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 REVIJA 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
***Schwingung* 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 Kryshevska
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 *Polis* 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

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

Žarko Paić

The Body and the Technosphere

Beyond Phenomenology and Its Conceptual Matrix

Abstract: In the history of metaphysics and its transformation by Heidegger, the body could not emerge as an explicit issue, as it today still hides in neuro-cognitivism under the notion of "the embodiment of consciousness." Considering the horizons of the intersubjectivity of consciousness in Husserl's phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty made the first, and last, step in the expansion of metaphysics in terms of its way to the existential turn and openness of the body as an event. Curvature, fractalization, and substitutability are evidence that the body as a living machine appears in a very different way from the constant transformation of Being as described in the traditional metaphysics. The thinking of Being is compromised by the occurrence of the post-biological body and its permanent transformation. As interplanetary nomads, wandering in the universe, we encounter the uncanny "new nature" of *the technosphere* based on the logic of calculating, planning, and constructing. The body becomes a fluid and metamorphic object.

Keywords: body, technology, event, transformation, *the technosphere*.

Introduction

Nobody described the destabilization of metaphysics better than Nietzsche. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he intimates: *I will demand that what is so generously given to the other world be returned to the man*. Yes, returning what was given out of pure generosity is now shown to be the task of establishing "new values." It is not something only symbolically related to man and his habits of thought. It means a change in the very way of living. When the beyond loses its significance, immanence reigns supreme. Furthermore, instead of the subject, the term "object" gains new legitimacy in determining reality. What was despised for centuries as being transitory and solely in the service of the spirit—*the body*—suddenly takes on the functions of a thinking object. The problem

faced by thinking in the 20th century was caused by the entry of the body into an existential abyss filled with different physiological and psychological theories. Among them, above all, psychoanalysis tried to penetrate the dark zones of the unconscious, starting from the individual subject as the guardian of language. And thus, the question of the objectivity of the object focused on the sublime in the fetishism of things. This path leads from illumination to fascination. The body turned out to be an ontologically "empty center of power." The writing of signs into its signifying void could begin only after liberation from the rule of the *logos*.

How is it possible to think what connects this emptiness with its various manifestations, from desires, through the will to power and cognitive processes of creating a complex reality, all the way to the relationship with the main concept and problem of contemporaneity, such as technology in the form of *the technosphere*? In the following, this path of the body from metaphysical to cybernetic difference or from ontology as a phenomenology of the body, especially in the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, to the open space of *the techno-genesis* of objects is considered. The starting point is that the body must be understood historically and epochally as a machine in its two modes: analogue and digital. Transformations of Being (*nature*) belong to the former case, and transformations of events (*technosphere*) belong to the latter case. However, the machine that unrolls the body at an irreducible speed of transformation means that neither the logic of machines nor the structure of the organism anymore meets the definition of the machine and the body in general. We must, therefore, immediately try to create a language for the new phenomena. Before that, it is necessary to free the thinking from the habit of vainly searching for meaning in the idea of cause and purpose, instead of understanding how *the technosphere* peers into the singularity to the last point of the visible and invisible world of objects. For its fundamental principles, only visualization becomes the sufficient reason for knowing what is happening as a movement in space and time of irreversibility. Nothing is repeated without the "new" way, in which the original and the simulation, the stable and the unstable, are creatively mixed. Opening the problem of the techno-aesthetics of autonomous objects means reconsidering the role of the body in the creative process of *techno-genesis*. But also of its possible

disappearance in the process of cybernetic disembodiment. *The design of the body*, therefore, marks the transition from the aestheticization of the world as a ready-made object to the dizzying techno-aesthetic construction of the "new" life. Marcel Duchamp and all the theories of design as applied art have nothing more to say about this. When life becomes technologized to the point of the existence of an autonomous object, everything becomes possible and everything becomes real.

1. The phantom limb: Maurice Merleau-Ponty and borders of the phenomenology of the body

The keyword for the painter's existence comes from the verb related to the real and phantom limb as the main organ of the artist's physical-cognitive engagement in the situation. *To handle* something does not mean to carry out the hidden will of the transcendental subject in the sense of the initiator of the action. In such a case, the spirit would "manage" the body at its discretion. At the same time, subjectivism would be written into the blind destiny of an organ with a special place in the determination of human "being." We do not mean the symbolic or metaphysical sense of the hand that governs human life in the manner of directing it into the socio-political sphere of command, nor of conducting a symphony orchestra, nor, on the other hand, pointing to the act of faith and grace, which in Michelangelo's allegory of the creation of the world on the walls of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City signifies the touch of man and God. To handle refers to dealing with something that is already always in the service of another purpose. In this respect, the hand has a double meaning. It is a means of work or action and an instrument of direction towards the goal of action. As part of the symbolic-volitional activity of man, it can even be said that without a hand man cannot be an "operative" system of functional action. Therefore, it is not surprising that the problem of the so-called phantom limb (organ), i.e., the phantom hand as a prosthesis or technical replacement for what has been mutilated or taken away, shows the key problem of the difference between ontology and cybernetics. The first one focuses on the natural as part of the necessity of the functioning of the body as an "innate" way of connection/relationship between instincts and sensibility and soul-spiritual manifestations of the "Being in the world." The second, on

the other hand, concerning the construction of the artificial body (robotics and engineering), is oriented towards the freedom of a new way of thinking and acting. Formally speaking, it has this advantage, because it comes from the work of "artificial intelligence" (*AI*).

The paradox is that freedom and contingency are conditions for the possibility of the cybernetic system of managing the world as an open field of possibilities, while the aporia is reflected in the fact that "nature" is determined by the non-freedom of the facticity of living in the body. Man and other beings cannot choose this voluntarily. Acting according to the principles of freedom begins where "Being in the world" is always limited by fate and bounded in space. Hence, "the phantom limb" is neither a rhinoceros horn nor a tortoise shell, but a technically or mechanically created so-called third hand that manages the processes of exchange of matter, energy, and information from two worlds: (1) natural, or analogue, and (2) technical, or digital. For the first world, language becomes a condition for the possibility of knowing the world, and for the latter world, it appears necessary to learn the rules of visual semiotics, because the techno-image lies at the "essence" of non-human communication. Merleau-Ponty says this about it in *Phenomenology of Perception*:

> The phenomenon of the phantom limb is here elucidated by that of anosognosia, which clearly demands a psychological explanation. Subjects who systematically ignore their paralysed right hand, and hold out their left hand when asked for their right, refer to their paralysed arm as "a long, cold snake", which rules out any hypothesis of real anaesthesia and suggests one in terms of the refusal to recognize their deficiency. Must we then conclude that the phantom limb is a memory, a volition or a belief, and, failing any physiological explanation, must we provide a psychological explanation for it? But no psychological explanation can overlook the fact that the severance of the nerves to the brain abolishes the phantom limb.
>
> What has to be understood, then, is how the psychic determining factors and the physiological conditions gear into each other: it is not clear how the imaginary limb, if dependent on physiological conditions and therefore the result of a third person causality, can *in another context*

> arise out of the personal history of the patient, his memories, emotions and volition. […] A hybrid theory of the phantom limb which found a place for both sets of conditions may, then, be valid as a statement of the known facts; but it is fundamentally obscure. The phantom limb is not the mere outcome of objective causality; no more is it a *cogitatio*. It could be a mixture of the two only if we could find a means of linking the "psychic" and the "physiological", the "for-itself" and the "in-itself", to each other to form an articulate whole, and to contrive some meeting-point for them: if the third person processes and the personal acts could be integrated into a common middle term. (Merleau-Ponty 1958, 88–89.)

If we look at the reasoning derived from the distinction between reflex actions in animals and humans, we will see that this understanding, along with Lacan's as the main representative of the new psychoanalysis, does not differ significantly from Heidegger's approach to the relationship of stone, animal, and man to Being. While, namely, existential phenomenology attributes to the human body the possibility of spontaneity and reflex action, only if it is engaged in "Being in the world" situations—and this means that practical knowledge takes precedence over the mere theoretical fact—, an animal cannot relate to Being except in an instinctive and reflex action. Admittedly, Merleau-Ponty will not say that because of this the animal has no world or that the world is less valuable to it than the human world. However, this will also not contradict the basic assumptions of philosophical anthropology. According to them, some kind of biological-cognitive evolution contributed to the hand and brain directing all further operations of thought. All this testifies that the body cannot be absolutized by establishing human existence in the spatial sense through the immanent transcendence of the openness of Being in general. The consideration of the so-called phantom limbs has primarily a cognitive-theoretical function of turning to the essence of metaphysics. In the "idealization" of the permanence of Being and the perfect order, in which diverse beings live in harmony and conflict, metaphysics never saw the body as lacking "in-Being" as such, with dissymmetry, disharmony, and deconstruction of the world. Therefore, its language cannot open up to

hybrid systems of difference and in this chaos of contingency admit what is so simple, painful, and imperfect. What? That people are simply mortal and prone to pleasures, sick and perverse, neither angels nor demons, but beings of physical existence with the aspiration to achieve immortality by moving into *the posthuman condition*. With the help of the body, man is aware of the world. This realization is the reason for human irrationality. Thus, existence becomes a condemnation of freedom and meaning.

