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A convergent conception of world through technique in Heidegger and Simondon

Uma concepção convergente de mundo por via da técnica em Heidegger e Simondon

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Abstract: This article proposes a convergent conception of world through technique, based on the dialogue between Martin Heidegger and Gilbert Simondon. Instead of a dichotomous reading between art and technique, or nature and artificiality, we seek to understand technique as a possibility of disclosing being, articulated to the notion of world as image and horizon of meaning. With Heidegger, we investigate the dangers of Gestell and the transformation of the world into image; with Simondon, we contrast the idea of a mediating technique, coextensive to the associated milieu and to the processes of individuation. Finally, we propose a non-fatalist interpretation of modern technique, capable of integrating art, nature, and technique in a unified ontological movement of emergence, opening possibilities for new modes of relation and technical experience of the world.

Keywords: Technique; World; Heidegger; Gestell; Technical individuation; Gilbert Simondon.

Resumo:
Este artigo propõe uma concepção convergente de mundo por via da técnica, a partir do diálogo entre Martin Heidegger e Gilbert Simondon. Ao invés de uma leitura dicotômica entre arte e técnica, ou entre natureza e artificialidade, buscamos pensar a técnica como possibilidade de desvelamento do ser, articulando-a à noção de mundo enquanto imagem e horizonte de sentido. Com Heidegger, investigamos os perigos do *Gestell* e a transformação do mundo em imagem; com Simondon, contrapomos a ideia de uma técnica mediadora, coextensiva ao meio associado e às formas de individuação. Por fim, propomos uma leitura não fatalista da técnica moderna, capaz de integrar arte, natureza e técnica em um mesmo

movimento ontológico de aparecimento, abrindo possibilidades para novos modos de relação e experiência técnica do mundo.

Palavras-chave: Técnica; Mundo; Heidegger; Gestell; Individuação técnica; Gilbert Simondon.

1. Introduction

Technique occupies an ambiguous and polarized position in contemporary thought. Oscillating between technophobic and technophilic readings, it is treated either as a threat to the human being and to the experience of the world, or as a mere instrument for the expansion of human capacities. This article starts with the diagnosis that such approaches remain insufficient for understanding the ontological status of technique in late modernity, especially within the context of digital technologies. Rather than asking whether technique should be refused or celebrated, we propose to interrogate it as a mode of world-constitution, that is, as an active dimension in the opening of horizons of meaning and experience.

It is within this context that we propose a dialogue between Martin Heidegger and Gilbert Simondon. In Heidegger, reflection on modern technique, particularly through the concept of *Gestell*, reveals the risk of a mode of unconcealment that reduces beings to standing-reserve, transforming the world into picture and configuring a historical destiny marked by the forgetfulness of Being. In Simondon, by contrast, technique is thought from the standpoint of its genesis and its processes of individuation, as a concrete mediation between the human being, the technical object, and the associated milieu, thereby opening the possibility of understanding technique not merely as exploitation, but as a relational and world-forming operation.

The central aim of this article is to argue that, despite the profound differences between these two philosophical projects, it is possible to delineate a convergent conception of world through technique. Such convergence does not entail overcoming the tensions between Heidegger and Simondon, nor does it neutralize Heidegger's critique of modern technique. On the contrary, the task is to explore how Heidegger's ontology of technique and Simondon's theory of individuation may be placed in a productive relation, thereby allowing us to think technique as a mode of appearing that actively participates in the constitution of world, without reducing it to neutral instrumentality or to a fatalistic destiny.

To this end, the article develops three main movements. First, it examines the Heideggerian concept of world, especially the notion of world as picture, articulating it with the analysis of modern technique as *Gestell*. It then contrasts this perspective with the Simondonian conception of technique, emphasizing the processes of concretization of technical objects, the notion of the associated milieu, and the idea of technogeographical mediation. Finally, it proposes a non-dichotomous reading of the relation between technique, art, and nature, according to which different modes of unconcealment, *phýsis*, *téchne*, and *poíesis*, may be thought of as convergent moments of a single ontological movement of appearing.

By adopting this approach, the article seeks to distance itself both from a paralyzing critique of technique and from an uncritical enthusiasm with regard to contemporary technologies. To think technique as a path of world-constitution means to recognize it as a constitutive dimension of human and non-human experience, especially within a context marked by generalized digitization. It thus becomes a matter of opening space for a mode of engaging with technique that, without denying its dangers, acknowledges its world-forming power and its participation in the ways worlds come to be and are transformed.

