissue with a microscope and modeling the connections of each neuron make the idea of mind uploading technically feasible. The development of artificial intelligence and deep learning techniques has also been influential in accelerating this process. Geoffrey Hinton's work on artificial neural networks, in particular, has laid the foundation for approaches to

understanding how the human brain works.

As Watanabe (2022) suggests, consciousness transfer may be possible by being able to read and write at certain fundamental junctions of the brain structure. Structures such as the corpus callosum, anterior commissure, and posterior commissure play a critical role in integrating the two streams of consciousness. Roger Sperry's split-brain experiments point to the multilayered nature of conscious experience; recent studies show that this structure can support two distinct streams of consciousness even in intact brains (Research Features, 2023).

Projects like the 2045 Initiative are taking this idea further, working on avatar systems that can transfer minds to synthetic environments. The project's four-stage avatar series aims to establish an infrastructure that will enable mind uploading by 2045 (2045.com, 2025).

In this context, digital immortality is not only a scientific goal but also a phenomenon that requires thorough ethical, philosophical, and sociological inquiry. Max Tegmark's (2019) theory of the three versions of life reveals the scope of this transformation. Accordingly, the following stage:

a) Life 1.0, which offers only the ability to survive and self-replicate, is simple biological evolution. b) The Life 2.0 phase, in which humans limited by biological hardware acquire new complex abilities, develop cultural values, create languages, acquire professions, and thus gain identities, is cultural evolution. In this phase, despite our limited hardware, we can receive software updates with the cultural capabilities we have acquired. c) The final stage of evolution that humanity will experience, Life 3.0, is a technological evolution that is independent of biological hardware, meaning that humans can update their hardware over generations just as they update their software. In this stage, there is not only evolution but also design.

Tegmark defines the 'Life 3.0' stage as a form of existence that transcends the limitations of biological hardware, capable of consciously updating both its software and hardware. This phase differs from classical biological evolution because change is not driven by the long-term, random process of blind natural selection, but by conscious interventions and design principles.

In Life 3.0, the organism's 'software' -information, consciousness, abilities, and learning capacity- can be continuously updated through artificial intelligence, neurotechnology, and biotechnology. However, the truly radical transformation lies in the ability to redesign the 'hardware' -the physical body and biological infrastructure- over generations as desired. This encompasses not only the development of biological form through genetic engineering, but also the transition to non-biological forms such as artificial bodies, cyborg structures, and entirely digital

carriers.

The design element transforms humanity in this phase not merely into an 'evolving' entity but into the architect of its own existence. Here, 'design' is not merely a technical process but a creative practice that encompasses ethical, aesthetic, and philosophical dimensions. Questions about which characteristics to develop, which boundaries to preserve, and which values should be at the centre of this transformation bring not only technological but also moral and cultural debates to the forefront.

Therefore, Life 3.0 is not merely a technological evolution but also signifies the 'reimagining of existence.' The random changes that nature has brought about over millions of years are replaced by a conscious design process guided by human hands. This transforms humanity into a 'design species' capable of planning its own form, capacity, and future, transcending its status as a biological species. Though not yet fully realised on Earth, humanity has ultimately broken free from its evolutionary chains and become the master of its own destiny (Tegmark, 2019, p. 44).

At this point, it could be argued that the principle of amor fati (love your fate), which occupies an important place in Stoic thought, loses its meaning. For an entity that transcends its hardware limitations, the obligation to 'submit to fate' no longer exists; instead, the possibility of designing one's fate arises. However, this interpretation remains reductive. This is because, in Stoicism, amor fati is not merely a passive acceptance, but a practice of endowing every form of existence with meaning and directing it towards virtue. Even if humans design their own destiny, they cannot fully control all the conditions they encounter: technical limitations, unforeseeable consequences, moral dilemmas and the search for meaning continue to exist.

Therefore, even in the Life 3.0, Stoic principles retain their philosophical validity. Memento mori continues to remind us of the fragility and transience of all forms of existence beyond biological death. Amor fati, on the other hand, teaches that humans should embrace not only their given fate but also the future they design with their own hands, and continue to live a virtuous life in every situation that arises.

