

La guerra. Un'altra forma di nichilismo?

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## War, Technosphere, and the Question of Evil. Three Paradigms of War

There have been three paradigms of war since the dawn of Western metaphysical history. With a minor deviation, this also applies to the rest of the world as a whole, which until the 20th century had not yet reached what Hegel, in his speculative-dialectical philosophy, called the substance-subject of world history. The first paradigm, from Heraclitus to Hegel, is determined by the insight into the first cause and the last purpose of history as a meaningful course of events in which the destruction of nature and man becomes a means for some “higher” goal arising from the onto-theo-cosmo-anthropological organization of metaphysics. From the Greeks and Romans to the Jews and Christians, this goal is always marked differently. For the Greeks, from the Trojan War to Alexander’s conquest of Persia and Egypt, war, as the realization of the syncretic spirit of Hellenism, represents a heroic act of freedom by which the people of philosophers and poets defend their homeland and the honour of the *polis* against the barbarian aggressors from the East. As the border of the *polis* moved farther and farther, so began the new logic of the imperial order with which Rome would embark on the mission of politically civilizing the world through the brutal destruction of the Other and its complete subjugation to the services of the *Pax Romana*. Therefore, in the ancient world, war constituted the necessity of conquering and preserving freedom, and the colonization of the Other had the Janus face of the civilizing process<sup>1</sup>. In other words, its bright and wild thoughts conflict, i.e. ancient colonization conceptualized both the idea of political freedom of the people and the idea of ruling an empire in which all other

<sup>1</sup> N. Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1976.

states are only limited territorial colonies. So, Heraclitus lived in the area of Ephesus (modern Turkey), and Ovid was exiled by Emperor Augustus to a distant island in the Black Sea, where the Roman Empire had its last stronghold on the border with the Scythians. The metaphysical paradigm of war is thus mediated by the primordial and initial [*arché*] and the last and final [*eschaton*].

The emergence of war in the mythical-religious sense stems from hurt human vanity [*thymos*], as in the case of Achilles' anger that Homer sang about in the *Iliad*<sup>2</sup>. In this way, the human in this other world appears even more radically expressed than in the world of the gods on Olympus or in Hades because the sky and the earth were created by the primordial struggles between the Titans for supremacy over the world. However, the divine-human history of warfare between nations and states could not have been possible without the singularity of heroes who, with their tragic sacrifices or destinies, from Achilles to Odysseus, fulfilled the mission of a meaningful history of humanity. All wars are therefore justified from this mythical-religious frame of reference and are necessarily both conquering and just. But, in Nietzschean terms, no point of view about war and its ultimate meaning can be absolute. Matters should be judged through perspectivism. For the Greeks, the Trojans were the cause of the war because they kidnapped Helen from Menelaus and took her away from Greece. Furthermore, the Greeks characterized them as barbarians and prone to despotism, so their preventive destruction and expulsion from their own country was designated an act of an enlightening and civilizing mission. From the perspective of the Trojans, on the other hand, the Greeks represented the worst forms of inhumanity and crimes against humanity because they exterminated a small nation and its centuries-old culture through war. Therefore, the question of the meaningfulness of war as the origin and materialization of the "new" in history always marks its instrumental nature. War never has meaning in itself [*an-sich*] because then it would be utterly meaningless, like the apotheosis of eternal destruction and the rule of chaos, which means at the same time that it would be metaphysically beyond the power of gods-nature-people, and that is truly impossible in the way of thinking that Derrida calls «logocentrism»<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> P. Sloterdijk, *Zorn und Zeit: Politisch-psychologischer Versuch*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2006, pp. 6-12.

<sup>3</sup> J. Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, Minuit, Paris 1967.

The Judeo-Christian paradigm of war is no longer determined by this instrumentalization of the concepts of freedom and mind as a metaphysical justification for colonizing the Other. Rather, it is entirely a question of the messianic liberation of the earth for the coming of the Kingdom of God. So-called “holy war” becomes a model of the eschatological vision of the end of history, which is not the ultimate goal of history, as the famous aphorism from Benjamin’s early *Theologico-Political Fragment* from 1921 claims<sup>4</sup>. For the Greeks, the gods, the protectors of heroes, were in a state of permanent war and always participated in war games. Athena, for instance, the goddess of wisdom, in the immortal statue of Phidias in the Parthenon, has a spear resting on one arm and an owl in her right hand, while Ares, the god of war, is a monstrous character from mythology whom it is not wise to anger.

This Deleuzian “immanentism” of life as an eternal conflict in the will to power cannot be the essence of the matter for Judeo-Christian soteriology. The change begins with the notion of the divine foundation of the world in which the messianic redemption becomes what comes from the coming future, so holy war cannot be the goal of history but only a means for, for example, Christ’s soldiers or knights to achieve victory over “unbelievers” and proclaim the triumph of God’s justice and love. Therefore, God does not interfere in the events of war because his kingdom rests outside this sphere. Every war within the framework of this “great narrative” of Judeo-Christian metaphysics is holy and just, and its meaning derives from the justification of what Hegel asserted at the end of his *Philosophy of History* when he said that the end of history denotes the realization of the theodicy of the world spirit<sup>5</sup>. Metaphysics and the philosophical conception of war within this model of Western thought necessarily end. We could even add something apparently “derogatory”. In Hegel’s eschatology of world history, Greco-Roman colonialism and imperialism (with the idea of war as a natural state), as well as Jewish-Christian messianic metaphysics (with the greatest thought reach of the cosmopolitan world order in Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*), were dialectically terminated and overcome<sup>6</sup>. After the end of Western metaphysics’ core concepts and ideas, such as Hegel’s philosophy of history, state and law, war from the sphere of natural-political normality between peoples in the world

<sup>4</sup> W. Benjamin, *Theologisch-politisches Fragment*, in H. Schweppenhäuser, R. Tiedemann (eds.), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II-1, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1972, pp. 203-204.

