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On the Human Park

Frank Mewes

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Philosophy

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Abstract

On the Human Park

Frank Mewes

This paper is inspired by Peter Sloterdijk's book *Regeln für den Menschenpark* ('Regulations for the Human Park') which is available as appended, original translation. It seeks to elucidate Sloterdijk's work, assess the theses he posits therein, and sets forth an overview on crucial developments pertaining to human society, i.e., the human park. The developments focussed on are relevant to the humanistic concern addressed by Sloterdijk and comprise General Systems Theory, human genetic engineering, bio-information society, and humanism. The work is supplemented by extensive, personal commentaries as well as a sample of voices urging for prudence in matters of scientific-technological enterprising. The concern lies with the question how and which morality is still regulative of human behaviour in a time when literary humanism as a formative, moral force has been superseded by the permissive, electronic media and their uninhibiting forces. The question that arises is: 'If humanism is no longer a reliable agent of human domestication, what tames human beings?' Sloterdijk suggests a harking back to the wisdom of old in order to find clues to the resolution of this domestic predicament of today and implicitly asks whether human genetic engineering could become a domesticating force (an anthropotechnology) that is better captured by a regulative codex lest it might lead to political abuse. While it offers some critical and perhaps provocative reflections on the issues in question, the paper is chiefly suggestive and expository and marked by ambivalence.

*For Nicole, this journey's dearest companion of mine,
and all inhabitants of the human park.*

I like to thank Prof. Dr. Vladimir Zeman for his contributions and encouragement in times of despair as well as for planting the seed for this work and his insistence on my watering it; Daniel Ouellette for his timely, excellent, and nearly gratuitous proofreading; the thesis committee for putting up with the volume of this paper; my companion for patiently enduring my low spirits when I found the work overwhelming; and my cats for enforcing frequent breaks by taking repose on my notes.

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“He who considers more deeply knows that, whatever his acts and judgements may be, he is always wrong.”

Friedrich Nietzsche

Introduction

To Sloterdijk, the nature of traditional, literary philosophy, including humanism, is one of sending and receiving friendship-begetting letters by which the senders, writing out of and on the love of wisdom, mean to induce others also into this love across space and time. In this sense, the nature and function of philosophy and humanism is that of a far-reaching pen pal relationship, an unpredictable, friendship-begetting telecommunication by means of letters. Humanism is always confronting because it is the engagement for fetching back humans from barbarism and, combined with the regime of a specific humanistic literature, the antidote to human 'bestial' tendencies. By becoming the ideology of a civil nation's grammar schools, conscription, and particularly teachers, professors, and priests governing canonical writings, humanism was rendered a pragmatic and programmatic force that forged national cultures out of fully alphabetized communities of 'enforced' friendship. With the emergence and advance of the electronic media and its progressive influence on society, the formative authority of the humanist canon became undermined and further eroded by the aggressively advancing, libertine forces unleashed by the electronic mass media. Considering how today's media-oriented and -saturated society contributes to our individual dislocation, it is not difficult to imagine that the trend could eventually lead as well to our ethical dislocation. In the face of the overwhelming headway in information technologies, the tradition of citizenry-forming humanistic literature has almost come to a standstill and increasingly sinks into archival oblivion. The result is that the nation-state / grammar school variant of humanism is

hardly capable of domesticating human beings. Modern mass society can maintain its political and cultural synthesis only marginally through the medium of humanist literature.

Sloterdijk praises Heidegger for having immeasurably revalued the human species by conceiving of it as being radically different from animals by virtue of its potential to be entreated by Being itself. But he criticises Heidegger for neglecting in his account of human nature the natural-historical and social forces forming human beings and points out that, in spite of its fundamentally beneficial character, the appeal of Heidegger's implicit call for aspiring to the harmonious life of the integrated mystic in order to rectify the ills of human society must necessarily remain limited in scope to a small number of gifted ascetics and is hence insufficient for overcoming the bestial tendencies of humankind. Sloterdijk diverges completely from Heidegger's stance by conceiving human beings as creatures exclusively determined by their biology and social-historical forces. Relocating his philosophy to the bio-history of the human species and its waning humanism, he leaves mere theory behind and approaches the actuality of human being in practice. Indeed, by suggesting that one could even go so far as to define a human being as that creature which has 'failed' in being and remaining an animal, he radically biologises human being. Paradoxically, and to the discredit of humanism, this undecided creature's effort at self-domestication entailed its prevalent, relentless dominion over members of its own kind and virtually all other forms of life known to it. Hence, it becomes questionable whether the caring for and forming of human beings can, in our permissive and uninhibiting times, still be competently addressed by educational theories with a humanist slant. One answer to

this problem can be that, in one way or another, human beings have always bred themselves and have been bred, and, with the advent of human genetic technology, this practice can assume a crucially different dimension: it is the hallmark of the technological era, specifically with regard to human genetic technology, that humans get increasingly onto the active or subjective side of choice and become either the selecting or selected. Humans ought to find a way to a mode of self-domestication proper to the practice of anthropotechnology¹ before a licentious and intemperate society allows human genetic engineering to commense, if feasible, the wholesale commodification of human physiological and psychological traits and become a sovereign, domesticating force. Correspondingly, it is a pivotal task to formulate and implement a codex which prevents possible political abuse resulting from human genetic engineering by strictly regulating the domain of this technology. But the permissive intimations of the electronic media render the humanistic aim of maintaining the relevant and preferably rationalistic domestication of human beings a seemingly hopeless endeavour. Considering the prospect of human genetic engineering, this development can have unsettling consequences in that it could lead to a radical revision of human(e) standards obtaining today. As a consequence, a novel definition of what it means to be a human being and to be human could find acceptance that today would generally strike us as radically alien if not downright heinous. Sloterdijk sympathises with Nietzsche who, in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, illustrates a possible course of human self-domestication and anticipates a future battle over what

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'Anthropotechnology' refers to the means employed by humans for human cultivation and comprises both ideational and physical expedients.

direction human domestication ought to take: will it be a breeding of 'grandness' or a breeding of 'commonalty' (see p.6)? But he (Sloterdijk) refers only indirectly to the Platonic state as a model of the good society where human domestication is directed by a benevolent elite of the ultimately wise (and therefore good) who are themselves the outcome of an ideal and elective program of domestication unique and appropriate to their class. Sloterdijk proclaims the model's practical impossibility because Plato's summoning of a leadership of the perfectly wise is not abetted by divine agency nor is it a viable option for directing human domestication in real life and, without either, the tending to human beings by human beings must remain an ambiguous or vain, if not disastrous, undertaking. What remains are human beings on a rampage in a world where both the gods and the wise have abandoned them to their foolishness and half-knowledge. As Sloterdijk seems to suggest, one way out of this dilemma may be to reconsider those archived letters containing the friendship-begetting wisdom of old in the good hope of finding past answers to present cues, waning insights worthy of reconstitution.

Contrary to charges levelled against him, Sloterdijk by no means advocates the idea of human genetic engineering as a means to a genetically reared posthumanity or Platonic state. Rather, in his response to Heidegger's letter, he offers an alternative account of the nature of human being and implicitly raises the question as to whether human genetic engineering could *plausibly* take up the domestication of humankind in an era where traditional humanism's task to meet this end is rendered increasingly

problematic.²

With regard to the contemporary human condition, my central task in this paper is to examine Sloterdijk's thought - in particular his theses - expressed in his book *Regeln für den Menschenpark*. To this end, I have translated the book into English and provided it as an appendix for reference to the main work. My translation, the ensuing assessment of Sloterdijk's theses, and the extensive account of ideas related to the 'human park' are meant to provide thought-provoking contributions - not solutions - to the ongoing discussion on humanism and genetic technology. I would like the reader to bear in mind that my argumentation proper is limited to Sloterdijk's theses whereas the rest of the work is chiefly suggestive and expository and, in accord with the topic's moot nature, rather inconclusive. In essence, then, the paper presents a reflection on the implications of a likely convergence of a variety of paradigms (bio-information society, general systems theory, secular humanism, and human genetic engineering). Basically, I will assess the viability of humanism and the prospects of human genetic engineering, try to provide an overview of the political-economical, technological, and axiological developments pertaining to human genetic engineering, and offer my own ethical understanding of the matter. When referring to human society and humans, I mean first and foremost, unless otherwise indicated, 'Western' and 'Westernizing' societies and their voluntary and involuntary adherents. By that, I mean the pluralistic, deontologically organized, liberal

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Sloterdijk expands on this topic in his paper *Der Operable Mensch: Anmerkungen zur ethischen Situation der Gen-Technologie* ('The Operable Man: On the Ethical State of Gene Technology') available at <http://www.goethe.de/uk/bos/deutsch/programm/dcpslot2.htm> (German and English version).

and quasi-democratic, capitalistic variant of society (and societies heading in this direction) characterized by mass production, mass information, and mass consumption. More specifically, in this society obtains by definition of the said terms (though not necessarily in reality) (1) the condition of a respected variety of minority cultures equally participating in the dynamics of the dominant host culture; (2) an ethics of duty, moral obligation, and right action; (3) a maximum of relative self-determination; (4) the hearing and consideration of all citizens in the practice of policy-making; and (5) the right to an unfettered accumulation of private wealth through economic activity. Furthermore, the production and distribution of goods and services in this society is intended to satisfy the greatest number of citizens possible.³ Based on my rendering of Sloterdijk's text, when referring to humans in terms of 'low' or 'common' versus 'grand' types, the former is meant to relate to the type of 'human being' bred by *Kleinzüchter* (lit.: those who breed 'littleness') as opposed to the latter type bred by *Großzüchter* (lit.: those who breed 'greatness').

