

The game of man with nature and the planet: Technics – technology; Being.

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1. Technics – technology

Kostas Axelos turns his philosophical work and attention towards the study of technology, yet, is technology capable of interpreting the human in another, non-anthropological way? From the standpoint of technics and XIX century capitalist economic system, the human being is a profit machine based, namely, on its faculty of being useful. It can be used to produce various advantages. But then examples appear immediately, going to reflections on spirituality's hardness and a desired normativity for the relation between human and nature, labour and nature, change and nature. For Kostas Axelos, by the middle of XIX century the first dimensions of technology critique appear, a critique whose categorical expression is the political philosophy of Karl Marx, and in XX century the dramatic outcomes, predominantly ecological, bring about other critics.

But technology on itself is a critique in a spontaneous philosophical sense, in the Kantian sense of the word. It challenges the metaphilosopher to think anew on existence and reality of the a priori form of knowledge, for it is precisely through this form that the formal and universal technicity is raised as a human attitude to the world. Here it is not about the postulation of a single "technics of nature", monotonous and innovative. It is even not about the discovery of technemes as necessary and material fantasies, symbolizing the creation of world – for instance the four elements that have produced time, space, matter and so on. Technics is the challenge of philosopher, for it is first and foremost a possibility and, at the same time, reality for ruling space and time. For that, from a philosophical point of view, technics can be reduced neither to mere contingencies nor to symbolic claim e.g. as the one that action is mostly a modification of the world. Science is a specialized language, whose applicability in technics and technologies gives amazing results. The categories of thought are set up onto the primal disclosure, which for Heidegger defines "tekné" as production, productivity, and not preparedness,

createdness. According to him, technics is productive in the sense of creativity, setting up, and old-Greek “tekné” is not associated with what is serial, or industrial. It supposes innovativeness, disclosure, originality. From that point of view Martin Heidegger considers that a theory of nature must by all means include the interpretation of the essence of technic and the explanation how in its confusion of production and challenge modern industry finds itself in relation to knowledge. According to Axelos, following Heidegger, technology in the XX century, found itself situated in the metaphysical conditions of the contemporaneity. They both think a transcendental vision of technology can not avoid comparison with anthropology. The paradigm of technology in contemporary world by necessity goes to the plots of human existence.

The existence of proper rules in the technological domain supposes the possibility for finding the logical priorities of human beings in a technical age, the human in a technical world – homo faber. Homo faber is more different than the man of reason for he is not a romantic, not even is he the Faust-like man of knowledge. Homo faber aims at another mythology, vastly more different than from philosophical poetry. Obviously, this new mythology is consisted of contradictions. It is about the contradictions between spiritual instinct and will to power. That is how a new “artisticity” arises, one that challenges the perspectives of sociobiology. Sociobiology has its ideological characteristics, as if they restore and return the old myths of discovering man, his new forming under new conditions. The second birth of man is a birth under the technical-economical circumstances in new science - technology, computer, atomic bomb.

That is how the question of technical appears. It is about a concept having various degrees, a concept-ensemble, in which archaic elements of myths such as those for Prometheus and Faust take place. The endeavor of man towards knowledge – even if hard to define – never came to an end. Yet the myth of Frankenstein is not only a warn but the new old reality under which so many people live. Gaining awareness of the spirit of bottle – yet the spirit is not always a good one – is significant not only for the philosopher, but also for the poetically set observer of the world. The metaphor of this scene includes the unexpectedness of future and the hidden hope could turn out to be benevolent, and the claims of an imagination, which – not knowing why – finds that “the situation can not be ruled”. The crystallizing of needs in a union with intellectual

expectances are factors which do not always respond to the social situation. It is a fact, though, that long before James Watt the principles of the steaming machine existed as knowledge for Cheron from Alexandria. It seems that a measure is needed to describe the problem. James Watt's machine finds its place and was useful because it served to satisfy not only an interest, but also a development. Nowadays people carry on their talks about innovation – this too subtle a term is now situated in reality, which itself is being a result from economical determinations. Innovation also has a scientific meaning, for it shows the variety of scientific discoveries.

The practical dimension of technics and technology valorizes to a certain extent those monsters and unexpected surprises on the way to human development. But technics and technologies are not only fertile soil, bringing about monsters and disaffections. Technology possesses and is often the fruit of wits, of happy accident, of unsuspected discoveries, aiming at a cherished dream – in a word, technology and the world of technology are the human world in another dimension, where the Being, Time and Aim apparently have another meaning.

