

## Singularity, Aisthesis and Artwork Postscript on Stefan Lorenz Sorgner's *Philosophy of Posthuman Art*

Žarko Paić\*

### Abstract

The main purpose of these reflections along with Stefan Lorenz Sorgner's book *Philosophy of Posthuman Art* boils down to an attempt to understand contemporaneity, which I denote by the term *technosphere*, and this concept encompasses the relationship between singularity, aisthesis and the artwork in a new perspective of aesthetic thinking. Just as Sorgner shows how a man as a cyborg appears as a twist of *homo faber* and *homo ludens*, so in my previous books and on the thought path of de-establishing metaphysics, I deal with the concepts of *homo kybernetes*, *technosphere* and *autopoiesis*. The problem faced today by all philosophical thinking is how a permanent becoming in the transformations of the posthuman condition leads to 'stabilization' if the time of this frantic process takes place as a crossing of all boundaries between human and non-human, and the models of reflection of the new posthuman art become at the same time hybrid ways of telling between language and images of 'aesthetics of disappearance'.

**Keywords:** posthuman art, technosphere, singularity, aisthesis, artwork, models of reflection

*The technosphere* that appears in the contemporary era of posthumanism with the total and imperial power of reducing thinking to the rational and the poetic, or as Heidegger puts it in the lecture and writing *What is called thinking? (Was heißt Denken?)* determined by the difference between thinking as calculation (*Rechnen*) and thinking as reflection (*Dichten/Besinnung*), denotes an epoch-making feature

---

\* University of Zagreb, Faculty of Textile Technology, Baruna Filipovića 28 a, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia. E-mail: [zarko.paic@tf.unizg.hr](mailto:zarko.paic@tf.unizg.hr). Orcid ID: 0000-0003-2269-6347.

of a radical change in the form of life (Heidegger 2002). With a technosphere, man and animal only “now” and “here” come to the truth about their relationship. Due to the greatest threat of extinction of species and life on Earth, both human and animal species, it might be possible to ask the question “what” means to be an animal and “who” is a human outside the anthropocentric horizon. Of course, this question becomes important only because at the end of history the biological structure of what is called life in all its forms disappears in favour of the techno-structure and the techno-morphic creation of new “life”. The technosphere makes it possible to ask about the relationship between the two. But no longer from the position of onto-theology (Being and God), but rather the place of techno-genesis of life (machine and aesthetics).

The singularity of the machine comes from the conditions of the possibility of combining the animate and the inanimate, nature and technology. The idea of the machine in the biocybernetic model of thinking, therefore, belongs to the synthesis of space and time as indeterminacy in the intervals of the creation of the “new”. This synthesis, in turn, allows space to be compressed and time to be stretched to infinity. It might be not difficult to see that this becomes a feature of virtuality. Immersion *in* virtual space means simultaneous presence in real-time. The machine does not function within any conjunction-disjunction logic. On the contrary, the machine becomes the idea of synthesizing “artificial life” (*A-life*), but by not showing and representing “Being”. Instead, the machine visualizes concepts as a computer. It does this based on programming the codes of a completely autonomous communication between machines and people as objects. That is why the key concept/word of the digital age and the related machine organization of all life of subjects/actors of networked societies has become—*interactivity*.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In her interpretation of digital aesthetics, Claudia Gianetti develops the premise that the interactive media art of networked computers has changed the traditional division between the work of art, the artist and the audience. The participative nature of this art leads to a twist in that the work creates an *inter-actor in relation to the observer*. Hence, the term “interactivity” does not refer to the mere interaction of the observer in commenting on the aesthetic and artistic values of the work. Instead of that “passive” principle of reception, it is now about “inter-activity”. The activity of the work is generalized by moving from an individualized sphere to a collective presence. The condition for the possibility of interactivity in a dematerialized state is, of course, the existence of the Internet. Without the network and devices necessary for data transmission, there is no “inter-activity”. Because of this, communication within the network, with regard to the new aesthetic status of the work of art, necessarily moves into the openness of meaning. The role of the observer *becomes* decisive. However, it would be completely irrelevant without the change affecting the entire metaphysical structure of the trinity of the work, the subject/actor and the user of the content. Gianetti therefore takes into analysis the concept of meta-author from the works of the American cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter, according to which the program creates a new type of “authorship” on the other side of all previous metaphysical boundaries between the creator and those who enjoy the created (work) aesthetically. (Gianetti, 2004)