Chapter one presents Sloterdijk's theses: (1) Modern mass society can produce its

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Also, this *society* is not a *community*: while the members of a community reside in a specific locality, share a *known* government, and have a common cultural and historical heritage, the members of a society are highly diversified and mobile, have only a vague idea of what governs the patterns they live by, and cooperate, at best, in the pursuit of their respective interests or, at worse, are gathered under a social-political-economical arrangement by which they live out partial existences and cooperate only if it is to their explicit advantage. One may also say that a genuine community is a *fated* association with shared liabilities while a society is an organization of functional elements around political and economical purposes.

political and cultural synthesis only marginally through the literary, postal, humanist media; (2) Human beings have both a natural history of comportment which enabled them to become cosmopolitan, world-competent animals as well as a social history of domestication by which they experience themselves primarily as the creatures which control themselves to be adequate to the whole; and (3) Human beings are animals some of which breed their like while others are the bred. Here I will elucidate Sloterdijk's relevant understanding of Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger as well as his understanding of human being, humanism, and human domestication. Chapter two presents the bases on which my subsequent assessment of both Sloterdijk's theses and the nature and prospects of the human park rests - with special regard to human genetic engineering. These components are (1) an account of the continuities and discontinuities between the human and nonhuman animal in an effort to denounce the ascription of bestial tendencies to either and the clarification of some key terminology and (2) accounts of the bio-information society, general systems theory, humanism, and human genetic engineering. Chapter three presents my assessment of Sloterdijk's theses. Here I will also sketch the contemporary situation of humanistic thought with regard to its disputed potential to be still decisively integrative to human rearing and comportment. Chapter four presents a selection of concerned voices respectively criticising some aspect of the human park, my comment on them, and my own understanding of the current state and prospects of the human park and human genetic engineering. In conclusion, I shall summarize my findings and offer additional personal notes on this work and the issues it raises.

Chapter One

The Ominous Article

In this chapter I will expand on Sloterdijk's work. I will (1) present and elucidate his three theses; (2) provide an overview on those ideas of Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger that are relevant to his treatment of the human park; and (3) expound Sloterdijk's understanding of humanism, human being, and the domestication and breeding of humans.

The title of Sloterdijk's book, *Regeln für den Menschenpark* ('Regulations for the Human Park'), is telling. It can be taken to imply that human society is like a theme park, albeit not a necessarily amusing one. The attraction of this theme park - humanity - is organized according to a theme which, for the purpose of this paper, we shall call human being and being human. Humans, the constituents of this park, have been grappling with this theme for quite some time now, constantly raising questions as to what they are as a specimen and species and how to live in the light of the available answers to their enquiries. So far, responses have been so diverse that this subject continues to be tragically inconclusive and, given the variety of human temperament, this is likely to remain that way. In his response to Martin Heidegger's *Über den Humanismus* ('Letter on Humanism'), Sloterdijk takes up the above questions and presents human beings as *sociobiologically* determined animals under the influence of uninhibiting forces whose civilizing self-domestication gives way to a rampant, bestializing permissiveness. That

human beings are sociobiologically determined animals means that humans belong to the genus of bipedal primates whose cerebral property entails a peculiar noesis and who have opted for living above all in association with their own kind. It means also that human noesis bears on human being because it bears on being human. That is to say that the human biological endowment plays an enabling and constraining role in how humans conduct themselves in society, for it is the indispensable requisite for all human culturing. Because humans are such specially gifted, theme-creating animals, the human park is really a zoological as well as a theme park. This hybrid park's organization around themes implies therefore the animality and polity of its constituents. To be involved in polity means to be concerned with the reasoned engagement for, and negotiation of, various themes, i.e., the various encultured and culturing interests pertaining to the park. In the human park, such reasoning is usually the affair of an oligarchical or representative, governmental organization; only where numbers and organization allow it can a people decide directly on the forces that shall bear on them. Referring to Plato's *Politikos* ('The Statesman') and *Politeia* ('The Republic'), Sloterdijk says:

'Since *Politikos* and *Politeia*, there are discourses in the world that speak of human society as of a zoological park which is simultaneously a theme park; the keeping of human beings in parks or cities appears from here on as a zoo-political task. What presents itself as pondering politics is really a rudimentary reflecting on regulations for the operation of human parks. If there is a human dignity that deserves to be voiced in philosophical thought, then it is primarily because human beings are not only kept in political theme parks but they keep themselves in them. Human beings are self-fostering, self-tending creatures which - wherever they live - create a park around

themselves. In city parks, national parks, cantonal parks, eco parks - everywhere human beings have to form an opinion about regulating their self-maintenance.’⁴

First thesis

‘Modern mass societies can produce their political and cultural synthesis only marginally through the literary, postal, humanist media.’⁵

Sloterdijk asserts here that the coexistence of humans in topical societies has been newly grounded through the emergence of a mass culture organized around electronic media

‘The social synthesis is no longer - and also no longer apparently - mainly a matter of books and letters. In the meantime, the new media of political-cultural telecommunication have assumed leadership and pushed the pattern of letter-born friendship back to a modest measure. The era of modern humanism as a model for schools and education has passed because the illusion that economical megastructures could be organized according to the amiable model of the literary society can be no longer maintained.’⁶

He points out that the educative paradigm of friendship-begetting, humanist literacy is inadequate for organizing a society characterized by institutional

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Appendix, p.203; Sloterdijk, p.48

5

App., p.179; Sl., p.14

6

Ibid

interrelationships unprecedented in their scope and complexity. Considering these novel interrelationships, a social synthesis can no longer be the fruit of humanist literacy but must be rather that of a political-cultural telecommunication via those media that spring from, embody, and sustain the novel purviews relevant to the changing nature of human affairs. Humanist literacy can hence no longer be the predominant force in negotiating today's society's integrity:

‘That this epoch (that of civic nations) appears today irrevocably expired is not because human beings in their decadent mood would be no longer willing to fulfill their literary stint; the epoch of national-civic humanism has come to an end because the art of writing love-inspiring letters to a nation of friends, no matter how professional in execution, has become insufficient to constitute the telecommunicating link between the denizens of modern mass society.’⁷

Mass society's chief characteristic is its tendency to channel creative action into standardized behaviour fostering a streamlined homogeneity and conformity harnessed to the task of advancing as a whole a posited society of equals. In our times, the term mass society has attained global significance. The Western mode of life has long come to influence the ways people live worldwide, and Western technology and ideology have come to be the momentous levellers of, at any rate, *gross* cultural differences. On this global scale, it is electronic information technology and not the medium of humanist literacy that most formidably forms the telecommunicative link bridging the spatial as well as ideational distances between the present and potential constituents of mass society and

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App., pp.178-9; SL., p.13

thus furthers homogeneity and conformity:

'On account of the medial establishment of mass culture after 1918 (broadcast) and after 1945 (television) and, what is more, through the current network revolutions, the coexistence of humans in topical societies has been newly grounded. It can be shown without effort that these (the topical societies) are post-literary and post-epistolary and hence post-humanistic.'⁸

By no longer relying predominately on literary profundity and friendship-begetting relationships of wisdom-inspired writers and readers to maintain its integrity, mass society diminishes the two classical pillars of humanist thought and becomes, so to say, post-humanistic. This idea is inextricably linked to the notion of *humanitas*⁹ as a consequence of alphabetization (appendix, p.174; Sloterdijk, p.7) extending from classical Greek to Roman and finally to the wider Western culture in a postal and nation-forming manner. Concerning the 'bestializing' influences (a notion that I will treat later in some detail), Sloterdijk relates that, in antiquity, the Romans were the first to install the most successful media network in the world by providing for a systematic display of the bestial through their pervasive militarism and their advanced entertainment industry of sanguinary games.