<sup>5</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, vol. 12, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1970, p. 540.

<sup>6</sup> I. Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, George Allan & Unwin Ltd., London 1903, p. 142.

becomes not only an insult and contempt for the mind that rules reality but also nonsense. Hegel set the liberal notion of English capitalism at the end of his reflections on world history as a sign of a new era in which economics takes over the task that politics had had for centuries.

Another paradigm of war results from the destruction and deconstruction of Western metaphysics. Is it not astonishing that within the framework of this first paradigm with the rule of *logos* and the essence of man as *animal rationale*, it is impossible to determine the essence of evil in history in any other way than as the negation of good? And since all good in the ethical-political sense is the result of the rule of the mind, then, as Arendt and Lévinas well understood, the outrageous “banality of the evil” of the Nazi system for the extermination of Jews in concentration camps cannot be explained by the essence of Kant’s regulative action mind in society and the state. Instead, what evil and modern total war belongs to must be introduced into this irreducible realm beyond the opposition of mind and no-mind. As such, it leads to the ultimate consequences of horror and absolute inhumanity. What, for example, the practice of the Holocaust introduced into world history is called “radical” or “diabolical evil”<sup>7</sup>. In this second paradigm, therefore, the concept of war does not consider the necessity of the action of the forces of destruction in nature and man with the help of methods and technology for history to be meaningful in its eschatological “secret mission”.

Moreover, the most significant thought representatives of this circle of destruction and deconstruction of metaphysics, such as Heidegger, Schmitt, Benjamin, Arendt, Lévinas, Derrida and Patočka, tried to open the question of the possibility of a different paradigm of war and, at the same time, the concept of evil, without which it is not possible to continue talking about the philosophical understanding of war without problems. This, of course, does not mean that evil in the theological-political sense appears as a non-reversible Kantian modal category, that is, as a condition for the possibility of war. Such a pseudo-transcendental relic of metaphysics is no longer relevant for any modern political theology. Evil is not “outside” this world and does not “enter” this world through what Mallebranche calls occasional causes but rather in the sense of the negation of God’s presence. In contrast, the relationship between evil and war does not derive from a

<sup>7</sup> H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Brace Jovanovich, New York 1973; E. Lévinas, *Useless Suffering*, in R. Bernasconi, D. Wood (eds.), *The Provocation of Lévinas*, Routledge, London-New York 1988, pp. 156-167.

relationship of absolute causality. Schelling has already explicitly emphasized this in his reflection on the idea of human freedom. For example, in his definition of the difference between the essence of human freedom and “human freedom” itself, the question of «freedom of will, Good and Evil, personality, etc.” appears<sup>8</sup>.

To be able to arrive at a true establishment of concepts such as evil and war outside the perspective of Western metaphysics, we must apply both evil and war in the thinking of what has happened throughout the entire history of mankind, culminating in the concepts of total war and war carried out with the help of the technosphere as the realized essence of the cybernetic foursome (information-feedback-control-communication) in the explosion of energy as mass and the implosion of information as chaos and entropy, to the ultimate possibilities of reduction to “liberate” any negative messianism and apocalypticism. As Clausewitz wrote, war is not the continuation of politics by other means, which Heidegger “undermined” in his thinking, starting from the fact that war is the occurrence of an “accident in the abyss of life”<sup>9</sup>.

Nothing from the entire legacy of metaphysics helps us to think about what I am trying to bring to light as a problem of the relationship between war, the technosphere and evil<sup>10</sup>. The autonomous consideration of the possibility of what I call here the third paradigm is unworthy. In the first paradigm, the technical notion of metaphysics and the war understood from it is at work, which determined philosophy starting from the traditional thinking from the logic of causality and teleology. In this framework, the meaning of Being, the revelation of God, the understanding of the world, and the position of humans are correlatively connected but with a distinct vertical hierarchy. War always denotes this or that war, just or unjust, heroic or cowardly, exterminating and genocidal, and since it is always in the function of something else, namely the creation of a nation-state, the conquest of new territory and the liberation of humanity from the natural shackles of tribes and clans by necessity, it seems self-evident that, like the concept of technique, it should be reducible only to the pure instrumentality of transcendence

<sup>8</sup> F.W.J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, SUNY Press, New York 2006, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> M. Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1939-1941)*, GA 96, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2014, p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> Ž. Paić, *The Permanent Condition of War-and-Peace: From the Total Mobilization to the Absolute Construction of the Event*, in «International Journal of Philosophy», 6, 2 (2018), pp. 40-54.

and messianism. All wars of this metaphysical rank fought from the Trojan War to the First World War are determined by the geopolitics of primitive (re) territorialization, to use the terms of Deleuze and Guattari<sup>11</sup>.

War, conceived from that second paradigm, represents a total technological device for the destruction of land, resources and people in the name of a metapolitically understood nation-race-humanity. For the first time, therefore, war appears as a means-end of the inhuman in the very “essence” of realized metaphysics, so it is not surprising why the First World War, in the jargon of the German conservative revolution, in the writings of Spengler and especially Jünger, received the attributes of the total mobilization of destructive technology, such as the long-range artillery that tore human flesh in the trenches of Verdun. Technology transcends the boundaries of nature as land and human essence as a handicraft. The mechanical technique still denotes what Nietzsche called human-too-human, so wars also give off a romantic illusion of chivalry and hand-to-hand combat, similar to the conflicts of the tragic heroes from Homer’s epics, especially Achilles and Hector. Therefore, war as a mystical existential experience is celebrated by none other than Jünger in the footsteps of Nietzsche and avant-garde futurist and expressionist aesthetic visions of the world<sup>12</sup>. Technology becomes what is freed from human presence, but without its surveillance and driving power as a will to kill the Other in the name of the nation-race-humanity, there is no possibility of self-directed action at a distance. One can read about this in various texts by philosophers of life, such as the anthropologist Scheler or the proponent of political decisionism Schmitt<sup>13</sup>. The key point of differentiation of opinions about war within this second paradigm separates war as the total mobilization of capital, technology and social militarism from the romantic conquest of the Other’s territory, even in the 19th century. Regardless of the absolute policy of genocide against African peoples in the Congo ordered by King Leopold I, this new technology of destruction, created by the assemblage of mechanics and engineering within the flourishing field of thermodynamics, perfectly coincided with the pursuit of modern imperialism, which meant the end of the fragmentation of the European concept of the nation-state.