Before considering the possibility of the creation of worlds through technique, we begin by asking what we understand by world in a more general sense. We therefore propose to delimit our understanding of world around the approach adopted by Heidegger in *Being and Time*: "The phenomenon of world is the *in-which* (Worin) of referential understanding, as the horizon of a letting and making an entity be encountered in the mode of being of involvement" (HEIDEGGER, 2018, p. 137). Therefore, following Heidegger, we understand world as a referential understanding of meaning, a network of articulated meanings experienced by *Dasein* as Being-in-the-world. In this conception, Being-in-the-world is not merely a matter of being placed within a world, like a thing inside another, but rather a structure of articulated meanings. It is necessary to avoid the spatializing notion proper to traditional metaphysics if we want to account for the diverse ways in which we inhabit the contemporary world. The author himself states that the spatial understanding of world as nature is "the interpretation of worldhood that stands in the most extreme opposition to it" (*ibid.*, p. 139). Referring to the origin of "in" as "dwelling, inhabiting, abiding" (ibid., p. 100), he further notes that "'being-alongside' the world, in the sense of being involved in the world (...) is an existential grounded in being-in" (ibid., p. 100). It is in this sense that we will understand the relation of the human being to the worlds it inhabits and in which it is engaged, whether natural or artificial, virtual or actual, abstract or concrete.

The Heideggerian conception allows us to address a significant part of our current perception of world, in which the possibilities of crossing the ocean and being on another continent, of attending a lecture delivered over the internet from the other side of the planet, or of experiencing a virtual environment through computer games are always set before us. Moreover, from the possibilities being technically created, time and space are surpassed. The categories of the large and the small are subverted. Action at a distance reconfigures simultaneity on the basis of a global presence.

> What is gigantic stands out in a form that, apparently, makes it precisely disappear: in the annihilation of great distances through the airplane, in a certain re-presenting, through the radio, of strange and distant worlds in their everydayness, brought about through a simple gesture (HEIDEGGER, 1998b, p. 118).

Now, this reconfiguration of spaces and global simultaneity thus entails what the author calls uprooting. In the annihilation of great distances, the sense of presence is lost. If the now is shared worldwide within a single chronological time, the concreteness of the present moment in which we dwell is lost. Heidegger even expresses a certain fear regarding the implications of this uprooting:

> I was certainly scared when I recently saw the photographs of the earth taken from the moon. We don't need an atom bomb at all; the uprooting of human beings is already taking place (HEIDEGGER, 1966).

More recently, already in the full-fledged development of digital technologies, Pierre Lévy speaks of a "detachment from the here and now," very much in line with Heideggerian uprooting. Making use of the term *être-là*, which translates the concept of Dasein as used by Heidegger in "Being and Time", Lévy states that "the virtual, very often, 'is not present' [*être-là*]" (LÉVY, 2011, p. 19). The virtual is not there; it is not given as thrown into the world like Dasein; it does not make itself present; it deterritorializes. Lévy reminds us, however, that this virtualization did not begin with the digital era, but is part of the very process of humanization, of the creation of culture: "Imagination, memory, knowledge, and religion are vectors of virtualization that made us leave presence [être-là] long before computerization and digital networks" (ibid., p. 20). In deterritorializing itself, the process of virtualization creates a nomadic culture, "bringing about a milieu of social interactions in which relations are reconfigured with a minimum of inertia" (ibid.). Certainly, digitization and network connectivity take significant steps in this process of humanization. In this digitally shaped and networked world, time and space are uprooted from present being-there.

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religion are vectors of virtualization that led us to abandon presence [*être-là*] long before information technologies and digital networks" (ibid., p. 20). In deterritorializing itself, the process of virtualization gives rise to a nomadic culture, "bringing forth a milieu of social interactions in which relations reconfigure themselves with a minimum of inertia" (*idem, ibidem*). Certainly, digitization and network connectivity take significant steps in this process of humanization. In this digitally shaped world, networked, time and space are uprooted from present being-there.

> Virtualization subjects classical narrative to a harsh test: unity of time without unity of place (thanks to real-time interactions through electronic networks, to live transmissions, to telepresence systems), continuity of action despite a discontinuous duration (as in communication via answering machines or electronic mail). Synchronization replaces the unity of place, and interconnection, the unity of time (*idem*, p. 21).