8

App., p.179; Sl., pp.13-4

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'*Humanitas*, explicitly so-called, was first considered and striven for in the age of the Roman Republic. *Homo humanus* was opposed to *homo barbarus*. *Homo humanus* here means the Romans, who exalted and honoured Roman *virtus* through the "embodiment" of the *paideia* (education) taken over from the Greeks. These were the Greeks of the Hellenistic age, whose culture was acquired in the schools of philosophy. It was concerned with *eruditio et institutio in bonas artes* (scholarship and training in good conduct). *Paideia* thus understood was translated as *humanitas*.' (Martin Heidegger: *Basic Writings*, p.224)

The latter became 'an indispensable, routinely extended, governmental technique which, thanks to the 'bread-and-circuses' (*Brot und Spiele*) formula, is still remembered today' (app., p.128; Sl., p.18). *Humanitas* can thus be understood as a reaction to this organized display of permissiveness and cruelty and the implicit demand that those who wish to preserve some civil decency abstain from it.

Humanitas, then, lies at the very heart of humanism that seeks to oppose and obliterate the human tendency toward the bestial which is synonymous with the barbarous. To be barbarous means to be at odds with the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic preferences embodied by a given standard of civility so that, typically, the barbarian not only lacks the understanding necessary to epitomize this civility but has also a fascination for what this civility condemns as debased. After the emergence of mass media conducive to the mass culture of our age, literature as the transmitter of *humanitas* has, however, not come to a halt but changed into a subculture *sui generis* impotent to evoke an integrative, national spirit of pervasive, humanistic civility.

Second thesis

'Human beings have a natural history of composure which enabled them to become the cosmopolitan, world-competent animal as well as a social history of domestication through which they experience themselves primarily as creatures which control themselves to be adequate to the whole.'¹⁰

¹⁰

App., p.192; Sl. p.33

Here, Sloterdijk senses two decisive developments jointly responsible for human(e) becoming; the first being that of hominization by comportment, the second being that of self-domestication by means of language and sedentary living:

'The adventure of hominization...tells how, in the long periods of primal, pre-human(e) history, mammalian Homo came to be a species of prematurely-born creatures which...stepped out into their environments with a growing surplus in animalistic inchoateness. Here, the anthropogenetic revolution is fulfilled - the disruption of biological birth into an act of coming-into-the-world.'¹¹ And '...as soon as human beings live together in larger groups and tie themselves not only to...language but also to...houses, they get into the force field of settled modes of being. Now they no longer let themselves only be salvaged by their languages but also be domesticated by their dwellings.'¹²

Hominization by comportment is meant to fill the species-historical gap which, according to Sloterdijk, has been neglected by Heidegger in his account of the clearing where human being lets itself be addressed by Being.¹³ Heidegger conceives of human

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App., pp.192-3; Sl., p.33

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App., p.194; Sl., p.35

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I am referring here to the way by which humans commonly and preferably chose to be addressed by Being, a way that leads to a mode of existence which, in Heideggerian terms, is inauthentic or improper, for the clearing holds also the possibility of an alternative insight into the nature of being: on the one hand, the clearing is that perceptual region in which human temporality pertains to the human appropriation of entities revealed and related by the world; on the other hand, the clearing is that perceptual region in which Being can disclose itself to humans in a way that transcends the condition of human temporality and its entanglement with the world. While the former constitutes an understanding

being as the temporal unfolding of a life course. The life course of human being is characterized by thrownness, discursiveness, and understanding. Respectively, all three characteristics constitute the clearing in which being is humanly experienced through a shared intelligibility in terms of (1) having been put into place; (2) the interaction with and articulation and interpretation of the world; and (3) the projection of possibilities of meaningfulness for things and human being itself. Human existence as such is an emergence into the clearing of being consisting of the occurrences of a shared and meaningful world which is thus obtained in its givenness. Sloterdijk senses that Heidegger ignores what he calls an 'anthropogenetic revolution'(app., pp.192-3; Sl., p.33):

'For that a human being could become that creature that is in the world has species-historical roots that can be foretold by the cryptic notions of premature birth, neoteny, and chronic, animalistic immaturity of human being. One could go as far as to say that a human being is that creature that has failed in its being and staying an animal. By its failing as an animal, the undetermined creature falls out of its environment and gains the world in an ontological sense.'¹⁴

of the world that is ideational, constricted, and superficial, the latter begets an understanding of the world that is beyond human purposiveness and reveals the otherwise concealed nature of being, the realization of which makes for what Heidegger calls the 'ecstatic' existence in the truth of Being. Choosing to be addressed by *being* in the mode of the former perception thus begets an inauthentic or improper temporality of human existence whereas choosing to be addressed by *Being* in the mode of the latter begets a proper or authentic one. In other words, within the clearing, actuality can humanly be experienced in two ways: (1) as the outcome of a thinking directed at the subjective objectification of the world and (2) as the outcome of a non-purposive and unitary awareness of the world as constituting itself momentarily through the spontaneous co-arising of all appearances.

14

App., p.193; Sl., p.34

The anthropogenetic revolution is thus the process by which sapiens-animal becomes sapiens-human and indicates the hominids' breaking-away from an environment-specific animal existence and the disclosing of the world to themselves while continuing to embody animality. This process is one of a transition from the contextualized, sheer animality to the open, world-disclosing animality of the hominid. Sloterdijk's notion of anthropogenetic revolution is meant to show that the clearing in which being is humanly experienced is not an original, ontological given but rather one which is ontologically *attained* by human being. In this particular sense, the term '*Gelassenheit*' (lit.: composure) used by Sloterdijk refers not so much to a state of self-controlled serenity than to a state of being that 'is let'. 'Is let' means here that the 'failed' animal embodying animality while busying itself with the vital disclosure of the world - the undetermined creature which is to become a human being - is allowed to pass as such for a period of time so long that it surpasses that of all other animals needing to learn how to thrive. The natural history of *comportment* - to which *Gelassenheit* is fundamental - accounts for the fact that a human being always is 'the product of a hyper-birth that transforms the suckling into a worldling' (app., p.193; Sl., p.34). In other words, the suchness of the undetermined creature is admitted in its excessiveness (of animality) and transmuted into worldliness. The undetermined creature's transformation into a worldling takes place in the clearing of being where it has come not only to involve the practice of (self-)domestication based on the use of language but also a sedentary existence in fixed dwellings:

'The traditional languages of humankind have made the ecstasy of being-in-the-world livable by having shown human beings how the world can experience their being at the same time

as a being-by-oneself (*Bei-sich-selbst-sein*). Insofar, the clearing is an event at the border between natural and cultural history, and the human coming-into-the-world takes on early the traits of a coming-to-a-language. But the story of the clearing can not only be developed as a narrative of human being entering the houses of language. For as soon as human beings live together in larger groups and tie themselves not only to the houses of language but also to built houses, they get into the force field of settled modes of being. Now they no longer let themselves only be salvaged by their languages but also be domesticated by their dwellings.¹⁵

Both the transformation of the suckling (*Säugling*) into the worldling (*Weltling*) and the habit of language use and sedentary living accomplish a shift from existence as the ground of presence to presence as the ground for existence, for what was before undetermined suchness thrown into existence as sheer presence is now a rootedness in culture which determines how the thus domesticated presence of the worldling manages existence. With that, the transition from being to becoming is consummate. The worldling's encultured becoming in the world is a becoming alongside entities encountered within this world and, simultaneously, an awareness of being present to those entities which it allows to have presence in the sense of being available, of being at the worldling's disposal. The subjective objectification of entities made manifest through language, together with the condition and requirements of a sedentary lifestyle, creates a further need for (self-)domestication whose origin in the threefold complex of house, human, and animal is hitherto little understood:

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App., pp.193-4; Sl., pp.34-5

‘...with the settlement the overall relation between human and animal got under new omen. Simultaneously with the domestication of human beings by the house began the epos of domesticated animals.’¹⁶ ‘Human being and domestic animal - the story of this egregious cohabitation has not been presented yet in an appropriate manner’ and ‘only in a few places is the veil of the philosophers’ silence wrenched over the bio-political complex of the house, human being, and the animal...’¹⁷

The social history of (self-)domestication through which humans experience themselves primarily as creatures which control themselves to be adequate to the (social) whole has its origin in the bio-political complex of the house, human being, and animal. Sloterdijk conceives of the houses’ windows as ‘the clearings of the walls behind which human beings became creatures capable of theory’(app., p.195; Sl., pp.36-7). In addition, the animals’ tie to the houses of humans is ‘not only a matter of taming but also one of training and breeding’(app., p.194; Sl., p.35). The relationship between the aggregated domesticity of humans and their animals can be seen as the paradigm informing human self-domestication which, in turn, is worked out further and takes on new dimensions through the making of theories. These new dimensions assume a certain noxiousness:

‘The clearing is at the same time a battlefield and a place of decision and selection. Where houses stand, there must be decided what should become of the humans who inhabit them; which sorts of house constructors predominate is decided in and by the deed. In the clearing is shown

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App., p.194; Sl., p.35

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App., p.194; Sl., pp.35-6

over which stakes human beings fight once they emerge as city-building and empire-erecting creatures.¹⁸

Here, we have already gone beyond the self-control needed for humans to be adequate to the whole, beyond the conformity required by human aggregated domesticity, to the front where the terms of this conformity are decided. The social history of human domestication speaks of the terms of this conformity as well as of the engagements by which they are determined.

