

CROSSING THE 21ST CENTURY: FROM CHRISTIANITY TO THE AGE OF SPIRITUAL MACHINES

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Article



Abstract

This article aims to show, based on the symbolism of the Age of Pisces, how the modern materialist mentality was structured based on an enantiodromia of Christian metaphysics. That enantiodromia the seeds of what it denied. The idealism denied by modern materialism then returns, at the core of what denies it, in the image sensationalism that binds us more and more to screens. Techno-imagined reality is purified of its mundane imperfections and distilled into a virtual image that re-presents it in an ideal version. Idealization appears in the process of intensifying the sensoriality of the image, which sanitizes its imperfections and asymmetries. The techno-image has an advertising form that works like an empty mold, one that works by idealizing the content, showing it not as it is, but as it should be, its ideal image.

Keywords: Age of Pisces, Christianity, Materialism, Techno-Image.

To make the journey through a century that, before completing its first quarter, has already brought so many changes and catastrophes, it would be prudent to have a map in your hands. As might be expected, a literal one would be impossible, since much of what we are about to cross has not yet been travelled, and therefore not mapped. However, a symbolic map would be psychologically useful in outlining the fantasies of the future that are already present as seeds. In his book *Aion*, Jung presents us with this map when he looks at the archetypal image of Pisces that drives the spirit of our time. In this image, we see two fish swimming in opposite directions and connected by a silver thread. One fish swims upwards and the other downwards. Jung sees in this duplicity the intrinsic link between the spiritual form of medieval consciousness and the material form of modern consciousness. Existentially, the spiritual and material forms of consciousness shaped the first and second halves of the Pisces age, respectively. In the first millennium of the Christian eon, divine existence became the central issue. The Christian scales tipped in favour of the spirit and all the qualities belonging to it had a much greater

weight in the articulation of culture, while the second millennium marked the materialistic turn of the descending fish.

The ideal of spiritualisation that aspires to the heights had to be countered by materialistic passion, attached solely to the things of the earth and occupied with dominating matter and conquering the world. This transformation became manifest at the time of the 'Renaissance'. This term means 'new birth' and was used to indicate the revival of classical antiquity. We now know, however, that this spirit was, at heart, a mask and it was not the concept of classical antiquity that was reborn; it was the Christian thinking of the Middle Ages that was transformed, adopting strange forms of pagan behaviour, exchanging heavenly destiny for earthly destiny and thus moving from the vertical line of the 'Gothic' style to the horizontal line of the discovery of the world and nature. The subsequent evolution that culminated in the French Revolution and the Enlightenment produced a state that is widespread today, which we can only describe as anti-Christian, and consequently realised the early Christian anticipation of the 'final age'. It is as if, with the advent of Christ, previously latent antinomies had become manifest, or as if a pendulum had swung more powerfully to one side, and from then on the complementary movement also pushed to the opposite side. No tree, we know, grows towards heaven if its roots do not also extend to hell. The double movement is inherent in the nature of the pendulum (JUNG, OC, vol. IX/2, §78).

As the journey proposed here is psychological and not astrological, it is not a question of which specific year we enter and which exact year we leave the sign of Pisces. Psychology is the logos of the psyche and not of the stars, so the narrative is not about the sign but about the symbol of Pisces, about the way in which the psyche self-regulates in its double swimming. The objective referent of the sign of Pisces is not quantitative time, but psychologically qualified time. Based on this psychological quality of time, we can imagine travelling through the 21st century by first taking a step backwards, reminiscing about the past in order to better understand the present and, from there, taking two steps forwards in a speculative attempt to imagine the future based on the present fantasies we already have about it.

The archetypal manifestation at work in the genesis of the Pisces age is that of the logos. We may not forget that the logos is one of the faces of the animus archetype, as well as the spirit, and that this archetype initiates this age because it ontologically opposes the spiritual fish to the material one. In the Pisces age, the animus takes the form of a logos that breaks the eros that united it to nature. In polytheism, the archetype of eros unites spirit and matter, overriding the logical opposition, so that mythical images are intellectual in themselves because they are expressions of unity in the difference between *esse in intellectu* and *esse in re*. Mystical participation with nature means that there is no dissociation between the head and the body, and so sensory images are animated by implicit thoughts.