<sup>11</sup> G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *Milleaux Plateus: Capitalisme et Schizophrénie I*, Minuit, Paris 1980.

<sup>12</sup> E. Jünger, *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, E.S. Mittler & Sohn, Berlin 1926.

<sup>13</sup> M. Scheler, *Krieg und Aufbau*, Verlag der Weißen Bücher, Leipzig 2016; C. Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum*, Duncker & Humblott, Berlin 1997.

In this sense, the technological dispositif of the destruction of the earth and the performative event of the inhuman in the very “essence” of evil continued in the Second World War, which, from the point of view of the method of action, was a total war of the elemental triad: namely, the sky (aviation), the earth (armoured vehicles like tanks and human forces, artillery and missile strikes), and the sea (ships and submarines). Most importantly, however, the concept of total war is not so much in a war’s expansion in the quantitative field of increasing the number, strength, ratio and scale of the destruction of object X but in the qualitative power of conquering space-time to establish its platform of progress in the production of the inhuman. The essence of total war derives from five post-metaphysical “attributes” of contemporary nihilism and thus connects all three paradigms of understanding war (the technical one, the technological one and the one I call the technosphere) as a combination of artificial intelligence and artificial intuition. In 1938, Heidegger interpreted this set of relationships from a philosophical perspective, without which it would not be possible to think of the posthuman condition of total war. These are:

1. the *dynamic* that refers to the development of strength;
2. the *totality* that affects the principle of power so that nothing outside that sphere of action can maintain its innocence and still be considered “real”;
3. the *imperial* one that results from the commanding character of power and suppresses any possibility of exception in one’s environment;
4. the *rational* one, in which the computational character of thinking is recognized in the closed framework of execution forces; and
5. the *planetary* one, which shows that power can no longer be “total” but is bound to the limits of the inhabited globe, such as the atmosphere and stratosphere, which means that the image of power conquers through the “penetration” of the planet as a whole and thus neutralizes possible planetary opponents<sup>14</sup>.

The third paradigm of war represents the end of war in the (post-)metaphysical sense. It is no longer the methods and technology of destroying the earth in the name of the messianic-political goals of justice of the eternal community or the perpetual empire of the nation-race-humanity, as were the political goals of totalitarian fascism, Nazism and Stalinist communism in the 20th century. Instead of this metapolitical advocacy of the rule of the subject-substance of “its” idea, which spreads imperially and colonially around the world with the aspiration of turning it into an absolute zone of geopolitics, as

<sup>14</sup> M. Heidegger, *Besinnung*, GA 66, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1997, p. 18.

can be seen in the 21st century in how Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine threatens the logic of the global-planetary politics of reorganization, we have found ourselves for the first time in a pure situation that derives the relationship between evil and war from the all-encompassing "positivity" of the will for power as the destruction of the human species or humanity. However, this new Armageddon does not come with any external cosmic catastrophe, nor with the so-called natural extinction of this species, nor by mutual human-too-human destruction, potentially helped by nuclear war or wars between the existing empires (USA, Russia and China) and their colonial satellite states. Rather, the third paradigm of war is determined by the total and absolute rule of the technosphere, which enables the emergence of artificial life from the technogenetic construction of artificial intelligence. All this began with the SF idea and imagination of a futuristic scenario in the 1960s with Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* in which the superintelligent computer HAL 9000 kills the ship's crew until the astronaut Bowman manages to deactivate it at the last moment and thus saves hypothetical humanity in its post-and-transhumanist transition to a higher stage of cognitive evolution<sup>15</sup>.

In the metaphysical sense, war is the realization of the idea of ruling over the Other, as in the Greek paradigm of the political and politics, which, despite formal freedom, equality and justice for Greeks and citizens of the *polis* as foreigners, does not include slaves and women in the totality of public recognition. In addition, war should be understood from the correlation of the psycho-political as singular and collective as it is the sphere of *thymos* that demands its *ressentiment*. Any explanation of the origin of war that is explicitly economic or materialistic, as in vulgar Marxism, with rare exceptions such as Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari in the area of post-structuralism, fails to see that the strategy of violence and aggression cannot be just an accumulation of political factors that correspond to the structure of contemporary capitalism based on information and communication networks and their endless process of the emergence and contingency of capital<sup>16</sup>. The same applies to the irreducibility of the third paradigm of war, which is not a war of all against all in the sense of chaos and entropy in today's corporate structure of oligarchic world rule. There have been periods since the Second World War that resembled peace and striving for non-war solutions to economic and political

<sup>15</sup> S.L. Sorgner, *We Have Always Been Cyborgs: Digital Data, Gene Technologies, and an Ethics of Transhumanism*, Bristol University Press, Bristol 2023; Ž. Paić (ed.), *The Technosphere as a New Aesthetic*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne 2022.