With the transformation of the machine from its mechanical “nature”, a living machine becomes a kind of apparatus controlled by a cybernetic code. And since it is a part in which the interaction was replaced by the relationship between subject and object, it seems obvious that cybernetics as a general science of systems management enables the becoming of the world as artificial life and living machine. Life could no longer be considered as linearity, suspense and causality in the necessity of order. Hence, it follows that the emergence of the case in the optimal control of replacing the one-off and the uniqueness gave unexampled opportunities for further reconsideration. Furthermore, singularity in the complex environment of animate and inanimate becomes consequently a key concept of posthumanism. What was Heidegger’s most valuable contribution to the debate on the achievements and the limits of understanding life in cybernetics understood as a completed metaphysics? First, classical concepts of physics as a basic science of nature, such as energy, mass and velocity were replaced by notions such as biogenetics information within the power of the genetic structure of the organism. Thus, the genetic code information is associated with a new ontology and a new epistemology, with Being and consciousness. The emergence of the new cannot be longer the result of an encounter created by eternal nature and immutable beings. Instead, we should note that merging and splitting of the core or stem cells with another living organism produce an emergent and complex living condition. Biology as paradigmatic science of posthumanism testified to the extent of the event in that matter. So, it means that humans and all other beings necessarily appear as a “case” of the recombination of animate and inanimate, mind and machine. With the design of synthetic life, all previous methods that were widely accepted for processing industrial ready-made objects disappeared (Paić, 2021).

So, it could be possible to make radical constructivist settings from the aesthetics paradigm shift:

- (1) entity becomes a project of alternative worlds;
- (2) there is no difference between “truth” and “illusion”;
- (3) technoscience and its power of visualization of the world creates the space of virtual reality for art as the aesthetic sphere of new information technologies and communication interactions;
- (4) beauty is no longer an “illusion of” truth because there is no difference between the sensitivity of the phenomenon and transcendental things-about-itself that allows the beauty of truth to shine in the activity of the subject;
- (5) aesthetics in the age of primacy of technology over science designs or creates immaterial objects. (Paić, 2016, p. 132)

What might be sublime in the absence of its subject-like beauty and not comprehensible from a productive fantasy of the artist as a subject? That question extends from Longin to Lyotard, from Neoplatonism to the postmodern dissensus (*différend*) of mind and is represented a permanent serious discussion

concerning the meaning of art. That's the reason why it seems to be the second leading concept of aesthetics which can be further explored within the discourse of the philosophy of art, but without outcomes. Attempt to return to the highest level in contemporary art of painting and performativity of the body were usually finished implausible. Lyotard has reversed the notion of "presenting the unrepresentable" by rehabilitating Kant and his way of thinking of art as aesthetic powers of the judgement of the very thing that cannot be said anymore either theoretically or practically (metaphysical-ethical-political), pointing to the technological creation of aesthetic illusion. Surely, that was possible only thanks to the application of information-communication technologies in everyday life. The American painter Barnett Newman served as a good example of turning the sublime into a postmodern painting. And the visualization of artificial light created by computer-aided information has been one of the strong pieces of evidence that the "thing in itself", or *noumenon* is now being moved to areas of technologically constructed reality (Lyotard, 1991, pp. 78-88). Instead of the "mystery of the infinite", we entered into the infinite mystery of self-production the something generated by "Nothing". The *technosphere* might be no longer displayed in the common terms of the metaphysical tradition (*mimesis*). Hence, the collective power of creating a new aesthetic will now be constructed as a sublime experience of creating things beyond the limits of nature and humans. The thing itself creates and the things are not the same as things in themselves. The creature was created now by the technological reproduction of the Being. It is conceived, however, as a technical object other than a living object. But what gives it specificity in the anthropomorphic world of functions and structures should be the applicability of the system that nowadays is represented as a techno-genetic phenomenon that emerges as a way of regulating social relations. An information circuit of communicative action was created, and the creation in terms of a technical object have to be available for Human use. Both, however, form the cyberspace environment as the management system that has been made up of artefacts and living things immersed in the network.