The ontological opposition between spirit and matter in monotheistic cultures governed by the logos led to a greater separation between

essence and appearance and thus to a dissociation between the senses and the intellect, with the consequent ontological downgrading of the former in the name of the latter. The spiritual was emphasised by consciousness, making essence ontologically real and appearance a mere sensory illusion. What we are experiencing in modernity is an enantiodromia in which the body, appearance and the *esse in re* return to obsess consciousness with the same intensity with which they were denied. Modernity is an enantiodromia of Christian metaphysics, it is the age of the antichrist.

The silver thread of the dove of the Holy Spirit, which connects the spiritual to the material, was, before the age of Pisces, a soul sphere that united the opposites within itself. *Esse in intellectu* and *esse in re* were contained in *esse in anima*. As in the circle of the Tao, the continuous flow of the Yang into the Yin makes it clear that, ontologically, the opposition between the two is secondary to the union and that, for this reason, eros is in the foreground in relation to logos, so that the world is not made up of extra parts which, by definition, are separate from each other. Everything is one with the Tao, everything is part of the great path of nature.

In polytheism, there is already a logical opposition between spirit and nature, but 'erotic' complementarity predominates over it, so that the opposition is at the bottom of a unitary ontology. Mythology is polytheistic because it is organised by an ontological unity in which the spiritual appears in the most different natural phenomena. This personification of the spiritual in a natural image is what constitutes a myth-image. The polytheistic gods are not transcendent creators, but 'subtle' aspects of the world itself and therefore display their supernatural qualities through nature itself. In the fertility brought by rain, in the heat radiated by the sun, in the destructive power of a volcano, a myth-image radiates numinosity.

The monotheistic god, on the other hand, looks at nature from the outside as a tool created by him to demonstrate his power. By radically separating itself from nature, the spiritual acquired the possibility of being a unique and universal god. While remaining united with nature, the spirit shone through the phenomena, so that each natural phenomenon radiated a specific myth-image through its particular qualities.

The Hebrew God is the god of the logos, of the word, whose narrative maintains their cohesion as a people. This monotheistic religion brought the logos into consciousness with its emphasis on the word and the consequent iconoclastic relationship with the natural myth images of other deities. The walk through the desert towards the Holy Land embodies the state of being of logical consciousness, a consciousness whose affirmation denies the natural, which thus becomes a desert of life. The sword that destroys the golden calf in the

desert is the personification of the cut between the spiritual and the sensory. The golden calf is the personification of the spiritual radiating into the natural, it is an expression of the numinosity of nature, of the value it has for consciousness and is therefore a representation of the Hebrew past, of the time when the Hebrews had a land. The moment they become the people in search of a promised land, whose real location is not even on earth but in heaven, they can no longer rely on rooted nature, they need to trust in the word that holds the people together, even without a natural ground to refer to. As an expression of the natural earth that needed to be left behind in the name of the spiritual, the golden calf needed to be denied in the name of affirming the logos written on the stone tablets. The Hebrews are spiritual nomads, because the spirit is what takes away the natural place of the human.

But this *opus contra naturam* would not be complete as long as the universal god was the particular god of a specific people, whose members were linked to each other by natural ties of consanguinity, and whose descent was through the maternal line. To be truly universal, God could not be exclusively Jewish, and Christianity pushed his counter-naturalness even further.

The greater separation between God and nature meant that Christianity ceased to be a cult passed down through family lines, becoming capable of encompassing all cultures and, precisely for this reason, a cult that was too abstract. Christianity aspired to universality, the reconnection not of a specific people, but of all individuals with the true universal. That is why it needed to sever blood ties, differentiating itself from religions based on kinship. This Christian separation from the union of blood ties was compensated for by the expansionist fervour of converting other peoples. Cults based on blood ties, as was the case with Jewish monotheism, were not, in the ancient world, driven by this conversionary furore that materialised the abstract universality of Christianity. For ancient cultures, the important thing in winning a war was to plunder the enemy's wealth, capture slaves for manual labour, force the defeated culture to pay tributes over time and count on the help of their armies in battles against common enemies. For Christian cultures, this was not enough, but it was also necessary to conquer the souls of the vanquished, to convert them to the 'true' God.