In conclusion, Tegmark's vision of transforming humans into masters of their own destiny does not invalidate Stoic thought but rather highlights its relevance. For no matter how much of a designer they may be, humans will always remain limited beings, surrounded by uncertainty and open to unpredictable outcomes. The Stoic call resonates precisely here: whether biological or digital, humans can only lead a meaningful life by accepting their limitations and choosing virtue in all

circumstances.

7. On the Emulation of the Human Mind and the Meaning of Death

Science fiction often precedes philosophical and ethical debates, forcing large audiences to ask profound questions about the future. Literature and cinema, in particular, anticipate the effects of technological developments and open up a space for reflection. In this context, the series Altered Carbon, as a literary reflection of the idea of digitising the human brain, provides a fertile ground for posthumanist discussions.

This series, scripted by Laeta Kalogridis, is based on Richard K. Morgan's novel of the same name and deals with the separation of consciousness from the biological body and its transfer to other bodies. This transfer is made possible by transforming carbon-based life forms into a digital environment. In this system, death is only possible through the fragmentation of memory; otherwise, a person's digital trace can continue to exist in other bodies. For everyone except those who adhere to the Neo-Catholic belief system, death is nothing more than a technical malfunction or an ethical choice.

Concepts such as brain emulation and consciousness transfer point to MIT professor Max Tegmark's 'Life 3.0' evolution. In this new phase, a vision of humanity is emerging that is independent of both software and hardware and does not require physical existence. Death becomes merely an option that exists 'if desired.' However, in this new age, death is not merely an end to be avoided; it can also be an escape itself. An individual who commits suicide by shattering their memory can rewrite their own destiny.

In this context, the two fundamental principles of Stoic thought, memento mori (remember death) and amor fati (love your fate), may initially seem to have lost their relevance. With death becoming a matter of choice, the existential necessity of accepting fate or remembering death appears to vanish. However, it would be simplistic to claim that Stoic concepts are completely without meaning. On the contrary, even in a scenario where death can be postponed or transformed, when faced with the illusion of infinity, humans still need to remember their own fragility. The delayed or altered state of death keeps the Stoic principles of 'accepting limits,' 'living in harmony with nature,' and 'meaningful engagement with the present' relevant, though in a different context. Memento mori can still serve as a reminder

not only of our biological end but also of all kinds of existential limitations; amor fati, in turn, can guide humans to accept their own destiny and current state of existence, even when options like digital immortality are available.

The dialogue between Kovacs and Bancroft in the series Altered Carbon dramatically reflects this tension. Kovacs, believing in the natural order of death, opposes constant reincarnation. However, Bancroft, recalling Nietzsche's words 'God is dead,' argues that death is now an individual choice. As Nietzsche puts it in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, with the death of God, it becomes impossible to tie the meaning of life to a transcendent principle. At this point, Stoicism reminds us that it is possible to preserve the moral value of confronting the limits of existence without relying on a transcendent reference.

The desire to transcend the limitations of the body, combined with the fear of death, rapidly propels humans along the transhumanist path. The fundamental claim of transhumanism is that humans can overcome their current biological limitations and leave behind their fragility in the face of death. In this context, immortality is not merely a utopia, but a technical and intellectual necessity. Indeed, in order to achieve this goal, humans can no longer remain purely biological beings; they must evolve into cyborgs, products of the human-machine union (Çadır, 2023, p. 35).

According to Ray Kurzweil's predictions, humanity will achieve (1) knowledge of the fundamental building blocks of physics and chemistry, (2) the decoding of biology and genetic code, (3) an understanding of nervous systems and brain patterns, (4) the development of technological hardware and software capabilities, (5) the full integration of human intelligence with technology, and (6) the spread of largely non-biological human intelligence throughout the universe. This evolutionary leap represents the fifth stage in his six-stage evolutionary theory (Kurzweil, 2019, p. 33).

