

thinking

togetherness

ANDREJ BOŽIČ (*Ed.*)

THINKING TOGETHERNESS

PHENOMENOLOGY AND SOCIALITY

Dr. **Andrej Božič** is research fellow at the Institute Nova Revija for the Humanities (Inštitut Nove revije, zavod za humanistiko; Ljubljana, Slovenia).

The scientific monograph is published as part of the effectuation of the research program *The Humanities and the Sense of Humanity from Historical and Contemporary Viewpoints* (P6-0341), the research project *The Hermeneutic Problem of the Understanding of Human Existence and Coexistence in the Epoch of Nihilism* (J7-4631), and the infrastructure program *Center for the Promotion of the Humanities* (I0-0036).

The publication of the book is financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

165.62:316(082)

THINKING togetherness : phenomenology and sociality / Andrej Božič (ed.). -
Ljubljana : Institute Nova Revija for the Humanities, 2023. - (Humanistična zbirka
INR = The Humanities Series INR)

ISBN 978-961-7014-40-2
COBISS.SI-ID 172262659

ANDREJ BOŽIČ (Ed.)

THINKING TOGETHERNESS

PHENOMENOLOGY AND SOCIALITY

INR | INSTITUTE NOVA REVUJA
FOR THE HUMANITIES

Ljubljana 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dean Komel — Andrej Božič Thinking Togetherness. Foreword	9
---	---

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Dragan Prole Sociality in the Husserlian Cave	15
---	----

Iaan Reynolds Abstraction and Self-Alienation in Mannheim and Husserl	31
---	----

Filip Borek <i>Schwingung</i> at the Heart of Phenomenon. Intersubjectivity and Phenomenality	45
---	----

TRANSCENDENTALITY AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Zixuan Liu What Is the Irreality of Social Reality? Higher Visibility Transcendental Intentionality	63
---	----

Noam Cohen Subjectivity as a Plurality. Parts and Wholes in Husserl's Theory of Intersubjectivity	89
---	----

Anthony Longo Intersubjectivity, Mirror Neurons, and the Limits of Naturalism	103
---	-----

Ka-yu Hui The Expressive Structure of the Person in Husserl's Social Phenomenology. From Subjective Spirit to Cultural Spiritual Shape	117
--	-----

DEVELOPMENTS AND REFINEMENTS

Liana Kryshevskaja	
The Notion of the Social World in Gustav Shpet's Conceptualization and the Ways of Phenomenology	131
Daniele Nuccilli	
Wilhelm Schapp on the Narratological Structure of Intersubjectivity	143
Daniel Neumann	
Sharing a Realistic Future. Gerda Walther on Sociality	157
Jan Strassheim	
"Passive" and "Active" Modes of Openness to the Other. Alfred Schutz's Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity	169
Andrzej Gniazdowski	
Phenomenology of the Total State by Aurel Kolnai	183
Max Schaefer	
Renewing the Erotic Relation. Michel Henry and the Lover's Night	205

COLLECTIVITY AND COMMUNITY

Marco di Feo	
The Ontological Root of Collective Intentionality	227
Lucia Angelino	
Sartre and Freud as Resources for Thinking the Genesis of a We-Perspective	241
Marco Russo	
The Theater of Appearances. Social Phenomenology of Excentricity	255
Nerijus Stasiulis	
The Ontology of Sociality	269
Dario Vuger	
On Circumlocution as Method. From Heidegger and Debord Towards a Philosophical Praxis	279
Silvia Pierosara	
Managing the Absent. On the Role of Nostalgia in Individual and Social Relations	299

PARTICULARITIES AND TOTALITARITIES

Michal Zvarík	
Socrates and <i>Polis</i> in the Thought of Jan Patočka and Hannah Arendt	313
Zachary Daus	
On the Significance of Mutual Vulnerability in Hannah Arendt's Conception of Freedom	327
Fabián Portillo Palma	
Isolation and Loneliness as Categories of Social Being. Arendt and the Origin of Totalitarian Movements	339
Gintautas Mažeikis	
Faustian Hope and Power. Bataille, Bloch, Habermas	351
Guelfo Carbone	
A Way Out of Nazism? Heidegger and the "Shepherd of Being"	365
Dean Komel	
On Totalitarium	381

7

INDIVIDUALITY AND EXPRESSIVITY

Evgeniya Shestova	
Communication in the Text Space. Phenomenology of the "Logic of Question and Answer"	401
Manca Erzetič	
The Hermeneutics of Testimony in the Context of Social Mediation	413
Andrej Božič	
"Mitsammen." Paul Celan's Poetry in the "In-Between" of (Cultural) World(s)	427
Antonia Veitschegger	
Disagreement about an Art Work's Value. Why It Is Unavoidable, What It Consists In, and How to Deal With It	443

TECHNOLOGIES AND CONTROVERSIES

Joaquim Braga	
On Don Ihde's Concept of Technological Background Relations	459
Žarko Paić	
The Body and the Technosphere. Beyond Phenomenology and Its Conceptual Matrix	475
Paolo Furia	
Uncanniness and Spatial Experience. A Phenomenological Reading of the COVID-19 Lockdown	511
AUTHORS	533
INDEX OF NAMES	539