The internet, virtually omnipresent in the third decade of the twentieth century, seems indeed to seek to replace both the unity of place and the unity of time. Techniques such as Virtual Reality, allied with next-generation data networks, aim to bring to the present those who are far away, to bring to the now those who are gone, to bring into the here-and-now those who are virtually in another time and space. In this movement, if the virtual, in the first instance, seemed to detach itself from the here and now, it seems to fold back upon itself and, in the process of amplifying virtualities, to create new spaces and new speeds. For Lévy, "the same movement that renders ordinary space-time contingent opens up new means of interaction and new rhythms of unprecedented temporalities" (*idem*, p. 22). This perspective reveals what lies at the core of this article: that, through technique, worlds are created, revealing even their own time and space. Still according to Lévy, "*each form of life invents its world* (from the microbe to the tree, from the bee to the elephant, from the oyster to the migratory bird) and, with that world, a specific space and time" (*idem*, p. 22). It is even possible, thinking with this Tunisian author, to understand that this process of virtualization and world-formation is not exclusive to the human being. On the contrary, the human possesses this possibility only by being itself already situated within World, as a creative agent, constantly recreated.

> *Virtualization through disconnection in relation to a particular milieu did not begin with the human.* It is inscribed in the very history of life. From the first unicellular organisms to birds and mammals, improvements in locomotion opened up, according to Joseph Reichholf, "ever vaster spaces and ever more numerous possibilities of existence for living beings" (Reichholf, 1994, p. 222). The invention of new speeds is the first degree of virtualization (*idem*, p. 23).

If it is possible to criticize this incessant movement of creating new speeds, if accelerationism is leading not only humanity, but every form of life on Earth, to an imminent risk, this is certainly worthy of note. However, and this is the path indicated by Pierre Lévy, the way out may indeed be to follow "the most positive tendencies of the ongoing evolution" (*idem*, p. 118) in the search for

solutions to the new emerging problems. It is undeniable, however, that virtualization "invents, at the cost and at the risk, qualitatively new speeds and mutating space-times", worlds perhaps more complex to inhabit, but still, a brave new world.

Ultimately, when we refer to world, we refer to this conception, not merely reductive and spatializing, one that Cartesian understanding (*res extensa*) has so firmly embedded in modern thought. In this way, we can speak of worlds, in the plural, as an unfolding of the possibility of our relation to World through changes of context. In order to avoid ambiguity, we attend to the polysemy of the word "world" and will use World (in the singular and capitalized) when referring to the shared world to which we commonly refer as the "real world."

We reserve the use of world and worlds (with a lowercase initial) for cases in which we are dealing with a relational context, experienced individually, not necessarily spatializing, even if, ontically, it is observed within World as simply given. Heidegger distinguishes this second sense from the first insofar as it possesses, in this case, "a pre-ontologically existentiell significance" (HEIDEGGER, 2018, p. 112), although it must still be understood in an ontic sense. "From this sense arise various possibilities: world sometimes indicates the 'public' world of the we, sometimes the nearest surrounding (domestic) and 'own' world" (*idem*, p. 112). As our interest is not to undertake a profound ontological analysis of worldhood, which would not fit within the scope of the present work, we understand that the distinction between these two ontic forms of world provides us with the necessary conceptual tools to deal with the world of technique and its impacts on World.

It is of interest to further deepen our understanding of the way of dealing with world and with the beings that are closest to us, insofar as we understand that this analysis will open up for us a more proper understanding of the world(s) we inhabit. It is in this mode of being that the perception of world in everydayness is configured. According to Heidegger, "the most immediate way of dealing is not merely perceptual knowing, but rather involvement in handling and use" (*idem*, p. 114). The productive and handling character of beings as they present themselves in such concern allows us to think not only concrete artifacts, but also "abstract" ones, although perhaps always linked to concrete beings, as in the relation that interests us between *software*, an "abstract" artifact, which is executed on *hardware*, a "concrete" artifact.

Heidegger designates the being that comes to meet us in concern as *instrument*. A computer is an instrument, but software too is an instrument, each with its various functionalities. Software, too, can be apprehended either in its readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) or as simply given in the world of things (*Vorhandenheit*), in the form of code that is written, analyzed, compiled, and executed. This

distinction becomes particularly evident when one considers that, in most cases, developer and user do not coincide: whereas the former relates to software predominantly as a thematized object, susceptible to analysis and elaboration, the latter encounters it primarily as equipment in use, integrated in a non-thematic way into everyday concern. The non-coincidence between these two poles thus makes explicit the plurality of the modes of being of software.

Perhaps we may understand the way in which we deal with software in the same sense in which Heidegger speaks of *Zuhandenheit*, thereby also allowing us to understand software, in its readiness-to-hand, as essentially and, for the most part, imagetic. The relation between the operator and computer programs takes place through interfaces that allow for a sensory connection between human and machine. Certainly, there are software systems that engage directly with senses other than vision; even these, however, as a rule, present configuration interfaces that are primarily given in the form of images displayed on screens of various types and sizes. Nevertheless, even when not directly related to vision, the use of software occurs in a way analogous to what Heidegger defines through the concept of circumspection (*Umsicht*), a mode of dealing with instruments subordinated to a multiplicity of references. Understanding software also as an instrument at hand, we conclude that the Heideggerian concept applies to this case as well, that is:

> The mode of dealing with instruments in use and in handling is, however, not blind. It possesses its own mode of seeing, which guides handling and confers upon it a specific assurance. The mode of dealing with instruments is subordinated to the multiplicity of references of "in-order-to" (*Um-zu*). The sight of this subordination is circumspection (*idem*., p. 117).