The fifth stage, defined as the beginning of singularity, makes it possible to exponentially increase access to and processing power of information by exceeding the limited connection speed and capacity of the human brain (Kurzweil, 2019, p. 39). Kurzweil's approach is not only a scientific scenario but also a vision of the future for humanity with undefined ethical boundaries. Today, neurotechnological developments and cybernetic applications show that the transition to this stage has already begun. For example, the use of neurolink-like interfaces to treat neurological diseases demonstrates that human-machine integration is no longer a fantasy but a practical reality (Yonck, 2019, p. 308).

The transformation from glasses to cochlear implants, from prosthetics to

bionic limbs, reveals the transformation of humans into a kind of 'modern cyborg' by merging with technological extensions. This is not merely a physical change but also an existential evolution. This transformation embodies concrete examples of the concept of 'transcending humanity,' which is the fundamental goal of transhumanism. The concept of posthumanism refers to a type of being that emerges as a result of this process, one that transcends the current human form and possesses higher cognitive, emotional, and physical capacities (Çadır, 2023, p. 31).

Post-humans not only overcome the natural limitations of humans, such as death, ageing, and disease, but also possess 'morphological freedom,' the ability to reshape the form of the body, and much more advanced cognitive abilities. These new beings also have the capacity to develop, at their discretion, less anger, more joy, or a more sophisticated emotional range (More, 2013, p. 4).

However, all these possibilities should be evaluated not only as technical progress but also as a moral, cultural, and metaphysical rupture. Modern thought, which has declared the death of God, has left behind not only God but also traditional theology in this context. Transhumanism proposes a new form of existence in which the individual can construct their own divinity. Humans envision a future free from the concept of death, whether by continuing their existence as digital avatars or by completely detaching themselves from physical form by uploading all their mental data to a 'cloud' system.

In the process Ray Kurzweil calls the 'singularity' phase, the boundaries between humans and machines become blurred. According to Kurzweil, this phase is a stage in which biological intelligence merges with technological intelligence, and humans become a technological rather than a natural part of the evolutionary process (Kurzweil, 2019, p. 33). Even today, technologies such as neurochips, cochlear implants, and bionic limbs used to treat neurological disorders demonstrate that humans are transcending their biological limits. The transition from human to posthuman is not merely a vision of the future but a transformation that is already taking place.

In this new era, posthumans will be free from constraints such as disease, old age, and death; they will become individuals with much greater physical and cognitive capacities. However, this development will also bring new ethical and existential problems. As Stoic thought reminds us, no matter how advanced technical capabilities become, the relationship humans establish with their limitations, the meaningful way of living in the present moment, and the pursuit of virtue will not disappear. On the contrary, visions of digital immortality invite us to reinterpret these very principles.

In this age where God, religion, affiliations, and even the individual self are transforming, it is not at all far-fetched to imagine a universe where the human mind exists only as a digital trace floating in the cloud. It is predicted that entities similar to the digital superintelligence in the film Transcendence will emerge as new life forms in the future. In this case, death may become not just a physical end, but a temporary state as fleeting as a software update. However, whether in biological or digital form, as Stoic philosophy teaches, the meaning of life lies not in conquering death, but in building a form of existence at peace with it.

However, an important philosophical question arises here: If the mind can be digitally emulated, can this mind truly be considered a continuation of the original? According to Leibniz's law of identity, "numerically identical things must possess the same properties."The question of whether a digitised mind is identical to the original self requires a discussion that goes beyond Leibniz's Law. Three different approaches can be mentioned regarding personal identity: psychological continuity, physical continuity, and spirit-based explanations.

The theory of psychological continuity defines personal identity through the continuity of memories, intentions, and mental states. From this perspective, a digital mind transfer could potentially preserve identity if the right conditions are met. However, as Parfit emphasizes (1984, p. 210), psychological continuity is not absolute but relative and pluralistic; this obscures the question of which is the 'real' person when digital copies emerge.

The theory of bodily continuity, on the other hand, argues that identity is tied to the biological organism. In this approach, a digitised mind ceases to be the 'same person' the moment it is separated from the body and becomes merely a copy. This view also questions the Cartesian mind-body dualism often assumed by transhumanist projects.