Dean Komel

ON TOTALITARISM

Abstract: Philosophical, historiographical, sociological, political, cultural, and other studies of totalitarianism in the 20th century focus on its “social appearance,” but predominantly without the insight that this “social appearance” can by itself be totalizing with regard to the horizon of the world as a whole of beings, although they presuppose it as their “objective assumption.” Totalitariness as *totalitarium* is empowered by the functional machination of the worldhood of the world dictated by the totalization of social subjectivity. Likewise, the system of production, defined by techno-scientific progress and capitalized globally, needs to be understood in the context of the empowerment of social subjectivity, which is functionally “objectified” into totalitariness. The totalitariness is established by various blocks and zones of functioning, however not in historical consecutiveness, but rather as a conjuncture of regulations, disposals, subordinations, and re-orderings, which take power over everywhere.

Keywords: totalitariness, totalitariness, society, subjectivity, world.

In contemporary philosophy, as well as in the wider field of social and cultural studies, and also in media communications in general, concepts, such as “global society,” “knowledge society,” “post-industrial society,” “information society,”

The text is published as part of the implementation of the research program *The Humanities and the Sense of Humanity from Historical and Contemporary Viewpoints* (P6-0341), the research project *The Hermeneutic Problem of the Understanding of Human Existence and Coexistence in the Epoch of Nihilism* (J7-4631), and the infrastructure program *Center for the Promotion of the Humanities* (I0-0036), which are financially supported by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS).

“risk society,” and “the society of the spectacle”¹ have, in addition to the old ones, such as “capitalist society,” “socialist society,” “mass society,” “consumer society,” etc., become well-established in recent decades. In these designations, “society” is, in different respects but nonetheless uniformly, addressed as the subject of an all-encompassing world process, *without explicit definition of the subjectivity of society as a processor*.

Peter L. Berger’s study *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, published in 1966 with Thomas Luckmann, is considered one of the central works of phenomenologically oriented sociology, an orientation founded by Alfred Schütz (cf. Schütz 1932). In the book, Berger defined society as “[...] a human product, and nothing but a human product, that yet continuously acts upon its producers” (Berger 1967, 3). Berger’s characterization of society as a product and a producer of man at one and the same time could also be somewhat refined. Are we not today made to bear witness to society acting *as a total production with and beyond man*, placing the latter, as “human resource” or “human capital”—together with all the “natural resources”—in the function of its own empowerment? The total (re)production of society as the unconditional subjectivity establishes power over the world, which is being, whilst the horizons of worldhood are erased, systematically transformed into *totalitarium*.

382

The world does not subsist as a universum, but functions as the totalitarium.

If we take into account that *the worldhood of the world* forms a distinguished theme of phenomenology, this premise dictates a consideration of the totalitarian structure, which is not only marked by the peculiarities of the so-called “social world,” but which concerns *the world as a whole*. The term “totalitarium” connotes a direct connection with what we are used to labelling the social phenomenon of “totalitarianisms,” which historically defined the 20th century. However, between totalitarianism as a social phenomenon and the totalization of social subjectivity over the world, a difference emerges that requires its own description and interpretation. Referring to the current theories of totalitarianisms, and the social ideologies behind them, can thus

1 Within the scope of this article, we cannot specifically cite all of the many relevant reference works and authors. The present text was written in connection with my book *Totalitarium* (Komel 2019).

prove very useful, but at the same time it can also prove insufficient for defining the totalization of the subjectivity of society itself, which does not have to rely specifically on ideological or any other terror, insofar as technology and capital are sufficient to maintain its power, under which everything functions. Despite that, we do not come to anything.²

Of course, I do not in any way intend to deny the various social forms of violence today or the various psychopathologies of desubjectification and deobjectification that accompany them. I also do not want to diminish the relevance of civil society efforts for social changes. However, it is necessary to consider what dictates the conditions of the possibilities, within which such efforts are actualized. What characterizes *the unconditional activation and actuality* of totalitarianism itself?

Totalitarium is essentially *mundus totalitarius*. Totalitariness, which establishes *totalitarium*, does not arise from the world as a *totality of existing*, but from the power of a self-willed ruling over the world.

Previous definitions of totalitarianisms as social and historical phenomena have repeatedly directed attention to the difficulty of structurally defining the terms “totalitariness,” “totalitarianism,” and “totalitarian society” (cf. Bracher 1981 and Žižek 2002). In “The Logic of Totalitarianism,” Claude Lefort, certainly one of the most prominent researchers of totalitarianism in the last century, described the *totalitarian social structure* as follows:

383

Totalitarianism presupposes the conception of a society which is sufficient unto itself and, since the society is signified in power, the