What does the statement about "the ambivalent presence of the hand" mean? Let us not forget that Merleau-Ponty published the *Phenomenology of Perception* in 1945. In other books, written in the 1950s and 1960s, we rarely come across examples from already developed computer science and cybernetics. The same applies to Jacques Derrida's major work *Of Grammatology* (cf. Derrida 1967). It explicitly uses the concepts of cybernetics and semiology, such as information, code, program, feedback, sign, signifier, and signified. However, the phenomenology of the body has the task, above all, of establishing the existential organization of reality outside of consciousness as intersubjectivity. Although Merleau-Ponty dares to assign to Husserl the position of the main thinker of the path towards the existential turn in contemporary philosophy, which is in opposition to Sartre's propositions from his phenomenological ontology in the work *Being and Nothingness* (cf. Sartre 1943), about which he declares that Sartre is the first to decisively place the problem of the body and existence on the horizon of his reflection, it seems that it is still much more important to notice his connection/relationship with Heidegger's concept of "Being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*; cf. Heidegger 1977). The ambivalence of the body cannot be understood without the massive assumption that the body is an existential projection of the meaning of the "Being in the world." By itself, it has no other meaning than the physical, actually physiological and psychological structure of sensibility. What distinguishes a man from an animal cannot be the mere presence of his body. At its center, lies the existential relationship of a man who suffers, feels, wants, loves, creates, and thinks, only because he is an experiential being of physicality. This is not just any physicality. From it, comes the orientation towards the dimensions of the true historicity of Being.

"The phantom limb" in the phenomenology of the body cannot be considered as a supplement/replacement of Being in the form of nature, to

use the term of the early Derrida in *Of Grammatology*. The reason lies in the fact that its provision should be in hybridity. On the one hand, this concerns the hand in analogy with a natural human organ, and, on the other hand, this concerns the foreign body that imitates the action of a real hand. The problem, of course, is that it is not art in the sense of work, like, for instance, an installation displayed in a museum. Mimetic action no longer refers to imitating nature as such, but to the techno-poietic system of "operational thinking." This is an extremely complex relationship between necessity and freedom, reflex actions and volitional-cognitive activity. Since man does not use his hand only for the everyday purposes of the mechanical way of his existence, it is not possible to simply take over the model of nature or the analogue world in a mechanical way of acting. Many examples from the medical practice of amputation and augmentation of "the third hand" show subtle relationships in the sensory spectrum of manifestations of pain and suffering, joy and elation, mourning and sadness, and feelings of pride and self-recognition. A man faced with the necessity of accepting a mechanical prosthesis for reasons of mere survival becomes someone else. However, this does not mean a complete personality change. He only clearly perceives that his body denotes the medial area of the permeation of life as a connection/relationship between nature and artificiality. Of course, he sometimes feels the pain, as if it were the memory of the original, living hand that is no longer there, and instead of it, all the operations are now performed by "the third hand." In the exhaustive analysis of this condition, in which "the phantom hand" operates, Merleau-Ponty provided the basis for an almost identical procedure of a refined analysis of the acceptance of the transplanted heart as "a foreigner" and "a living machine" in the essay "The Intruder" by Jean-Luc Nancy included in his book *Corpus* (cf. Nancy 2008, 161–170).

Is it possible to generalize the experience of the singular individuality of a person who, thanks to a mechanical prosthesis "on" their body or the installation of an apparatus "in" their body, becomes someone with a different experience of the world? The body becomes the primary experience of *my* body. The criticism of Kant and Husserl was best carried out by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, when he talks about the structure of the Being-there (*Dasein*) as *Being-in-the-world* in the mode of my-ownness, mineness, always

assuming the determination to understand Being in general. *Mine* is not about *anything* vs. the *world*. For something to be appropriated and marked as *mine*, the content of consciousness "about" the world must first be reduced to the openness of perspectives. Only in *my* world, even that monstrous "phantom hand" can be called *mine* on the condition that it belongs to the structure of the autonomous will-feeling of a Self. But now this is no longer the extension in terms of the Cartesian body. Now, "the third hand" with its technically produced "will" belongs to *my* existential space of thought and action. Even more precisely, *mine* as a label of the self must be expanded in such a way that in addition to the existence of the surrounding world (*Umwelt*, *environment*, *milieu*) introduces the technical landscape of Being. If, on the other hand, we ignore, for methodological reasons, that spatiality can no longer be expressed in the technical landscape of corporeality by oppositions of external and internal, we are left to see what this "phantom hand" truly means in the new meaning beyond metaphysics and its derived concepts and categories.

Merleau-Ponty explicitly claims: "The phantom limb is not the mere outcome of objective causality; no more is it a *cogitatio*." (Merleau-Ponty 1958, 89.) The main reason for the introduction of this term, which does not seem phenomenologically correct, because it is more reminiscent of the psychoanalytic language of the difference between the phantasmatic and the real, so it would suit Lacan perhaps even more than it seems at first glance, is to show how the body appears as an object. However, it should be clearly emphasized that this is not a classic contradiction, arising from the metaphysics of subjectivity. Namely, for metaphysics, the object should be always a construction of the subject. On the contrary, the tradition of the French materialism, as found in La Mettrie and d'Holbach, for example, introduced into philosophical thought, in contrast to Kant's thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*), a series of objects as a result of a mechanistic notion of the concept of nature. In this context, the body's thought appears for the first time. However, in contrast to the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, there is now a solution that has a closed circle of matter's action without the first mover and the last purpose. The objectification of the body does not mean its transformation into an inanimate object as a stone-like "thing" or, on the other hand, its transition into the form of mechanical existence of a prosthesis without the participation

of the organic. What is an object for existential phenomenology? Nothing but the product of external and internal relations between subjects in the perception of the world. Husserl would add here the keyword for a solution to the problem of the relationship between the Self and the community: *inter-subjectivity*. However, when the body appears as an object, it is always something other than the subject, that irreducible area, from which stimuli for action come, because the object is not a mechanical toy without a "soul." Its appearance requires reflection on the conditions of possibility, under which the body is de-subjectivized, and becomes *more extended than the psyche*, as Freud said in a posthumously published note. "The phantom hand" is, therefore, not moved by God or another human being. The desire to objectify the subject turns out to be a decisive factor. Thus, the perception of the external world becomes a problem of determining reality. In the classical projection, it was realistically a place of a synthesis of consciousness and Being in two modes of appearance during modern philosophy: idealistic and materialistic. To be an object, however, for Merleau-Ponty means to leave the Scylla of "objectivism" and the Charybdis of "subjectivism" in the footsteps of Husserl. This concretely means opening up the problem of the emergence of that phenomenon that no longer has anything to do with the metaphysics of nature or with the idea of Being as constancy in changes.