Expelled from animate nature, God had to submit it to his supreme will which, in order to be supreme, could not be limited by any intrinsic teleology, even if it was one he had created at the beginning of time. Disenchanted, nature became capable of being manipulated at will by a Creator whose reason was instrumental, as he used natural entities as instruments to realise his goals. A disenchanted nature comes into existence based on the notion of

a God who looks at it from the outside, who treats it as a neutral instrument, who handles it as a tool subject to his will.

By focussing his consciousness on this image of God, by meditating on it, by concentrating on it as an ideal to be followed, man slowly developed his abstractive capacity, separating himself from nature to look at it from the outside as a *res extensa*, as an aggregate of extra parts without any intrinsic archetypal form. Just as the sacred was unified in the form of a single god by being externalised from nature, the mind was unified by externalising itself from nature and objectifying it. And since there was no longer anything spiritual in nature, it could be seen as a tool by a man who also no longer had any archetypal form to serve as his final cause. Its purposes were at the service of a will that was potentially as free as that of its creator. The monotheistic God became the archetype of the emerging modern ego.

In the Prayer to the Dignity of Man, written by the Renaissance philosopher Pico della Mirandola in 1487, we witness the Christian God incarnating in modern man.

Neither a fixed abode, nor a form that is yours alone, nor any peculiar function have I given you, Adam, so that according to your desire and according to your judgement you can have and possess the abode, the form, the functions that you yourself want. The nature of all other beings is limited and restricted by the boundaries of the laws prescribed by Me. You, who are not restricted by any limit, according to your own free will, in whose hand I have placed you, must order for yourself the limits of your nature. I have placed you at the centre of the world so that you can more easily observe everything that happens from here. I made you neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honour, as if you were the creator and moulder of yourself, you can shape yourself into the form you prefer (MIRANDOLA apud TAYLOR, 2005, p. 260).

Man, the last of the divine creations, was also the icing on the cake of creation because, unlike the other creatures, he had no archetypal form to model himself on. No archetype governed him *a priori*, because he had been created in the image and likeness of his Creator. His model was his own Being, free from any archetypal constraint, and his will mimicked the omnipotent will of his Creator. This makes him capable of recreating himself, of becoming whatever his will desires. The rational human will is a divine gift that allows man to recreate himself by choosing his own nature.

This is the moment of the crossing where I return to try to understand the present from the past and risk pointing out what today constitutes an effective prayer for the dignity of this human being capable of recreating his own nature. I stress the term 'effective' here because it is a ritualised prayer, one that is concretely acted out by people in general, just as the medieval prayer ritual was. However, firstly I would like to remind everyone that, in the present day, spiritual

consciousness has been inverted into material consciousness. The greater the height reached by a God, the greater his fall, and the Christian God, having reached the highest transcendence, has plummeted into the most mundane immanence. As we are going through the age of the descending fish, this prayer is effective because it is actually an anti-prayer, the anti-prayer of the selfie.

The selfie is a celebration of the highest value of individuality, it is an anti-prayer, *i.e.*, an inverted prayer in which the individual does not ask for something from the universal, from God, but asks for recognition from other individuals. If in prayer the individual asks God for something by praising his majesty, in the selfie the individual asks for likes from others so that, through the hearts of others, the individual narcissistically praises himself, just as God loves himself through the love of his creatures. The selfie is the ritual of hypermodern ego worship, the display of its majesty which, paradoxically, is sustained by collectivism.