“Intelligent technics”, being established and found at some point, starts to “delete” the mysteries of life, even the ones of all-mighty, all-encompassing, unique life. Apparently, technics and technology reduce life, even human life, to a mere mechanism, teleological rationality and quantitative commensurability. In relation to human, technology searches equilibrium, in order to secure stability, to erase dilemmas of anthropology that have embraced the human body. Individual liberty, combined with military exploitation of technics is just an example for the peculiar and unexpected entering into a new world, ungracious perhaps, but mathematically argued whatsoever. We need not to forget the aspect of simplifying or, more precisely, the alleged simplifying of the problems that technology seeks to solve. The latter, really, constructs a world, but it is precisely this construction that enters the real world of greenery, animals and water. Ecological problems following from economic-technical expansion of the human reach the frontier where the exploitation of natural sphere just brings about social conflicts. It is out of every suspicion that through technology one starts a very dangerous game with nature and planet. This is a game between life and death, between health and madness, between present and future. The language and norms of this game as if bring

about the transcendence of technics. Is not it that the world of technics is a new, transcendental world imposing the address of the ideal question, that is, an ideal inevitably demanding philosophical construction and ethical need?

Industry and practice of technics are the real face of XX century technology. It is based on automatism, which presupposes mainstream production, and production maybe changes people's thinking. Martin Heidegger calls technology "crossing the border". He puts the stress on the modification, on development. Surely enough there are other opinions on the question. It is just enough to recall Nikolai Berdyaev. The Russian philosopher foresees the big jeopardy for the freedom of man and the authenticity of his existence in technics and technology. According to him, technologies create a new world that does not change for the good, on the contrary, it destroys. The destructive force of technologies is best expressed first and foremost in the possibility of being used for violence. Great are the tyrant's possibilities using technics and technologies for the enslavement of contemporary human beings. The most horrific is the union between scientific-technological discoveries and the political power of totalitarianism. Then the age of new slavery comes, something even more horrific than the antique one.

There are sci-fi novels and literature enough to express both stands. It is enough to recall the names of Orwell, Huxley, Wolf, Lem, Bayar. If the metatheory of technology is denied, because it can not be explained – let alone the impossibility of preserving "real nature" and spiritual search – this is so since even such a metatheory appropriates the higher mechanicism to become supreme vitality. Both Heidegger and Berdyaev saw in this thesis the fatal danger for sovereign human will and hidden recognition of the victory of alienation. The finding is that technology in contemporary world multiplies the equivocation and ambiguity, so characteristic for XX century's theoretical and existential philosophy.

Questions of technology find their confirmation in the so-called technical medicines. A typical example is bioethics, which in the course of the last two decades shows the form of the aforementioned "bordering technology". The domination of medicine over contemporary human beings became possible because the man himself became his own medium, using technics to secure his healthy equilibrium. From hygiene, through nurturing, and to the most complicated operations contemporary medicine is

rendered impossible without science and technologies. Surgical and medicine techniques touch the human at his most neuralgic ends with the claim to even direct the nature – from prostheses to the “test-tube baby”. It is not about momentous whims anymore, but for the use of wide-scoped mechanicism and technicity, reaching out to transform the genetics of human even. It is as if we are at the threshold of changing the concept for “normal and natural human”, as if in the name of technical cult towards health and the lengthening of human’s life refuses the old religiousness, insisting on the finitude of human being and the role of God’s will in human life. Is not true that today’s technological power mechanizes the human, and, what is more, in the name of a better future? Is not it that the contours of a new morality must appear, far away from tradition? Is not it that the definition of human in his relation to natural world must be changed, the actual nature, human life and even the concepts of life after natural death? Biomedical technology extrapolates the XX century unreal dreams, transfers them in another plane and this plane is really another philosophy, more different than what is known in the wake of the century.