One of the main reasons for resorting to the theory of physical continuity to solve the problem of personal identity is that the criterion of psychological continuity falls short in the face of certain thought experiments. In hypothetical scenarios such as teleportation, cloning, or brain transfer, the uncertainty of psychological continuity may make physical continuity a more consistent alternative. However, the main reason is the widespread belief that physical existence is indispensable for the continuation of personal identity. We are not purely mental beings, but living beings integrated with our bodies. Physical characteristics such as our faces, gestures, and mannerisms are also integral parts of our identity.

Nevertheless, the issue of personal identity is not simply a matter of identifying the elements that make us 'us.' Physical continuity may not be sufficient on

its own to preserve identity. Personal identity based on physical criteria should be explained more in terms of bodily continuity than psychological phenomena. The criteria may vary depending on which physical element is taken as the basis. For example, it may be more consistent to associate personal identity with the brain rather than the body. This is because personality appears to be dependent on the existence of the mind, and the mind is ultimately shaped by the brain. From this perspective, the brain theory is more advantageous than the body theory. As long as the brain remains unchanged, changes in the body do not disrupt personal continuity. Similarly, if there are two separate brains in a two-headed body, this implies two separate personalities. In a similar manner, if the brain of a patient (A) whose brain is not functioning but whose body is alive is transplanted into a patient (B) whose body is dead but whose brain is intact, the surviving individual will be A.

Brain theory offers a compromise between the two views, emphasising the importance of physical existence while also taking psychological continuity into account. However, there are situations that require this theory to be rejected. One of these is a forward-looking technological expectation known as 'mind uploading'. Famous futurist Ray Kurzweil (2019), argues that by the 2030s, the human mind will be able to be transferred to a digital environment. According to him, the biological body will eventually become insignificant, and our minds will be transferred to a new environment without us even realising it.

While Kurzweil's prediction is optimistic, if the mind is accepted as a purely physical process, digital transfer may be possible in the future. In such a scenario, if all our memories, personality traits, and beliefs were transferred to another environment, we would be inclined to think that the protector of our personal identity is not the brain, but the mind itself. This supports the view that psychological continuity is the most fundamental criterion for personal identity.

Finally, when we look at spirit-based explanations, they also base identity on the existence of a transcendent spirit independent of material or psychological elements. From this perspective, digital mind transfer cannot guarantee the transfer of the spirit to the digital environment; therefore, 'true identity' is not achieved in any way.

When these three approaches are considered together, it becomes clear that the idea of digital immortality is not only a technical problem but also a metaphysical one. While Leibniz's Law provides a logical framework for this discussion, the question of what criteria should be used to define identity cannot be resolved without reference to these broader theoretical contexts.

Therefore, it is doubtful whether such a simulation can perfectly correspond

to the original mind as a subject. This question brings us to the heart of the philosophical problems of consciousness.

Another important risk, as Cioran warns in The Book of Decay, is the emergence of the 'subhuman' that could occur when humans abandon their own nature. Cioran's concept of the 'subhuman' reflects his deep existential pessimism and radical questioning of human destiny. He is skeptical of the idea that the human species will evolve towards 'progress' or, in Nietzsche's words, the 'superhuman' (Übermensch). According to him, history often moves not upward but downward—towards humanity's own corruption and alienation from itself. Nietzsche views humanity as a being that must be transcended, and he sees the goal of this transcendence in the 'superhuman'. Cioran, however, argues that a form of existence he calls the 'subhuman' -characterized by a weakened will and a collapse of spiritual and moral foundations- could emerge. This degeneration is not biological but relates to the loss of meaning, values, and ethical depth.

According to Cioran, the development of reason and technology does not save humanity from confronting existential emptiness; on the contrary, it accelerates efforts to escape from this emptiness. The 'subhuman' is the final destination of this escape: a figure who does not pursue great ideals, does not bear historical responsibility, but merely survives without truly living. In this context, the concept of the 'subhuman' serves as a powerful warning in today's discussions of transhumanism, digital immortality, and post-humanism.