In the selfie, what is apparently worshipped is the singular image of one's own face, the materiality of the face rather than the ideality of a universal god. But the materiality of the singular face that is celebrated is that of an idealised body, shaped by a collective ideal, by an abstract form that exists *a priori*. In the selfie, the face, what is most individual about it, is filtered through virtual forms that aestheticise it according to collective standards to be echoed by followers. "Spectacularised" according to the idea of beauty, the face loses its materiality through techno images, thus abstracting itself from the individuality that makes it concrete. The numinosity of individualism that makes it worshipped in selfies is because individualism is aesthetically idealised according to collective criteria, making its techno-image the expression of the current tension between the individual and the collective, the material and the ideal. It is the ideal returning symptomatically in the core of what negates it, in the bodily materiality that is 'photoshopped' by being techno-imagined.

Today's consciousness is capable of seeing the material hidden in the spiritual ideal, seeing, for example, in the higher spiritual being a copy of the secular patriarchal authority, an authority that needs to be bought with tithes and flattered with prayers begging for favours. But today's consciousness, due to the materialistic paradigm that structures it, is often blind to the idealism hidden at its mundane core. If we look through today's virtual world, we 'see' the spiritual idealising the material, because everything important and interesting is posted, and this post is converted into energy waves that circulate through the air. This shows how much life lived materially on Earth is shaped by immaterial light.

In the language of the esoteric tradition, we can say that matter here has obtained the status of a 'subtle body'. It has been alchemically refined, sublimated. In

this sense, what is digitalisation if not a total dismemberment, a pulverisation of the 'body'? Electronic media and, even more so, completely wireless transmissions via infrared rays or satellite, moving at the speed of light, are the form in which material reality comes closest to the mind or spirit. According to Schelling, light is the ideal or spiritual in nature, an analogue of the mind in the wider world. It is something intellectual, but something objectively posited. It is ideal and material at the same time. The mind or intellect does not have to be subjective, it does not have to occur exclusively as a human mental activity. With this idea in mind, we are in a position to understand, in its contradictory nature, the externalising movement we observe. By stripping itself (in the sense of kenosis, an 'emptying', Phil. 2:70) of what used to be its inalienable property and sinking into the material reality of electronics, the mind frees itself from its dependence on our personalistic subjectivity and enters a state of objective and 'autonomous' existence independent of us. But this materialisation doesn't mean that it has lost the character of mind. On the contrary, through this influx of mind, matter has been reciprocally sublimated, vaporised, distilled and thus spiritualised to a higher degree. In this way, mind and matter exchange their natures. Mind acquired the objective and independent existence of matter and matter acquired the subtlety and invisibility of mind. It is a double movement: the incarnation of the logos ('the Word became flesh') and the "logification" of matter (GIEGERICH, 2007, p. 318).

The silver thread that connects the spiritual fish to the material is also a channel in which each swims to dive into the other. And by tracing this Piscean fluidity, we can dive into the 'deep web', the shadowy depths of the net, the idealisation of essence by spiritualising appearance, dematerialising it on screens into pixels of light.

The movement away from the ground to become light takes place in the background of the narcissistic appearances that circulate on the networks. The images of bodies posted on networks are intangible lights, idealised virtual bodies. And in order to be virtualised, to permeate the air, asceticism is necessary. You must have a fit body, you have to perform to be interesting. The body is virtualised by the idea of beauty and efficiency, which in turn is embodied in the material body that is surgically modelled on the simulation of this ideal.

In what is known as the 'passage from myth to logos' in ancient Greece, we can see logical consciousness breaking the 'erotic' bond with nature through philosophical discourse, especially Platonic. In Platonic philosophy, the spiritual is no longer the radiance radiated by natural phenomena, but a light that is in a place that transcends appearances. This light, represented by the sun, is the most perfect Idea and therefore the most beautiful, the Good. For Plato, the Idea of Ideas, the hierarchically highest Idea is the Idea of the Good, which is also the Idea of the Beautiful, because the Good is the most Beautiful of all Ideas, so that the ideal form of something is the perfection of that something which we try in vain to copy in the profane world. The Idea of each thing is its good, its beauty, its perfection, and the Idea of Good itself displays the beautiful rational perfection of the whole. In

modern profane society, goodness in the metaphysical moral sense has materialised as efficiency. Good is something efficient. A good car, for example, is an efficient car, a car that does its job well. The goodness of something has become its efficiency, the perfection of its performance, so the activity that exposes goodness is no longer religious or metaphysical-philosophical, but advertising.