However, it is of interest to deal more closely with software that opens itself to the possibility of interaction by means of images, for in this way we will be able to better understand the possibility that a world may be brought forth from digitally generated images, and the impact this has on the circumspection of the being that we ourselves always already are. As we think about a concept of world that applies to what we experience in the broadly digitized society in which we live, it is fundamental that we attend to the relation that is established visually[1] with software entities. In our daily dealing, computer programs form part of the circumspection of *Dasein*. We deal with world by way of representations in the form of images. It is therefore possible to speak of an image of world.

[1] In this aspect of the conception of world as image, Simondon seems to be in tune with Heidegger in highlighting a certain privilege, within human conception, of the image formed visually: "The symbolism proper to technical operation is visual symbolism, with its rich play of forms and proportions. The civilization of the word has given way to that of the image" (SIMONDON, 2020b, p. 159). In line with this guiding thread that runs through both authors, we propose to think software created through object-oriented programming languages. An emblematic example in the twenty-first century is the creation of environments produced by Virtual Reality.

Still in Heidegger, as becomes clear in the lecture pronounced in 1938, *The Age of the World Picture*, "the image of the world would be like a painting of beings as a whole" (HEIDEGGER, 1998, p. 112). This is not, however, a mere representation of the world as lived, but rather the conception of world in the form of image. It is not as if there were a world out there filled with objects that are represented by the knowing subject, which interprets them in the form of images projected in its psyche, as Kant maintains in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. Rather, for Heidegger:

> World-image, essentially understood, does not mean, therefore, an image that one makes of the world, but the world conceived as image. Beings as a whole are now taken in such a way that they are something only insofar as they are posited by the representing-elaborating human being. Where world-image comes to pass, an essential decision concerning beings as a whole is accomplished. The being of beings is sought and found in the being-represented [Vorgestelltheit] of beings (*idem*, p. 112–113).

Dasein is always already projected into a world that surrounds it and, in order to better deal with it, conceives it as image. World, in the Heideggerian sense, is properly this ensemble of images that comes to meet us in the everyday dealing of being-in-the-world. In the modern age, this ensemble of images constitutes the world properly so called. And what is the essence of this age in which we live? Still for the German author, "what distinguishes the essence of modernity is not that one passes from a preceding medieval world-image to a modern world-image, but rather that the world becomes, in general, image" (*idem*, p. 113). It is perhaps precisely this transformation of the world into image that opens up the possibility of composing a world from the creation of digital images. The generation of images of virtual worlds is thus perhaps an unfolding of the historical age in which we live: "that beings become something that is in being-represented" (*idem*, *ibidem*), and the world becomes an imagetic world. Not merely an "imagined" world, but a world represented through digital images that form it essentially.

First of all, therefore, world is perceived and conceived as image. It is commonly said in contemporary discourse that each individual has their own worldview. There exists an entire body of sociological and anthropological texts dealing with multiple forms of perspectivism. Heidegger understands this process of anthropologization as constitutive of modernity. It is only possible to speak of a worldview of each human being on the basis of the Cartesian notion of subject and object, which, in turn, already forms part, for Heidegger, of the decline in which we are immersed through the metaphysics of the forgetting of being. For the author, "that the world becomes image and that the human being, within beings, becomes subjectum, is one and the same process" (*idem*, p. 115). It is only from this subjectivist standpoint that world and subject can be thought separately. For

Heidegger, "it is no wonder that only where the world becomes image does humanism arise" (*idem*., p. 116), for it is only within this conception that one can propose a science that places the human being at the center as a privileged agent.