<sup>16</sup> E. Aliez, M. Lazzarato, *Wars and Capital*, Semiotext(e), New York 2016.



issues. However, these tended to be periods of so-called “stand-by” or periods between two wars aiming, for example, for national independence and state sovereignty or, on the other hand, for the imperialist conquest of other people’s territory. These may be unfinished ethnic conflicts, such as the ongoing violent conflict between Israelis and Palestinians or ethnic wars in Africa, or frozen conflicts of a warlike nature, such as between India and Pakistan in the Himalayas. However, none of this can be decisive for this third paradigm of war, which, according to the minimal definition, is not a conflict of an aggressive nature until the Other is destroyed and its territory is controlled.

The technosphere, as a cybernetic system of transmission, storage, control and creation of information, appears as the origin of the so-called “third machine” that unites technique and technology thanks to the algorithmic process of calculating, planning and constructing events. The reality, therefore, becomes a techno-genetic or digital construction that Deleuze calls «virtual actualization» in his book *Difference and Repetition*<sup>17</sup>. The third machine denotes that which is no longer just an extension of a human’s arms or body in its technical form but mediated by the work of the brain, which visualizes concepts as images that have no model or original either in nature or in the external world of culture. These are images of events, like movie images or images that do not imitate or represent anything in the sense of reference to Being, beings and the essence of humans in traditional metaphysics. These images are not even a visual language, as semiotics has tried to understand from Barthes onwards with its belief in language as the fundamental “signifier”. In the cybernetic model of ontology, instead of the necessity and permanence of Being, regardless of whether it is considered phenomenologically or psychoanalytically as *noema* or the unconscious, we encounter the triad of contingency, emergence and deterministic chaos. That is why vision as a visualization of events precedes the program as a system of computer intelligence. This antecedence only by analogy belongs to the apriorism of speculative German philosophy, primarily Kant and his transcendental perception of space and time. However, as computer intelligence is not a *mimesis* or a copy of the speculative mind, human intuition cannot be a generative model for a possible artificial intuition, on which many software engineers responsible for the optimal performance of artificial intelligence’s work and action have been working experimentally since Minsky<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> G. Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition*, PUF, Paris 2011.

<sup>18</sup> M. Minsky, *The Emotion Machine: Commonsense Thinking, Artificial Intelligence, and the Future of the Human Mind*, Simon & Schuster, New York 2007.

Since the technosphere at the current level of cognitive development is not yet a fully autonomous thinking machine, everything is moving towards the fact that it will very soon be the realization of the SF vision of Kubrick's HAL 9000, which means that in addition to the infinite speed of calculation-planning-construction, it will also have developed emotional intelligence and perhaps artificial intuition. As such, the question of the possibility of an ethical understanding of the world in the categories of consciousness, conscience, responsibility, and doing good and evil is no longer completely futuristic and unreal<sup>19</sup>. The problem, however, with the thinking of the technosphere when it comes to war is that it cannot be an ethical issue. Here, it is no longer a question of a potential struggle or war for the territory of a nation-state or even for supremacy over the global-planetary space. Instead, "war" becomes only cognitive and a matter of ruling over the human mind and body as a free territory of existential performance.

Furthermore, if the means and metaphors of warfare in the age of technique were the sword and shield, and, in the age of technology, the cannon and the bomb, then it is quite obvious that in the age of the technosphere, the instruments of destruction of the Other, earth and man, are nothing but gamma rays and hypersonic missiles. There are therefore only two possibilities within this third paradigm of war after the end of metaphysics and post-metaphysics. The first is already at work and refers to the human use and abuse of thinking machines as smart or autonomous destructive weapons. The second is what can be expected, namely that the technosphere takes an "enactive" approach to evil and destroys the apparently advanced and technologically developed human civilization. Of course, there is a third hypothetical possibility: that, like Heidegger's last god, AI will save us from ourselves, that is, from our deadly *thymos* and destructive resentment, becoming a higher form of that Kubrickian "star child" on the other side of the tragic (post-)biological history of humanity.

### *Thinking as Techno-Nihilism: Penrose vs. Severino*

Since the beginning of the new era, with what Sloterdijk calls «Copernican mobilization», we have encountered the attempt that philosophical thought wants to construct the world from its logic of technical production instead of

<sup>19</sup> N. Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2014; M. More, N. Vita-More, *The Transhumanist Reader*, Wiley-Blackwell, New York 2013, p. 22.

observing Being as the subjectivity of an object<sup>20</sup>. For Severino, the origin of this modern-day technical nihilism goes back to Plato and his concept of *poiesis*. Of the many works on artificial intelligence and its consequences for life in today's information society, it is worth highlighting the book of conversations between Severino and one of the most important contemporary mathematicians, Nobel laureate Roger Penrose: *Artificial Intelligence vs. Natural Intelligence*<sup>21</sup>. What is interesting here is that the conversation necessarily recalls what has always been a problem throughout the history of Western metaphysics, namely, how to establish a true dialogue about the essence of things that are the subject of a dispute between science and philosophy. Did this dialogue not begin in the pre-Platonic era with the Greeks – for example, between Thales and Parmenides – and continue in the new era with the conversation between Newton and Kant, culminating in the 20th century, of course, with the conversation between Einstein and Bergson? The question, however, is what all these meetings between scientists and thinkers testify to if not the fundamental issues of ontology, such as the question of whether the world is perpetual or was created by the Big Bang, whether God exists or whether his existence was unnecessary for the creation of the world, and whether the capacity to think is only human or whether it also belongs to the non-human in some way still unknown to us. When Moravec published his visionary book *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence* in 1988, he determined that by around the year 2030, man will be essentially “overcome” by the powerful action of intelligent machines. This prediction still had a streak of utopian rapture with the technical constellation of modernity<sup>22</sup>. In other words, what Moravec predicted was that around the mentioned year, there would be an equivalence between the natural mind and artificial intelligence. I dealt with this problem of the relationship between two ways of thinking and their complex configuration of concepts in *The Superfluity of the Human: Reflections on the Posthuman Condition*, starting from an understanding of the *technosphere*<sup>23</sup>. In short, between thinking as rationality-planning-construction and thinking as a tel-

<sup>20</sup> P. Sloterdijk, *Kopernikanische Mobilization und Ptolömäische Abrüstung*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1987.