Third thesis

‘Human beings are animals of which some breed their like while others are the bred.’¹⁹

Methods of domestication constitute the many ways humans have devised to establish civility. For a long time, alphabetization has been the most influential domesticating force. Literacy and its corollaries (reading, sitting, calming, and pondering) have been the chief means of the humanistic taming and disciplining of human beings through education. Humans are thus lead to civility, a conformist device of (self-)control that is embodied in etiquettes of affability and renders individuals adequate to the whole. Sloterdijk, however, thinks that Nietzsche, in *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, correctly senses another dimension of domestication - a dimension that is not readily perceivable - and

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App., p.195; SI., p.37

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App., pp.200-1; SI., p.44

points beyond the obvious humanistic striving for civility to an outspoken breeding policy that underlies and paradoxically transcends in gravity the humanistic education proper:

‘...Nietzsche...fancies to see a second, darker horizon behind the serene horizon of human being’s scholastic domestication. He senses a space where battles over the direction of human breeding will inevitably begin - and it is in this space that the other, the veiled, face of the clearing shows itself. When Zarathustra walks through the city in which all has become lower (*kleiner*), he perceives the result of a hitherto successful and undisputed breeding politic: it appears to him as if human beings, with the help of a clever combination of ethics and genetics, have succeeded in breeding themselves low. They subjected themselves to domestication, initiating for themselves the breeding of a domesticated animal’s affability. From this assumption springs Zarathustra’s peculiar critique of humanism as a rejection of the air of false harmlessness with which the modernly good human being surrounds itself. It really wouldn’t be harmless if human beings breed human beings to be harmless. Nietzsche’s skepticism towards all humanistic culture urges the disclosure of humanity’s domesticating secret. He wants to call the present holders of breeding monopolies - the priests and teachers who present themselves as philanthropists - by their name and reticent function and launch a world-historically, novel wrangle between the various breeders and breeding programs.’²⁰

Sloterdijk has no doubts that ‘hidden in the rhapsodic talk (of *Thus spoke Zarathustra*) is a theoretical discourse on human being as a domesticating and breeding force’(app., p.197; SI, p.39). ‘From Zarathustra’s perspective, human beings are above all

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App., pp.197-8; SI., pp.39-40

successful breeders who have managed to turn the wild hominid into the human of late'(ibid). The remotely familiar discourse of human domestication blends here with the downright unfamiliar and ominous one of human breeding. The difference between domesticating and breeding is that while the former signifies a process of taming aimed at domesticity in the present, the latter signifies a process of selecting, crossing, and hybridizing that goes beyond mere taming and the present to an original and deliberate creation for the future. Domestication and breeding are, however, inseparable in that the former is fundamental to the latter and vice versa, i.e., the type of domestication achieved informs and guides the breeding effort whose outcome in turn conditions the course of future domestication. Sloterdijk urges us to acknowledge this hitherto largely ignored mutuality of human being and human making:

‘When Nietzsche speaks of the superhuman, his thinking transcends the present by a world age. As a measure, he takes the past millenarian processes during which the intimate blending of breeding, domesticating, and educating hitherto determined the making of human being.’ ‘...The discourse on the difference and blending of domesticating and breeding, yes, pointing at all to the dawn of a consciousness of the making of human being and, more generally speaking, about anthropotechnologies - these are avowals which present thinking cannot ignore except if it wants to dedicate itself anew to a belittling.’²¹

Heidegger’s notion of the ‘clearing’ refers to the space where humans, thrown, discursive, and understanding, are ‘addressed by being’ through obtaining a world that can

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App., p.198-9; SI., pp.41-2

be meaningfully shared. While the visible face of this clearing has come to be that of (self-)domestication aiming at sharing meaningfully within the context of literacy and sedentariness, efficacious human breeding is the clearing's veiled face, the hitherto hardly thought of and unexplored but potentially trend-setting. Anticipating the lifting of the veil, Nietzsche points to the possibility of a fundamental future conflict over the directions of breeding as a result, namely 'the battle between the breeders of low and the breeders of grand types of human being (*Kleinzüchter* vs. *Großzüchter*, see p.6) - one could also say between humanists and superhumanists, philanthropists and friends of superhumans' (app., p.198; SI., p.40). It is certainly not harmless if human beings breed human beings to be common because the intention of the breeders remains questionable in the sense that those who breed others with their commonalty in mind may not be harmless. The breeders' harmfulness comes to the fore if the common they seek to procure turns out to be a deliberate and subtle sedative allowing them to pursue schemes of breeding by which power can be wielded over the low, a power that might lead to them to being gradually superseded by an alternative genus that, I surmise, corresponds more to the breeders' concealed intent of monopolizing control.²² That such attempts at breeding might however not go unnoticed and unchallenged becomes clear through the apprehension of a future battle over the direction of breeding. Here, the harmless, and the proponents of

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With a lesser degree of intentionality, a similar effect can be ascribed to the 'evolutionary' process of domestication by which each successive generation's enculturation entails the abolition or substitution of some of the standards pertaining to the previous one. This process illustrates the mutuality of domestication and breeding and is part of what Sloterdijk calls a 'bio-cultural drift'.

harmlessness, are pressed to take a stand against a pernicious opponent. But the future battle over the direction of breeding might not be over variant deliberations at all, for, as Sloterdijk suggests, instead of a contriving perpetrator may be found a 'breeding without breeder, that is a non-subjective, bio-cultural drift', to be reckoned with (app., p.200; Sl., p.42):

'It is the signature of the techno- and anthropotechnological era that human beings, without willfully urging for the selector's role, get more and more onto the active or subjective side of selection.' '...As soon as powers of knowledge are developed positively in one field, human beings cut a sorry figure if - like in times of their prior incapacity - they want to let a superior force, be it God or chance or others, act in their place. Because mere refusal or disregard habitually fail through their sterility, it is likely that, in the future, it will be decisive to take up the game actively and to formulate a codex of anthropotechnology.'²³

The statement that human beings are animals of which some breed their like while others are the bred gains plausibility also in the past and present and not only by portentous predictions:

'...reading was a great power formative of human being - and, in a more modest dimension, it still is; yet, selection...was always the acting power behind the power (of reading). Lessons and selections have more in common than any historian of culture was willing and able to consider, and if, for the time being, it seems impossible for us to adequately reconstruct the correlation between reading and selecting with precision, it is still more than a noncommittal

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App., p.201; Sl., pp.44-5

foreboding that the correlation as such is real.

Until the recently enforced general alphabetization, literary culture itself has brought about sharply selective effects; it has fissured its host societies and separated literate human beings from illiterate ones by a furrow so severe and unbridgeable that it almost differentiated the species. If, in defiance of Heidegger's caution, one would want to talk once more anthropologically, historical human beings could be defined as animals of which some could read and write while others not²⁴

So if it is not conspicuous breeders decreeing who actively or subjectively takes part in a specific breeding scheme, it is an obscure bio-cultural drift which turns humans into selected objects and selecting subjects. One such type of bio-cultural drift becomes evident through the phenomenon of alphabetization and its consequences for society. It is (permissively-speaking) biological because of the human capacity for literacy, and it is (chiefly-speaking) cultural in that enculturated, intellectual pursuits give rise to the knowledge and technology which in combination create the possibility and subsequent needs of a literate society perpetuating its cultural achievement. This knowledge and technology can, however, be made generally available or at least initially remain bound to the special interests of an elitist clique. Thus, when literacy is a novel and uncommon occurrence and put into the service of authority by the potent, we readily see how some can be breeders - the literate sovereignty interested in retaining its privilege of power - who breed their like while others are the bred - the illiterate under the sway of a command which they cannot verify. And what holds good for literacy holds as well good for any

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App., pp.,200-1; Sl., pp.43-4

form of knowledge and technology emanating from the bio-cultural drift as a novelty disposed to preemption. The statement that some are the breeders who breed their like while others are the bred thus implies that a certain manner of domestication springs from, and informs, a certain scheme of breeding which always creates a relationship of creator and creation but which can manifest itself as conspicuous as well as inconspicuous, intentional as well as unintentional, obstinate as well as amenable.

Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger

In the following, my chief concern is not whether my own preliminary presentation of the relevant works by Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger are accurate nor whether Sloterdijk interprets the authors and their works correctly but solely the manner in which he applies his findings to his sketch of the human park.