It is only according to this conception that "the world becomes image and the human being becomes subject" (*idem*, *ibidem*). "As soon as the world becomes image, the position of the human being is conceived as worldview" (*idem*, p. 117); the human being places itself at the center, as the result of an ontological turn, as proposed by Kant; the world becomes representation and comes to assert itself "as the name for the position of the human being in the midst of beings" (*idem*, *ibidem*). This human being, however, does not assume this position as a merely passive and observing agent. The subject of knowledge is also, at the same time, while observing the world, an active agent who seeks to grasp, conquer, and modify it with a view to "improving" the world. Dissatisfied with a world that appears to it as fundamentally hostile, the human being seeks to modify the image of the world it observes. Thus, still according to our author, "the fundamental process of modernity is the conquest of the world as image" (*idem*, *ibidem*), where image is "the product [*Gebild*] of representational production" (*idem*, *ibidem*). We thus arrive at another fundamental point for understanding the notion of world in Heidegger, through the concept of Gestell presented by him in an even more notable lecture, published in 1954, namely, *The Question Concerning Technology*. Although separated by sixteen years, we will understand these two lectures as a certain continuity in Heidegger's conception of world, also in resonance with the fundamental concepts of the analytic of *Dasein* set forth in *Being and Time*. In this way, we seek to better understand the aspirations of modern humanity that "the world must be brought into the picture of the public and must be fixed within it" (*idem*, p. 122) and, in properly securing it, to investigate the possibility that opens up to it of creating worlds through technique.

1. The Essence of Technique as Enframing in Heidegger or Mediation in Simondon

If world, as we have seen from Heidegger, must be understood as more than the totalizing ensamble of beings, what can be said of technique and its relation to the non-reductionist concept of world proposed by Heidegger? We are not yet in a position to say how the relation between technique and world takes place in contemporaneity. However, along the preparatory path toward this analysis, we ask, together with Heidegger, about the essence of technique. We understand that, in understanding essentially how technique is constituted, the possibility is directly opened up of interpreting it on the basis of world conceived as image. Moreover, it becomes possible to carry out

an inverse analysis, examining how technique may be considered as world-forming and as influencing the very conception of world.

And how does the essence of technique come to pass? In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger traces a rigorous analytical path that proposes to us a response to this fundamental question. For him, "the essence of technique is by no means anything technical" (HEIDEGGER, 2008, p. 11). Many of the premature conclusions to which one tends to arrive when thinking about technique have their origin in a technicist approach to the issue. Both technophilic and technophobic perspectives tend to interpret technique as merely an instrumentalization of human action in the control of the world. It is precisely this exploitative and controlling drive that Heidegger denounces in proposing a more fundamental and essential analysis of technique. We follow him in the conclusion he reaches, namely, that the essence of modern technique shows itself in what he calls Enframing (*Gestell*) as "a destining mode of unconcealment, namely, the unconcealment of ordering and challenging" (*idem*, p. 32). It is precisely for this reason that we understand, together with the author, that contemporary anthropological worldviews present this way of interpreting technique as something placed at the dis-posal of the human being for the exploitation of nature. Thus, it is possible to conclude that *Gestell* is also a mode of access to truth as αλήθεια (truth as unconcealment or disclosure). However, what Heidegger seeks to denounce is a dangerous pretension of *Gestell* to become the sole mode of unconcealment. As the author states: "Enframing is the extreme danger because it precisely threatens to enclose the human being within dis-position, as the supposedly sole mode of unconcealment" (*idem*, p. 34). And how are we to save ourselves from such danger, which may ultimately come to position the human being itself as disposed and co-opted by technique? Is there a way of freeing the human being while avoiding that "it itself comes to take itself only as standing-reserve [Bestand]" (ibid., p. 29)? And, furthermore, if, as Heidegger tells us, "technology is not dangerous; there is no demonry of technology" (*idem*, p. 30), would it be possible to articulate a relation to technique that is not paralyzing?

In seeking some tentative responses to the preceding questions, it is fundamental to note that Heidegger does not deny that Enframing is a mode of unconcealment and thus that it opens a path to truth by way of αλήθεια. However, Heidegger also sketches a rather fatalistic prognosis, based on the idea that "the essence of technique is the danger" (*idem*, p. 30). The translator and commentator Mário Botas emphasizes that "Heidegger perceives in technique the consummation" of Metaphysics and stresses that "the essence of technique thus appears as extremely dangerous" (BOTAS, 1995, p. 60). What seems to make this prognosis even more pessimistic is the apparent impossibility of any action on the part of the human being. Botas recalls that Heidegger issues precise warnings in this

regard and that "the danger of *Gestell* is not susceptible to ethical mediations or precautionary measures" (ibid., pp. 60–61).