2 In this context, Sheldon S. Wolin introduces the distinction between “classical totalitarianism” and the new “inverted totalitarianism”: “[...] totalitarianism is capable of local variations; plausibly, far from being exhausted by its twentieth-century versions would-be totalitarians now have available technologies of control, intimidation and mass manipulation far surpassing those of that earlier time. // The Nazi and Fascist regimes were powered by revolutionary movements whose aim was not only to capture, reconstitute, and monopolize state power but also to gain control over the economy. By controlling the state and the economy, the revolutionaries gained the leverage necessary to reconstruct, then mobilize society. In contrast, inverted totalitarianism is only in part a state-centered phenomenon. Primarily it represents the *political* coming-of-age of corporate power and the *political* demobilization of the citizenry.” (Wolin 2010, xvii–xviii.)

conception of a power which is sufficient unto itself. In short, it is when the action and knowledge of the leader are measured only by the criterion of organization, when the cohesion or integrity of the social body turns out to depend exclusively on the action and knowledge of the leader, that we leave the traditional frameworks of absolutism, despotism and tyranny. The process of identification between power and society, the process of homogenizing the social space, the process of enclosing both society and power are linked together to constitute the totalitarian system. With the constitution of this system the representation of a “natural” order is reestablished, but this order is supposed to be social-rational and does not tolerate apparent divisions or hierarchies. (Lefort 1999, 77.)

384 By “the logic of totalitarianism,” Lefort means the systemically directed *manipulation* of social reality, not the *machination* that characterizes the process of totalizing society as totalitarianism. Totalitarian social machination, unlike totalitarian social manipulation, *erases the very worldly-historical horizon and its ground*, which is why it cannot be historically located in the way that, for example, Nazism and Communism as totalitarian social phenomena are explained within the historical situation of the 20th century. That totalitarianism as a machinating takeover of power over everything can no longer be placed in history does not follow only from some postmodernist declaration of the end of history and the corresponding end of man, art, philosophy, capitalism, revolution, etc. On the contrary, all these ends are ultimately possible only within the framework of *the totalization of social subjectivity*, which can itself calmly, blithely, and with universal approval also declare the end of society in its global or planetary dimensions. One can draw a comparison with the collapse of past civilizations, as well as with the apocalyptic end of the world, which was successfully replaced by the “scientifically” supported theory of the Anthropocene. The very label “Anthropocene” reveals the machination with *the worldhood of the world*, if we consider that the English word “world,”³ like

3 “Old English *woruld*, *worold* ‘human existence, the affairs of life,’ also ‘a long period of time,’ also ‘the human race, mankind, humanity,’ a word peculiar to Germanic languages (cognates: Old Saxon *werold*, Old Frisian *warld*, Dutch *wereld*, Old Norse *verold*, Old High German *weralt*, German *Welt*), with a literal sense of ‘age of

the German word “Welt,” originally meant “age of man.” One might say: the empire strikes back.⁴

In any case, referring to the end of history, even if we reduce it to its geological level, does not absolve us from *the question of the truth of this history*, which is not merely some socially confirmed historical reality, but concerns the question of *the essential eventuating* of the historicity of this history or the worldhood of the world. Martin Heidegger tackled this question when he conceived of the history of being as the nihilism of the will to power, which does not simply define some socio-historical course and the systemic manipulation of it, but the transformative processing and procedure of historicity itself in the manner of *Machenschaft* (Heidegger 2012, 99–132). *Machenschaft*, *machination*,⁵ as such, drives the machinery of totalitarianism, in which everything and everyone merely functions, and nothing more.⁶

man,’ from Proto-Germanic **weraldi-*, a compound of **wer* ‘man’ (Old English *wer*, still in *werewolf*; see *virile*) + **ald* ‘age’ (from PIE root **al-* (2) ‘to grow, nourish’).” (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. “world,” accessed November 23, 2022, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/world>.)

4 For more on this, cf. Moore 2016 and Stiegler 2018.

5 “Late 15c., *machinacion*, ‘a plotting, an intrigue,’ from Old French *machinacion* ‘plot, conspiracy, scheming, intrigue’ and directly from Latin *machinationem* (nominative *machinatio*) ‘device, contrivance, machination,’ noun of action from past-participle stem of *machinari* ‘to contrive skillfully, to design; to scheme, to plot,’ from *machina* ‘machine, engine; device trick’ [...].” (*Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. “machination,” accessed November 23, 2022, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/machination>.)

6 In his *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger plays broadly also with the label *Welt-Imperialismus*, *world-imperialism*: “Yet world-imperialism itself is only something pursued and driven by a process having its determinative and decisive ground in the essence of truth in the modern sense. The basic form of this truth unfolds as ‘technology,’ whose essential delimitation cannot be captured by the usual notions. ‘Technology’ is the name for the truth of beings insofar as they are the ‘will to power’ unconditionally inverted into its distorted essence, i.e., insofar as they constitute the *machination* which is to be thought metaphysically and in terms of the history of being. Therefore, *all* imperialism is *conjointly*, i.e., in reciprocal increase and subsidence, pursued to a highest consummation of technology.” (Heidegger 2017, 187.) “In this process, which we grasp only extrinsically as long as we think of it as ‘world-imperialism,’ absolute subjectivity attains its consummation even according to the circumstance that for humans now there remains altogether no means of escape

The complex of functioning is the driving force of society as a subjectivity that propels into function simply so that everything functions.