Plato, Nietzsche, and Heidegger offer different paradigms within which the complex of the human park, the question of what it could mean to be a human being and be human, can be addressed: Plato's *Politikos* illustrates the method of arriving at a definition by successive division of beings and constitutions classified according to their typical criteria - a procedure that Sloterdijk calls 'winning the truth through carefully dividing or dissecting quantities of ideas and objects' (app., p.203; Sl., p.47). The aim is to discern those traits that distinguish the true statesman from the sophist and a good constitution from a bad one. The conclusion is that the statesman distinguishes himself from the sophist - who is considered a mere imitator of the statesmen - by his knowledge

of true statesmanship.²⁵ Unrestricted power of one or a few who have the true art of statesmanship is ideal; the second best is for the rulers to be obliged to rule in accordance with laws drawn up by those who master the art. Moreover, it is irrelevant whether the constitution is consensual or absolute as long as the rulers master the true art of ruling. The true statesman masters the architectonic art of state-building, of directing and controlling education, rhetorical and belligerent engagement, management of leadership, etc.. Plato's *Politeia* contributes the model of the ideally just state. To be just means to be good. The good is a permanent, ideational 'form' inferred from observed standards of 'goodness' and the true statesman the epitome of the good. Justness is established through the dedication of each of the state's citizens to one task for which it is naturally suited and specially trained. In due course, knowledge of true statesmanship is established when one's 'soul' is fully integrated, i.e., when one's training is such that mental and emotional traits come to constitute a functional harmony issuing into the ultimately just character. Thus, the integrity of the state mirrors the integrity of the statesman's character and vice versa. The true statesman's just treatment of others flows then from a perfectly balanced psychological condition rather than from adherence to a set of rules, from the formation of a specific character type rather than from learned expertise. Subjects of the ideally just state know this, and presupposing that the statesman's decrees are in their best interest, they readily submit to them. Here, Sloterdijk sees Plato evoking a model of the

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Possessing expertise but lacking the insight of an integrated 'soul', the sophist resembles today's politician who, in Plato's sense, is not a true statesman but a more or less clever rhetorician supported by and advocating vested interests.

kingly art of scientific statesmanship that involves the purposive herding of humans towards an ideal of commonwealth which, to him, presents an original, masterly discourse on human making in terms of a deliberate and comprehensive breeding program:

‘...its incommensurable place in the history of thought lies in its running like a discussion about work amongst breeders - not accidentally under participation of a, for Plato, untypical personnel - a stranger and a younger Socrates, as if, for the time being, ordinary Athenians are not to be permitted to conversations of this sort - and how could it be so if the issue at stake is to select a statesman unprecedented in Athens and to breed a state’s people hitherto not found in any empirical city. This stranger and his opponent, Socrates junior, dedicate themselves to the captious attempt at placing the future politic, or art of the state-herdsman, under transparent, rational rules.’²⁶

The art of the state governing the Platonic zoo is a scientific and kingly discipline that deals with the pedestrians of those creatures living in herds; more exactly, it concerns only the wingless kind and the remainder is again divided into two subclasses, namely into those with horns and those without, each of which is matched by both a specific herder and art of herding. *Humans belong to the herd with trimmed-off horns, and their herders reside amongst them.* The task of these herders is to guard the purebred of the flock and to curb endogamy and bastardization. The art of herding and guarding is then divided into the violent-tyrannic and voluntary modes. If the tyrannic mode is eliminated as unviable, the voluntary mode remains as the proper art of state which is the voluntary attendance to

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App., p.203; SL, pp.47-8

volunteering creatures. At this point, the idea of supervising reproductive breeding is introduced into the art of guarding the human herd:

‘The real and true reason of the kingly art is, according to Plato, not to be found in the vote of fellow citizens which grant to or withdraw from their politicians their trust at will; it also doesn’t lie with inherited privileges or novel presumptions. The Platonic master finds reason for his mastership alone in a regal knowledge of breeding, an expertise whose legal basis is the understanding how humans - without ever impairing their voluntariness - would best be sorted and joined. The kingly anthropotechnique requires namely from the statesman that he knows how to most effectively intertwine, for the commonwealth, the most salutary qualities of voluntarily guidable human beings so that the human park attains under his hand an optimal homeostasis.’²⁷

The optimal homeostasis of the human park is achieved when ‘the two relative optima of human nature, the warlike bravery on the one hand, the philosophical-humane level-headedness on the other, have an equally strong impact on the communal fabric’ (app., pp.206-7; Sl., p.53). Because the former tendency can degenerate into militaristic bellicosity and the latter into apathetic detachment, the statesman’s task is to constitute the state with those natures which don’t tend to either extreme and to sort out the misfits. Upon selection, the good state can then be created with the remaining noble and voluntary natures. Thus, the program of a ‘humanistic’ society is carried forward, a society resulting from the mastership of the kingly art of human herding charged with planning the character of an elite which must be specially bred for the sake of the whole.

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App., p.206; Sl., pp.52-3

That such statesmanship is not licentious is illustrated further:

‘...the Platonic herdsman can only be a credible guardian of human beings because he represents the worldly image of the sole and primordially true herdsman - the god, who, in a dim and distant past and under the reign of Kronos, tended directly to human beings. One must also not forget that, with Plato, only the god can be considered the primordial guardian and breeder of human beings. But now, after the great revolution...where, under the reign of Zeus, the gods withdrew and abandoned human beings to care for their own guarding, there remains, as the most dignified guardian and breeder, the wise in whom the memory of the finest Elysian visions is most vivid. Without the model of the wise, the caring for human beings by human beings is a futile passion.’²⁸

Sloterdijk admonishes us that the present manifestation of the Platonic zoo involves a learning process by which the world must come to discern *or* decide whether ‘there exists a mere gradual or a specific differentiation between population and direction’(app., pp.204; SI, p.49). Graduality means that human natures deviate from one another by small degrees; specificity implies that human natures are radically different. He says:

‘Assuming the former (graduality), the distance between the guardian of human beings and their protégées is only an accidental and pragmatic one - in this case, one could grant the herd the capacity to rotationally elect its new herder. But if a specific difference dominates, the directors and inhabitants of the zoo would be so fundamentally different from each other that an elected

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App., p.208; SI, pp.54-5

direction would be not advisable but only a direction based on insight. Solely the false zoo directors, the pseudo statesmen, and political sophists would then tout themselves with the argument that, after all, they are of the same kind as the herd, while the true breeder puts emphasis on difference and discreetly relates that, because he acts from insight, he is closer to the gods than to the confused creatures he attends to.²⁹

Seen in this light, it appears as if all highly cultured pedagogies and politics have so far ignored the actual inequality of human beings before the power of knowledge, instead belying it through the conciliating and consolidating paradigms of human likeness and community. Contrary to this practice, Plato's dialogue on the politician in *Politikos* and *Politeia* boldly 'develops the preambles of a political anthropotechnique; its crucial point being not only the domesticating guidance of the already tame herd but also a systematic new breeding of prototypical, human exemplars' (app., p.205; Sl., pp.49-50). Such breeding can only come to happen through the concentration of adequate knowledge in the hands of those who, mistakenly or not, consider themselves the apt guardians of human interest.

Nietzsche expects the dawn of a new, systematic breeding of humans and draws our attention to the antagonism it is likely to entail. In *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche questions the vanguards and long cherished tenets and traditions and asks us to look at the world differently, namely not with a philosophical matrix of eternal return in mind but with the consciousness of this life as being the one and only and to be taken advantage of to the

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App., p.204; Sl., p.49

fullest and with all our means. The persona of Zarathustra represents the ancient Persian prophet who first taught that the world was a battle between good and evil. He returns to the human world to relinquish his teaching and point the way to an age beyond good and evil. Nietzsche's estimation of the value and meaning of human life and possibility is informed by a perceived collapse of traditional modes of religious and philosophical interpretation. Dismayed by the resulting moral uncertainty, he seeks to rescue the very possibility of affirming life through the reinterpretation of life and the world along radical but more tenable lines. Thus, Zarathustra denounces the old (Judeo-Christian) order of Western morality and announces a new order that will replace it. His spirit is that of a revolutionary, his revolution is one of morality and culture rather than of politics. Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* helps to elucidate the nature of this revolution: it is one by which noble ones ascend to sovereignty over an otherwise weak human herd. The noble are not prophets or pundits or bearers of conventional regalia but adventurous Dionysian men with overflowing strength and an unrelenting desire for creation, change, and becoming - the revolution is a Dionysian celebration of life's superabundance and the antithesis to the Apollonian attitude and the divulgements of the downtrodden. The nobility's ascent, driven by a will to power that values *and* is supremely valued in itself, is the ascent of the strong and self-righteous over a weak, civilized herd. While the herd is made to embrace altruism as the moral ideal, the noble conceive of their self-interest as the ultimate good, and as such they are the masters beyond good and evil. Nietzsche's nobility is the actuality and symbol of a sublimated will to power and the supreme advocate of life-affirmation through the defiant acceptance of the totality of life -

especially of the suffering entailed in living, for it is hardship that singles out those who can excel. Calling on the noble, Dionysian, or superhuman, presents a loathing protest against the mediocrity of the human herd which has renounced the totality of life and surrendered vigor to comfortable vegetating and concerns with safety and security. Nietzsche's prophecy of a fateful conflict between those who advocate a common civility of the low and those who champion an exaltation of the grand through unbridling the eminent foreshadows the Dionysian revolution. Sloterdijk sees the possibility of uncivility's dominance foreshadowed in the chapter '*Von der verkleinernden Tugend*' ('Of the debasing virtue') which he thinks to be '...sound enough to provoke a later pondering of humanity beyond human harmlessness'(app, p.200; Sl., p.42-3). Considering the signs of our times, he declares: '...to humanity, the next long whiles will be periods of species-political decision. It remains to be seen whether in these periods humanity, or its chief factions, succeeds in getting at least again effective procedures of self-domestication under way'(app., p.202; Sl., pp.45-6).

