

Summary

Radical technopoiesis may have an ambiguous impact on individual self-identities and interindividual relations, and practices as well. This impact has hitherto been underexamined when compared to that of technopoiesis, in reflections on the global condition of humankind and the future of human nature. Even the polysemy of the term 'posthumanism' or 'transhumanism' indicates a specter of global and impersonal issues, rather than a specter of problems of individual subjects affected by (auto)technopoiesis and its consequences for their self-identities.

The scope of the project reported in this book was different. Paraphrasing the title of Anthony Giddens' work *Modernity and Self-identity*, the thematic issue as *technopoiesis and self-identity*. We are surrounded and affected by the technosphere and it is assumed that we embody a need to be a self and to have an identity – instead of existing 'beyond' our self and changing into a 'post-self' or 'post-person', as both the supporters and the opponents of the *posthumanist turn* put it.

No one is able to entirely determine and create their own self-identity, though many try to do so through the use of narrative tools. Once Soren Kierkegaard said, "Most men live in relation to their own self as if they were constantly out, never at home". Constantly facing such homelessness and disharmony with regard to oneself can be a chronic problem in the age of the radical impact of technologies on subjects. However, according to Robert Kegan, "there is no progression without contraries".

Inspired by Kegan, Waldenfels, and Dąbrowski, in this book I advocated for a self-identity which would achieve "the next balance" and "the next equilibrium", if the crisis caused by technologies radically changing our bodily and mental features is actively dealt with. But transforming disintegration to reintegration and disequilibrium to equilibrium may be challenging and need the support offered by professional psychotherapy. As long as the ability and willingness to reintegrate one's self is observed – a recovery process and even a growth of self-identity is possible. This process can be considered as self-immunization against radical posthumanism, which no longer seems to be interested in a consistent, diachronic self-identity. Indeed, the opposite is happening: by weakening the criteria suitable for defining the human self, posthumanism coincides with a skeptical view of 'psychological connectedness': "since connectedness is a matter of degree, we cannot plausibly define precisely what counts as enough"⁷⁵⁶,

756 D. Parfit, *Reasons and persons*, p. 206.

as Derek Parfit claims. Psychological disconnectedness (including “a series of interrelated physical and mental events”⁷⁵⁷) provides a favorable opportunity for light-heartedly proclaimed posthumanist experience to initiate the next stage of (post)human development – but first of all, to initiate a permanent self-identity crisis in human beings and in related research as well. Still, “I am not a series of experiences, but the person who *has* these experiences”⁷⁵⁸. How can I continue existing as a person while becoming a ‘post-person’, as posthumanism asserts?

A single type of self-identity always remains an ideal model, a heuristic fiction. In this book the core types of the self were revisited and discussed in the light of experiences radically challenging the invisible subject of them, as something that perceives, experiences, thinks, suffers, acts and interacts. These were: 1. the narrative (diachronic) self, 2. the episodic self, 3. the embodied self, and 4. the agential (energetic) self vs. a *patient*-like ‘me’. The analyses often confronted those selves with realistic, technologically triggered interventions; three cases were drawn from the literary imaginary of 20th and 21st centuries to prove radical posthumanist projects as illusory and not manageable for a human being.

Other ways in which radical technological and biotechnological interventions’ have effects on one’s self-identity were illustrated by examples related to facial allografts and bionics. Considered in line with the post-dualist, psycho-somatic, embodied self-based approach, such interventions deeply revise an individual self and identity. They may disturb both proprioception and the perception responsible for body representations, and cause dissociation, existential crisis, etc.; and they may distort a subject’s sense of her autonomous and authentic conduct. Nevertheless, even such a radical crisis can elevate persons’ self-identity to the “next balance”, as was shown in Chapters III and IV. These therapeutic self- and identity-advances should not be assigned to the category of *posthumanism*; the same applies to the bionic athletes celebrated as “post-human” or “super-human”. Evaluating the effects of technopoietic surgery, which makes the borderline between my body and environment (as the borderline traditionally associated with our skin) liquid, was not aimed at banning technologies, and neither was it about taking the position of the techno-enthusiast, because it is not technologies that are ambiguous; it is the use of them which can be ambiguous. Here their ambiguous nature was discussed in regard to a persons’ self-identity and the permanent crisis associated with it – caused, supported and celebrated by the enthusiasts of radical posthumanism.