When, then, the boundaries between the notion of purposefulness and what is purpose without purpose became unsustainable, we have not only lost the beauty in contemporary art. It also drifted off its counterpole. From Romanticism, it has so strongly established the leading aesthetic notion that Nietzsche already needed to shake it into the chaos of life's living powers, where reside the god of darkness and unconscious, chaos and ecstasy, Dionysus, described as the figure of the darkness and madness (Sloterdijk, 1986). What is already known in German romanticism at Schlegel and Novalis, and especially in the painting of Caspar David Friedrich, as a motif of the exalted feeling, goes beyond distinguishing the purpose of nature and art as a synthesis of the subject and object. It is best to call it a German term that could be almost untranslated in other languages and is used by

Schelling, and then in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Freud and Heidegger—*Unheimlichkeit*. We can translate it with obscurity, ambiguity, strangeness, monstrousness, something that causes unforgettable fear and admiration. It is not about “something” as an ontic object or Being in the world. What’s more interesting, there is no point in the theories nor any particular fears that have a source in the subject matter of the world. What makes *Unheimlichkeit* “familiar” comes from an anonymous Being. The “thing” of that holly experience might be indescribable and unutterable. It can therefore be said that “what” creates the feeling of an unusual inconsistency of humans in front of the “mystery of infinite” should be the origin of aesthetics beyond nature and art.

For Hegel and his absolute metaphysics, the true dimension or ecstasy of time was the past. Only when Being is placed in a time of stable past, which is ontologically immutable in the factual sense, although it is not in value or heuristic due to always new interpretations of the meaning of events from recent or older history, we can speak of essential time from the point of view of classical metaphysics. Everything that is, is becoming what it already has been and happened once and never again. It is no coincidence that this one-time eventful accident or fate of history had the primacy of the modal category of necessity over possibility and reality for Hegel. We can find it in his assumption of freedom as a perceived necessity. Therefore, time in the perspective of the flow of the series is now not only the rule of the present as a presence (*ousia*) but above all the necessary reality of what is stabilized as an event of historical significance that can have far-reaching consequences for the future. These are good examples of great world political revolutions, and of course, the only remaining revolution that no longer has political significance, because it is essentially ontological par excellence. It is a scientific-technological revolution that, unlike the Hegelian necessity of time as a past that is stabilized time, requires constant virtual actualization. The thinker who opened the problem of a different understanding of time in the ontology of becoming starting from the repeatable uniqueness of Being or becoming events and thus determined the notion that implicitly presupposes both the *technological singularity* of posthumanism and the cosmic-technological evolution of transhumanism is Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze, 2011). Instead of Hegel’s metaphysics of the absolute spirit with the rule of the dimension or ecstasy of the past, we are connected with the rule of the dimension or ecstasy of the future. It is no projection of the present in the upcoming period of the new presence. On the contrary, we encounter the future provisions of the actualization of this present state. We can denote it by the assumption of duration in constant change. In the introduction to their collection *Post-and Transhumanism. An Introduction* Robert Ranisch and Stefan Lorenz Sorgner (2014) confirm with an appropriate statement why talking about transhumanism necessarily refer to posthumanism as well. Namely, the ultimate premise, although different from the main idea of

posthumanism that strives for a technological singularity, announces that transhumanism aims to establish a *posthuman condition* by which Human transcends their biological boundaries. Hence it will be self-evident how that term is used today as “a slogan for a multitude of different cultural, political, philosophical and digital movements, promoting techno-futuristic visions of the transgression of human biology” (Ranisch and Sorgner, 2014, p. 14).

Let us dwell on an expression that is crucial to both related and seemingly different intellectual movements. Of course, it encompasses an expression of a *techno-futuristic vision*. In addition to the proponents of post-and-transhumanism linked by the idea of the progress and development of human history as an endless event of perfecting and improving emergent and convergent technologies, (Coenen, 2006, pp. 195-222) their common focus is that they try to think and act in a neo-Darwinian context of what covers the meaning of the word post-biological. Evolution in this sense, from a Darwinian point of view, signifies the development of species on earth without a first cause and ultimate purpose and therefore excludes the idea of planned creation by God’s will. Since for both new paradigms of thought, the issue of the immortality of the individual and the species leads to the question of *technological singularity* and *post-biological cryonics*, ie the revival of man as a being without permanent human nature, it becomes obvious that visions of the upcoming period cannot have an anti-technological feature. Moreover, what almost fatally determines contemporaneity in the sign of mental efforts to establish new boundaries between nature and humans no longer stems from the excess of artistic imagination, but from the excess of techno-genetic construction that unites the inventiveness of scientists and the creativity of artists. In any of the existing forms of self-transformation and for post-and-transhumanism, trust is crucial, even an almost unconditional optimistic projection of the upcoming thought as that which unites metaphysics, cybernetics and astrophysics. Philosophy, then, cannot be at the end of exhausting possibilities when it comes to what Bostrom calls a *technological postulate* (Bostrom, 2001). Is it entirely doubtful exactly what in such a plastic way the same theorist attributes to the bioethical condition of the possibility for the future formation of the so-called posthuman dignity? Let us not forget that the integration of technology into human life cannot be just a new frontier of post-biological evolution. If what I call the *technosphere* lies beyond any distinction between animate and inanimate, human and inhuman, then everything that belongs to artificial intelligence and its thinking as *calculation-planning-construction* becomes what is fundamentally different from Hegel’s absolute which *a priori* produces the world as a projection of one’s work of self-consciousness in the circle of metaphysical determinations. The *technosphere*, unlike divine rationality-intuition in terms of direct insight into what has been, is, and will be born of immanent transcendence, becomes therefore infinitely