Sloterdijk admits that it is many centuries, if not millennia, too early to judge Nietzsche's pretensions, but in the face of current developments in scientific knowledge and technology, it becomes clear that Nietzsche conceived indeed of a gigantic premise of species-political decisions with evolutionary gravity whose actuality and probable and improbable dimensions are now beginning to vaguely dawn upon us. The portents of our times are that the urgency of this premise will become increasingly clearer and exigent:

'The battle between domesticating and bestializing impulses and their respective media is

also performed in contemporary culture. Yet, greater successes in domesticating would be surprises in the face of a civilizing process characterized by an unprecedented and apparently unstoppable wave of permissiveness. But whether this long-ranging development will lead as well to a genetic reform of the species' properties - whether a future anthropotechnology advances to an explicit planning of traits; whether humanity will be able to perform a reorientation from birth fatalism to birth optimization and prenatal selection - these are questions in which, however blurry and fishy, the evolutionary horizon begins to clear up before us.'³⁰

How the battle between restraining and uninhibiting tendencies could end is a matter of conjecture. Considering Heidegger's idea that human thought is notoriously divorced from the truth of being and, as such, bound to the interested, subjective objectification of the world, it appears inescapable that a dominance of uninhibiting tendencies will also merely establish some sort of novel, common sense of existence and thus lead to nothing but a new definition of what it means to deceive ourselves and be limited by ignorance.

In the *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger affords an answer to what he took to be a question in one of Jean Beaufret's missives to him: 'How to bestow the term humanism with new meaning?' ('Comment redonner un sens au mot "humanisme"?').³¹ This question presents the notion of humanism as both inadequate and bereft of meaning. In his treatise, Heidegger proclaims that by his rational presuppositions man has become

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App., p.202; Sl., pp.46-7

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App., p.184; Sl., p.22

homeless, i.e., he is divorced from ecstatic existence in the truth of being by clinging to ideational constructs that may at best point to the lost home but in the end are ever incapable of leading back to it because by its very nature, ideation veils man's home from man. Man's existence is the emergence into the clearing of being. The nature of this emergence is what renders man's existence authentic or inauthentic. As Heidegger sees it, the thinking that makes for man's authentic existence is but man's property for reflecting being in its givenness, a property that enables him to speak the truth of being. The truth of Being it is essentially the non-purposive and total reflection of being accomplished in man and revealed through language which as such forms the house of Being. Alienation from this truth is brought about if thinking follows from subjective objectification. That way, what is usually designated humanism is no humanism at all because it essentially meant to indicate man's nearness to the truth of being in whose light he dwells as an equal among equals. Instead, conventional humanism alienates man not only from himself and his own kind but positions him also over and against all other beings and betrays thus man's essence - his nearness to the truth of being - by setting him apart on the premise of a rationality of which he is himself a product. As such, 'humanism - in its antique, Christian, and enlightened guises - is '...the agent of a 2000 year old non-cerebration'(app., p.185; SI., p.24). Being the fruit of unquestioned, rational presuppositions, this humanism is a commodity traded on the market of public opinion whose tyranny is the dominance of a subjective metaphysics lost to the truth of being. This subjectivity undermines the linguistic formulation of aesthetic and moral responsibilities, for language, no longer witnessing to the truth of Being, is but an instrument of domination over beings as

actualities which stand to man in calculated, causal relations based on explanations and proofs. In this sense, modern humanistic thought is an oppressive, self-interested form of humanism made in man's metaphysical bias while it essentially ought to denote man's nearness to the truth of being, i.e., man's impartial, ecstatic existence in, and with, the given that characterizes humanity in essence. In short, modern humanism closes itself to the 'simple' fact that man occurs in his essence only when being claimed by Being - instead, it locates him within the realm of categorical interpretations of things living and thought and is hence misleading. Common thinking cannot think the truth of Being, for such thinking already belongs to this truth and is realized only if thinking has given way to the perception of being as an *absolute*, ontological whole undifferentiated by ideational constructs. As such, this thinking is neither theoretical nor practical but the inconclusive recollection of being as it is revealed by the momentarily given, i.e., it no longer delimits being by means of subjective objectification but lets it be. Heidegger concludes thus that man's essence consists neither in being an animal organism nor in an immortal soul nor in the power of reason nor in the character of a person, for all these don't realize the dignity of man lying with his unique sense of, and potential to, the truth of being. Through thinking claimed by the truth of Being, man returns to his home in his essence and becomes the guardian of this truth in a truly humanistic sense. Until then, until the corruption of being by valuation has ceased, until man lets Being be, man, expelled from his home in the truth of Being, circles round himself as a rational animal rejoicing in what it thinks it can solely know for certain, namely the material and technological.

Sloterdijk views Heidegger's letter as suggesting a radical and decisive venture to overcome the crisis of humanity. Heidegger immeasurably revalued human being by giving up the idea that a human being is an animal to be tamed and to understand it instead as potentially appealed to by a higher sense of being. The radicalness of Heidegger's approach lies in its apparently implied espousal of a rather austere way of life characterized by a self-disciplining introspection which, if generally adopted, could in fact decisively alter the nature of human (co)existence:

'...Heidegger's critique of humanism propagates a change of attitude pointing human being to a contemplative asceticism that aims far beyond all humanistic, educational goals. Solely by virtue of this asceticism could a community of contemplatives beyond the humanistic, literary society be formed; it would be a community of human beings which remove human being from its central position because they have realized that they can exist only as "neighbours of being".'³²

The far-reaching implications of Heidegger's approach are clear:

'...he implies human being, understood as the clearing of being, in a domesticating and befriending that go deeper than any humanistic debestializing and any educational affection for the text that speaks of love could ever reach. By appointing human being guardian and neighbour of Being and designating language the house of Being, he commits the human being to a correspondence to being which imposes on the human being a radical keeping back that limits him - the herder - to the adjacency or periphery of the house...and confers on him the prominent bearing of a consciousness that takes up more capacity to keep quiet and be in bond of quietude than the

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App., p. 190; Sl., p.30

most comprehensive education ever could. Human being is subjected to an ecstatic keeping back that reaches further than the civilized pausing before the classical word. The Heideggerian self-contained residing in the house of language is meant to be a biding listening to what being itself emits as that what is to be said. It evokes a harkening into the proximity by which the human being must become more quiet and tamed than the humanist by reading classics.³³

But he still relies on the paradigm of classical humanism:

‘...by rejecting the claim of humanism of having sufficiently interpreted human nature and confront it with his own onto-anthropology, he yet holds indirectly on to the most important function of classical humanism, namely the befriending of human being with the word of the other (here: Being) - yes, he radicalizes this motive of befriending and transfers it from the pedagogical field to the centre of ontological reflection.’³⁴

Aware of the limited viability of Heidegger’s proposal, Sloterdijk affords an overall sceptical evaluation of the visionary letter:

‘...as far as we can see, it is impossible to form nations, nor even alternative schools, from...fellow herders and friends of being - last but not least because a public canon of hints from being is not to be had...’ Thus, ‘...it is, until further notice, absolutely unclear how a community of neighbours of being could be composed - before anything more conspicuous can crop up, it might well be understood as an invisible church of scattered individuals, each of which listens to the

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App., pp.188-9; Sl., pp.27-8

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App., pp.187-8; Sl., pp.26-7

tremendous and awaits the words which voice what the speaker is assigned to say by language itself.’³⁵

Though Heidegger rightly points to the ‘vast neglect in European thinking - namely that of not inquiring into the nature of human being in the (according to him) solely adequate, existential-ontological, manner’(app., p.185; Sl., pp.23-4), his own proposition offers only but little hope. Heidegger’s outline of an ultimately pacifistic, fundamental change in human nature by means of contemplative asceticism, of *self-conquest*, must remain ineffective because it is inconceivable how such change could ever come about on a scale extensive enough to thoroughly alter the dynamics of human (co)existence.