And "then"?, the commentator himself asks. In the technical age in which we live, we are constantly confronted with this question of the "then." Proceeding from the Heideggerian diagnosis, interpreted with the aid of his translator and commentator, the human being thus finds itself "reduced to its animal composition, turned into a beast of labor" (*idem*, p. 49); "human 'resources' are concentrated or distributed according to the demands of technique" (*idem*, p. 50). And here we are, human as we are, asking ourselves: "And then?" Is there a possibility of a way out of this condition of subservience? To use a term from Heidegger himself: is any salvation possible? Mário Botas raises the same question:

> We find ourselves here before what could be called the *question of the after*: it is clear that the technical age in which we find ourselves cannot know an after, at least not in the manner of the epochs that preceded it, which had received, after Plato, their specific *after*. If there is an *after*, it is not an *after of the technical age*, but an *after of Western civilization*. (*idem*, p. 61)

Would it be legitimate to seek in Heidegger an answer to such a troubling prognosis? If we are so dominated by technique and it is not for us to attempt mediations or precautions, what remains for us to do? Botas himself warns us that "one cannot expect from Heidegger a *clear and distinct* answer" (*idem*, p. 61) and points out that the salvation indicated by Heidegger is limited to "a fall from where we stand into the right to hope [...] but in which the event does not depend on human beings" (*idem*, p. 65). A paralyzing waiting for a salvation that "is to come, will arrive by the 'grace' of being at the ultimate moment of the danger of beings" (ibid., p. 65). It sounds apocalyptic and deeply theological, like the expectation of Christians for the day of the Last Judgment. Moreover, such hope, if it exists at all, would be groundless, for, according to the commentator, "it is not possible for us to ground our hope in anything whatsoever, since the terms of grounding would still belong to the era of metaphysics and technique" (*idem*, p. 66). But is it really so impossible for us to construct an active waiting by way of technique? If Heidegger himself tells us that "the essence of technology harbors within itself what we least expect, a possible emergence of what saves" (HEIDEGGER, 2008, p. 35), why should we not allow ourselves to think alternatives that are neither paralyzing nor merely salvific, but active and constructed by means of technique, and not outside it?

It is along this line that we seek other voices in twentieth- and twenty-first-century philosophy that may present us with alternative ways of dealing with technique, for although we agree with Martin Heidegger in his precise diagnosis of modern technique as Enframing, we tend to disagree with the fatalistic prognosis that emerges as a conclusion when a non-critical reading of the author is adopted.

One runs the risk of, in adopting a technophobic and fatalistic stance, reading in Heidegger a privileging of the mode of unconcealment opened by Art to the detriment of that opened by Technique. A canonical reading of Heidegger tends to carry this bias of attributing a value judgment in the form: technique = bad, art = good. We understand, however, that it is necessary to articulate multiple modes of appearing, ranging from the "natural" of the physical world, by way of Φύσις, to the artistic and the technical.

As we think of art as the only "good" mode of unconcealment, in contrast to a "bad" mode of unconcealment arising from modern technique, we run the risk of falling into the very danger pointed out by Martin Heidegger, namely, that of privileging one mode of appearing over others. Perhaps the clear appearing of truth occurs not in a reductive manner that seeks to isolate one mode of unconcealment (the artistic) to the detriment of the others, but rather in articulating Φύσις and τέχνη, the natural world, art, and technique together in a broad and cohesive movement of the appearing of a single, coherent, and inseparable truth. It is this possibility of reading that we will pursue through a more critical analysis of Heidegger's question concerning technique, also through a reading of other authors, especially the French philosopher Gilbert Simondon.

We can have a notion of the fundamental difference in perspective between Gilbert Simondon and Martin Heidegger by reflecting briefly on how these two authors treat a similar example, namely, the river and the technical artifact coupled to it: a power plant or a Gimbal engine. Heidegger argues that the installation of a power plant in the bed of a river is a form of aggression that seeks to exploit the energies of nature.

> The hydroelectric plant set upon the Rhine dis-poses the river to supply hydraulic pressure, which dis-poses the turbines to turn, whose turning drives a set of machines, whose mechanisms produce electric current. The transmission stations and their network dis-pose themselves to supply electrical energy (*idem*, p. 20).

The author sees the installation of the power plant on the Rhine as a form of violence, a co-optation. Whereas he once saw beauty in the river, "evoked by the *work of art* of the poem of the same name, 'The Rhine,' by Hölderlin" (*idem*, *ibidem*), the river now appears, "in this integrated succession of dis-positions of electrical energy" (*idem*, *ibidem*), itself as a dis-positive. Unlike the old wooden bridge, which served as a passage, a connection between one bank and the other, for Heidegger "The situation has been reversed. Now it is the river that is installed in the power plant" (*idem*, *ibidem*). In lamenting the installation of the power plant on the Rhine, the author is already clearly making a value judgment, establishing a limit for technique, in which the river is beautiful, evoked by Hölderlin's poetry as a river of passage, with its beautiful wooden bridge. In the Heideggerian