What is for existential phenomenology the fundamental criterion for separating animals and humans? We will by no means say that an animal does not have a body. But we will not equate the cases of replacing limbs in insects or antlers in deer by analogy with "the phantom hand." The phantom in the hand is nothing but the presence of life as a form in the technical event of state transformation. The hand can be formally replaced indefinitely. The infinite sequence resembles a copy of an image in a digital environment. Namely, there is no original here. However, one must not lose sight of the fact that "the third hand" does not take the place of the "first" as a mere thing without a "soul." The copies are, admittedly, the same in their indistinctness. But that is not the singularity of a living organism. Its fateful expulsion into the world is that organism shows up as being irreplaceably sensuous in suffering and pleasures. Each "phantom hand" does not sit on living flesh as a replaceable organ according to the model of the analogical nature. Instead, we are faced

with the uncertainty and contingency of events. What will happen with receiving or accepting a foreign body, that uncanny otherness of a technical organism, cannot be predicted in advance. This is precisely the essence of the body's existential organization. It becomes the indisputably living singularity of the transformation of organs or limbs. The totality is not superior to the parts as in Hegel. In between, exist the logic of singular reproduction as becoming different from the logic of the production of difference. An animal can reproduce only unconsciously by employing the replacement of limbs, and man leads existence to the highest level of what Dante calls "the new life" (*la vita nuova*). The search for the "new" utilizing substitution does not mean that technology might be understood as a mere mechanical means for other purposes. In the phenomenological and psychoanalytical search for a solution to the problem of creative "human nature"—and this is true for Merleau-Ponty as well as for Lacan—, there is no point of transition towards the essence of technology, although places of mediation with the newer results of cybernetics and semiology in the 1960s were frequent in these works (cf. Paić 2019). Why is that so? The answer that seems to be acceptable is that the concept of existence as an essential new "essence" of man and (unconscious) desire as a structure of corporeality in the world do not reach what the most important thinkers of technology in the 20th century—Heidegger and Simondon—credibly opened as the main problem of modernity. How is it, namely, possible to preserve the experience of a different thinking against the logic of technoscience, without at the same time falling into the fold of the overplayed metaphysical scheme of history about humanity as an authentic Being and inhumanity as the vulgar existence of a technical object?

Let us, for a moment, return to that strange and irreducibly ambivalent "phantom hand." Merleau-Ponty describes the experience of the mutilated body of the subject with psychoanalytic language. This is, therefore, a "traumatic experience." "*A certain dread*" arises from the realization of its inexplicability with categories from vitalism and the organic attachment of the body to the Earth (cf. Merleau-Ponty 1958, 96). Handling objects is possible only under the conditions of a primary contact between the living and the non-living. Moreover, the phenomenon of touch, which Nancy insists on discussing philosophically, shows us that, in the case of stroking an obsidian

head or a marble statue, there is still some excess of the desire to objectify. The coldness of the statue and its perfect indifference, because it cannot reciprocate the touch with a sensory reaction, cannot be the model of understanding for the technical apparatus in the living body. Touching objects or living beings is not the same. The reason is that the technical replaceability of organs in "the other way of life" requires the hybrid creation of events. Feelings and experiences of something that cannot be clearly described are such uncanny events. The arrival of a mechanical machine in people's everyday life causes discomfort, disbelief, and astonishment. This lasts for a short time, because the technical existence of machines, robots, and cyborgs, as Gilbert Simondon put it, is domesticated as "a foreign body" in the socio-political environment of man.[1] The process of accepting the inhuman is no longer such a traumatic experience, as long as the core values of the community are not questioned. Let us remember that today the relationship between the achievements of technoscience in medicine, such as reproductive stem-cell cloning, is tolerated by religious communities. But only to the extent of the distance between the so-called untouchability of Natural Law (God) and human intervention in the biological default of the organism. When that limit is crossed, serious disputes arise. In this regard, bioethical norms are always changing. For the most part, they depend on the level of the value scale concerning the problem of the body in modern society. This is additionally ethically challenging. The reason lies in the fact that it shows the impotence of traditional metaphysics and the religious-ethical doctrines built on it before the penetration of transhumanism and posthumanism. It is enough to extract the main argument for prenatal selection and reproductive cloning: the desire for a healthy offspring (cf. Paić 2011, 65–117)!

1 "The machine is a stranger; and that stranger who precisely creates the human, makes it conscious, materializes, serves it, but always remains outside the horizon of the human. The true cause of alienation in the modern world consists in this ignorance of the machine, which is not an alienation caused by the machine, but by ignorance of its nature and its essence, the absence of the world of meaning and its non-existence in the table of values and in the understandings that have a part in culture." (Simondon 1989, 9–10.)

However, it is not only faith as the foundation of religion that comes to the wall here. Keeping the memory of the primordial nature of Being and the changes that do not call it into question means defending what has long been indefensible. In his phenomenology of the body, Merleau-Ponty started from the assumption that the world is inhabited by imperfect beings. Moreover, these beings, especially men among them, are the least understandable in their mutual relations, starting from what one thinks of the other, and vice versa. The first fact that we encounter is the view of the Other's body. In contemporary French philosophy, apart from Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, this was in the language of phenomenology most strikingly considered by Emmanuel Levinas. His turn from ontology to ethics had the function of re-searching the world according to the measure of human impotence and the freedom of unconditional commitment to the Other (cf. Levinas 2000). In all three cases, the body is shown to be the main ontological problem for the simple reason that it is about the meeting between objects in space, about the contact between beings, the existential restlessness and discomfort that Being "is," and that this happens in unpredictable and unexpected relationships. If beings are imperfect, then the fundamental impulse of their meeting is an attempt to free the body from the stigma of the ideal world and the form, in which that world mystifies itself to the extreme limits of the sustainability of the order of concepts, upon which its metaphysics rests. Body mutilation in the context of "a healthy society" arises as an excess phenomenon. The loss of bodily integrity through mutilation also causes discomfort in the observer. This kind of shyness often leads to pathetic compassion for the crippled. But the panicked need for healing and normalization, paradoxically, humanizes the technical character of the world. All this takes place only under the condition of transition to *the posthuman condition*. Traces of the latter are visible in the talk about "the phantom limb." For Merleau-Ponty, it was a necessary step towards a different determination of the meaning of existence. Without a body, everything seems just the appearance of a Being, a deceptive sublimity without nature, an insight into the blueness of the sky in the dark night of the end of history. Things are, therefore, upside down. Their perspective is visible only from a different point of view than usual.

The body, thus, becomes a scandalous act of openness without any shred of theodicy, according to which salvation comes after the end of the

body and relates to the soul of man. We can safely claim that the two most significant theoretical "grand narratives" in the humanities about the body are phenomenology and psychoanalysis. And both confront the influence of modern natural-technical sciences on the experience of the body in all its aspects from medicine to engineering. However, both "grand narratives" are based on the concepts that belong to the Western metaphysics, albeit in its descent from the throne of ideas in the form of inverted Platonism and Christianity. Nietzsche expressed this best. In the intercessions of the will to power as an eternal recurrence for the fundamental concept of "life," he opened the space for the act of radical de-construction of Being. And, indeed, the body as an object can never be understood otherwise than being the opposite of "life." This is why the desire for immortality becomes primarily a desire to prolong the physical existence of man. In the analysis of Merleau-Ponty's statements from the *Phenomenology of Perception* and other writings published in the 1960s, it seems evident that the body is restored to its dignity in thought, only when instead of the primacy of temporality there is a turn towards the primacy of spatiality. This is not only an important difference in comparison to Heidegger and his intended thinking of "the second beginning," starting from the mission of Being as an event (*Ereignis*). Hence, spatiality becomes the authoritative way of the techno-genesis of autonomous objects. In other words, Merleau-Ponty represents the beginning of the thought of recognizing the eccentric and extravagant bodies of the human-non-human. By determining Being-in-the-world through the existential organization of the body in practical engagement, it became possible to abandon the Cartesian relics of thinking about the body. The body cannot be just an existential being, as Jean-Luc Nancy says in *Corpus*. From the extensibility of matter, the supply of energy, and the deliverability of information, it cannot be reduced to what already always is, that is, to be in the permanence of changes.

My position is that, following Merleau-Ponty, the body should be understood as an elementary *existential event*. The meaning of that event cannot be predetermined, nor does it appear at the end as a hidden secret of Being. Instead, it would be necessary to think the body in its ultimate possibilities of transformation. Like Kafka's character, Gregor Samsa, who was transformed into an insect in a dream, the body also opens up as an event

beyond any previous ontology. Jean-Luc Nancy is right, when he asserts in the *Corpus* that the body as yet still requires to be thought of ontologically (cf. Nancy 2008, 15). The only problem is that for such a different thought, ontology can no longer be authoritative. This might also be true for many other cases, such as the ontology of image, for example. The reason lies simply in the fact that the vertical and hierarchical model of understanding the world, with God as the central substance and Being as the leading concept, no longer corresponds to what happens in the procedural process of the creation of many virtual worlds. Instead of phenomenology, which could still place the problem of "the phantom limb" at the center as a continuation of mechanical technique by other means, because only in the 1960s the first transplant of a human organ, such as the heart, took place, the body in the cybernetic way of thinking can no longer be determined, neither positively nor negative. It is neither an extended substance (*res extensa*) nor is it a function of some phantom human intelligence that feels even the finest vibrations of the Earth. If all this is what body is not, then what "is" it? Nothing. Yes, you heard right—nothing. It does not exist as a thing-in-itself. It is also not conceivable as a thing-for-itself (*Ding-für-sich*). No Enlightenment epic about the process of developing a higher level of consciousness in the body as a neuro-cognitive network of plasticity gives the last answer to the question about what, after Wittgenstein, is called "language games" (*Sprachspiele*, *know-how*) in the philosophy of language. With this, we already indirectly indicate a solution to the problem. If the body is to be thought of as the initiator of *the transformation of events*, such a starting point can no longer be understood from any ontology. Its universal application to diverse areas of Being has passed. All the so-called regional ontologies that Edmund Husserl was still talking about are now melting away in the flourishing of a multitude of aesthetics. However, this is not proof of the absolute predominance of philosophical thinking in the age of *the technosphere*, but an indication of the complete fragmentation of knowledge about the worlds of pure construction. Instead, it is necessary to start from the initial assumption that, like an insect that replaces its organs, "the phantom hand" can be replicated by a technical process of event transformation, which is already performed today in medicine with the help of a 3D printer.