Already referred to under the heading ‘Second thesis’(see p.13), Sloterdijk also has quarrels with Heidegger’s neglect of the ‘anthropogenetic revolution’. In short, this revolution is a disruption in that human birth is a coming into the world which determines the new human being right from the beginning both in terms of its biological endowment *and* immediate enculturation. More specifically, the disruptive aspect is that biological birth engenders a creature that is bound to become a *homo sapiens* by being readied by and for the world so that the suckling has no choice but to grow into a worldling taking to the ways of the world *that finds it*. This is a process of harnessing animality to worldliness, a process of which Sloterdijk speaks as a by Heidegger ‘resolutely ignored

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App., pp.189-90; Sl., p.29

history of human being stepping out onto the clearing - a social history of human beings' touchability by the existential question and a moved historicity in the gap of ontological difference'(app., p.192; Sl., p.32). What precisely is ignored by Heidegger is that a human being is a bipedal primate with a biological and cultural plus contextured in its respective environment (see app., pp.186-7; Sl., p. 25). Heidegger disregards this obvious mark of the human coming to and being in the world and takes a human being instead as that creature which obtains the world and stands to all other animals in a radical, ontological difference. In order for this extraordinary creature to extricate itself from existing inauthentically, it must recollect its essential abiding in the clearing of the truth of Being which, as an ontological absolute, is a given normally obscured by the veil of conceptualization. Pondering human being and becoming from this vantage point, the power and crucial significance of biological endowment and enculturation mutually constituting the bio-cultural drift is belittled if not overlooked:

'In his standoffish mulishness towards all anthropology and his zeal to preserve the originator's pristine ontology in being-there and being-in-the-world of human being, Heidegger has by far not taken enough notice of this disruption (i.e., the anthropogenetic revolution).'³⁶

Humanism, Human Being, and the Domestication and Breeding of Humans

For the initial portion of this section, I have extensively borrowed from Sloterdijk's *Regeln für den Menschenpark* and structured a selection of slightly altered passages into

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App., p.193; Sl., pp.33-4

an answer to the question about his conception of the nature of humanism.

Humanism as a word and object denotes the engagement for fetching back humans from barbarism or the bestial. Like all philosophy, also humanism is originally the product of wisdom-loving philosophers' writings meant to kindle this love in others. As such, it is a corollary of alphabetization; it functions as a friendship-inducing telecommunication by means of writing. For the Western world, the foundations of humanism were laid down in classical Greece and further cultivated in Rome from where it extended its influence over the wider western hemisphere. Humanism can thus be reduced to the model of a literary society where those involved discover through canonical readings respective of their national domain their common love for senders of friendship-begetting letters that inspire a dream of the fated solidarity of their readers. Humanism is hence a communal phantasma whose three pillars are literacy, befriending literature, and the proselytizing efforts of those enthralled by the latter. Where alphabetization took on pragmatic and programmatic forms, the model of the literary society developed into the norm for the political society. From 1789 till about 1960, the reading-enthusiastic, national humanists were at their best. During this period, civil humanism emanated from philological as well as ecclesiastical authorities that averred the universal validity of national(-izing) reading matters and forced classics upon the youth. During the aftermath of the second world war, in a time when a gloomy shadow of doubt was cast on the workability of humanist tenets, a melancholic-hopeful enthusiasm about the civilizing, humanizing power of reading classics reemerged despite all odds. Especially in Europe, the motive of this movement was the desperate

dream of preventing humans from surrendering to a corrosive sense of moral nihilism by means of a radical bibliophilism endorsing not only Roman but also Christian-humanistic literature. This reflex act - the arranged renaissance of humanistic thought - delivered the model for all reanimations of humanism ever since. But through the rise of a mass culture significantly determined by electronic media - a process that began already in 1918 through the introduction of public broadcasting - the coexistence of humans has been newly grounded in a manner that is yet to be acknowledged by the humanistically educated - the electronic media of political-cultural telecommunication have assumed dominance and drastically reduced the influence and importance of befriending literacy *and* literature. What remains to be understood by present humanists is that, today as ever, from a soaring unfoldment of power sallies the bestial, be it directly as warlike activity and imperial brutality or as the everyday bestializing of human beings by the media of uninhibiting entertainment. Nowadays, special attention must be given to the fact that human beings are incessantly taken up by two formative powers simultaneously - the inhibiting or civilizing and the uninhibiting or bestializing influences. The question as to how a hominid could in these circumstances still become a true or veritable human is from now on to be posed as an unavoidably medium-related one if we understand by media the communal and communicative means by the use of which hominids educate themselves towards what they can and will be.

To the credo of humanism belongs the conviction that human beings are animals with cerebral amendments under the influence of inhibiting and uninhibiting forces and that

it is therefore imperative to subject them to the right kind of influence; the latent theme of humanism is the debestializing of human beings; the latent thesis of humanism is that right lecture makes tame; the traditional function of humanism is the befriending of human beings by means of the literary medium; and the etiquette of humanism is that it reminds with deceptive harmlessness of the continuous wrestling of bestializing and taming tendencies for dominancy over human being. The fate of the humanist correspondence appears to be sealed if we consider that the friendship-begetting letters have transmuted into largely ignored, archived objects. At present, the prospects of humanism, formatively confined to human domestication through education, are shattered by the extensive subjection of humans to media influences disparaging the traditional humanist gospel and the promise of novel ways of human domestication manifest in the potential to human breeding opened up by developments in the domains of scientific knowledge and technology. The new modes of breeding could retroactively change the meaning of classical humanism, for the formulation of a codex to regulate it explicitly reveals that *humanitas* does not only imply friendship but also that a human being can be a superior force acting on human being (and that even to the extent that it could eclipse *humanitas* itself).

To Sloterdijk, human beings are above all specially endowed animals that have decided to exist in association. On the basis of a biological plus in the form of a distinct, cerebral endowment, they have come to intricately organize themselves to be adequate to the whole of their association. This organization issues from the process of enculturation

which may be representative or oligarchical in nature and whose conveyors are key figures with the mandate to civilize. Enculturation is always a hybrid process of domestication and breeding. Domestication is concerned with transmitting the norms organizing the desired association, breeding with establishing the biological premise best suited to it by commending certain modes of propagation while discouraging or excoriating others. Domestication is a taming force while breeding is formative of the mold that best embodies and accommodates the taming force. In the course of an increasingly complex association, literacy emerged as the eminent agent for binding hominid culture. Thus, literacy gave rise to alphabetized associations of compulsive friendship sworn in to canonical, national readings. The compulsive friendship between humans is by definition a humanistic one. In this sense, modern nations are but the fictions of reading citizens bound by a humanistic lore. Nowadays, the normative impact of reading literature promoting humanistic association is being decisively curbed by humans' towering subjection and attraction to the electronic media and their alluring modes of information, trivial and significant, ordinary and extreme. Attraction to the electronic media is frequently informed by a desire for stimulation in the form of entertainment and amusement which counters and weakens the domesticating protocol through its frequently favouring the permissive and uninhibiting. Also the emergence of an immense complexity entailed by the paradigms of global, human association - hastened by the electronic media - render enculturation by nation-bound concepts of humanistic domestication problematic, if not obsolete. On the national level, humanistic domesticity is thus undermined while on the international level it is still inconceivable how an agreed upon program of human

enculturation normative for global association could be effectuated. In any case, the national weakening of the humanistic paradigm makes it difficult to see how it could become an internationally accredited and binding influence - this would be rather like a phoenix rising from its ashes. Consequently, successful humanistic (and Judeo-Christian) domestication appears to be in peril and bound to give way to a novel mode of association whose nature and viability remain uncertain. In addition to these developments, an unprecedented possibility of breeding humans emerges: genetic engineering. This practice holds the hypothetical power to fundamentally alter the future character of hominid nature and association. For now, however, it remains unclear whether the change can and will in fact be so far-reaching and, if so, how it will manifest itself. In any case, humans have to take three major factors into account if they wish to cast about their fate: (1) the decline of societal organization based on humanistic literacy; (2) the electronic media that allegedly fosters inanity and brutish permissiveness; and (3) the dawn of a new breeding power whose potentialities are so far not fully known and hence speculative. It remains to be seen whether and how these factors will actually converge into a novel type of polity and whether human beings will get a form of self-domestication under way that enables them to prevent at least the worst of consequences such a convergence could entail, namely the rise of a genetocracy (see p.92). The portentous questions that present themselves at this intersection of tendencies and possibilities are:

‘What tames human being when humanism as a school for taming human being fails?
What tames human being when so far all efforts of self-taming lead mainly to its taking over all
that is? What tames human being when, after all experiments with educating humankind, it

remains unclear who or what the educator teaches and what for?' 'Or has it not become completely impossible to competently pose the question as to the caring and forming of human being within the framework of mere disciplinal and educational theories?'³⁷

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App., p.191: Sl., pp.31-2

Chapter Two

Premises of the Human Park

In this somewhat lengthy preliminary, I will (1) write on humanity and animality, first, in an attempt to denounce the derogatory ascription of bestial tendencies to both the human and nonhuman animal as well as to clarify the meaning of relevant key terminology and (2) introduce the notions of bio-information society, general systems theory, humanism, and human genetic engineering, all of which are components pertinent to my ensuing consideration of Sloterdijk's theses and the human park.