The advertising image was born out of the death of Platonism, the affirmation of this profane world as primary in relation to the ideal world of Platonic forms. Advertising is the fruit of the Sophist perspective in which the human being is the measure of all things and truth is defined by discursive practices and can thus be moulded rhetorically. But the negated Platonism returns at the core of what negates it, it returns so that the rhetoric created to persuade the consumer is based on the creation of idealised doubles of the advertised merchandise. Advertising has become the means by which something is communicated efficiently, an efficiency achieved through spectacularisation, aestheticisation and performative inflation that will seduce the most attention.

It is less the content of advertising that influences people's minds and more the way in which this content is shown, the advertising way of dealing with any and all content, the technique that instrumentalises the content so that it appears at its best in terms of aesthetics and performance. If the issue were content, it would be enough to do the 'right' advertising, to publicise humanitarian, ecological and politically correct actions so that we could live in a better world.

Advertising is numinous not because of what it shows, but because of the sheer act of spectacular display. It is the symptom of the inversion of the spiritual in the material, of essence in appearance. It is the cult of appearance for appearance's sake, of the image without any substantial content, without anything essential. On the internet, anyone and everyone can go viral and become a digital influencer doing the most ludicrous things, because what matters is their spectacular staging and not the content.

This appearance, which shows nothing substantial, which is not the appearance of something specific but pure and simple appearance, is appearance in its most absolute essentiality, and in this essentiality of pure appearance we see the return of essence by abstracting appearance from its own 'flesh'. In modern appearance, the negated essence returns so that what appears does not appear for its own sake, but appears according to the idea of 'beauty' and 'goodness' that, in metaphysics, shaped shapeless matter and, in advertising, spectacularises the material, idealising it as more beautiful and efficient than the referent, in such a way that the image becomes hyper-real, more real than the real by making the essential shine on the surface, thus turning it into an idealised material.

Structured in advertising, today's techno-image shadows the material body with its virtual light, so that the matter of the body is modelled by the idealised images in advertising to be seen as much as possible on the screen. In the contemporary compulsion for plastic surgery, we see idealism returning in its opposite, in the core of the body's immediate materiality, which is modified to meet the ideals of beauty displayed on screens. The model's body is an ideal model of the body, an idea of the body that denies the material body, as we see in the spread of anorexia among those who want to have the fashionable body.

In *Scoop*, Woody Allen says that, after having deluded himself with Judaism and Christianity, he was now trying the religion of narcissism. And this hypermodern religion of narcissism worships the body, but not the material body with its cellulite, its moles and scars, its wrinkles and grey hair, but an idealised body that only exists as a mental idea, the 'photoshopped' body of the model that appears on the cover of the magazine, the image of the body edited by a computer program to be displayed on social networks and which people suffer in gyms and surgery clinics to materialise. What is worshipped in hypermodern corpolatry is a platonic body, a beautiful and efficient image of the body that individuals sacrifice themselves to embody.

Life is idealised to be liked by others, because individuals perceive themselves through the echoes reflected in social networks, they see themselves based on the impact that their techno images have on others, measuring their real lives through them. Hypermoderns live lives that are increasingly individualistic and, at the same time, increasingly dependent on the likes of others. Everyone has become a paparazzi of themselves, everyone wants to appear, because the essence of being is now appearance. 'I show myself, therefore I am'.

This dynamic appeals to the narcissism of everyone who wants to be seen by others. In mythology, Narcissus was cursed with attachment to his image and so grew up deprived of mirrors by his mother. But when he went out hunting, he ended up seeing his image in the lake when he followed the echo of his voice repeated by the nymph Echo who, hidden in the forest, watched him passionately and repeated his questions when asked about his identity, because she was cursed to repeat what others said. This narrative embodies the Greek intuition that the image you have of yourself depends on how it echoes in others. The more attached you are to your self-image, the greater your dependence on its echo in others; the more Narcissus, the more Echo.