What does this change mean for the understanding of the body? The impossibility has become a pragmatic possibility of transformation for the functioning of the body as a *technosphere* beyond the difference between the living and the inanimate. If, for example, one wants to improve a person's ability to remember in a complex situation that requires a high level of intelligence, as is the case in space flight today, the solution lies in improving the operation of the "artificial intelligence" devices (*AI*), and not in the birth of a potential genius. A technical understanding of the body removes any trace of dealing with pure essences that phenomenology dealt with. Instead, we are dealing with a pure "uploading" of cybernetically created protocols of the body as a machine. The only thing that remains of Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology in the age of *the technosphere* is the problem of determining the existence of that uncanny inhuman that hides behind the idea of "the phantom limb." What kind of existence is it, if its essence should be reduced to calculation, planning, and construction, and no longer to incalculability, singularity, and unpredictability? Does it have something more than the horizontal arrangement of events without foundation in the idea of a creative original, which appears under the name of simulation, simulacrum, and reproduction as a condition for the possibility of the emergence of new machines of contingency? We can answer these questions, only when we establish the essential difference between emergence and *techno-genesis*, the transformation of Being as becoming (*Werden*, *devenir*) and the transformation of a condition as an event (*Ereignis*, événement).

2. Contingency machines

The classical philosophy of technology stems predominantly from the book *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology. On the Evolutionary History of Culture* (*Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Cultur aus neuen Gesichtpunkten*; 1877) by Ernst Kapp. The motto to the work seems to be decisive; Kapp namely quotes the thought of Edmund Reitlinger who says: "All of human history, upon close scrutiny, ultimately resolves into the history of the invention of better tools." (Kapp 1877, 1.) This reduces the essence of historical development to technical inventions as the improvement

of things that serve human purposes. However, if we clean this "philosophy of technology" of the classical ailments of the modern dogma called the law of causality and of the rests of natural or rational theology in the notion of the purposefulness of history, what do we get? Only the problems of "progress" and "development" of automata, devices, and things that belong to some indifferent world of pure objectivity. After all, even the word "tool," which comes from the Greek word *organon*, covers the meaning of a logical system and a way of using it by managing it as a manipulation of an object beyond human organic purposefulness, which points to such a self-sufficiency. It can even be said that technology is reduced in everyday dealings with life to the existential space. Newton defined the space, in which two-dimensional objects rest, as a "collector" or "container." Things are, therefore, essentially "not," because their Being as technical bodies cannot be derived from the phenomenological concept of existence as proposed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty for the modern concept of freedom. In addition, the problem of technology does not lie only in the vagueness of this self-sufficient indifference that we observe at the graveyard of old machines from the mechanical era. Therein lies the paradox of the technical existence of the object. The faster the obsolescence, the almost schizophrenic the need for new technical objects. Without this paradox, the object has no reason to exist, and the machine remains an empty flywheel of motion. What we call a machine is not a machine in mechanical motion. On the contrary, the machine includes *organon*, *téchne*, and *poiesis*. While the machine is reduced to the inhuman in the sense of an insurmountable opposition to the human Being, here we encounter the trinity of *management, performance*, and *production*. In this way, it can be said that in the cybernetic system of *the technosphere* there is a synthesis of the management mechanism and control over the processes of producing new things (objects and data networks), of the performative concept of knowledge as a pragmatic use of language in the form of a visualized concept, and, last, but not least, of the infinite production of "the forms of life." The latter are supposed to include what belongs to nature in the analogue world and to artificial life in the digital world (cf. Rieger 2003, 315–326).

What does self-sufficiency mean with regard to the ontological status of technical devices and machines? It would be a mistake to think that technology

in the mechanical way of working tools has some special independence of its own. A thing as an object of the subject's reflected experience cannot have the autonomy that the mind has, which, as Kant says, is its own legislator. However, in the theological sense of the word, only God is assigned this lofty idea of freedom. Because it is not limited by anything external. Hence, the origin of modern theories of political sovereignty in the theological science of God's unlimited power. Nevertheless, a kind of limited autonomy, which is a higher form of self-sufficiency than what the Greeks called *autarky*, belongs to the field of technology in the sense of reshaping nature. Matters change significantly, when modern technology based on automatics comes into play. When machines work on their own and perform complex operations that require a higher level of mental-volitional ability than man, and man appears in the service of the supervisor of the work process in the factory, we are already on the way to machine self-sufficiency. Gilbert Simondon calls it "the second order of cybernetics." However, this historical development of technology from the modern age to modern technology determined the period of the industrial society from the 19th century to the end of the 1960s. Sovereignty and self-sufficiency belong only to "the third order of cybernetics." Here, information precedes matter and energy, and the management or control system is based on the idea of a feedback *loop*.

This circular irreversibility characterizes the process of liberating *the technosphere* from all mediations and medial reflections "about" the world and man. Instead, we are faced with a machine that thinks for itself by producing events as state transformations, rather than mere objects through the technique of replication and cloning. In this sense, *the technosphere* is truly self-sufficient. It cannot be compared to the graveyard of industrial technology, simply because it is on the path of absolute dematerialization. Modern quantum computers are the beginning of the second digital revolution, for which Merleau-Ponty's "phantom limb" means nothing. Apart from perhaps reminding us of the era when the body was still understood from the absolute spontaneity of the freedom of human will. However, today the very concept of free will in the traditional metaphysical sense is called into question. Neuro-cognitivists and enactivists no longer speak that discourse. The brain "thinks" pragmatically. In its plasticity, it reacts to events by going beyond the arguments of physiologists

and psychologists, those who put everything on the line of reflex drives as well as those who bet on the magnificent and irreducible space of human action as absolutely voluntary decisions (cf. Sturma 2013). In this almost inexplicably childish "fascination with the brain," as Jan Slaby points out, we are witnessing the natural sciences in the guise of a new objectivism supported by powerful visualization techniques (SCAN) taking over the once-unconquerable territory of philosophy and spiritual sciences (cf. Slaby 2014, 211–221). Self-sufficiency and autonomy, sovereignty and the absolute rule of managing the system and its surroundings become a fascinating way of unfolding "life" in the highly developed contemporary societies. Why is that so? It seems obvious that there is something uncanny and at the same time amazing in the "essence" of *the technosphere*, since it encompasses the concept of new information and communication technology as "a thing that thinks" and as "an apparatus/device that is aesthetically seductive." Ambivalence arises from its indefinite ambiguity. It is both *a thing* and *a creature* in the sense of a cybernetic virtual avatar, and its calculated images are not perceived as images of nature, but as the creation of a new reality with a fundamental turn in "the essence" of the image. It does not depict and does not represent an objective world. *The technosphere* calculates, plans, and constructs new worlds.

If we return to the problem of determining the reason why phenomenology of the body no longer has the possibility of insight into what is happening with the techno-poietic way of transforming the condition, by which bodies *can* be reshaped not only by transplanting organs and replacing them with other, even animal organs, we immediately come across the keyword of this controversy, i.e.: *history*. That is why Hans Blumenberg is right, when, in his analysis of the relationship between phenomenology and technology in Husserl's late writings, he shows that for him history is "nothing but the living movement of the common and of the mutually permeated within the original conception and sedimentation of sense" (Blumenberg 2015, 175).