Heidegger, in laying out the machination that turns everything into function, partly relied on Ernst Jünger's formulation of "total mobilization" (Jünger 1993), which, compared to what Lefort considers "the logic of totalitarianism," plunges deeper into the very *metaphysics* of the totalization of society itself. Nevertheless, Heidegger accepted Jünger's formulation with a certain reserve, namely, because he followed the insight that *Machenschaft* as such conceals its metaphysical essence, which decisively contributes to the fact that the phenomenality of the subjectivity of society in the process of its totalization appears as a *gigaphantom*: in an enormous production of its appearance, it simultaneously obscures and denies its own essential character in such a way that everything becomes equally essential or equally unessential. We cannot say that the totalization of social subjectivity assumes the fundamental function of being, insofar as what is represented by being remains just a function that guarantees the power of the functioning of the world as totalitarianism. The more social "occurring" and "processes" become functionally phantomic, the less clear and transparent what we still call "society" is. This, of course, is not an obstacle, but a condition for society to be unconditionally totalized.

This *gigaphantom* is, therefore, not something phantasmatic and unreal, but at most something virtual and hyperreal (to use Baudrillard's label), which renders questionable even the possibility of a *phenomenological description* of society's present condition. At the same time, the concept of "social construction of reality," as proposed by Berger and Luckmann in the aforementioned work, appears to be a good deal problematic. As their subtitle indicates, they themselves understood it as a contribution to the "sociology of knowledge."

The phenomenological research method, which Berger and Luckmann relied on, claims that each position of knowledge is guaranteed on the basis of a phenomenological description, which should bring the horizon of understanding to a certain level of *evidence* and *contextual analysis*. Compared

on earth; that is, the selfcertainty of the subjectum has now been caught and enclosed unconditionally in its most proper distorted essence, and self-relatedness, the sense of absolute reflexion, has become definitive." (Ibid., 187–188.)

to analyses in the social sciences, phenomenological description is not limited to providing a more or less credible picture of social realities or of the entire social situation on the basis of the available data. When describing social phenomena, in order to broaden the horizon of understanding at all, phenomenological description must be assumed from the outset; *we ourselves* must be essentially included in any structural analysis of society. However, the fact that the “we” does not evince merely some social preobjective givenness, but a socially active coexistence, does not of itself ensure the evidence of experience, which we have with ourselves. This requires an explicit phenomenology of *the lifeworld*, which reveals that the experience with ourselves is correlated with *the horizon of the world*, since otherwise *it would not be an experience at all*. This fact, however, can only have a *constitutive*, not a *constructional* validity, which, for example, is also revealed through all literature and art.

This evidence, which directly concerns *us in the world*, does not of itself appear only at the level of theoretical dealing with social phenomena; rather, it is present already within the most common human action (*praxis*), which is referred to others according to its end-in-itself. The production of goods, as well as their sale and consumption, is, in comparison with action, purely purposeful and not *properly* directed at others. That I act of my own accord and “for my own good,” therefore, does not negate, but rather essentially affirms the actions of another just as it does to me—although not always for me—of equal value. From this follows further *evidence of the world we share with others*. That we can share a world, or that it, on the other hand, divides us, should not be taken as a mere social fact, since social facticity itself can only be formed on the basis of the assumption of human action and cooperation in the world that we share—most directly in that we can communicate in it. “We,” “you,” they,” “those over there,” etc., do not only express the subject of some interconnected multitude, but first and foremost express the world between us.

Precisely the tendency of interpersonal communication shows that the “world common to all” exceeds, as a whole, human action, but at the same time it cannot manifest itself experientially, if human action does not enter it; here, we can recognize the elementary *emergence of freedom*, which cannot be invented and constructed, unless it has found us in advance. As something already found, freedom is constitutive of *being-in-the-world*. We associate

freedom most of all with the experience of ourselves, but it is precisely in this connection that the irreparable connection of freedom with necessity is revealed, which has been the central topic of philosophy from its beginnings to the present day; as such, it triggers a *polemos* regarding the *just* constituting of the social world and of the world in general (cf. Komel 2019).

Although today the demands for justice around the world ring louder than ever and although the tremendous levels of social injustice in the world have been statistically proven, it is necessary to ask whether, in principle, the subjectivity of a society that transforms the universe into totalitarianism even needs justice and anything fundamental. Or is it enough to spread the propaganda of total freedom, which also sells the fiction of a just society, in which everything and everyone functions? Everything is perfect, except that we remain without the world.

388 The difference between *subjugating* and *delivering* the world is relevant precisely in relation to the phenomenological consideration of the worldhood of the world as a horizontal unveiling of what prevails over us, even before we *subjugate* it, and at the same time it demands of us a free attitude. In this regard, let us quote Heidegger's very succinct phenomenological formulation of the delivering of the worldhood of the world in "On the Essence of Ground," which he dedicated to Husserl in 1929 on the occasion of his seventieth birthday:

*Freiheit allein kann dem Dasein eine Welt walten und welten lassen.
Welt ist nie, sondern weltet.* (Heidegger 1978, 162.)

Or, in English translation:

*Freedom alone can let a world prevail and let it world for Dasein.
World never is, but worlds.* (Heidegger 1998, 126.)