757 D. Parfit, *Reasons and persons*, p. 211.

758 D. Parfit, *Reasons and persons*, p. 223.

Although scholars representing wide, multidisciplinary (or – to apply a more fitting word – postdiscisciplinary) area of research have for a long time considered types and changes of self-identity, including modern and postmodern (be it Locke, Reid, Giddens, Bauman), they cannot predetermine what type matches a contemporary subject's needs and beliefs, and to what context it applies. As nowadays psychologists and philosophers of mind tend to claim mental representations of oneself relate to the states of one's embodied and extended mind, this aspect of self-identity was a core issue in this book. On the other hand, "bodies do not generate or tell any narratives of their own"⁷⁵⁹, thus, narrating the problems emerged from the usage of new technologies would remain a complementary priority if we are interested in voicing those problems and dealing with them. Showing its limitations (also mentioned in this book), the narrative approach can be complemented by a dialogical-therapeutic approach to the self (Chapter V). There can be no universally applicable, eclectic model of self-identity diagnosed or recommended for persons confronted with advanced technologies. There can only be the use of complementary strategies giving structure, strength, sense, diachrony, "shape and coherence"⁷⁶⁰ to the experience and recognition of ourselves as users of technologies. That is, often as both their beneficiaries and victims at the same time.

Over the course of the six chapters, I have argued that our organisms and bodies – not only our pure cognition – have powerful means for dealing with invasive environmental and technological factors, and to be an 'intelligent' part of natural interrelations with their environments. The new environmentalism (which also takes a moderate posthumanist form) recalls the phenomenological concept supported by Hans Jonas and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The limitations of being open to our animal 'past' were illustrated with Kafka, Bulgakhov and Brown's novels in Chapter I (*Kinds of the Self*) to show how destructive replacing a human self-identity with a non-human identity would be. Rather, a radical posthumanist evolution would not imply "transcending our natural confines" (Bostrom) and achieving an enhanced version of ourselves.

In Chapter II (*The Evolution of Body Concept*) nine body concepts were constructed and check-listed, from the basic to the most complex, and their identities were defined with the focus on allograft reception, bionic prosthetics,

759 S. Gallagher, D. D. Hutto, "What's the story with body narratives? Philosophical therapy for therapeutic practice".

760 Catriona Mackenzie, „Bare personhood? Velleman on selfhood," *Philosophical Explorations* 2007, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 268–269.

somaesthetics, new media, etc. In fact, according to the invented ontologies, technologies and interpretation schemes (humanist, posthumanist and posthumanism-critical), the human embodiment seems to evolve, however, more often it would be a body concept and theorization that evolve across disciplines and explorative or experimental practices, including somaesthetics, new media and new special locations of the body.

In Chapter III (*Body Representationism between Permanent Loss and Recovery of Identity*) body image and body schema (i.e., perception- and proprioception-based body representations) were analysed, due to their plasticity as an intelligent (cognitive) response to one's own body's morphological dynamics, including the dysmorphic body and prosthetic body. Plasticity is one of the core mechanisms protecting the embodied subject against body-mind disintegration. However, one's own body image is highly prone to sociocultural manipulations. Drawing on Aristotle's physiognomics, Arnold Gehlen's conception of functional plasticity, Hans Jonas' conception of *Homo Pictor*, and cutting edge philosophy of mind, plasticity was defended as our human strength when our bodies confront radical changes. Also, the bio-scientific and social limits of bodily integrity were discussed here. In the same chapter people's attitudes towards artificial devices, human and posthuman identities in several different countries (N=199) were reported to document social body imagery across cultures (especially in China, Egypt, Lithuania and Poland). For example, 18.59% interviewees considered artificial intelligent technologies to provide individuals with additional 'superhuman' potentials or qualities, much less than expected. For 50.25%, artificial devices contributed to a variety of individual potentials, and for 31.15% all human beings have the same innate potentials. Furthermore, as the same pilot survey revealed, 65.2% of Chinese interviewees and 37% of Polish interviewees would define the crosscorporeal identity as 'posthuman', which is a higher percentage than other participants. Lithuanian (70%) and Egyptian (87.8%) interviewees indicated artificial devices and the human bodily identity to comprise an integral whole. Still, for 20.6% of interviewees, artificial devices and technologies belong to the 'alien' area.