adaptable and plastic to any change in what Alfred N. Whitehead called an event in the history of cosmic epochs (Whitehead 1929/1978). Philosophically thinking of the essence of the technosphere can no be longer possible, nor does such an endeavour prove meaningful because it is done by the very logic of techno-genesis, by visualizing events as a virtual actualization of becoming. When information suspends the meaning of Being in its openness, we find ourselves in the lobby of a post-and-transhumanist area with no signal. Nothing comes from outside or inside. Everything happens in simultaneous non-simultaneity, because here and now as labels for the classical ontology of space and time are no longer decisive. When philosophy is reduced to technoscientific epistemology, or when its essence and task are reduced to bioethical discussions of the status of cyborgs, androids and technical dispositive of consciousness in telematic societies of control today, then philosophy is left only enough to reflect on techno-futurism and techno-biologism by other means in contrast to scientists and cybernetic artists. Instead of speculation and reflection of Being as the objectivity of the object, what remains in this new philosophical thinking should be a synthetic reflection of integrated circuits of contemporary technoscience experiments. This seems evident in the flourishing of the so-called philosophies of technoscience, especially in the case of convergent and emergent technologies such as nanotechnology. The talk of this new thought designates to that extent a combination of Popper's epistemology and neopositivism. Sorgner lucid points out in his text that mostly in transhumanism represents "this-secular, materialist, naturalistic, rationalistic and immanence wholly understanding the world" (Sorgner, 2014, p. 30).

There should be no surprise about that. The thinking based on the radical immanence of the world already in the case of Deleuze considers that it is divine and supersensible, that which bears the trace of transcendence completely unnecessary for modernity. Nietzsche was the first to clearly announce this by setting out the rule of superman as the "meaning of the earth" after the death of God.

The future of philosophy as thinking that opens up possibilities beyond these two reductions, therefore, remains uncertain. What has become obvious, however, is that the philosophical 'flirting' with the saving turn that comes in the period of post-history from the unfounded essence of art has lost its credibility. Why? For the simple reason that Heidegger best saw at the end of his philosophical life when he was engaged in the analysis of Paul Klee's painting. Namely, art, reduced to the technological feature of metaphysical realization in cybernetics, no longer has its space, time or topology because as an event of aesthetic experience it is only reduced to non-objectivity, construction and aestheticization of the image without the world. Instead of sacred space, art greedily seeks a new God of experiment and construction. What futurism and dadaism determined as movements of the historical avant-garde, especially Filippo T. Marinetti and Hugo Ball, is being

realized in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in all aspects of emergence. What remains for art is to be, like philosophy, in one way or another merely the executor of the last riddle of the *technosphere*. Does not this riddle precisely hide transhumanism in its paradoxical realization of the plan of *immortality without the secret* with the arrival of the “posthuman superhuman”?

In posthumanism, the issue of man and his nature becomes a technical issue of his new (artificial) existence. The second life of man as a posthuman creature of reproductive biology calls into question the whole metaphysical history of the ontological difference between Being, the essence of man and beings. At the same time, it becomes obvious that for a new definition of man, humanism, which thinks of a man from an anthropocentric position, must be radically overcome. But the way to overcome that seems extremely controversial. We can see this in the analysis of the inhuman in contemporary art. The inhuman as a subject of contemporary art is no discovery. But since the beginning of avant-garde art predicts *posthuman conditions* in the works and thoughts, it will be easy to understand contemporary art with which we meet constantly in the world of life. The encounter often takes place in signs of fascination and indifference towards objects from the surrounding world, which shape the material basis of contemporary art. Wolfgang Iser shows that the demand for the inhuman in 20th-century art makes the internal history of the fine arts from the Renaissance to the Neo-Avant-Garde in the late 1970s. The examples he cites convincingly prove this assumption. From Cézanne to Cubism, from Malevich to Cage and Feldmann, it seems quite obvious that something disturbing should be found in works of art. It is the disappearance of man as a figure and subject in favour of the abstract monstrosity of objects and machines. The world in its invisibility thus hovers between nothingness and emptiness. The historical-aesthetic representation of the dehumanization of art for Iser appears epochal through:

(1) anthropocentrism of classical art, especially the Renaissance (Dürer, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael);

(2) the anthropic thought figure of modernity, which, from Kant and the post-Copernican world, places man and the human world at the centre of artistic representation. The anthropic principle is that which understands nature and all that constitutes the universe of the world by the human creation of freedom. According to him, it is possible to derive a teleological model of history as the purpose and meaning of development, and to determine the humanities (philosophy and the entire architecture of culture) by the notion of value;

(3) romanticism as negative anthropic in the painting of Caspar David Friedrich, where it is clearly shown that sublimity as an uncanny of the supernatural transcends humans within its limits. The loss of the art of perspective, which was the illusion of the depths of the world in the Renaissance, has now replaced by the



view of the observer in his reduction to a figurative set of experiences of the uncanny (fear and sublime);

(4) avant-garde deconstruction of the image as in the case of Kazimir Malevich's suprematism's painting *Black Square*, where we could perceive the one-dimensionality of the image in which the human measure and the anthropo-teleological approach to the world disappear. On the whole, the inhuman, according to Welsch, in all avant-garde and Neo-avant-garde art becomes only a counter-concept and a complementary notion of the human. The desire for the inhuman in art remained a failed project because it was only a negative anthropic complex (Welsch, 2004). Welsch's argument is correct. But at the same time, it seems problematic to try to positively determine what has succeeded in abandoning the anthropic or human projection of the inhuman. The very notion itself, as Welsch derives very precisely, denotes only a counter-notion and a complementary notion to the human. This is also evident in Lyotard's critique of the inhuman technoscientific colonization of the world of life in the creation of artificial life and artificial intelligence (Lyotard, 1991). The impossibility of a positive definition of the inhuman arises from the fact that modern humanism in the philosophy of the subject is at the same time the self-establishment of man as the supreme being. According to this model, there is a universal "human nature", while nature itself, in turn, is equal to the causal-teleological model (cause-purpose). And the notion of beauty was defined by Kant in his aesthetics as purposelessness without purpose. As a model, he used the idea of nature in its purpose, which perfects itself with human action and becomes a work of art. To that extent, sublimity as a negative beauty or its complementary notion, as is evident in Lyotard's aesthetics of postmodernism becomes inevitably the main notion of a negative aesthetic of the end of man and posthuman art. The anthropic art of the avant-garde as the negative aesthetic of the inhuman cannot be declared a failure. It is a negative aesthetic and remains so until the moment of the final abolition of the difference between illusion and truth, image and simulacrum, origin and copy in the technoscientific or information-communication model of media formation of the world. Stefan L. Sorgner in the Preface of his book entitled *Philosophy of Posthuman Art* claims that

(...) in the time of posthuman paradigm shift, we also get confronted with new aesthetic challenges. Technologically modified animals come up as works of art. Performances and metaformances get realized which address a non-dualistic ontology of permanent becoming. ... The cyborg turns up a figure of ontological relevance in the arts, which enables us to reflect upon the appropriate meaning of non-duality. Religious myths are being referred to in artworks that otherwise stress the relevance of plurality and relationality. AI and gene technologies are considered in the production process of artworks. (Sorgner, 2022, p. 13)