We quote Heidegger's formulation, because it succinctly presents a phenomenological point of view towards the *a priori* aspect of the worldhood of the world, which prevails in advance, to the extent and only to the extent that freedom releases it (to us). This is an essentially releasing freedom, in which we can recognize an intimation of Heidegger's later introduction of *Gelassenheit*,

releasement (Heidegger 2010). Essential in this respect is the emphasis that the prevailing of the world does not follow from the existence of, but from *the worlding* of the world. Although it seems that this is just a play on words, a so-called *figura etymologica*, it is a genuine phenomenological indication of *the worldhood of the world* in the sense of what is giving itself in advance, although it is never given in the manner of some fact or thing. The ascertainment that *the world worlds*, but does not “exist,” in this connection, therefore, does not mean any denial of the existence of the world, but a recognition of the horizons of its advance giving, in short, the recognition of the worldhood of the world. The freedom that lets the world prevail is not a subjective self-certainty as a guarantee of the objective reality of the world. The latter never lets the world prevail as *arche*, but, rather, according to its own self-will, which it perceives as a certain freedom in itself, transforming the world into its totalitarian archive; this should not be understood only to mean that an egoistic individual, as a human or even a superhuman, takes possession of the world and corrals it within the zone of his interests. This concerns the authority of society as a world overruling subjectivity, which is not willing to let the world prevail. As a result, it cannot be “generalized” to any set of individual human specimens. In order for society to function as an unconditional subjectivity, each individual will must be put into function (cf. Stiegler 2013). The empowerment of society’s subjectivity, therefore, corresponds to the enormous striving of individual wills for will; these can express themselves personally, culturally, through media, academically, politically, economically, etc., without being able to achieve anything other than the self-promotion of this power of expression, but never the power in itself. The will never triumphs, which is perhaps decisive for the machinating empowerment of the society’s subjectivity.

389

This undoubtedly further problematizes the “social construction of reality.” What conceptual validity do we attribute to this “construction”? The construction, which we distinguished earlier from constitution, can only have the validity of systemic, technologically transmitted functioning, which Heidegger called *Gestell* (Heidegger 1977). This raises the question of how to understand *social construction*—*Gestell*—in terms of subjectivity, if it is structurally connected in advance to the plant of technological production? Thus, it cannot be claimed that society dominates the world with the help of technological progress. However,

the frontal expansion of technology can be *conceived* as *technosphere* (Paić 2022) or *medium* (Trawny 2017), in which *the society that is being technologized* and *the technology that is being socialized at once* dominate the world and functionally mediate it as *totalitarium*. The subjectivity of society, which totalizes itself in the *sphere, medium, and zone* of technological recycling machinery, is therefore not composed of and represented only by “human resources” or “human capital”; rather, everything “technologically produced,” as well as “naturally born,” and, of course, first and foremost “the public space,” is functionally harnessed into its machinating economy.

It is certainly worth considering how we can justify the label “subjectivity,” if we are not satisfied with justifying it on the basis of its modern origin. In this respect, the concept of society as subjectivity was already thoroughly dealt with by Niklas Luhmann. Within the framework of his systems theory, society is conceived as an autopoietic, self-organizing, and self-managing system that leaves behind the perception of society as subjectivity. In his *Social Systems*, Luhmann emphasizes:

390

Kant started with the assumption that plurality (in the form of sense data) is given and that unity must be constituted (synthesized). Only separating these aspects, thus posing complexity as a problem, makes the subject into a subject—indeed, into a subject of the connection between plurality and unity, not only into a producer of synthesis. Systems theory breaks with Kant’s point of departure and therefore has no need for a concept of the subject. It replaces it with the concept of self-referential systems. Then it can say that every unity used in this system (whether as the unity of an element, the unity of a process, or the unity of a system) must be constituted by the system itself and cannot be obtained from its environment. (Luhmann 1995, 28.)

When Luhmann outlines the difference between systemic and subjectivist conceptions of society, he is not only distancing himself from Kant, but he is distancing himself from the entire transcendentalist tradition, including Husserl’s phenomenology. It could be said that he marks off systems theory from all of philosophy, which is based on the assumption of self-knowledge, and proves the

rational will to know and act. In establishing this demarcation, Luhmann partly relies on the “deconstruction of the subject,” such as that undertaken by Derrida and other authors. However: does conceiving of society as a self-referential or autopoietic system really overpass and dismiss understanding *society as subjectivity*, or does this transition to the systemic level empower society as a subjectivity that totalizes itself?⁷ By replacing the correlation of subject and object, which characterizes the cognitive and ontological ground of philosophy in the modern era, with the interaction of system and environment (“Umwelt” in German), Luhmann bypasses the worldhood of the world, or reduces it to the environment. The very order of the world is thereby made disposable as an object of systemic regulation that is dictated by the totalization of society’s subjectivity. This subjectivity, which regulates and subordinates the world, is not a subjectivity based on a human or social subject; rather, it posits itself in terms of systemic supremacy. Luhmann himself emphasizes that “every unity used in this system (whether as the unity of an element, the unity of a process, or the unity of a system) must be constituted by the system itself and cannot be obtained from its environment.” However, the functioning of the system, precisely at the point of its own self-referentiality, demonstrates the systemic empowerment of the subjectivity of the society, in which everything must function. To the extent that in this all-functioning the difference between social achievements and the technological efficiency disappears, the system is no longer the determinative form for the society; rather, it functions as an information management *apparatus* that empowers power itself and, in this respect, essentially manifests itself as *an apparatus of power*.⁸