In Chapter IV (*Psychosurgery. The Self As a Chronic Patient*), the pharmaceutical technologies of psycho-surgery and neuroenhancement were described, with the focus on their effects on subjects' autonomy and authenticity which are essential for self-identity, including moral decision making and moral behaviour. They were discussed from the viewpoint of controversial therapeutic stimulations whose outcomes aim at adapting subjects to social standards and conventions. In the same chapter, the episodic self-identity was revisited and examined for the second time (Chapter I recapitulated, among others, the Dennett vs. Ricoeur

discussion) to defend subjects' right not to narrate their autobiographies in order to prove that they have self-identity. Nor must they be pressed (biochemically or with the use of further clinical tools) to harmonize with experiences and factors that are foreign to them. The chapter finishes with Bernhard Waldenfels' phenomenological phrase "... that the self is not at home, but is estranged from itself (*ausser sich ist*)", which also belongs to our human (and not necessarily posthuman) experience.

Chapter V (*Empowering the Agent, Not the Patient. Gadamer, Kępiński, Dąbrowski and Waldenfels vs. Technopoiesis*) was conceptualized to synthesize four compatible approaches to the concept of dialogical autotherapy rooted in phenomenological and hermeneutical psychology, and the agent-centered concept of the self as well. Strengthening the agential potentials of the 'agent' would protect the self against being reduced to the *patient*. Whereas the conventional *ars medicinalis* already treats subjects as 'patients' and demonstrates its technological advantages over them, post-conventional autotherapy would try to re-empower a patient's agential potentials. Dąbrowski's and Kępiński's models of positive disintegration have their corresponding models in Kegan and Erikson, but they deserved an update. Hence, they were chosen as leitmotifs for the whole Chapter V. Gadamer's and Waldenfels' compatible phenomenological approaches to the subjectivity crisis and autotherapy followed. All four contributions created a powerful counterbalance to both technopoiesis and the progressive dehumanization and post-humanization of therapy itself.

Chapter VI (*Artificial Intelligent Devices To Be Our Alter Egos? Facing Humans' Most Distant Relatives*) was constructed as a *Gedankenexperiment* in which the social AI's autonomy was hypothetically extended by means of Kant's categorical imperative. The lawgiving procedure based on the categorical imperative was traditionally regarded as essential for being an autonomous moral self and, at the same time, for being an equal participant of interindividual relations. Hence providing the AI with Kantian ethics was mostly considered for social robots, i.e., making them worthy of participation in essentially human forms of sociality and social life. Robots able to respect human autonomy seem to be desirable partners of interactions and cooperation with humans. If a subject's freedom interacts with another subject's freedom, constraint, instrumentalization, domination, etc. can be replaced by reciprocity. But such a radically moral AI is impossible to design by means of technologies, as it is impossible to create a complex system of autonomous lawgiving able to universalize its maxims at the level of the hypothetical "als ob" (*as if*), which requires a reciprocal agreement anticipated by an intelligent individual. Regarding the social and transcendental requirements necessary for conducting the categorical imperative procedure (and to justify its

sense) as well as probably all the requirements which apply to an autonomous and principled moral judgment, one should use expressions such as *autonomous*, *social*, and *moral* artificial intelligence with great care and reduce human expectations concerning reciprocity and post- or transhuman fellowship and unity with it.