conception, the bridge still appears as a work that brings forth beauty, whereas the power plant co-opts, exploits, and destroys the beauty of the river. But how is it that Heidegger can see beauty in the wooden bridge, a human technical artifact connecting the two banks, and not see beauty in a power plant, also a human artifact, albeit one of greater technical complexity? Or again, would it be possible to think as beautiful the coupling between the technical artifacts of the power plant and the river? It is in this direction that the thought of the French philosopher Gilbert Simondon seems to point when he refers to the Guimbal turbine[2], a technical object that uses water as a source of kinetic energy, but also as a means of cooling. Simondon seems to indicate that there is a deeper association than mere exploitation between the technical object and its milieu. By proposing a notion of associated milieu as part of the technical system (the technical object also has its mode of being dependent on the surrounding world), the author suggests that the technical object acts as a mediator between two worlds, the technical and the geographical, creating a "third milieu, the technogeographical milieu, whose modifications are all self-conditioned" (SIMONDON, 2020b, p. 105).

> The technical object is at the point of encounter of two milieus and must integrate itself simultaneously into both. However, since these two milieus are two worlds that do not belong to the same system and are not always entirely compatible, the technical object is determined, in a certain way, by the human choice that attempts to effect an agreement, as best as possible, between these two worlds (*idem*, p. 100).

Unlike an arbitrary, exploitative choice, Simondon speaks of this mediating potential between a technical world and a geographical world. It is not merely the power plant that has been placed in the river, nor, as Heidegger would have it, the river that is installed in the power plant. What is at stake is the invention of a new milieu, technogeographical, which is only possible on the basis of the coupling between river and turbine. The turbine presupposes the river. The invention of the turbine presupposes the presence of water within it, which allows for a reduction in the dimensions of the very devices that compose it. The author tells us that this is a form of adaptation, not in the sense of a given being that adapts to an equally given milieu, but of an adaptation through concretization with the milieu, which comes to be an associated milieu of the concretized object itself. "Adaptation-concretization is a process that conditions the birth of a milieu, rather than being conditioned by an already given milieu" (*idem*, p. 104).

[2] As Brian Massumi reminds us, the Guimbal turbine is "a water turbine invented by Jean Guimbal, who succeeded in miniaturizing key components while ingeniously resolving the associated problem of overheating." Still according to Massumi, "The designer/engineer can bring the two disparate fields of water and oil to the limit of relation, but the passage of the threshold belongs entirely to their potentials. The designer/engineer is a helper of emergence."

In Simondon's thought on the concretization of technical objects, there is an idea of co-participation, of mutual dependence. Not that the river depends on the power plant in order to exist, but that the new technogeographical milieu obtained in the conjunction of the river and the power plant is only possible if thought as already from the outset mutual and correlated. The technical object is not merely a being that has been placed in a milieu in order to exploit it. The object itself exists only in presupposing the milieu to which it will be associated. Simondon goes so far as to propose that this concretizing coupling is organic, drawing an analogy with the emergence of organs in the evolutionary chain of living beings:

> The organ is the condition of itself. The geographical world and the world of already existing technical objects relate to one another in a similar way, in a concretization that is organic and that is defined by its relational function (*idem*, p. 105).

The perspective of the technical world brought forward by Gilbert Simondon is decidedly more optimistic than the paralyzing prognosis of Heideggerian *Gestell*, insofar as it opens up possibilities for thinking alternatives by way of technique. Rather than seeking a way out external to technique, looking to art for a salvation from the technical danger, Simondon turns to the level of technical elements, to their constitution and invention, in order to seek ways out by way of technique itself. Martin Heidegger treats the power plant as a large, undivided block, a technical monster cast into the Rhine that destroys Heidegger's nostalgic and romantic vision as a reader of Hölderlin. Simondon speaks to us of a synthetic organicity as a mediator of worlds. He speaks of the need to think the ontogenesis of technical objects for a better, non-alienating understanding of the technical world in which, and this Heidegger does not deny, we are always already thrown.

4 Art as τέχνη and Technique as Art

Still in Heidegger's text, we find an analysis of the various modes of unconcealment and production, beginning with Φύσις and proceeding through τέχνη, which may be differentiated into fine arts, craftsmanship, and modern technique. The author states that "Φύσις, the arising and emerging of itself, is also a pro-duction, it is ποίησις. Indeed, Φύσις is the highest ποίησις. For what presences by φύσις has within itself (ἐν ἑαυτῷ) the bursting-forth of pro-duction…" (HEIDEGGER, 2008, p. 16). That is, for Heidegger, the fundamental difference between Φύσις and τέχνη is that the latter does not have the bursting-forth of pro-duction in itself but in another (ἐν ἄλλον), in the artisan and in the artist" (*idem*, p. 16). The author himself also reminds us that, for the Greeks, "τέχνη also designated the ποίησις of the fine arts (…) Art was simply called τέχνη" (*idem*, p. 36).