Attempts to make humans 'more resilient' or "smarter" through technological interventions can, from Cioran's perspective, paradoxically lead to the exhaustion of meaning. In this scenario, the 'subhuman' emerges as a physically powerful but spiritually empty being. Technical progress devoid of moral standards can cause humans to flee from freedom and responsibility. The greatest danger is the desire to be freed from the burden of freedom. As technology takes on the burden of thinking, decision-making, and choice, human ethical autonomy erodes.

From Cioran's perspective, transferring consciousness to a machine is not a gateway to the 'superhuman,' but rather a tunnel leading to the 'subhuman.' In this process, the meaning of death, the educational effect of limitation, and moral depth are lost, replaced by an 'endless but shallow' existence. In the modern age, the 'subhuman passage' encompasses not only technological degeneration but also consumer culture, excessive comfort, and a practice of survival devoid of meaning. Ethically, this carries the risk of reducing the question 'how should we live?' to 'how do we survive?'

Cioran's warning about the 'subhuman' serves as a sharp lens for questioning

the optimistic rhetoric behind transhumanist ideals. While post-human visions of the future promise immortality and absolute perfection, the question of how these goals will transform humanity is often overlooked. If technological progress transforms humans into beings who think faster and live longer but cannot produce value, this opens the door not to Nietzsche's 'superhuman' but to Cioran's 'subhuman.' In such a world, humanity risks losing its sense of meaning in the shadow of its technical victories, reducing life to an experience that is merely sustained but not truly lived. Ultimately, mapping, digitising, and transferring the human brain into another form is not merely a technical advancement; it is a paradigm shift that fundamentally transforms the meaning of being human. The central question in this process is not so much how far technology will go, but rather what aspect of humanity we wish to preserve. For even as we stand on the threshold of a posthuman future, the question of what humanity is and what it wishes to remain remains as weighty as ever.

9. Conclusion

Throughout human history, death has been the most shocking boundary stone of individual and collective consciousness. The Stoic tradition's memento mori principle is not merely a reminder, but an existential ethic that constantly questions what it means to be human. The awareness of death has remained meaningful for centuries as a motivation that enhances the value of life and encourages virtuous actions. Today, however, this awareness is being redefined in the shadow of technological utopias; we are confronted with the idea that death can be postponed or even overcome entirely through digital immortality projects.

Transhumanism claims to transcend the cognitive, physical, and emotional limits of humanity, while posthumanism fundamentally questions human-centred ethical models. In this context, the issue is not merely an escape from death, but a reimagining of the most fundamental constants of existence. However, Stoic thought reminds us that with the changing of technical possibilities, death and finitude do not disappear entirely, but merely change form. Even in the age of digital immortality, memento mori continues to remind us not of the end of the body, but of the fragility of memory, identity and meaning.

A similar transformation applies to amor fati. According to Stoicism, fate is not the acceptance of events beyond human control, but the affirmation of existence as it is. Today, fate seems to have been reduced to a set of options that can be technically regulated or even erased. However, this does not invalidate Stoic teaching; on the contrary, it makes it even more relevant. Because, regardless of the equipment

they possess, humans must learn to accept their digitalised or designed form and to live virtuously within it. Amor fati, in this context, is a call for acceptance not only of biological destiny but also of technological existence.

The promise of digital immortality also raises moral and existential questions: What meaning can concepts such as crime, atonement, forgiveness, or repentance have in a future without death? Will moral experiences shaped by the linear flow of time be transformed into a cyclical order in which memory is backed up? Stoicism offers a balance in the face of these questions: to build a meaningful life within our limits, without underestimating the possibilities offered by technology, but without surrendering to them.

The metaphysical upheaval Nietzsche initiated with his statement that 'God is dead' has found a different resonance in the digital age. This time, it is not only God but also everything that mortal humans have sanctified—death, fate, pain, patience, hope, virtue—that is being questioned. But it is precisely at this moment of dissolution that Stoic principles offer a new foundation: even if death is postponed or even transformed, the need for humans to consciously acknowledge their own limitations and affirm their existence does not disappear.