391

7 Indicative in this regard is not only the title of Luhmann’s *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (1997), but also many other titles of his books that were published by Suhrkamp: *Die Wirtschaft der Gesellschaft* (1989), *Die Wissenschaft der Gesellschaft* (1990), *Das Recht der Gesellschaft* (1993), *Die Kunst der Gesellschaft* (1995), *Die Religion der Gesellschaft* (1998), *Die Politik der Gesellschaft* (2000), *Das Erziehungssystem der Gesellschaft* (2002), and *Die Moral der Gesellschaft* (2008). The English editions avoid literal translations of the titles: *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* is thus translated as *Theory of Society* (2012–2013).

8 Cf.: “a collection of tools, utensils, etc. adapted as a means to some end,’ 1620s, from Latin *apparatus* ‘tools, implements, equipment; preparation, a preparing,’ noun of state from past-participle stem of *apparare* ‘prepare,’ from *ad* ‘to’ (see ad-) + *parare* ‘make ready’ (from PIE root *pere- (1) ‘to produce, procure’).” (*Online Etymology*

The apparatus of power, which is here at work socially and which communicates in information terms, cannot be swayed to any will, not even the will to power. Any interference with the will of anyone—be it that of officials, directors, commanders, leaders, dictators, taxpayers, protestors, influencers, the public—proves to be mere self-will, to which the apparatus easily submits, eventually even becoming “fashionable.” Nevertheless, it is worth considering whether the unknown apparatus of power is not in itself some tremendous self-will, or whether, as Heidegger suggested, it is *the will to will, which insatiably devours everything before it*.⁹ The contradiction between *the insatiable will* and *the order of power* is only apparent or machinating within the systemic framework, if this framework is understood as an apparatus of power that exercises total dominance over the world and subordinates everyone without exception.

392 The result is that totalitarianism as a state of the world as a whole no longer represents any order (cosmos, universe, inter-subjectivity), but it represents *a dispersion of subordination*. Here, the differentiation between subordinators and subordinates, between masters and subjects, between capital and labor, lies in the background. What is essential in this universal establishment of power-over (the world) is the will, or the will to a will that *cannot resist*—which at the same time means acting against and being completely susceptible to—power. This *sub-*, *under-* doubly characterizes the *sub-*jectivity of society, which corresponds to the *hyper-*reality of totalitarianism. It is not the case that one should subordinate others, but that everyone without exception must be subordinated, in order for *sub-ordination* to hold sway over the order of the world as a whole. The subjectivity of society that re-orders the world into totalitarianism is given in the manner of *total subjection*.

Here, it seems useful to mention, in addition to Luhmann’s criticism of the subjectivist conception of society, Heidegger’s definition of the essentiality of

Dictionary, s.v. “apparatus,” accessed December 12, 2022, <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=apparatus>).

9 “The will has forced the impossible as a goal upon the possible. Machination, which orders this compulsion and holds it in dominance, arises from the being of technology, the word here made equivalent to the concept of metaphysics completing itself. The unconditional uniformity of all kinds of humanity of the earth under the rule of the will to will makes clear the meaninglessness of human action which has been posited absolutely.” (Heidegger 2003, 110.)

subjectivity, which he provided, alongside an intimation of totality, in his lectures *The Principle of Reason*:

Subjectivity is not something subjective in the sense of being confined to a single person, to the fortuitousness of their particularity and discretion. Subjectivity is the essential lawfulness of reasons which *pro-vid*e [zu-reicht] the possibility of an object. Subjectivity does not mean a subjectivism, rather it refers to that lodging of the claim of the principle of reason which today has as its consequence the atomic age in which the particularity, separation, and validity of the individual disappears at breakneck speed in favor of total uniformity. Whether or not we may want to look into and attest to it today, all this is based in the *Geschick* of being as objectness for the subjectivity of Reason, for *ratio* as determined by the *principium rationis*. Its injunction unleashes the universal and total reckoning up of everything as something calculable. (Heidegger 1991, 80.)