However, the author there moves to a conclusion that, in our view, calls for at least a more updated critique, for Heidegger states that "The revealing that dominates in modern technology does not, however, unfold as a pro-duction in the sense of ποίησις" (*idem*, p. 18). Why could we not understand unconcealment by way of *Gestell* as a form of production, of making a world appear (albeit in an aggressive manner) through the determining exploitation of modern technique? We are not proposing a value judgment as to whether this produced world is better or worse than the "natural world," but rather investigating the concretizing possibility of world as pro-duction also on the basis of modern technique. Given that Heidegger himself tells us, a little further on in this same text, that "extracting, transforming, storing, distributing, and reprocessing are all modes of unconcealment" (*idem*, p. 20), which extend even to the human being, it seems entirely possible to articulate all modes of unconcealment in a convergent movement that is much closer to the way in which world is set forth for us in the twenty-first century. Still for the German philosopher, "the human being never reduces itself to a mere standing-reserve. In bringing-forth technology, the human being participates in Enframing, as a mode of unconcealment" (*idem*, p. 22).

It seems to us that, in modern thought, τέχνη and ποίησις have undergone a divergent conceptual distancing that leads us to understand poetic or artistic making as not only divergent but at times even antagonistic to artisanal or technical making. Subsequently, the very differentiation between artisanal making and modern technique seems to us to further amplify this divergent movement that began with the Greeks. But what if the artisan or the artist, the human being, ultimately, were not to be considered an agent external to nature, but a part of it?

And what if, just as the growth of a plant is a multiple and convergent event, involving not only the plant but a complex system with a milieu that is impossible to dissociate from it, the production of the artisan, the artist, or even the modern technician were also to be considered an event of a complex system in which the human being is inserted, not as a superior agent, but as a participant?

At this point in his critique, it seems to us that Martin Heidegger falls into a certain anthropocentrism, or even into a humanism that he himself repeatedly criticized, by separating the production that emerges in the human being as "non-natural," distinguishing it from natural production by way of Φύσις (or phýsis). What if we were to think technique also as a form of a bursting-forth in itself, having the human being as an inter/mediating agent? The author himself reminds us that "the essence of technology harbors within itself what we least expect, a possible emergence of what saves" (*idem*, p. 35). Τέχνη harbors within itself a salvation. Every artistic making is grounded in a technique. Every technique is, in itself, an art. In the intertwining with artistic making,

it is shown to us that "the essence of technology is profoundly ambiguous." And further: "the question concerning technology is the question concerning the constellation in which, in its proper unfolding, revealing and concealing, the essence of truth comes to pass" (*idem*, p. 35). Thus, the German philosopher seems to authorize, for us, a "salvation" by way of technique and not outside it, as a hasty reading of the Heideggerian diagnosis might suggest. It is not by denying technique and affirming art that we glimpse truth as unconcealed, as if technique concealed a truth that art would come to reveal. What Heidegger appears to denounce is the pretension of technique to become the sole mode of appearing, co-opting nature and the human being within the mode of *Gestell*. The author's critique is this: that "with all our technology, we have not yet experienced the essence of technology, and with all our aesthetics, we have not yet preserved the essence of art" (*idem*, p. 37). The warning is that the overwhelming force of technique may definitively co-opt thought, but also that a purely aesthetic valorization may prevent art from coming into its own. It is necessary to think technique and art in their essence, and "the more we question the essence of technology, the more mysterious the essence of art becomes." For this very reason, it seems to us all the more urgent to think them in convergence.

Would it be possible, then, in a return to the Greeks, to articulate Φύσις and τέχνη not as antagonistic systems of production, but as complementary movements of one and the same unconcealment? If we carry this task through, perhaps the modes of appearing of the physical, artistic, and technical world are not so divergent, but rather part of a single and convergent movement of which we are both product and producers. Let us think the articulation of technique and art in the midst of the "possibility that the fury of technology may establish itself everywhere until, one day, in the midst of so much technology, the essence of technology comes to presence in the event of truth's appropriation" (*idem*, p. 37)[3].

[3] Let us note, however, that to articulate Technique and Art is not to propose an inversion of privilege, moving from a privilege of art, as Heidegger seems to indicate, to a privilege of technique, as many technophiles seem to suggest. Nor is it a matter of a technicism that sees in technique the essential primacy of the way of dealing with the world. Let us attend to the following warning by Gilbert Simondon: "To reduce technical reality to a collection of machines is like reducing art to works of art, or reducing humanity to a series of individuals who present only traits of character" (Simondon, 2020b, p. 223). To articulate Technique and Art as modes of appearing of Truth is to think in a convergent manner: every art presupposes a technique and every technique potentiates an artistic making.

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