The expansion of technology can not be grasped without the development and achievements of information and informatics. The new prophets of informing construe not only the preservation of memory, evidences, but aim at the fast re-delivery and receiving of information considering all the facets of social and private life. All this is happening with the aid of machines that can count, calculate, think, decide, but also to do troubles. A new language is appearing – the technical, independent enough and extra-human, non-human. Wiener, Turing, von Neuman are, from that point of view, authentic representatives of the philosophy of cybernetic machines, radicalizing technology. The cyborg set the question of what is the border between human and machine. But such a question is the re-founding of an old alternative – total mechanization of functions or the irreducibility of certain human characteristics, avoiding the whole technical simulation of humans. Reason, mind, subjectivity, as well as other philosophical concepts, they all express the human kind and human characteristics. Yet Dreyfus thinks it is not possible to wholly realize the rational functioning of human. He could be replied that new thinking machines turn values. After all, their decisions and reactions are finitely individual and extraordinarily mathematical, but if the best information is the best way of

thinking? If the “most noble” human is to be the best informed and mechanized one? It is natural that we must save ourselves from formulating questions simplifying or even changing the problems. If, however, opinions are accepted, such as these following the sense of actions, as well as the those of the human body, explained with regard to their most necessary functions, then a philosopher will hardly accept these. The implanting of technology through thinking machines is possibly a danger, a fatal game of man with himself and the products of his thought. John Galbright in his “New Industrial Age” reveals the global economical situations following from the creation of new objects and products, of new language and even new intuition forcing the human’s future to possibly think as machines. This is a warn we must think about.

In his “Menon”, “Thimaeus” and “The Republic”, Plato still assumes utopias can – to put it in the modern way – be or become techno-political. Techno-political in the sense that the weight of government and power is set onto the indisputable, unchangeable, and therefore mechanical and automatic follow of laws and principles established once and for all. Then is it not true that irrationality and its indisputability do link their influence with efficacy and teleology similar to the technical ones? Automatism in all its forms can be qualified as monotonic repetition of what is already established, the impossibility to redefine norms. The automat is a functional concept through which technics is deepening its specificity in the science of movements, while the robot is its ergonomic and social meaning. Automat and robot are the basis of technology, yet they can’t posses cultural-social dimensions. Maybe in our times technics, technology, automata and cyborgs constitute our privilege to save a new philosophical solution of outdated metaphysical opposition between mind and body, human and animal, nature and culture, life and matter, theory and practice, rational and intuitive and, finally, knowledge and ignorance, which, formulated in our everyday life, search a new language and demand a technology which is actually transcendently opened and critical. This way the a priori possibilities of reason cannot be in disguise and stand apart practice any longer. Then, could we not assume, optimistically though, that the strange and complicated dialog between knowledge and ignorance in our days is guided by “technical knowledge”? This paradox of our civilization, unknown for the classical era of

knowledge and philosophy, is a worrisome and promising signal, that maybe we will have success to solve something somehow at the beginning of XXI century.

2. Being

Technology as an aggregate of technics, automat and robots asks questions and is a challenge for modern philosophy. For instance, here we talk about being.

The concept of being is one of the hardest to interpret. Being is what is. Blaise Pascale points out that being can not be defined without reaching absurd. For a single word can not be defined without starting from the very being. That is why his definition of being is the use of a word, defined by the definition itself. The semantic equivocality between being and the very definition of being poses many hard questions. Kostas Axelos prefers to work on and interpret the concept of being through Heidegger's philosophy.

It seems as if Kant first understood the modern development of the question of being through phenomenology. The latter means return of the very things in themselves. Phenomenology is presented as a descriptive science, essentially treating human experience in its integrality. However, two lines must be differentiated. According to Husserl, the primate belongs to mind, for the mind is intentional and constitutive, it is the absolute, a necessary being. In its accidentality the world possesses phenomenality and relativity only. The other line is presented by Heidegger is Merlau-Ponty. Heidegger follows Kant's critical approach but attaches to it a radical meaning, for the whole tradition and the philosophical discussions on being transform it in a peculiar idol of knowledge. Heidegger is one of XX century's greatest philosophers – the one to undertake a real deconstruction of metaphysics. By posing the question of being he problematizes not only the being itself, but the very question of it – the truth of being is at the very beginning of being and existing, of human having the capability of asking himself for the being. For Heidegger, man is not described by mind, but is expressed through the very being: man is the very existence, asking itself questions of being or Dasein. The analytics of Dasein puts some light on how the understanding of being can articulate itself as Dasein. The latter describes the appearance of an existence whose conditions express being-in-being-in-the world and a being open to the question of being.

He unites being and man through a troublesome condition, of anthropological understanding of his philosophy. Heidegger directs Dasein to being without observing the ontological tradition, for under ontology it has never been understood the differentiation between existence–subsistence and essence–being.