The disappearance of living history from the scene must be replaced. Therefore, the new cybernetic physicality exists in the constant state of transformation. The stability of the system results from its change. Everything valid for the technologization of language that describes these bodies becoming disembodied in the *robot–cyborg–android trinity* is even more valid

for the technologization of the image. Why do we talk about different relations of the construction of "artificial life" (*A-life*), when it comes to language and image? The reason lies in the fact that language is telling and, therefore, has the communicative potential of symbolic exchange in the common Being of man. Artificial languages can only be algorithmic languages for the visualization of concepts. In other words, their function becomes instrumental, and that is why it is always mediated by the process of technologization. In contrast, a technically produced image is completely aesthetically autonomous. Without reference to anything in the given world, the information refers only to itself and to other images. Hence, the process of technologizing the image focuses on objects in the space of virtual interaction. Language still speaks, in order to describe things and phenomena. The picture only shows what happens in the continuous transformation of the events. Language, therefore, belongs to the realm of ontological difference, while the image is derived from the cybernetic difference. To the first, history appears as the transcendental *a priori*, and to the second as the immanence in movement without beginning and end. From this, it necessarily follows that we no longer live in "worlds of life," but in "forms of life." Original or immediate life is reduced to the structures of "bare life," and moments of unique happiness are almost rare. Around us are endless platforms of the digital world. They multiply like the conditions for the possibility of new physical or visual communication. Gone are the days of unexpected encounters and uncertainty. Now, the only thing is how contingent machines produce desires and resistance in the world, because the structure of life is not created "naturally" and "historically." All this is far behind us like a pale shadow of things in the accelerated "aesthetics of disappearance" (cf. Virilio 1991).

Having a body today does not mean being condemned to a singular conception of the world. For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology of the body was an onto-pathology of living corporeality with a transition to "the phantom limb"; one could speak of a historical way of existence, in which the body engages in situations. Namely, this was only possible, because the body had an original "flaw"; it had an ontological defect in that, unlike insects, for example, it could not *auto(re)generate*. The rapidly developing technology based on the reproductive matrix of copying originals was limited to mechanics and semi-

automatics. If we only look at horror films from the experimental avant-garde phase of the 1920s, we will understand that the dismemberment of organs and mutilation of the body tends to be visually supported precisely by the feeling of disgust (abjection) towards the monstrous event of destruction of the integrity of the body. In analogy with "the phantom limb," which pathologically questions "Being-in-the-world," the film staging was based on the excess of "phantom images." The cut to the body, the cutting of the vital organs as a perceptive shock in Salvador Dalí's and Luis Buñuel's film *An Andalusian Dog* and Germaine Dulac's film *The Seashell and the Clergyman*, directed the viewer's attention to what lies beyond the shock as such. The sublimity of the experience of the thing itself, with which the gaze enters the space of chills, connects disgust and monstrosity. There is no better term for it than the German word *Unheimlichkeit*. It expresses the outrageous fear and admiration of what is both foreign and close to man. The body that disappears in the self-sufficient and autonomous process of the unfolding of *the technosphere* ends this effect of *Unheimlichkeit*. Moreover, by its suspension and neutralization as a constructed object of self-staging in virtual space, the body becomes a replaceable singularity of the case. Nothing seems impossible anymore and everything becomes a performative event: from plastic surgery to the birth of a monster as in Dalí's painting *Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man* (1943).

Today's research with regard to the human body concerning techno-scientific constructions shows how much "operational thinking" is inscribed in the procedures of "embodiment." Going beyond the prevailing attitude about the rule of the mental substance that determines and orders the body what to do marks the end of modern subjectivism. The talk about "the objectification of the will" as an offshoot of metaphysics, present, e.g., in Schopenhauer, testifies that knowledge was understood only in the difference between mind and body. Therefore, the body could only be understood as an object of knowledge or an intention of free will in the sense of the action of *logos*, *spirit*, and *mind*. Incarnation is either the descent of the mind into the body from the heights of transcendence (philosophy) or, on the other hand, the shaping of man in the image and likeness of God (theology). In both cases, it is understood as an object, although the Greeks, unlike the Christian concept of resurrection,

consider the dead body to be a mere corpse. As we have already shown, for phenomenology the body is a subjectivized way of existentially confronting the world (Husserl and Merleau-Ponty). This constitutes a big step away from the Cartesian "functionalism." Today's attempts to think the body in the complexity of its manifestations combine neuroscience and cognitive science. The upheaval occurred precisely because the research of machines and artificial intelligence shows that man cannot be unambiguously classified neither with the transformations of Being nor with the transformations of the events. "The nature" of the body is that which mediates between the two shores of the world-historical existence of the technical world. Being between "nature" and "technology" gives the body the possibility of merging and permeating with something that transcends duality.

Is this age a sign of the absolute rule of the flesh or is this just an illusion? The answer seems to derive from the logic of contemporary action: *either–too.* Yes, the body appears everywhere in Being transformations. Contemporary art, for example, is defined through a performative-conceptual turn. The same applies to efforts in the interdisciplinary field of transhumanism. Here, on the other hand, research is aimed at improving the physical structure of man concerning *the technosphere*. The fascination with physicality stems from the fascination with the image in the form of a digital code. *Instagram*, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, and other social networks, in addition to showing mass idolatry of sexuality and the body, also testify to the narcissism of our sophisticated technical era. However, at the same time, everything is directed towards disembodiment, the movement towards the Omega point of the universe. The ambivalence of the image as a body and the body as an image permeates all human activities, simply because the body in the age of *the technosphere* is not "a thing" of philosophical-theological "embodiment." Instead of the mystery of the entry of spirit and soul into the body as flesh, the fundamental question is how does "what" (*quidditas*) connects nature and technology happen. In other words, the extension of the domain of "the phantom limb" to the worlds of life shows that living in a network of "phantom images" requires the processes of an aesthetic "embedding" of *the implant* "onto" the body. At the same time, their structure is located beyond the border between the living and the non-living. To be aware of one's own body today means to move from the existential

drama of Being to the pure indifference of *body design*. This turn introduces us to a space, within which powerful machines of contingency work noiselessly and glow fluorescently without stopping. Spirit and soul have passed on their own forever. The only thing left for the body is "a bright future." But can "what" we encounter in our daily dealings with information and codes still be called a body?

3. Aesthetics of self-shaping

When we say "body" (*Körper*, *corpus*), we mean something that is framed and closed, which is also limited by its shell as an object. Each body is located in a certain space. It can even be asserted that spatiality is for the body what time is for Being—an inalienable possibility, reality, and necessity of existence. The distinction between figures and bodies in geometry rests precisely on the assumption that the figure is only an image, and the body becomes a real object in space. All this is still not enough without the existence of a dematerialized substance or "essence" of the body's physicality. Neither the figure as an image nor the body as an object are in their mutual relationship at all conceivable without the relationship of thought and Being. In the metaphysical relationship, a figure appears through the idea or perception of an object. Thus, spirit always has precedence over matter, and ideas over reality. For an object to be created in nature, there must be some condition of possibility for it. Aristotle distinguished between two concepts of shape or form (*eidos* and *morphé*). Since the body as an object appears in reality and as an imagined character, this double appearance is determined by the connection/relationship between form and matter. Not a single thing in nature is without the formal-material condition of its existence. Order in nature can be disrupted by a state of chaos. In such a case, we talk about formlessness and meaninglessness, because what is at stake is the disintegration of the system to the level of reaching the zero point of Being. There are three fundamental concepts both of Aristotle's metaphysics of the creation of beings from Being as well as of classical and modern physics. These are: form, matter, and energy. Besides the form in its two already mentioned modes, the aesthetic (*eidos*) and the physiological-psychic one (*morphé*), the Being of beings always appears in

its constancy as whole or disintegrated, beautiful and sublime or ugly, good and noble or evil and broken. The three fundamental concepts simultaneously determine all possible metaphysics/physics of the body as an object, regardless of whether it is a stone, an animal, or a human. What is enigmatic in its factual necessity? Nothing but the fettering of matter by the form in its singularity. In other words, metaphysics as physics always starts from the idea of creation and what is created. One cannot step into the same river twice, said Heraclitus. And this means that repeating Being in some form outside of its singularity of movement seems impossible. Necessity is, therefore, a kind of absurdity and a wall for thinking that tries to cross the boundaries set by Being itself. What is true for the facticity of movement in space must also be true for the way of appearing in form, which, like the idea of nature, is predetermined and unchanging. The paradoxes of classical metaphysics regarding the body stem from the circumstance that it is always determined by something else and signifies something else. Its formal-material structure can change, only when the third member of the conceptual order—energy—reaches the threshold of the equalization of form and matter.