What does it mean—a *posthuman paradigm shift*? Is it just one of the powerful turns in contemporary science, philosophy, art, culture, politics and life in general that formally begins with Rorty's *linguistic turn*, and in the 1990s will culminate in an *iconic* or *visual turn* in which the image begins to be more important than language in the context of metaphysics as logocentrism, which has been already discussed by early Derrida? (Derrida, 1967; Paić, 2022a). Posthuman art becomes more than the traditionally understood human basis of reality and more than a metaphysically posited idea or essence of art from Plato to Hegel. After all, what Sorgner does in his philosophical analysis of posthuman art is ontologically paradigm shift, then epistemologically, and only at the end, so to speak, an aesthetic paradigm shift. In this sense, his description of the posthuman situation denotes a kind of transgression of what has gone wrong with humanism. It seems no coincidence that some kind of suppressed 'anger' is directed at the achievements of the traditional aesthetics by Kant and the modern aesthetics by Adorno. The reason should be seen in the exclusion of minorities as edges of totality, the supremacy of the elite's point of view in aesthetics and a philosophical attempt to 'found' every new art from above, speculatively-dialectically, which undermines the foundations of ancient metaphysics. Let's leave here the objection that the so-called avant-garde aesthetics as a paradigmatic case of the Frankfurt School went astray due to the aspiration to be a comprehensive critique of mass culture as a cultural industry. The problem with this legacy and I agree with Sorgner, is that it had for referential frame a negative dialectics of society and thereby it paradoxically relegated all other non-politicized approaches to contemporary art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the background. For Sorgner, therefore, the fundamental problem is that the legacy of this outdated aesthetic lies in the fact that its horizon of thought remains dualistic and because of this it becomes imperative to think something radically different. What really?

A posthuman aesthetics, on the other hand, is twisting categorical ontological dualities, aware of permanent becoming, inclusive, non-dualistic, non-anthropocentric, non-foundational, non-essentialist, non-speciesist, non-alethic, non-logocentric, non-heteronormative, perspectival, non-utopian and pluralistic. This is what I will show in my reflection on a philosophy of posthuman art. A central concept is that of the twist. Important affirmative concepts are permanent becoming, inclusiveness, and perspectivism. (Sorgner. 2022, p. 14)

Indeed, we have already had the opportunity to see everything that has been said here in his previous books, from that one on Nietzsche to recently published books about posthumanism and transhumanism. What's the point now? Sorgner seems to stake his position on a radical transgression of metaphysics by abandoning the reach of Heidegger, the Frankfurt School, and postmodernism to explore the existing possibilities of thinking meta-humanism. However, the notion of

permanent becoming did not come directly from Deleuze's ontology of multitude and difference in the wake of Nietzsche and isn't it a question of why the so-called philosophical justification for posthuman art is based on transcending the limits of the human, the all-too-human? In the contemporary philosophy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, everything abounds in research of different aesthetics, such as the body, atmosphere, performativity, appearance, image, event, and inhuman, as we are witnessing the spread of philosophy to all possible areas from everyday life, spectacles, fashion, design, etc. According to Sorgner, it is the result of a kind of 'ontological' process of democratization and pluralism. By the way, *Bildwissenschaft* theorist Hans Belting in his contemporary interdisciplinary analysis of the concept of image interpreted the spread of visual culture in a global framework in the same way in his anthropology of image (Belting, 2001). The problem lies, it seems to me, somewhere else. Aesthetics cannot be longer a theory of the beautiful and sublime as in Kant, but a synesthetic notion of technology as a process of merging the living and the non-living in the creation of artificial life. Hence the booming of the so-called new aesthetics should be methodically framed by simultaneously deconstructing the categorical system of metaphysics in which the aesthetic was always dependent on the primacy of logic and ethics, as in Hegel himself, therefore, who regarded art as the 'lowest' stage of development of a spiritual Being, unlike religion and philosophy. Furthermore, in the same way, the very concept and task of philosophy must be defined differently both from the rule of technoscience and from reducing it to a philosophy of art in the sense of a mere reflection of artistic phenomena in the world. This means that philosophy cannot become a substitute for cybernetic anthropology or, on the other hand, a normative-analytical 'big narrative' about the knowledge of the world and its aestheticization process. Sorgner is well aware of this and therefore directs his analysis of 'posthuman art' to the edges of what has so far been less thought of and thematized, such as leisure and mindfulness—that new existential-reflexive dimensions in which posthuman art takes place as a total event of the construction of new worlds of life.

Dieter Mersch in his book *Epistemologien des Ästhetischen* asserts that the models of reflexivity in contemporary art, admittedly, rest on the avant-garde model that reduces the purity of the apparent world to the idea or matrix of the absolute irreducibility of the image to anything outside of itself (Mersch, 2015, pp. 131-187). What results from this but a differently understood notion of art which, in alliance with the technological transformations of the world today, always exists as a process of becoming different. What Sorgner takes, therefore, from Deleuze's ontology of becoming is a necessary change in this model of reflexivity. Namely, for Sorgner, posthuman art becomes a paradigmatic example of a non-dualistic idea that was given fundamental impetus by Kant, Nietzsche, Wagner, Darwin and Freud. Besides, it is necessary to show how and why the so-called posthuman