393

Totalitarianism is characterized by total uniformity of subjection. Heidegger outlines the subjectivity of Reason, not of society, but at the same time emphasizes that subjectivity is not merely something humanly-subjective. Heidegger and Luhmann seem to agree on the definition of subjectivity up to a certain point; however, while Luhmann conceptually renounces the use of the label “subjectivity” in the context of treating society as an autopoietic system, in Heidegger’s exposition of the machination of *Gestell* as the essence of technology (“Technik”), as evidenced by the previously given references, we even encounter its emphasized use. How is it that subjectivity is not (any longer) a determination of the human subject—on the contrary, it even eliminates it—, yet it can still be an increasingly powerful determination of the rationally calculated machination? This cannot be equated with Hegel’s “cunning of the reason” or “instrumental reason,” which is the subject of Horkheimer’s, Adorno’s, and Marcuse’s critiques. Even if we declare that today the instrumental function of this intelligence is done by the smartphone and artificial intelligence, we should consider the function of digitalization within the context of the totalization of social subjectivity (cf. Stiegler 2016). Perhaps,

following what we previously highlighted as medium and technosphere of the totalization of society's subjectivity, we should add here also the *noosphere*,¹⁰ which defines subjectivity as "essential lawfulness of reasons which *pro-vide* [zu-reicht] the possibility of an object." This should not be taken as something delivered from outside. *Gestell*, in its functional *Herstellen* and *Bestellen* (*installation*) (cf. Heidegger 1997, 3–35), is not something that waits behind the doors and enters when we open it; it imbues the very threshold of the "subject" in advance, so that it willingly or unwillingly disposes and is itself predisposed for what the subjectivity of society as total subjection installs into it. This installed subjection is entirely at work when it meets our expectations, ambitions, emotions, feelings, thoughts and imaginations, creativity, political aspirations, social activism, as well as our scientific achievements and religious beliefs, strategies of war, futuristic architecture, stock markets, prices of raw materials, necessities of life, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

394 Michel Foucault who devoted a number of his works to the genesis of subjectivity in the social, political, historical, as well as in the individual and biopolitical contexts based his analyses of social installation and the related subjectivations, subjectifications, and subjections on *the theory of dispositive*. Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben (2009), among others, particularly drew attention to its validity for today's "social theory." It is important to emphasize that Agamben himself supports the English translation of the French term *dispositif* as *apparatus*, which also appears in the English translations of Deleuze's writings. This also allows Agamben to make a direct reference to Heidegger's definition of *Gestell*,¹¹ namely, when he accentuates the following:

10 The term "noosphere," which was introduced by the biogeochemist Vladimir Vernadsky and by the Jesuit, paleontologist, and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, serves as a predecessor to the term "Anthropocene." Regarding the connection between the concepts of the *Anthropocene*, *technosphere*, and *noosphere*, cf. Lemmens 2022.

11 "When Heidegger, in *Die Technik und die Kehre* (The Question Concerning Technology), writes that *Ge-stell* means in ordinary usage an apparatus (*Gerät*), but that he intends by this term 'the gathering together of the (in)stallation [*Stellen*] that (in)stalls man, this is to say, challenges him to expose the real in the mode of ordering [*Bestellen*],' the proximity of this term to the theological *dispositio*, as well

The term “apparatus” designates that in which, and through which, one realizes a pure activity of governance devoid of any foundation in being. This is the reason why apparatuses must always imply a process of subjectification, that is to say, they must produce their subject. (Agamben 2009, 11.)

Agamben further ascertains that the manner of how the formation of apparatuses formulates the process of subjectification is key to dealing with what Foucault called “disciplinary society.” In this regard, processing subjectification is obviously embedded in the procedure of desubjectifying subjections:

Indeed, every apparatus implies a process of subjectification, without which it cannot function as an apparatus of governance, but is rather reduced to a mere exercise of violence. On this basis, Foucault has demonstrated how, in a disciplinary society, apparatuses aim to create—through a series of practices, discourses, and bodies of knowledge—docile, yet free, bodies that assume their identity and their “freedom” as subjects in the very process of their desubjectification. Apparatus, then, is first of all a machine that produces subjectifications, and only as such is it also a machine of governance. (Ibid., 19–20.)

395

Deleuze, in this regard, emphasizes that Foucault’s theory of the dispositive or apparatus is linked to the transition from *disciplinary society* to *control society*:

Some have thought that Foucault was painting the portrait of modern societies as disciplinary apparatuses in opposition to the old apparatuses of sovereignty. This is not the case: the disciplines Foucault described

as to Foucault’s apparatuses, is evident. What is common to all these terms is that they refer back to this *oikonomia*, that is, to a set of practices, bodies of knowledge, measures, and institutions that aim to manage, govern, control, and orient—in a way that purports to be useful—the behaviors, gestures, and thoughts of human beings.” (Agamben 2009, 12.)

are the history of what we are slowly ceasing to be and our current apparatus is taking shape in attitudes of open and constant *control* that are very different from the recent closed disciplines. Foucault agrees with Burroughs who announced that our future would be more controlled than disciplined. The question is not which is worse. Because we also call on productions of subjectivity capable of resisting this new domination and that are very different from the ones used in the past against the disciplines. A new light, new utterances, new power, new forms of subjectivation? (Deleuze 2007, 345–436.)

396 If we once again take up Wolin’s distinction between “classical totalitarianism” and “inverted totalitarianism,” we can easily determine that “control society” is already a very recognizable brand of “classical totalitarianism.” In the conditions of “inverted totalitarianism,” however, it is not about society or about some part of it being under the control of a particular apparatus, but rather about *society as an apparatus that itself exercises control in the function of the totalization of its own subjectivity*. That the rebellion against such a “controlled society” and the revolutionary change of the world can be left to the agency of new “forms of subjectivation,” as Deleuze suggests, is indeed beyond questionable. Is not the worldhood of the world turning into *totalitarium* precisely, because of new and new “forms of subjectivation” installed by the machinating totalization of social subjectivity? According to the conditions of this installing, the “world” also functions only within the apparatus and as a slide on the screen of social subjectivity.