<sup>21</sup> R. Penrose, E. Severino, *Artificial Intelligence vs. Natural Intelligence*, ed. F. Scardigli, Springer, Cham 2022.

<sup>22</sup> H. Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1988.

<sup>23</sup> Ž. Paić, *The Superfluity of the Human: Reflections on the Posthuman Condition*, Schwabe Verlag, Basel 2023.

ling event of the meaning of Being, there is a correlative relationship and, at the same time, an incompatibility in the essential settings of what Heidegger calls the «task of thought». I tried to develop the same problem extensively in *Prospects of Future Philosophy: Metaphysics-Cybernetics-Transhumanism* in such a way that I arrived at the proposition that the future of philosophy lies in contrast to the absolute rule of the techno-scientific system of the visualization and mathematization of thought to defend what enables the essence of thinking as such, which means the freedom to decide on one's path beyond the triumph of scientific positivism and the return to the abyss of primordial metaphysics<sup>24</sup>. It seems that this conversation between Penrose and Severino truly represents, as Borges would say in one of his literary parables, a mirror of eternity and a trace of the metaphysical passion for the search for truth.

But what exactly does “artificial intelligence” mean in contrast to the natural mind? Penrose, Emeritus Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, argued that artificial intelligence is a term (albeit imprecise) to describe machines that think by reproducing the activities of human intelligence. He claims, however, that all these great achievements in the development of artificial intelligence, such as acceleration in data processing, the evolution of machine learning, big data and algorithms, are still not enough to explain the true triumph of artificial intelligence over natural or human intelligence. Why? Penrose believes that the logical structure of this non-human thinking needs to be explained and therefore directs attention to Gödel's theorem on the impossibility of an “intelligent machine”. However, the key problem for him is not logical in nature but touches on the issue of physical nature. In his books, he constantly pointed out that in order to understand the essence of the universe and its origin, it is necessary to think about the creative dimension of the purposefulness of the correlation between matter and energy. However, at the same time, the problem of the origin of human consciousness and self-awareness remains unsolved. According to Penrose, our human mind cannot be algorithmically programmed in performance processes. Not only do we still know so little about it, but what we do know we cannot interpret in a correct way using limited thinking schemes. In other words, we lack a conceptual framework that could solve the aporias of the relationship between the natural and the artificial. When everything is reduced to the right measure, it seems that Penrose's scepticism towards

<sup>24</sup> Ž. Paić, *Prospects of Future Philosophy: Metaphysics-Cybernetics-Transhumanism*, Mizanotrop, Zagreb 2023.

what Moravec calls «human equivalence» denotes the result of something that German speculative philosophy from Fichte to Schelling has already considered: “artificial intelligence” cannot be an adequate term for the very act of developing a thinking machine until it develops what is called self-consciousness. However, the question is whether the “self-consciousness of an intelligent machine” can only be a copy of human self-consciousness or whether we have to find a different solution for what Gotthard calls «trans-classical logic» that goes beyond the principles of identity and sufficient reason<sup>25</sup>. Unexpectedly, in his interpretation of this problem, Penrose says that *AI cannot be real intelligence because only human intelligence is a real thing*.

Here, I would like to add the following. To understand the relationship between human thinking and what we call “artificial intelligence”, something more than classical ontological categories like “reality” and “non-reality” is needed. As we know, Kant talks about modal categories in which the substance and essence of a thing appear in space and time. These categories are possibility, facticity and reality and necessity. When we talk about artificial intelligence, it goes without saying that in developing a thinking machine, despite Gödel’s theorem, it will be increasingly supplied with a multitude of information beyond all human memory capabilities. Plato still counted memory among the fundamental features of human thinking because it was only thanks to this mode of thinking that humans have self-consciousness in space and time. The possibility of the self-development of artificial intelligence assumes two things: the self-development of the rational structure or logic of this thinking and the self-development of what is called artificial intuition, that is, thinking that produces information by functioning according to the model of a visualized concept or image. That picture is anything but realistic, so Penrose is only partly right. Artificial intelligence is not “real” but “hyper-real”.

It is precisely because of this that the key point of the modality category for the self-development of artificial intelligence on the way to technological self-awareness denotes the connection between possibilities and reality as a new contingent necessity. Deleuze calls this «virtual actualization»<sup>26</sup>. Although it seems obvious to Penrose that the concept of artificial intelligence should be freed from the matrix of social implications and consequences for human communication by having to solve falls into the abyss of reduc-

<sup>25</sup> G. Gunther, *Beiträge zur Grundlegung einer operationsfähigen Dialektik*, vol. 1, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1976, pp. 249-328.

<sup>26</sup> G. Deleuze, *op. cit.*

tionism, there remains a problem that is already, at this level of artificial intelligence use, irremediable. The openness of the space for the creative dimension of human thinking and innovation by no means excludes the possibility that artificial intelligence thinks and acts by creating innovatively what looks similar to human thought existence.

In his conversation with Penrose, Severino consistently defended his views on the original structure of thought as the openness and persistence of Being in its eternity, starting from Parmenides and pre-Socratic ontology. For him, the decisive problem in the discussion of the relationship between the natural mind and artificial intelligence boils down to the fact that the conceptual framework of both is present in what Plato calls *poiesis*, i.e. production. Since the West denotes precisely the absolutization of production as the ruling and only authoritative way of thinking, *poiesis* is the cause that enables the creation of something from non-existence into existence. We can see from this how Severino tries to show that the question of thinking as a dispute between the original and the non-original lies at the very foundation of Western metaphysics. For this reason, the question about the possibility, reality and necessity of artificial intelligence simultaneously becomes a question about the ontological issue of the world and humans, considering that for the first time in history, intelligence can now become completely non-human and therefore created as a manipulative framework for any further action in reality.