Desire is the desire of the other, because there is an echoic aspect to desire, a collective aspect hidden in singular desire that makes narcissism rely on being desired by the other, which makes individuality depend on recognition. A child's psychic development

is based on the way its parents echo it. In the 'erotic' polytheistic consciousness, this echo was at the forefront of individuality, the surname was above the name, the values of the clan took precedence over individually constructed values. Modernity is the inversion of this relationship, it is the emphasis of logical consciousness on the first person singular.

However, if the more Narcissus, the more Echo, then a culture of narcissism is also a culture imprisoned in the image echoed by the other, a culture in which the negated collectivity returns to the core of what negates it, in the narcissistic gaze at its image reflected in the gaze of the other. In the selfies posted incessantly to be liked by others, Narcissus contemplates his image. We must remember that the mirror in which Narcissus sees himself is the mirror of water, the surface of a liquid that dissolves the part into the whole. The desire for recognition of individuality is inverted in the desire to be collectivised, because to be liked you have to please others, you have to mould yourself to the tastes of others.

Everything interesting is posted, everything important is shown to be enjoyed. The fact that travellers spend less time contemplating the place they have travelled to and more time with their backs to the landscapes and monuments, taking selfies for others to see, shows how important life is lived more for others than for oneself. And through this collectivisation, the hypermodern individual is electrified, hyperactivated as if they needed to accelerate in order to reach the speed of escape from the earthly world, thus becoming part of the technical image flow, circulating at the speed of light through the air we breathe.

Techno-imagination matter becomes increasingly aestheticised, sanitised, beautiful and good, free of the imperfections that characterise materiality itself. The sensuality of the virtual image is not material but ideal, filtered by a computer programme. The virtual image is what the viewer idealises it to be. It is what the content should be and not what it actually is.

These techno images are injected into our eyes through screens. And with each passing day, we find ourselves more dependent on the stimulation felt when these images respond to the shocks of our fingers on the screens. In today's techno-image, we see how addicted we are to the physiological stimuli of the nerves. This is the materialistic aspect of modern existence. But in order to excite us, we need ever more elaborate images in terms of appearance, we need computer programs that perform and aestheticise the image, that model it according to the ideal of efficiency and beauty. The hidden ideal shines darkly in the intensification of the sensory, thus sensory hyper-realisation, making it more real than the real. The materiality that excites us, electrifies us, is ideal, it is the glow of idealism hidden

in materialism, it is the ideal shaded as the colourful, insubstantial luminescence of the image.

After this archetypal archaeology of our spirit of time, it is time to speculate about the future based on the fantasies we have of it in the present. One of the most important fantasies is an auspicious event for the journey that awaits us at the end of the century. This was the implantation of sensors in the arms of Kevin and Irena Warwick in 2002. The microchip in the nerves of one's arm communicated with the device inserted in the other's arm, and this electronic connection between nervous systems allowed each person's brain to receive pulses when the other moved their hand. When someone touched Irena's hand, the scientist felt the same sensation in his own. Kevin referred to this as an initial form of telepathy via the internet, which will be perfected to the point where we can not only convert subtle cheek movements into a computerised voice, as in Stephen Hawking, but also have this speech heard only by those we want, because it will be transmitted to the brain itself with a neurochip from the receiver. In the future, we will be able to communicate our sensations and thoughts to each other by brain.

Today it is already possible to consider the mobile phone as a kind of transitional object, a symbolic extension of our inner world. In time, smartphones will become glasses, which will become contact lenses, until they become miniaturised in the form of microchips implanted in our brains. This is the aim of brain-chips, which are already being tested today. Through them, the physical sensation recorded in one person's brain is repeated in another's brain and the aim is to make the entire brain experience of microchipped humanity accessible in a 4d virtual hologram, one that will simulate not only images and sounds, but also sensations. This 4d internet will simulate each and every lived experience by activating the same electrical pattern in the same neural networks activated in the original experience. It is a 4D simulation, not a 3d simulation, because it is not just a matter of "seeing and hearing something that jumps out of a screen", but of neurologically feeling the other person's entire neurological experience. It is a material simulation of mystical participation with the other person's mind, an immersion in the experience through technological implants.