Translated by Jason Blake

Bibliography

- Agamben, Giorgio. 2009. *“What Is an Apparatus?” and Other Essays*. Trans. by D. Kishik and S. Pedatella. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Berger, Peter L. 1967. *The Scared Canopy. Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City: Doubleday and Company.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Garden City: Anchor Books.
-

- Bracher, Karl Dietrich. 1981. "The Disputed Concept of Totalitarianism." In *Totalitarianism Reconsidered*, ed. by E. A. Menze, 11–33. Port Washington: Kennikat Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles 2007. "What Is a Dispositif?" In G. Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, 343–352. Los Angeles—New York: Semiotext(e).
- Heidegger, Martin. 1977. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. by W. Lovitt. New York and London: Garland Publishing.
- . 1978. *Wegmarken*. 2nd ed. Frankfurt: Klostermann.
- . 1991. *The Principle of Reason*. Trans. by R. Lilly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- . 1998. "On the Essence of Ground (1929)." In M. Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, trans. by W. McNeill, 97–135. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2003. "Overcoming Metaphysics." In M. Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. by J. Stambaugh, 84–110. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2010. *Country Path Conversations*. Trans. by B. W. Davis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 2012. *Contributions to Philosophy: Of the Event*. Trans. by R. Rojcewicz and D. Vallega-Neu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 2017. *Ponderings XII–XV: Black Notebooks 1939–1941*. Trans. R. Rojcewicz, Richard. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 397
- Jünger, Ernst. 1993. "Total Mobilization." In *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. by R. Wolin, 119–139. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Komel, Dean. 2018. "Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit als zentrale Determinanten der politischen Welt." In *Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit als Herausforderung der Humanwissenschaften / Freedom and Justice as a Challenge of the Humanities*, ed. by M. Miladinović Zalaznik and D. Komel, 73–84. Bern, etc.: Peter Lang.
- . 2019. *Totalitarium*. Ljubljana: Inštitut Nove revije, zavod za humanistiko.
- Lefort, Claude. 1986. "The Logic of Totalitarianism." In C. Lefort, *The Political Forms of Modern Society. Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, ed. by J. B. Thompson, 273–292. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Lemmens, Pieter. 2022. "Thinking Technology Big Again. Reconsidering the Question of the Transcendental and 'Technology with a Capital T' in the Light of the Anthropocene." *Foundations of Science* 27: 171–187.
- Luhmann, Niklas. 1995. *Social Systems*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Moore, Jason W. (ed.). 2016. *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland: PM Press.
- Paić, Žarko. 2022. *The Return of Totalitarianism. Ideology, Terror, and Total Control*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Schütz, Alfred. 1932. *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*. Wien: J. Springer.
- Stiegler, Bernard. 2013. *Uncontrollable Societies of Disaffected Individuals: Disbelief and Discredit*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- . 2016. *Automatic Society. Vol. 1: The Future of Work*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- . 2018. *The Neganthropocene*. London: Open Humanities Press.
- Trawny, Peter. 2017. *On Freedom: Technology, Capital, Medium*. Trans. by R. Lambert. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Wolin, Sheldon S. 2010. *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Žižek, Slavoj. 2001. *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism? Five Interventions in the (Mis)Use of a Notion*. London: Verso.

“The publication edited by Andrej Božič on *Thinking Togetherness. Phenomenology and Sociality* presents a novel and up-to-date account of phenomenology, which comprehends this philosophy as an essentially intersubjective or a communal enterprise; in the volume, phenomenology exceeds narrow limits of subjective life of consciousness, and focuses on various phenomena connected to the public, communal, and political spheres. [...] The book can serve both as a textbook in the heritage of the phenomenological movement and as a collection of original studies.”

Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Witold Płotka**

Institute of Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

“The comprehensive collection of contributions entitled *Thinking Togetherness. Phenomenology and Sociality* represents an important scientific achievement within the field of phenomenological philosophy. The monograph, the central topic of which is the elucidation of some of the essential dimensions of the social, was prepared, as already a simple glimpse over the table of contents reveals, in cooperation with an assemblage of authors from across the world. Such an international configuration of the whole composed of 32 chapters, meaningfully arranged into seven thematic sections, imparts upon the volume the character of an extensive and exhaustive, panoramic scrutiny of the phenomenological manner of confronting the question what constitutes the fundamental traits of interpersonal co-habitation with others. [...] *Thinking Togetherness. Phenomenology and Sociality*, therefore, not only offers a historical account with regard to the development of phenomenology, but also quite straightforwardly concerns its relevance within the philosophical research that deals with the contemporary problems of society.”

Assoc. Prof. Dr. **Sebastjan Vörös**

Department of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana

togetherness

thinking

INR | INSTITUTE NOVA REVIJA
FOR THE HUMANITIES

ISBN 978-961-7014-40-2



9 789617 014402