philosophy goes beyond humanism and becomes a key starting point for thinking about one's own model of reflection. What is particularly noteworthy in this consideration is the strict distinction between posthumanism, transhumanism, and metahumanism (Sorgner, 2022, pp. 26-28). It seems obvious, namely, that Sorgner, in the concept of posthuman philosophy as well as art, clearly perceives tendencies and development towards what in transhumanism is the goal of all "rationalization" of man in an attempt to break away from the iron grip of fate rooted in the biological structure of gen-centrism. Art designates therefore truly the most obvious proof that permanent becoming requires a change in what Mersch calls the reflexive model. Knowledge of this essential moment of posthuman art makes its 'essence' in the ontological sense transitive, constantly formative for the change from the biological default of life to the postbiological network of immanence.

Among the most significant forms of performance of posthuman art, Sorgner includes bioart with Eduard Kac, and his works 'Alba' and 'Edunia' are genetically engineered flowers as a hybrid of Kac and Petunia. Stelarc is also present here with the performance 'Second Life' and Patricia Piccinini with her work 'Still Life with them Cells', a sculpture created for the 'Art Biennale Venice' 2003. Sorgner argues that this kind of art has some main features of post-and-transhumanist motives. However, due to the obvious impact of technological innovations, cryptoart seems to be a paradigm shift in art history. This refers to the development of the Internet and cyberspace. Paraphrasing Donna Haraway, Sorgner explicitly claims "that we have always been cyborgs" (Sorgner, 2022, p. 36). If we have always been cyborgs, then what has changed in the 'essence' of man if not his latent possibilities of transformation? Of course, it should be not a problem to show, in the footsteps of Nietzsche, that the essentialist notion of human history cannot be longer applicable to a new transversal thinking that does not rest on the idea of an eternal Being and a permanent substance-subject. On the contrary, the problem is that posthuman art, in its hybrid status of non-dualism and non-substantialism, cannot be longer art as a metaphysical considered form of thinking and acting because it shows nothing and represents nothing. *Mimesis* and *raepresentatio* as the basic category of classical aesthetics are neutralized and suspended. In their place comes a whole series of hybrid categories as a combination of life and artificial intelligence. Among them *experiment*, *process* and *interaction* become the keywords of what I call the *technosphere* (Paić, 2022a, 2022b). In this way, the philosophy of posthuman art can no longer be a matter of establishing this art as an object of showing and presenting the sensuous appearance of the idea, which was the metaphysical 'grand narrative' of Hegel. Instead, we are faced with fluid signifiers, and with different models of reflection than the so-called things themselves as Kantian *Ding-an-sich*. The matter of thinking moves to the thinking of things in terms of the construction of autonomous objects that are aestheticized and interwoven with other such objects. The phrase about the paradigm shift repeated

so often in this book must, therefore, cover thinking itself and its functions, structures and the conceptual power of creating a new aesthetic object as such.

It seems to me that here we could introduce the concept of *aisthesis*<sup>2</sup> as a connection between singularity and artwork. In my opinion, as I have explained on several occasions (Paić, 2021, 2022a), contemporary art represents a universal model for unravelling how the processes of technologizing life and the processes of reflexive analysis of its metamorphic states—and precisely Sorgner ‘catalogues’ a whole series of forms of posthuman art—take place in the finalization of the metaphysically understood idea of the essence of man. Why? Simply because its ‘essence’ becomes just that what Paul Virilio calls the *aesthetics of disappearance* (Virilio, 1991). All its forms disappear quickly and only one of them can be stopped by recording them in a coded image that connects the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future thanks to cybernetic technology. In this way, the paradox of this art, which Sorgner deals with as a philosophical account, also arises. Posthuman art is not ‘current’ at all, but as a reflexive model of permanent becoming staying in a condition that we might call in-between past and the future, because its actions, performances, installations, and concepts are on the edge of banality and sublimity, and at the same time they are the link between science and technology into the human body itself, as in Stelarc’s and Ken Rinaldo’s artworks. It will be therefore not surprising why contemporary art needs philosophy instead of the reference framework of art science. With which historical-artistic terminology could we understand Kac’s bioart or Helbig’s musical drama? For Sorgner, after all, the question of establishing a non-essentialist world becomes synonymous with a different meaning of leisure, which Aristotle already had in mind under the name *scholé* as a space for the realization of ludic freedom of human creativity. All this, of course, assumes that the cyborg as a new way of understanding the human concerning *homo faber* and *homo ludens*—necessity and freedom—is no longer thought of as a mere technological invention. My understanding of this problem refers to the introduction of the term *homo kybernetes* as a realized ‘superhuman’ within the framework of the *posthuman*