This 'brainet' (Miguel Nicolelis) will make it possible to access sensations and experiences lived by anyone in real time. Both those that are happening at the moment and those that have been recorded in the memory of servers scattered across the Earth. It will be possible to experience all the brain reactions that, at some point, were experienced by everyone who is neuro-connected.

In our eyes it may seem unimaginable that someone would allow such an invasion of privacy, but we see today that more and

more people are displaying their private lives for anyone to see on the web. Dreams, desires, family, emotional and sexual life – it is all there. Even the most intimate details are made available. If the problem in modernity, according to Bauman (ENTREVISTA..., 2024), was the threat that the newly conquered individuality received from state totalitarianism, in hypermodernity the situation has been reversed. It is not the public sphere that threatens the private one, it is not the individual whose privacy is invaded by public interests, but the public sphere that is invaded by individual privacy. The Internet is the realisation of Big Brother and people do not fear it. On the contrary, they want to be stars, even for a measly fifteen minutes. It does not matter if companies access this content to obtain information about the private lives of their employees or potential clients. What matters is appearing, being on the surface where things happen. Everyone wants to be seen.

In the future, digital influencers will monetise their lives by allowing people to access their brains by immersing themselves in a neuronal simulation of the influencer's past and present experiences. Lives will be like films that can be accessed in a cerebral immersion of neuronally reactivated images, sounds and sensations. In the film *Strange Days*, Ralph Fiennes plays a dealer in CDs that contain the experiences of others. At one point, a snuff film falls into his hands, a CD containing a recording of an anonymous person's brain experience as he rapes and kills women. This kind of material is the hard drug that circulates in the hidden backstage of this techno and voyeur civilisation.

Byung-Chul Han (2017) talks about the impossibility of religion in today's times of total transparency, because religion implies mystery, and this mystery presupposes something that is beyond the ordinary visible. But in the satellite gaze, which roams the Earth in an electronically sealed vessel, we see how today's pornographic transparency short-circuits the total divine gaze, how techno-voyeurism materially embodies divine omniscience, omniscience that is completed with the virtual cerebral network. Denied by spiritual consciousness, the erotic surface of images has exploded with full force, seducing today's material consciousness in such a way that, enantiodromically, the spiritual returns at the core of what denies it, in the omnipresence of telepresence, in the pornography of techno images that aim to break the fourth wall by 'resonating carnally' (PAASONEN, 2024) in the masturbatory participation of the spectator in the image.

The dissolution between observer and observed, which engages the spectator's material body in the future pornographic brain-chip, makes it clear that the promised rapture, the union with the universal One that would spiritualise our body like the resurrected body of Christ, will happen materially in an electro-orgasmic wave hyper-stimulated by the fantasy of total transparency of a soul pornography.

In this view, consciousness is physical on the one hand, a network of positively existing neurons, and meta-physical on the other, as it takes the form of a virtual reality in which everything that has been experienced can be simulated and shared, a collective consciousness with no specific spatial location, an omnipresent and immortal consciousness, embodied in materiality that is then made explicit as an idealisation. On the other hand, the spirit is materialised, experienced as electricity circulating in a neural network that occupies a specific place in the brain. But these material neural networks are dematerialised, in the sense that the spatiality that materially determines them as an extension is converted into energy, into microwaves that travel at the speed of light through the air we breathe.