Ultimately, both admiringly embracing transhumanist utopias and outright rejecting them would be reductive. The real issue is not achieving immortality, but building a virtuous life within limitations. And perhaps, right in the midst of digital immortality, remembering memento mori and amor fati is the most timely philosophical call for humanity to remain human.

References

Akkaya, H. (2022). Ölüm sonrası yaşam arayışları: bilim, teknoloji ve felsefe açısından Cyronics. *Bilim ve Gelecek Dergisi, 209*, 18–23.

Cioran, E. M. (2022). *Çürümenin kitabı* (H. Kalcı, Trans.). Jaguar Yayınları.

Bostrom, N. (2020). *Süper zekâ yapay zekâ uygulamaları, tehlikeler ve stratejiler* (2. Baskı) (F. B. Aydar, Trans.). Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Cornford, F. Macdonald (2021). *Bilgeliğin başlangıcı: eski Yunan'da felsefi düşüncenin kökenleri* (Ş. Filiz & F. Özeş, Trans.). Say Yayınları.

Cryonics Institute. (2022). Cryonics: Frequently asked questions. `https://www.cryonics.org/faq`

Çadır, Y. (2023). *Transhümanizm: ölüm ve ölümsüzlük.* Kedidedi Yayıncılık.

Dede, Ö. (2024). *Dijitalleşme ve modern insan: ölümlülüğün dönüşümü.* İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Dorkenwald, S., Saalfeld, S., & Turner, N. (2024). The complete connectome of a fly brain. *Science Advances, 10*(2), 124–136. `https://doi.org/10.1126/science.add9330`

Kenny, A. (2017). *Batı felsefesinin yeni tarihi, antik felsefe cilt 1* (S. Uslu, Trans.). Küre Yayınları.

Kurzweil, R. (2019). *İnsanlık 2.0: Tekilliğe doğru biyolojisini aşan insan* (4. Baskı) (M. Şengel, Trans.). Alfa Yayınları.

Long, A. A. (2002). *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic guide to life.* Oxford University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of perception* (D. A. Landers, Trans.). Routledge.

More, M. (2013). The philosophy of transhumanism. In M. More & N. Vita-More (Eds.), *The Transhumanist Reader: Classical and Contemporary Essays on the Science, Technology and Philosophy of the Human Future* (pp. 3–17). Wiley-Blackwell.

Nietzsche, F. (1997). *Ahlakın soykütüğü üzerine* (A. T. Kuru, Trans.). Say Yayınları.

Nietzsche, F. (2010). *Böyle buyurdu Zerdüşt* (K. Ata, Trans.). İlgi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık.

UPI. (2024, October 23). DeepBrain AI revives the dead with hyper-realistic avatars. `https://www.upi.com/Top_News/2024/10/23/deepbrain-ai-revives-the-dead/0001698064`

New York Times. (2025, January 1). He wants to live forever. Can he

convince anyone else? `https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/01/technology/bryan-johnson-blueprint-anti-aging.html`

Onur, F. (2023). Kişisel kimlik için kriter arayışı: Sezgilerin çatışması. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 24*(44), 169–190. `https://doi.org/10.21550/sosbilder.1179213`

Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and persons.* Oxford University Press.

Project December. (2024, October 27). Advanced chatbots that simulate the dead. `https://projectdecember.net`

Research Features. (2023). A conscious future: Watanabe's vision of artificial awareness. `https://researchfeatures.com`

Saqib, A. (2023). Whole brain emulation: Challenges and future directions. *Journal of Cognitive Computing, 11*(3), 203–218.

Smith, C. (Director). (2025). *Live forever: The quest for immortality* [Film]. Netflix.

Tegmark, M. (2019). *Yaşam 3.0: İnsan çağında yapay zekâ* (Z. Bilgen, Trans.). Buzdağı Yayınları.

2045 Initiative. (2025, January 13). Avatar Projesi. `https://2045.com`

Watanabe, T. (2022). *From biological to artificial consciousness.* MIT Press.

Yonck, R. (2019). *Makinenin kalbi: yapay duygusal zekâ dünyasında geleceğimiz* (T. Göbekçekin, Trans.). Paloma Yayınları.