---

<sup>2</sup> *Aisthesis* from *aisthánomai* = to apprehend by the senses, to perceive and speaks primarily of spiritual perception; English = aesthetic; the root verb is *aio* = to perceive refers to the capacity to understand referring not so much to an intellectual acuteness but to a moral sensitiveness. *Aisthesis* is therefore more of an immediate knowledge than that arrived at by reasoning. It describes the capacity to perceive clearly and hence to understand the real nature of something. It is the capacity to discern and therefore understand what is not readily comprehensible. It refers to a moral action of recognizing distinctions and making a decision about behaviour. So, with this concept, the possibility of a complete aesthetic inflexion should be discerned, mainly because the phenomenological concept of *noesis* and *noema* falls away. Thinking outside of education about the aesthetic subject obviously means to intuitively place things as experiential objects that themselves exist only as inflexible things with a different model of thinking. *Aisthesis* denotes the possibility of synaesthetic knowledge in the age of technosphere (Paić, 2022b).

*condition* (Paić, 2022b). This means that the key concepts of *singularity*, *technosphere* and *autopoiesis* are latent possibilities for creating a completely new interaction between humans and non-humans. Aesthetic thinking, therefore, has the ontological-epistemological task of thinking and articulating the matrix with a new categorical system of fluid concepts as a different position of art beyond the service to superfluous man. What is already coming becomes the sign of the rule of synesthetic transformation of all forms of existence, not only of human subjectivity that evaporates into the ether like a bubble.

What remains belongs to this creative aesthetic thinking without nostalgia for the renewal of the ‘grand narratives’ of magnificent metaphysics and its archive of transcendental illusions. With his metahumanism, Sorgner opened up the possibility of a different thought about the essence of art at its end and transition to a posthuman condition. And that’s the focal point which should be considered as a stimulating step for further similar research in the direction of uncovering the conditions for the possibility of a different form of existential challenge to the freedom of man as *homo kybernetes*.

## References

- Belting, H. (2001). *Bild-Anthropologie. Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*. W. Fink.
- Coenen, C. (2006). Der posthumanistische Technofuturismus in den Debatten über Nanotechnologie und Converging Technologies. In A. Nordmann, J. Schummer, A. Schwarz (Eds.), *Nanotechnologies in Context*. (pp.195-222). Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Deleuze, G. (2011). *Différence et Répétition*. PUF.
- Derrida, J. (1967). *De la Grammatologie*. Minuit.
- Gianetti, C. (2004). *Ästhetik des Digitalen: Ein intermediärer Beitrag zu Wissenschaft, Medien- und Kunstsystem*. Springer.
- Heidegger, M. (2002). *Was heisst Denken?*, GA. (Vol. 8). V. Klostermann.
- Lyotard, J.F. (1991). *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*. Polity Press.
- Mersch, D. (2015). *Epistemologien des Ästhetischen*. Diaphanes.
- Paić, Ž. (2016). Technosphere—A New Digital Aesthetics? The Body as Event, Interactivity and Visualization of Ideas. In Paić, Z. and Purgar, K. (Eds.) *Theorizing Images*. (pp. 121–143). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Paić, Ž. (2021). *Aesthetics and the Iconoclasm of Contemporary Art: Pictures Without a World*. Springer International Publishing.
- Paić, Ž. (2022a). *Art and the Technosphere: The Platforms of Strings*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Paić, Ž. (2022b). *The Technosphere as a New Aesthetic*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Sloterdijk, P. (1986). *Der Denker auf der Bühne. Nietzsches Materialismus*. Edition Suhrkamp.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2014). Pedigrees. In Ranisch, R. & Sorgner, S. L. (Eds.), *Post-and Transhumanism. An Introduction*. Peter Lang Edition.

- Sorgner, S. L. (2022). *Philosophy on Posthuman Art*. Schwabe Verlag.
- Virilio, P. (1991). *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*. Semiotext(e).
- Welsch, W. 2004. Die Kunst und das Inhumane. In Hografe, W. (Ed.) *Grenzen und Grenzüberschreitungen. XIX. Deutscher Kongress für Philosophie*. (pp. 730–751). Akademie Verlag.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1978). *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. The Free Press. (Original work published 1929)