How can that even be possible? The answer was given by cybernetics in its second and its third order with the setting of storing information as a constant event transformation (cf. Hagner and Hörl 2008). This not only disestablishes the idea of the permanence of Being in its changes, but also leads to the final process of overcoming metaphysics with the emergence of disembodiment and at the same time the *techno-genetic* construction of a new body with the help of "embedding." The answer of cybernetics presupposes prior clarification of the difference between "embodiment" and "embedding." What does it embody, and what does it incorporate? The answer seems to be that consciousness enters the body in the manner explained by cognitive psychology. With the development of the brain and the growth of a child capable of simple and increasingly complex thought operations, it is clear that thinking appears as a constitutive factor of "humanity." At the same time, "thought" cannot be reduced only to logical-calculating features, but to it belongs the whole set of spirituality or emotionality. Embodiment in today's understanding of neuro-cognitivism of interdisciplinary sciences primarily refers to the ability of the body to move and for the "subject" to feel it as its own body. This applies even

under the condition of "implantation" of other people's organs and implants. Mental abilities are not separated from the physical ones. In the contemporary discussion regarding the problem of the embodiment of consciousness, the action of "mental representations and processes" directed at the body is taken into account: sensations and motor senses (somatic and enactive) (cf. Prinz 2013, 466). We should ask whether other forms of criticism and cognition are embodied or not? The reason is that the term "embodiment" carries with it the unfortunate baggage of apriorism and transcendentalism of the mind (*cogito*, *Vernunft*). The term is doubtful for further use, because it causes controversy. Already from the fact that the brain is never fully considered as a bodily "organ," like the hand, doubts arise about the ontological status of the incorporeal and the corporeal.

The artificial body represents the result of *techno-genetic* construction. However, here we encounter the problem of its cybernetic determination. If, namely, the logic of *the technosphere* stems from the fact that artificial intelligence (*AI*) creates artificial life (*A-life*), then the artificial body (*A-body*) appears as a pure mediality of events that can be produced and controlled. Everything that arises from the information or digital code must be able to be disembodied, in order to be "embedded" in another body. What does this significantly change in the determination of the physicality of the body? First of all, in the process of dematerialization and disembodiment, the body is reduced to a series of functional organs. Formally speaking, the system consists of "phantom limbs" that can be replicated ad infinitum, only because their "essence" lies in technical reproduction. For the first time, the concept of singularity no longer refers to the unrepeatability of the case of what is alive and irreplaceable. On the contrary, thanks to artificial intelligence, the emergence of new life requires the fluid and mobile body that can function in non-natural living conditions. It is not only the body that is the object. Such are all imaginable constructions of artificial life, because their space in its *spatializing* extends to the post-industrial environment. However, what is most important in this is the reversal in "the essence" of the concept of object. *The technosphere* comprises a network of autonomous objects that think and move based on the logic of artificial intelligence. There are three modes, in which they appear: *robot*, *cyborg*, and *android*. Moreover, thanks to the change

in "the ontological status" of the concept of the object, it is possible to conclude that a complete reversal of the entire metaphysical scheme of history takes place here.

"It" as a creature/thing becomes the subject of its own "fate" without transcendental illusions of eternity and immutability. In the process of de-substantialization, the object rises to the level of a self-sufficient and autonomous network of information and at the same time "experiences"/"revives" by creatively imitating the irreducible "human nature" with a tendency to transcend it. Gilles Deleuze was right when he stated, in his writings about Foucault, that the previous forms of existence, such as God and man, are on the way to disappearing in the form of superman (cf. Deleuze 2004, 131). But this superman no longer has the trace of God's face, nor does he feel the sufferings of human historical consciousness in the pursuit of reaching the Omega point of meaning. His "perfection" becomes pure indifference towards the Other. Except, of course, in the execution of program commands as a contingent "essence" of the technical world. This no longer concerns the act of "objectifying" the subject, but the process of "subjectivizing" the object. The dream of machines in the Renaissance era was not just an echo of hermetic and esoteric understanding of the human body as stardust. Leonardo's machines as mechanical prostheses of the human body and Faust Vrančić's parachutes were the beginning of an intense search for the secret of transitioning to the state of a flying object, the connection/relationship of living and non-living through rising above the Earth, and travelling to the dark side of the Moon.

The objects of *the technosphere* are impossible without visualization or the complex image in digital form. This once again shows the close connection/relationship between the body and the image. The only difference, in comparison with the analogue image, shows that now the digital one constructs the conditions of what is not there in reality, even before the virtualization of the world occurs. The aesthetic object does not have the status of *a readymade*. On the contrary, its advantage is that it is infinitely replaceable in its plastic singularity just like the "artificial brain" (*A-brain*). The image is not a simulacrum of some "natural" source of the sanctity of Being. As a technical body, it is pure information that can, or may not, be transformed into the condition of self-creation of a real object. If, on the other hand, in the new

understanding of the concept of object, the classical metaphysical problem of the mind–body relationship is pushed aside, starting from the primacy of consciousness vs. the extension of matter, then it is necessary to establish new relationships between the body and the object. Merleau-Ponty, as we have seen, elaborated his phenomenology of the body upon the assumption that the body is an object in space and that human existence is conducted bodily. Thus, the opposition of mind and body became suspended. However, there is something doubtful in the new monism. For Husserl, the solution was in the intersubjectivity of intentional consciousness. Hence, the *cogito* must necessarily have the property of a noetic act of event creation. Because only man thinks by using language. Merleau-Ponty went a step further in the direction of the spatiality of the body as an existential object. Such an object is not a thing in the sense of objectivity, but it is also is not a pure function of the self-posited subject either. However, the problem remained unsolved. In the neuro-cognitivism of today's philosophy and science, certainty is sought without unnecessary wandering through the labyrinth.

When this no longer concerns "the embodiment of consciousness," because "the phantom hand" is already a mere remnant of the onto-pathology of nature as non-perfection, nothing else remains but a reversal in the concepts of *cogito* or subject. In Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* (*Cartesianische Meditationen*), the role of the concept of *cogito* is set differently than in Descartes, and it is likewise more radical than in Kant (cf. Husserl 2012). The mind and the subject are not, however, the same. What binds them together becomes transcendence. The subject mentally constructs the world with the help of the spatio-temporal perception of the essence of the experience of the subject's reality. Everything that can, therefore, be thought of within the limits of the transcendental subject is determined by the causal categories of some phenomenon and the purpose it has in the sense of Being. Without causality and purposefulness, Being seems to be meaningless. However, it is not quite like that. Husserl's project of the phenomenological reduction of the essence of the world is based, on the other hand, on an attempt to break through the enchanted border between mind and nature. We have seen that he, therefore, had to leave the body in the environment of intentional consciousness as a mediality or mediation between the demands of the mind and the autonomy

of the subject. Phenomenology schedules in its program the ripening of pure "beings" exactly where its highest peaks are—in the act of eidetic reduction. It cannot think of the abyss or the groundlessness of that uncanny process of the emergence of the modern *cogito* as a transcendental subject. And it cannot do so, because it starts from the self-evident "fact" that every consciousness (*noesis*) is always also the consciousness of something (*noema*). But, what if that "something" (Being?) is the same as Nothing, that is, what can no longer be thought of metaphysically, as Heidegger established in his thinking? Should we perhaps abandon this distinction, this firm boundary between "subject" and "object" by simply reversing the state of affairs itself? Therefore, in the concept of embeddedness, *the possibility* arises that the very process of cogitation or thought criticism becomes an act of object and objectification of consciousness. At the end of the book *Cybernetic Anthropology. A History of Virtuality* (*Kibernetische Anthropologie. Eine Geschichte der Virtualität*), Stefan Rieger introduces into the discussion the relationship between virtuality and transcendence. Of course, we can assume that virtuality in the environment of digital ontology cannot be a new apriorism of technically constructed consciousness. Instead, "virtual transcendence" is at work. And it, on the other hand, arises from the singularity and contingency of events (cf. Rieger 2003, 422–434).