In contrast to Penrose, who defined real or natural intelligence using the concept of conscience as a quality of consciousness, which assumes the ethical dimension of distinguishing between good and evil, Severino concludes that consciousness encompasses the area that artificial intelligence cannot reach and thus it seems that the production of consciousness is what becomes the fundamental issue of today. Hence, both the mathematician and the philosopher are aware that this conversation is nothing more than an exchange of views on the hope that the self-development of artificial intelligence cannot replace the irreducibility of human thinking and that, in the future, the relationship between the artificial and the natural will still be in the coherence of both, not in the total power of artificial intelligence over man.

Everything that emerges from this book is not far from Heidegger's notion of serenity [*Gelassenheit*] against the technical system in the sense of preserving the property of thinking as expressing the meaning of Being<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> M. Heidegger, *Gelassenheit*, G. Neske, Pfullingen 1985.

However, it seems to me that this is just an attempt to calm people before the unstoppable process of technologizing thoughts and visualizing events. The problem is no longer in pointing out that production in the sense of the total production of consciousness marks the path of Western nihilism. What the term *technosphere* attempts to denote goes beyond the scientific and philosophical ways of thinking. The *technosphere* cannot be what Penrose and Severino are talking about when they sceptically try to protect the irreducible territory of human consciousness with the help of ethics and ontology in the synthesis of all five senses in human history, with language as the first and last guarantee. When the logic of an infinite number in the process of computation completely masters the concept of image in the sense of producing information as visualized concepts, then the problem is in what we ascribe from Aristotle to being human, namely opinions in terms of *animal rationale*. From the essence of the *technosphere* as the self-awareness of autopoietic machines, it necessarily follows that thinking synthesizes the non-human into the human, i.e. the rational into the intuitive. Therefore, it should be no coincidence that, at the beginning of the 21st century, intensive research into artificial intuition in robotics and engineering goes beyond the limits of human thinking that we usually attribute to art, not science. In the conversation between Penrose and Severino, the “third man”, the synthesis of artist and visionary, was missing – the “great third”, who is neither God nor technology but that which can think differently and creatively produce something new without it being a mere imitation of human creativity. Is this *tertium datur* still only a possibility and not a reality and a necessity, or perhaps, has the virtual actualization of the non-human as a creative designer of worlds already been realized?

Why does that conversation between mathematicians and philosophers seem extremely important for understanding the problem of the relationship between the technosphere and war? Because it shows that thinking as calculation-planning-construction versus thinking as mythopoetic telling signifies the primacy of the pragmatics of knowledge about the possibility of mastering the world as the conquest and subjugation of the earth and the universe with the fundamental purposes of what constitutes the essence of modernity, which is the rule of the subject-substance through progress and the development of the techno-scientific objectification of Being. Therefore, it seems quite obvious that with the new era and the scientific and technological image of the world, a hegemony of thinking is established, which tends to have military features in the form of the quantification and visualization of Being. The military cannot be just the

realization of war plans and programs for the complete conquest of the earth and space due to the will for the power of some singular-collective subjectivity. It involves the colonization of the land and the rationalization of the world, starting from the tendency to bring the concept of total mobilization, which Jünger talks about in his analysis of the enslavement of Being and the nihilism of technology, to the real condition of governance beyond all limits. However, the boundary between thinking as the technomilitarism of the world, which Nietzsche calls «logic, mass and brutality», and thinking as a discursive conception of Being cannot be only a difference in the sense of a plea for war and a plea for peace<sup>28</sup>.

Instead, in these two modes of human thought existence, we face the last border in the very “being” of man as *animal rationale* and *homo kybernetes*. While the anthropological reduction of the ontology has a scientific-technological character for the former, for the latter, as the “last man” in the posthuman condition, the difference between what Heidegger calls calculating thinking [*Rechnen*] and what he calls telling thinking [*Dichten*] cannot be decisive. Why? For the simple reason that for the contingent-emergent action of “man” in the environment of the technological dispositif of “artificial intelligence”, any insistence on defending the irreducibility of mythopoetic narration and the humanistic set of “values” represents “reactionary” nostalgia for the old days of metaphysics. This obscure dualism between the Platonic rule of *téchne* and *poiesis* is no longer relevant for the technosphere as the essence of a cybernetic system of managing a technically shaped world. As an event of the third paradigm, war represents the “natural state” of the self-regulation of the relationship between the techno-military system and its environment, where local-regional wars take place at all levels of performativities. In this respect, Jünger left the following prescient thoughts, irrefutable proof of the complete bankruptcy of all messianic-romantic illusions about the meaning and purpose of wars in the post-historical era:

The perfection of the technical means of power consists of the ultimate state of expediency and the possibility of total destruction. [...] Already in the last war, there were zones of destruction whose scenes can only be described if we compare them to natural disasters. [...] It is a romantic thought that social contracts can restrain the rampage of these energies and their application in a life-and-death struggle. The premise of that thought is that man is good – but man is not good,

<sup>28</sup> F. Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1885-1887*, KSA 2, edited by G. Colli and M. Montinari, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1980, p. 473.



but good and evil at the same time. In every calculation that needs to pass the exam, it is really necessary to include that there is nothing that a person is not capable of. Reality is not determined by moral rules; it is determined by laws<sup>29</sup>.