This fusion of machine and organism gives birth to the cyborg and this image of the man-machine hybrid shows the ideal radiating in its material shadow because it is the image that personifies the techno-image itself. In the cyborg, external machines are internalised in the human body and, thanks to this, internal thought is experienced in a simulated virtual exteriority, whose immersion is cerebrally stimulated. If, on the one hand, the mind becomes a material extension, on the other hand, the material becomes a mental extension. When the logic of opposition is taken to the extreme, it is inverted into its opposite, dissolving the opposites into a monster (*monstrum*), a conjunction in which the opposites have lost themselves in each other. And the cyborg is the image of this techno-alchemical monster (*monstrum*).

The term 'cyborg' first appeared in an article by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline in 1960. The term referred to the integration of cybernetic systems with the human organism to facilitate adaptation to the adversities of extraterrestrial environments. The body of the cyborg is the body of the astronaut who leaves earthly existence behind and ascends celestially. In the man-machine monstrum that looms on our horizon, it is not existence on planet Earth that is literally left behind, but fleshly life that is denied in the name of an ideal body, a body technologically rebuilt to live on a planet that, due to the intensification of global warming, has itself become an alien planet, thus reflecting the very human who has acted throughout the Christian eon as an infiltrated alien, an incarnate angel. The cyborg is the spiritual body incarnated in matter. In it, immortality ceases to be something to be achieved in the spiritual world and becomes material with the exchange of pieces of flesh organs for artificial organs and bone limbs for cybernetic limbs.

The cyborg's collective mind dematerialises individual materiality by transforming it into energy waves that circulate through the air ready to be sucked in and enjoyed by the collective. The screen that serves as a narcissistic mirror, hyper-individualisation of consciousness on the one hand, and hyper-collectivistic on the other hand, by merging with biological vision and making each individual vision a

part of a large multifaceted insectoid eye. Neurons will be elevated to the heavens looking down on the world via satellite, so that the human nervous system will swallow up the earth, immersing it in a techno-cave of simulations.

The whole brain-chip civilisation will surf on oceans raised by global warming and on electromagnetic waves that will permeate everything. This techno-hive is an electromagnetic world soul whose altar celebrates a simulated double of life in 4d, an altar that breaks the fourth wall of the Platonic techno-cave by immersing the tele-spectator in the scene through neural hyper-stimulation, an immersion that is the simulation of the negation of the sensation of spatial distance on which the positivity of today's identity is based. Called extended reality, this techno-image is a digitalisation of all solid materiality energetically vaporised and reconstructed into a techno-idealised version, a shared fantasy world that floats around the globe for the various microchips that connect each individual cog in the social machine.

Being *tele*, dissolving distance, is the negation of the experience of space that allows the experience of one's own individuality. The human is spiritualised, transmuted into electromagnetic energy flying at the speed of light, thus instantly being anywhere on Earth and having access to any part of the whole. The screen inserted into the eye itself materialises the alchemical desire for the vessel to be an equivalent of the world and for its gaze to be like the divine gaze roaming all of reality from the outside, materially simulating the vision of *sub aespice aeternitas*. This is the profane version of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, the materialisation of the predicates that characterise the image of God.

Could this be the end of the journey through the 21st century? Will this century end with an inverted rapture in the form of the immortal body of machine man? Will the rapture, instead of uniting us to the divine universal, instead of immersing us in spiritual oceanic feeling, immerse us all in electro-orgasmic waves of virtual voyeurism? Will we go through our century as desiring machines that enjoy immersing themselves in techno images that simulate the dissolution of the logical opposition between the imaginary and the real? Will we end up immersed in a techno-imaginal world? If so, then the journey through the 21st century will be uroboric, with the end of the Pisces age taking us back to its beginning, to the time when the mental and the material were one and the individual was a drop in an ocean of collective consciousness. Instrumental science, the material version of the logos that dissociated mind and matter, will literally reconnect the opposites, materialising the mind while dematerialising matter in an internet of things, of machines around the globe that will move according to brain-chip thought. Peter Sloterdijk reminds us that the essence of magic is tele-activity. To act magically is to act on an object

from a distance and this is exactly what technology is doing more and more.⁷ The past is not remembered symbolically, it is acted out literally and, by enabling thoughts to flow through the air like waves of energy, science will show us that at its heart it is techno-magic.

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