Does the problem not lie precisely in the thought's attempt to solve the mystery of "the embodiment of consciousness" using old metaphysical schemes in a new guise? As shown by various studies in the field of neuro-cognitivism, consciousness is not located outside the body as some extracorporeal substance that, by the will of God or by an act of spontaneity of the subject, sets in motion the complex mechanism of physiological-psychic human processes. However, it is also not "in" the body as a mere object that can be disposed of like a pile of flesh and nerves. Thinking as the highest form of conscious activity is a self-reflective act of knowing the world. The world cannot be located somewhere objectively outside of consciousness. For Kant, time and space were the result of the subject's construction, not eternal and objective categories. The mind, then, constructs natural laws that do not exist objectively outside of our consciousness. It would be wrong to say that the world is only what the title of Schopenhauer's book states—*will and representation*. The first energy principle

is Being in the mobilization of the Earth as a planet, while the second appears as a cognitive moment of the subject's rule. To present the world in the medium of thought means to have it as a pure construction of the unconditional. But, the return of realism within ontology at the beginning of the 21st century appears at the same time in opposition to a new type of transcendental or radical constructivism advocated by the supporters of "the second-order cybernetic" theories, such as in the works of Heinz von Foerster and Ernst von Glasersfeld (cf. Foerster 1985 and Glasserfeld 1995). Virtualization means that kind of technical "operational thinking" that overcomes the oppositions of primary and secondary, original and copy, *a priori* and *a posteriori*. What happens to the subject and the object? Nothing but the ontological deployment of their essence. Another important addition: the virtual enables reality to appear at all on the horizon of space and time. Unlike transcendence, which is primarily related to the concept of primaeval time—this is why Husserl can talk about the primaeval phenomenon and the primaeval experience of a primaeval Earth—, in this context there is nothing temporal in the meaning of presence as "now."

Everything is "here-now." Everything happens simultaneously. Virtuality precedes the actualization of the state of events that consciousness in the technical medium of "second- and third-order cybernetics" simultaneously produces, visualizes, and "thinks." As we can see, production precedes sight and cognition. The practical character of today's technoscience *still* goes a step further than this scheme of historical development. It concerns only the fact that the production is not an unconscious act of some complex body according to the four causes (*causa formalis*, *causa materialis*, *causa efficiens*, and *causa finalis*).

Poiesis, *visio*, and *computatio* are found in a new set of categories and concepts. Instead of the transcendental structure of the subject who thinks by imitating God or creatively constructing the nature of things, a virtualization of the event of the object is at work. In the form of "a thinking machine" (computer), it visualizes the very process of the creation of artificial life (*A-life*). Objects that think in a manner different from human thinking, which Heidegger separated into thinking (*Denken*) and telling (*Dichten*), enter "the third order of cybernetics." They calculate, plan, and construct events as states of affairs in terms of their potentiality and usefulness. The pragmatics

of knowledge replaces the meaning of Being (hermeneutics, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis). When we are no longer able to think of Being and time directly and indirectly, authentically and vulgarly, when we can no longer hope for any "second beginning" (*der andere Anfang*) of thought by the reversal within "the essence" of the metaphysical history of the West, what remains? The answer is clear: *the techno-genesis of events*, out of which *the technosphere* is created and transformed as a system of thinking, autonomous, and self-moving objects.

4. Hybridity, fractalization, curvature

There no longer exists a gap of worlds between *ontogenesis* and *techno-genesis*. This was still the case at the dawn of the 20th century, when first research began regarding the possibility of machines becoming human substitutes and man flying from the Earth towards the endless expanses of space. The problem with determining the meaning of an object in the age of *the technosphere*, in principle, stems only from the fact that it designates a radical construction of artificial life. In such a case, the differences between "subject" and "object" are irrelevant for "the operational thinking." Moreover, many terms that we use to describe the contemporary state of affairs are extremely ineffective, if not completely unusable. Since Norbert Wiener established the fundamental principles of cybernetics with the introduction of the concept of information, everything fundamentally changed, including the notion of the objectivity of an object. In "the third order of cybernetics," there exists no possibility that the human consciousness would be the one that disembodies itself and thereby acquires the status of the transcendental subject. There are virtual-real objects within the world of *the technosphere* rule, such as devices and apparatuses, for which the principle of *autopoiesis* applies. They create themselves like nature and living systems (biological evolution). Thus, they enter the post-biological stage of "life," for which it is necessary to ensure optimal functioning conditions through the increasing construction of new digital platforms and the increasing incorporation of artificial organs into the assemblies that now shape what we still call the body. Embedding becomes a way of singular replaceability of the body as an object that extends its shelf life or, in the case

of a human, its lifespan only thanks to the contribution of technoscientific research into the possibility of changing "nature" as such. Without this, it seems impossible to continue with the utopia about the immortality of the body and the dystopia about the end of the human body. Neither the human body nor the animal body is a biologically extinct form of existence or "Being-in-the-world." On the contrary, we will witness more and more the kingdom of hybrid creations in all the areas of human activity and surrounding worlds. Being in the form and way of appearing in the manner of a hybrid condition does not mean having a permanent "nature." Instead, everything is subject to technical transformations according to the demands of aesthetic self-shaping. Desire, therefore, does not come from some sublime "black box" of a metaphysically constructed machine that everyone follows, because it is universal. Far from it.

The essence of desire lies in its irreducibility to anything common. Hence, contingency or chance prevails over the necessity (actuality) of Being. The object in its autonomous action can shape itself according to the changes of the environment like a chameleon or it can aesthetically construct its temporary environment, as in the experimental process of "the terraforming of Mars" for man's future conquest of the red planet. Hybrid life also requires hybrid materials, which are all synthetic, because they combine the biological conditions of the organism and the cybernetic system of necessary transformations. To be hybrid means to have an ambivalent experience of the two-dimensionality of a being, which truly belongs to the realm of the "Big Third." The order of things in the age of *the technosphere* derives from the main concept of "third-order cybernetics." It is *an emergence*. The entire history of complex systems is covered by the emergence of the "new." Why do we write this word in quotation marks? The reason lies in the fact that there is something ontologically new, if it springs from the persistence of Being in change: a new sunrise, a new age created on the ruins of the previous epoch, a new man who knows that what is at stake is not only the aesthetic appearance, but the spiritual change of existence (*metanoia*). By contrast, in the world of autonomous objects, "the new" comes from dynamic procedures and protocols, through which cognitive machines self-produce their bodies and their environments. This is why it is possible to say that the ontologically new concerns primarily the relationship to the historical mission of Being, while the cybernetically

"new" is distinguish by the relationship to the event as a technical process ("uploading" in transhumanism). In the philosophical sense of the word, these relationships can be "illustrated" with the comparison between Heidegger's and Deleuze's thinking. Being presupposes meaning and order of beings in the causal-purposeful chain of events. The event, on the other hand, signifies the emergence of structures and processes from the logic of *techno-genesis*, which includes the connection/relationship between the living and the non-living. That is why we are talking about the rule of creative chaos or the order of non-linearity. *Emergence* refers to "chance" as existence refers to "necessity" as its natural obstacle in designing the world. *The arrangement of hybrid objects breaks down the boundaries between worlds. Thus, the body in infinite becoming (*Werden, devenir*) finds itself in constant transformation of events, and the initiator of this process becomes the cybernetic information system. In the pursuit of reaching "the infinite speed" (*vitesse infinie*) in the universe beyond space and time, a new history of post-biological humanity is unfolding* (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 2005, 118).

Why are autonomous objects in aesthetic self-shaping condemned to hybridity in all their manifestations, and not only in appearance (*eido*s) and form (*morphé*)? The explanation that talks about the mixing of substances for the purpose of the creation of a "new" part of the alchemical process in the search for pure gold does not seem entirely logical. Hybridity is the only possibility of Being, which unites events and becoming with a difference. In other words, what medieval theology calls the *tertium datur* in opposition to the rules of "common sense," such as, for example, the existence of unicorns, albino deer, black sheep, or fractal forms of the cauliflower, refers to something truly ontologically decisive. Instead of the rule that the exception confirms the rule, the leading generative principle is now that the exception determines the rule, that is, that the singularity of what is created from the mixing of two different substances becomes a new way of self-shaping the world. Hybrid objects are medially determined encounters between worlds. The reason lies in the fact that, in the techno-aesthetic mode of Being, they hide the secret of "new" creation. Hybridity is not, therefore, some external feature of the modern world in the planetary-global movement. At stake is the internal structure of the new metastability of the order. The uncanny (*Unheimlichkeit*)

becomes the rule in the construction of the object, just like the communication between beings and civilizations in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987–1994) was based on the idea of posthumanism, transhumanism, new cosmology, technoscience, robotics, and nanotechnology. The meaning of the word *hybrid* (ὕβρις) from the original Greek to modern times has with the rule of *the technosphere* almost completely changed. While it originally had a negative meaning, now it has a positive meaning.