From all that has been said, something uncanny emerges. First of all, what is hidden behind the third paradigm of war in the term “technosphere” can, for the first time, become a realized absolute as a triad of metaphysics, cybernetics and transhumanism. Technological singularity is therefore not a messianic event of the cosmic-human evolution of consciousness, which, by merging with God, will lead to bliss on the other side of history. Instead of this traditionally understood soteriology, which was still the philosophical view of modern physicists and mathematicians, as well as the philosophers of monadology, namely Newton and Leibniz, there are more and more reasons to express concern about the linear development model of emergent artificial self-awareness.

The reason is clear. The production of autonomous weapon systems or “killer robots” that can find military targets and neutralize them with smart bombs without human intervention has already gained momentum in recent years. Drones are powerful weapons in military conflicts, and in addition to replacing aviation, their widespread use is leading to significant changes in warfare in the classic means of destruction, from tanks to multi-barrel rocket launchers. No one can stop this anymore, especially not by making appeals of an ethical nature, such as the one signed by many leading technological experts, roboticists and philosophers, and linguists claiming that they intend to prevent the so-called third revolution in warfare after the invention of gunpowder and nuclear weapons. It cannot be prevented because this is neither the first nor the second paradigm of warfare, nor, therefore, is it the sword and shield, nor is it the cannon and the bomb, which were created as a development of technique and technology as a means of conquering the Other in the sense of (re)territorialization. This “here” and “now” is not spatially and temporally fixed and permanent in the opinion of some great inventor or designer.

This arises as the *technosphere* from the singular process of the human that merges with the non-human, just as the emergence of cybernetics with its key concept of information meant transcending the concepts of matter as mass and energy<sup>30</sup>. For the performative enactive mind of the

<sup>29</sup> E. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter – Herrschaft und Gestalt*, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1981, pp. 145-146.

<sup>30</sup> N. Wiener, *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, MIT Press, Cambridge MA 2019.

third or cybernetic machine, the world is no longer post-temporally “in” the world. Instead, in the middle is a techno-genetic construction in which Being, beings and the essence of man are no longer ontologies. After all, the authoritative concepts of the new operational opinions are based on the trans-classical logic of *tertium datur*. That third – the third machine, the third hand, the “great third”, the third paradigm of war – is nothing but the end of the distinction between metaphysics and cybernetics. Instead, thinking in the sphere of action of the technosphere goes beyond the earth and territorial rootedness of things and objects, and the autonomous object as such, object X, “thinks” by quantifying and visualizing what lies in the horizon of the immeasurable and invisible, like technoscience with the human eye.

Artificial intelligence therefore becomes only the algorithmic potentiality of the construction of events that do not exist in reality but are virtually actual and thus hyperreal as far as the strategic planning of the future war is concerned, for now still in the heads of people and their metaphysical fictions and obsessions for the will to power against the existence of the Other as the enemy of my subjectivity and substantiality, and declare what is “new” on the *event horizon* as a legitimate war objective that should be neutralized or destroyed. We can now see that what until the 1990s had the feature of “futuristic” or SF, like the dystopian films *Blade Runner*, *Alien* and *Terminator*, has since become a hyperreal event of the combination of information, genes and robotics in the production of a third machine or *technosphere* that “thinks” and acts autonomously but in the sense of *Rechnen*, not *Dichten*. In the coming future, this tendency may even become *techno-mythic-poetic*, which presupposes unimagined possibilities of aestheticizing as designing digital platforms of cybernetic synaesthesia.

### *Wars Without Worlds?*

Any new “philosophy of war” no longer has its *raison d’être* for the simple reason that a war waged with autonomous weapons for the destruction of the Other, not necessarily human, is no longer a war-in-the-world that has, phenomenologically speaking, its *noema* or subjectivity of the object. The concept of the world in the metaphysical history of the West until Heidegger had that essential ontological difference between Being and beings, so it was self-evident to distinguish between the world as *cosmos* and *mundus* in the Greek and Christian sense and the world as the horizon of designing the

event of Being and the essence of the human. The worldliness of the world has always been a “thing” of thought within the metaphysical triad of Being-God-Man. The fourth, that is, worldly in the concept of the world, belongs to an opinion that does not reduce the absolute integrity of the world to something external to it, such as science or technique-technology, which Heidegger destroyed in *Being and Time* by asserting that the meaning of Being is missed in the modern reductiveness of biology, psychology and anthropology<sup>31</sup>. “Life”, “soul” and “man” therefore do not express the subject-centricity of thinking but are self-showing and self-expressing phenomena of the meaning of Being in the mode of an existential project of freedom as a “being there” [*Dasein*]. When the world in the age of the *technosphere* loses its cosmocentricity and anthropocentricity, that is, what in the term “Anthropocene” signifies its carbon structure of the earth and the end of the industrial conquest and destruction of the surrounding world [*Umwelt*], the logical consequence is that from the horizon of meaning, the world becomes astrophysically reducible to the possibility of its disintegration in the projection of the *event horizon*, which, as Hawking knew, marks the end of the possibility of all visibility and the cognitive-theoretical validity of physical categories<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2018.

<sup>32</sup> The event horizon denotes the boundary that defines the region of space around a black hole from which nothing (not even light) can escape. In other words, the escape velocity of an object within the event horizon exceeds the speed of light. It is so-called because it is impossible to observe any event that takes place within it – it is a horizon beyond which we can no longer see anything. The event horizon therefore effectively hides the singularity at the centre of the black hole, a boon for astrophysicists uneasy about the breakdown of the laws of physics at such a point. The cosmic censorship assumption states that all singularities are hidden by the event horizon and this lack of laws of physics is not visible. In theory, any mass can be compressed enough to form a black hole. The only condition is that its physical size must be smaller than the radius of the event horizon. For example, our Sun would become a black hole if its mass were contained within a sphere with a diameter of about 2.5 km. The event horizon of a rotating black hole splits into an outer horizon and an inner horizon. The outer event horizon of such an object acts as a point of no return, just like the event horizon of a non-rotating black hole. The inner event horizon of a rotating black hole, also known as the Cauchy horizon, is stranger. After that threshold, cause no longer necessarily precedes effect, the past no longer necessarily determines the future, and time travel may be possible. (In a non-rotating black hole, also known as a Schwarzschild black hole, the inner and outer horizons coincide). A rotating black hole also forces the fabric of spacetime around it to rotate with it, a phenomenon known as frame dragging or the Lense-Thirring effect. Frame drag can also be seen around other massive bodies, including Earth. If we summarize what was said above, then it should be pointed out that the concept of the event horizon originates from Einstein’s theory of relativity. As a whole, everything that happens beyond that horizon only shows that the known physical laws no longer apply, so even the model of causality cannot explain the interaction of what is