The German thinker reminds that such an ontological difference ambiguously and equivocally engaged the philosophy of Parmenides. But history of philosophy after Plato and Aristotle has forgotten this difference be it because it identified being with being or because it has transcended the being to its being. If, however, this difference is forgotten, being is presented and leaves aside the appearing existences. For instance, it is presented as an essence through images or is substantiated through reasons that inform the existence of phenomena. Finally, with the Cartesian concept of subject and truth human existence is put at the place of being. That is why, according to Heidegger, we must believe the listening to and language of poets who have surrendered the metaphysical discourse, but who have heard the ecstasies of existence. Leaving the realm of metaphysics actually takes the form of return. The steps to this return are directed the understanding and grasping of difference as difference. Being can not merely ‘appear’, as is vice versa – existence certifies being. Then thought is released from classical categories of metaphysics, being ceases to be an absolute, but the one and the other are yet different. The significant aim is that this difference be found with the aid of a developing language.

Who and what is to define being? Being, it can be thought, is a name we use to name it. But then is not it that it disappear and becomes a sign, the sign of disappearing metaphysics? In such reflections we find the conditions for metaphysics’ end. But in what language will this end be expressed? The disappearance or dispersion of classical concepts of metaphysics seems to lead to another determination or constellation of language, whose grain is poetry again and whose exodus is maybe beyond classical ontology. If philosophy asks itself, if the philosopher mutely or loudly asks questions, then the trace of these questions do not ignore the world and seeing the world, for the one who speaks, believes and thinks, expects and knows. World is maybe the unity of carnality and spirituality, the unity of object and subject and, most importantly, the most consisting thing is theirs. The tension of this relation brings about trouble, disturbance,

and insecurity. Being abandoned in time is an ecstasy for the man. In the words of Heidegger it is a threefold ecstasy – past, present and future.

Thus being is transformed in time through which one aims at finding a place Here-and-Now. This strange condition of man shows the indecisiveness to questions of knowledge whose interpretation renders difficult knowledge. The enigmatic and fundamental insecurity of human life as time open up, paradoxically enough, the force of possibilities. Precisely the possibilities are the fullness of modernity.

That is why the interpretation of being in modern time follows the cumulative processes in epistemology and gnoseology, having its outset in Plato and Aristotle. According to M. Heidegger the Unified, or Nature, destiny, matter, atoms and emptiness, form, Idea, act, will, God, subject, objectivities, identity of subject and object, Spirit, individual, capital and so on and so on are “the question of fundament”, question of being as such beyond the existing. But then the existing is incognizable like being or existence. The latter is indifferent, it is dissolved in the process of its own forgetting, of “forgetting the being”. The forgetting of being consists in a defining and defined way through the metaphysical thought in trespassing into the sphere of the question of being’s sense, without it to be “seen”. Therefore, ontology as interpretation explicates the nature of existence not allowing the very existence do “scatter”. The motion or the celebrated flow of Heraclites as if returns towards the yet disputable and yet commented discovery of the question of a process pure in itself and the river which is not one and the same where one can not put his foot twice.

The Heideggerian take on being and existence is based on the history of philosophy from Plato and Aristotle to Husserl. Through all these forms and figures the game of metaphysical concept and the game of metaphysics itself appear as an interpretation of being, of changing theses for the essence of existence. In order to understand the meaning of Martin Heidegger’s philosophical adventure, we certainly need to clarify modernity’s hermeneutical situation for the sense of being and for the critical coloring of truth. This is a project demanding history of the today ontology becoming destruction of the history of ontology, in Heidegger’s own expressions. Then it is already clear how the bridge leading to the “forgetting of being” is to be crossed. It is

only then that the reinterpretation of the question of being as question – which is at the same time addressed to being and time – can be grasped.

The fundamental ontological work of Heidegger finds itself in the topology of being, which does not characterize being as a condition but as its revelation as a horizon, an element, a “place” through which it adopts sense, becoming a “place” for its interpretation. Being is revealed through its sense, through questions, process, and Time. The existential temporality is the analytics of being as Dasein.

Paradoxically, this is a spiritual fact of our time! Heidegger’s abstract reflections in “Being and Time” are linked to one of the greatest and dramatic events of modern European socio-political history: for being and existence have the fixity of a social body without which we can not cognize the world we live in.