What seems valid in the biological sense is within the new technologies continued by other means for the construction of objects of wide application in the daily life of contemporary man. In doing so, the entire network of newly created technical products is designed according to the aesthetic criteria of surface polishing and fractalization of shapes. Everything becomes curved. Everything is visualized from a multitude of perspectives. Hybridity reigns inexorably over our lives. Nothing anymore is self-evident from one dimension and one source. Just as energy is drawn from two or more sources, a form cannot be reduced to uniformity. The metaphorical nature of the body in a hybrid state enables its faster and easier replaceability. However, replaceability and substitutability should not be confused. In the first case, it is a question of similarity with the original. In this way, the substitute cannot be a copy, because it takes over some features of the original. However, its role becomes purely operational. If the replacement toner in the printer works just as well as the original, then it is a pragmatic notion of Being. Everything that contributes to the ultimate purpose is good and has its function. By contrast, a substitute is what Derrida calls *a supplement* in *Of Grammatology*. The meaning of the substitute as an addition lies in the circumstance that it, paradoxically, precedes Being as a single and singular event. In the world of technical civilization, life is led as a pragmatic pursuit of purposes and goals. That is why bodies are replaceable like all other objects. Their "addition" to what happens in nature denotes the path towards *the posthuman condition*. After all, artificial intelligence (*AI*) surpasses the human mind, just as artificial life (*A-life*) surpasses what still seems to us only worthy of real life.

Conclusion

Finally, let us sum up everything we have argued thus far about the transition from the ontology of the body to the cybernetic system of information and the corresponding logic of *the technosphere*. First of all, nature and the Earth were the foundations and sources (*arché*) for understanding the body as rooted in a spiritual ground. In the history of metaphysics and its transformation by Heidegger, the body could not emerge as an explicit issue, as it still hides today in neuro-cognitivism under the notion of "the embodiment of consciousness." It could not be thematized separately, in its principled autonomy, because it had the status and character of a mere object with the associated features of matter and form (*eidos* and *morphé*). From the horizon of the intersubjectivity of consciousness in Husserl's phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty's thinking was both the first and the last step in the expansion of metaphysics in terms of its way to the existential turn and openness of the body as an event. Curvature, fractalization, and substitutability are only clear evidence that the body as a living machine appears in a fundamentally different way from the constant transformation of Being as described by traditional metaphysics for centuries. We do not have to begin to think of the body ontologically, as Jean-Luc Nancy asserted in *Corpus*. However, our task is less apocalyptic-messianic than the announcement of the end of history and metaphysics, upon which the Western thinking about Being rested. Instead, it is necessary to start from the event of the creation of a post-biological body and its permanent transformations. Why such a need for the "new" and changing Being? Simply put, because there can no longer be any illusions that nature and the Earth are the last words of human existence. As interplanetary nomads, wandering through space—this, of course, has yet to be fully realized for the human species—, we encounter the monstrous "new nature" of *the technosphere*, which rests on the logic of the trinity of categories: *calculation*, *planning*, and *construction*. Hence, the techno-poietic activity of "artificial intelligence" (*AI*) also requires the aesthetic design of "artificial life" (*A-life*).

The body becomes a fluid and metamorphic object. But it is no longer an object in the function of a transcendental subject that a priori *decides on its movement, form, and material extension in space. Like in digital architecture,*

in design for the age of the technosphere*, too, one works on designing objects that can independently and arbitrarily—of course, still under the watchful eye of man as the program supervisor without a direct physical presence in real space and time—cross the boundaries set by the actual organization of reality. Getting out of the shelter of nature and the Earth requires the body as a digital object to miraculously "ascend" to heaven*.

Thinking about the body becomes a task, for which we still do not have an appropriate language. The technology, with which we assemble concepts for hybrid circuits, is full of neologisms and "language games" (*know-how*). But who would care about that, if the only truth of language in the age of *the technosphere* is that no one speaks it anymore, except for thinkers and artists lost in the abyssality of a phantom of the primaeval Earth, abandoned a long time ago by both humans and machines.

And maybe forever.

Bibliography

Blumenberg, Hans. 2015. "Lebenswelt und Technisierung unter Aspekten der Phänomenologie." In H. Blumenberg, *Schriften zur Technik*, 163–202. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1969. *Logique du sens.* Paris: Minuit.

---. 2004. *Foucault.* Paris: Minuit.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. 2005. *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Paris: Minuit.

Derrida, Jacques. 1967. *De la grammatologie.* Paris: Minuit.

---. 2010. *La vérité en peinture*. Paris: Flammarion.

Foerster, Heinz von. 1985. *Sicht und Einsicht. Versuche zu einer operativen Erkenntnistheorie.* Wiesbaden: Springer.

Freud, Sigmund. 1940. *Gesammelte Werke. Vol. 13: Jenseits des Lustprinzips. Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse. Das Ich und das Es.* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer.

Glasersfeld, Ernst von. 1995. *Radical Constructivism. A Way of Knowing and Learning*. London—Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press.

Hagner, Michael, and Erich Hörl (eds.). 2008. *Die Transformation des Humanen. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Kybernetik.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Heidegger, Martin. 1954. *Was heißt Denken?* Tübingen: M. Niemeyer.

---. 1977. *Sein und Zeit. Gesamtausgabe 2.* Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

---. 2003. "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes." In M. Heidegger, *Holzwege. Gesamtausgabe 5*, 1–74. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

Heraclitus. 2013. *The Fragments of Heraclitus.* Trans. by G. T. W. Patrick. New York: Digireads.com Publishing.

Husserl, Edmund. 2006. "Kopernikanische Umwendung der Kopernikanischen Umwendung." In *Raumtheorie. Grundlagentexte aus Philosophie und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. by J. Dünne and S. Günzel, 153–165. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

---. 2012. *Cartesianische Meditationen.* Hamburg: Felix Meiner.

Kapp, Ernst. 1877. *Grundlinien einer Philosophie der Technik. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Cultur aus neuen Gesichtpunkten.* Braunschweig: Verlag George Westermann.

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1990. *Totalité et infini. Essai sur l'extériorité.* Paris: Le Livre de Poche.

Lyotard, Jean-François. 1979. *La condition postmoderne*. Paris: Minuit.

---. 1988. *L'inhumain. Causeries sur le temps.* Paris: Galilée.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1945. *Phénoménologie de la perception*. Paris: Gallimard.

---. 1958. *Phenomenology of Perception.* Trans. by C. Smith. London—New York: Routledge.

---. 1968. *The Visible and the Invisible.* Trans. by A. Lingis. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

---. 2007. "Eye and Mind." In *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, ed. by T. Toadvine and L. Lawlor, 351–378. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

More, Max. 1993. *The Extropian Principles 2.5*. http://www.aleph.se/Trans/Cultural/Philosophy/princip.html. Accessed: September 12, 2022.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1997. *The Sense of the World*. Trans. by J. S. Librett. Minneapolis—London: University of Minnesota Press.

---. 2008. *Corpus.* Trans. by R. A. Rand. New York: Fordham University Press.

Nietzsche, Friedrich W. 2000. *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik.* Frankfurt am Main: Insel.

Paić, Žarko. 2011. *Posthumano stanje. Kraj čovjeka i mogućnosti druge povijesti*. Zagreb: Litteris.

---. 2019. *White Holes and the Visualization of the Body*. London—New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Prinz, Jesse. 2013. "Ist das Bewusstsein verkörpert?" In *Philosophie der Verkörperung. Grundlagentexte zu einer aktuellen Debatte*, ed. by J. Fingerhut, R. Hufendiek, and M. Wild, 465–500. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Rieger, Stefan. 2003. *Kibernetische Anthropologie. Eine Geschichte der Virtualität*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. 1943. *L'être et le néant. Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique.* Paris: Gallimard.

Simondon, Gilbert. 1989. *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques.* Paris: Aubier.

Slaby, Jan. 2014. "Perspektive kritičke filozofije neuroznanosti." Trans. by B. Perić. *Tvrđa* 1-2: 211–221.

Sturma, Dieter (ed.). 2013. *Philosophie und Neurowissenschaften*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Virilio, Paul. 1991. *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*. New York: Semiotext(e).

"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 co-constitutes the fundamental traits of inter-personal 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

thinking

togetherness

ISBN 978-961-7014-40-2