When we keep this in mind, it becomes obvious that the technosphere transcends the boundaries of the human and the earthly and that its space-time is that of contingency-emergency-deterministic chaos. The world of the technosphere lies beyond any metaphysical picture of the world, and even Heidegger's brilliant analysis of the emergence of the scientific-technical age with the term «the age of the world picture» [*Die Zeit des Weltbildes*] is no longer an appropriate framework of thought for what is happening "here" and "now"<sup>33</sup>. Instead of world history, we are immersed, and no longer thrown out, into the global-planetary nihilism of *the third paradigm of war beyond the war for (re)territorialization* because total war in the hyperspace of Schmitt's *Großraum*, which I call *post-imperial sovereignty*, encompasses everyone and no one, with a tendency to become an interplanetary war without worlds, that is, in the singular plural, it is about permanent wars that will potentially be waged between humans, *homo kybernetes* and extraterrestrial creatures in the coming future<sup>34</sup>. This syncretism of subjects/actors shows that Jünger, Schmitt and Heidegger, not the heirs of Kant and the Enlightenment, are the thinkers who were quite clearly "down to earth" in thinking that the human is neither an angel nor devil but a being that, in its possibilities, encompasses precisely the demonic ability to realize the goals of radical or diabolical evil and, just as Schelling first thought in his discussion about the essence of freedom, becomes the fundamental issue of any further discussion about the meaning of life in the age of artificial intelligence. Is it not amazing that as soon as *ChatGPT* was released by OpenAI

beyond these horizons with what is inside. We would say that contemporary science in this respect is identical to what Deleuze claims when he introduced into the philosophy of becoming [*devenir*] what Duns Scotus, Spinoza and Nietzsche called "immanence". The worldliness of events marks the boundary between the empirically determined world of phenomena and what cannot be known, such as the Kantian thing-about-itself [*Ding-an-sich*] or object X. However, what if, from the point of view of future physics as a metaphysics that synthesizes experience within itself astrophysics and cosmology and philosophical research into the possibility of the emergence of what lies behind our experience, the event horizon is actually a temporary cognitive-theoretical boundary, not something fixed and unchanging? What, then, if events can happen in such a way that Whitehead's hypothesis that the evolution of cosmic epochs requires the creation of new conceptual frameworks for understanding the contingent necessity of a universe for which God is not the first cause and the last purpose, but possibly the creative-metaphysical initiator of the process into infinity without the last insight into its newness of eternal becoming?, Z. Merali, *Stephen Hawking: "There Are No Black Holes"*, in «Nature», (2014), <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature.2014.14583>.

<sup>33</sup> M. Heidegger, *Holzwege*, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1977, pp. 87-88.

<sup>34</sup> Ž. Paić, *Nemesis: Aporias of the Political and Politics*, Naklada Breza, Zagreb 2022, pp. 309-340.

in 2022, all previous “great narratives” of metaphysics, from phenomenology, psychoanalysis, Marxism, the philosophy of life, hermeneutics and philosophical cosmology to cybernetic anthropology and various theories of war from the perspective of the ethical-political renewals of Kant and cosmopolitanism, lost any credibility? All the new so-called “successful” positive science philosophies take place as neurocognitive and neurophilosophy, so this referential framework of the brain as calculation-planning-construction becomes something of a reductive path in understanding war in the age of the technosphere. However, let us not celebrate what should not be celebrated because the brain as a vision and as a program only shows the ambiguous wisdom of Heidegger’s statement from *What Does it Mean to Think?*:

Das Bedenklichste in unserer bedenklichen Zeit ist, daß wir noch nicht denken<sup>35</sup>.

To think of war in the age of the technosphere means to think radically differently from the ruling current of this techno-nihilistic fall into the abyss of “new positivism”. War denotes the *polemos* of all things, and that is why its destructive history of chaos and entropy becomes paradoxically our *creative future*, provided that what remains presupposes the openness of the question of evil and not the closure of thought in the ever-new fiction of perpetual peace and its fallen angels of infinity. To think of what stands outside this event horizon means to think of what is impossible and inexpressible and, as such, essentially undemonstrable.

## Abstract

*The problem of the thinking of the technosphere cannot be an ethical issue because it is no longer a question of a potential struggle or war for the territory of a nation-state or even for supremacy over the global-planetary space. Instead, “war” has now become only cognitive and a matter of ruling over the human mind and body as a free territory of existential performance. Furthermore, if the means and metaphors of warfare in the age of technique are the sword and shield, and, in the age of technology, the cannon and the bomb, then it is quite obvious that in the age of the technosphere, the instruments*

<sup>35</sup> M. Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?*, GA 8, V. Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2002, p. 5.

*of the destruction of the Other, earth and man are nothing but gamma rays and hypersonic missiles. The essence of total war derives from the post-metaphysical “attributes” of contemporary nihilism and thus connects all three paradigms of understanding war (the technical one, the technological one and the one I call the technosphere) as a combination of artificial intelligence and artificial intuition.*

Keywords: technosphere; total war; contemporary nihilism; artificial intelligence; evil.

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