On Humanity and Animality

Biologically speaking, human beings are clearly animals occupying a special - though by no means altogether superior - place in the animal realm. Already Aristotle grappled with the decisive difference between humans and animals:

'...both humans and animals are moved by critical and desiderative faculties. In the case of animals, however, critical faculties are limited to perception, memory, and perceptual imagination. Human capacities include these, but in addition belief, thought, the manipulation of belief through syllogism and deliberation, and choice.'³⁸

As far as it is known, humans enjoy a particularly comprehensive cognizance that enables a special ability to memorize, foresee, and imagine and is fundamental to the above

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Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* I., p.7, cited in Sherman *The Fabric of Character*, p. 161.

uniquely human cognitive capacities recognized by Aristotle. These capacities take part in and sustain a specifically human wholeness. Following Mary Midgley's description, this wholeness is the integrity of a human being as (1) an individual organism which depends on its surroundings while it is discontinuous from it through its tendency to preserve and perpetuate its own kind; (2) an animal which shares with all other animals the capacity to act positively and deliberately; (3) a social animal by virtue of its acting and being aware of the actions of others as significant performances that are taken personally and responded to immediately and by building lasting and complex relationships with the actions' agents - such sociality requires not only that a human acts as a distinct individual but also, and most importantly, feels like one; and (4) distinctive from other social animals by its being enormously more conscious both of its individuality and of the internal and external factors that comprise it - this awareness allows for a complex, voluntary deliberation, arbitration, and conflict-resolution that is essential to human wholeness.³⁹ The integrity of human wholeness is, however, not something given. Rather, it is:

'...a continuing, lifelong project, and effort constantly undertaken in the face of endless disintegrating forces. We, as well as every mouse and every apple-tree, struggle for this wholeness as best as we can throughout our lives, undiscouraged by endless obstacles.'⁴⁰

It appears that this struggle for wholeness is demanded by the very constitution of

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See Midgley *The Ethical Primate*, 1994.

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Ibid, p.23.

every creature which must maintain its integrity as both a centre of experience and part of its surroundings. Speaking of humans, the impulse towards this integration involves the individual's renunciation of one particular motive so that its motivational constellation as a whole can render a more balanced response to experience. Though we know little about the inner lives of other animals and hence ought not to dogmatize about it⁴¹, it can be postulated that at least advanced, social, nonhuman animals share our struggle of harmonizing conflicting motives, but they do not share in the reflectiveness needed to harmonize them in the way of introspection, comprehensive perception, and balanced adjudication so typical of humans and fundamental to human freedom. Thus, the discontinuity between the nonhuman and human animal appears to be a difference in, *not* an absence of, awareness - markedly in terms of recollection, prescience, and creativity - bearing on the process of integration whereas the continuity between the two is that of a persistently incomplete control over the integration process as well as the fact that also the human mind and motivation are physically rooted, for the seat of the mind is the cerebral apparatus, and the sustenance of the physical body to which it is essential is the more or less conscious prime objective of all forms of life. Determined by a creature's level and constitution of self-awareness, intelligence is the capacity to learn, understand, and deliberate purposively or, in other words, to direct curiosity, grasp what is important, and maintain a peculiar interest in it.

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With exception of creatures other than advanced, social nonhuman animals, for the problem of ascertaining the nature of their awareness presents such a mysterious situation that here 'it is not parsimonious to dogmatize' (ibid, p. 174).

Intelligence among all animals differs then only according to the degree and the manner by which a given complexity of internal and external factors is consciously perceived, comprehended, and manipulated and harnessed to the struggle for wholeness - of all animals, the human animal seems to be most adept in doing so. Hence, motivating human intelligence is first and foremost the individual's effort to integrate the various internal and external factors into a however transient and incomplete wholeness of character capable of prospering in a given context. In the social context, this means that conflicts between individual characters, i.e., between variant motivational patterns, is inevitable, for each aspires towards a distinct, idiosyncratic wholeness. But this overall conflictive situation of human existence is less a predicament as it is a vital precondition for the improvement of intelligence - for humans learn, understand, and deliberate more successfully as conflicts are encountered, managed, and resolved. The working mode of intelligence is reason, its guiding principle morality, and its characteristic freedom.

Reason is not a mere tool for simplifying nor is rational thought an intellectual monoculture: to reason means to use linguistic symbols and corollary concepts in order to form conclusions, judgements, and inferences from a wide range of doubts and questions issuing in an as wide range of explanations centred around what is relevant to doubt. Reason is thus engaged in an ongoing quest for relative certainty informed by trust in the premises on which certainty is to be established as well as by a temperament-specific, emotional preference for a particular form of certainty.⁴² Consequently, a particular form

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The reasonable is not only, nor is it limited to, a scientifically exalted certainty: '...since the seventeenth

of reasoning is a contextual human arrangement as well as an aesthetic choice relative to the attainment of a truth deemed desirable.

Morality clarified by reason is more than just rules to secure the comfortable survival of the human animal incapable of prospering in an asocial condition. Considering the spectrum of reason, it is also 'a panorama of ideals, a way of developing the feelings into a particular direction, a set of arts for visualizing better kinds of life, for working on the understanding of human destiny' (Macy, p. 120). Put simply, morality concerns what ought to be while ethics can be seen as attendant moral philosophy, i.e., the systematic effort to understand moral concepts and justify moral principles and theories (Pojman). Since the most salient characteristic of contemporary ethics is its being grounded in natural, human experience and secular reason, moral practice is no longer dependant on religious considerations nor are moral precepts any longer grounded in revelation and divine authority - religion can, however, add incentive to the moral life. Domestic morality, a crucial component of civility, has the following main purposes: (1) to avoid the

century, our tradition (of propagandist or psychological reduction) has insisted on a peculiarly high standard of certainty that can supposedly be found only in science. But such certainty as is available to us at all is in fact mainly found elsewhere. All human enterprises, including the sciences, constantly depend on ways of thinking which can in no way be reduced to scientific methods. For instance, we trust, and have no choice but to trust, most of the evidence of our own senses (including emotionality as a sensed, affective state distinct from cognitive and volitional states of consciousness) and memory, and of the reasoning-powers by which we assess them. We also trust most of the utterances of those around us. If we did not, we would not have that general knowledge of the world from which science starts, and we certainly could not use other people's testimony as scientific evidence (nor could we use the mass of indubitable data as a standard by which we measure the doubtful one). It is not possible to treat these forms of trust as irrational. They are necessary preconditions for reasoning itself (ibid, pp.53-4).

disintegration of society; (2) to ameliorate human suffering; (3) to promote human flourishing; (4) to resolve conflicts of interest in just and orderly ways; and (5) to assign praise and blame, reward and punishment, and guilt for purposes of direction. Generally speaking, moral principles are to be (1) prescriptive (practical or action-guiding); (2) universal (applicable to all who are in a relevantly similar situation); (3) overriding (yielding hegemonic authority in that they take precedence not only over other considerations including aesthetic, prudential, and legal ones but also over other moral precepts if a particular situation requires it); (4) public (they must be public in order to guide action); and (5) practical (they must be workable by not being unduly burdensome for the agent).⁴³

Reason and morality make for a freedom that is fundamental to, and characteristic of, an intelligent creature, a freedom that thrives on conflict or, better, on that resolution of conflicts that it has learned to effect as an aspirant to wholeness (speaking of humans, this freedom orients in a surrealist universe). It is the freedom to 'reinforce or reshape the creature's central character by forming a constant framework of decision adapted to it, the effort to establish lasting policies with which incoming impulses can agree or conflict. The more aware a creature is of its internal conflicts, and the more it can, on occasion, distance itself from any of its particular motives, operating as a whole that contains them, the more it becomes free.' (ibid, p. 174-5). To the degree a creature is not free, it becomes carried

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See Pojman *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, 1999. The mentioned is an adaptation of the content from pp. 1-20.

away, more or less helpless and unthinking, by any single motive. Through the ongoing trials human beings face, trials that demand continuous arbitration and reconciliation, reflection is never exhausted and freedom is never wholly attained but must remain a process of learning - learning to approximate the integrity of human wholeness in an existence whose circumstances continuously defy this effort and whose past, present, and future extents no reflection can ever fully encompass or truly grasp. Crucial to the degree of human freedom is the sophistication of memory, foresight, and imagination which together render a sense of the past and future as well as of alternative pasts and futures. This sophistication is in turn an important function of self-knowledge based on intelligence grounded in reflective consciousness both of one's self *and* of others. The range of reflective consciousness determines the degree of freedom that can be attained by human *and* nonhuman animals respectively⁴⁴. A human being, by its engagement in a continuous learning process, exalts by virtue of its peculiar, intelligent self-knowledge and the ensuing freedom permitting of an approximation to that individual integrity by which conflict, internal and external, can be resolved in a considered, self-reflective fashion. Being not necessarily coterminous with the consensual negotiation and habituation of motives, any

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'In trying to take decisions, we must become aware both of our own complex, conflicting inner attitudes and also of other people's, and we constantly need to compare the two. Since, however, some nonhuman animals show elements of both these kinds of awareness (Midgley bases this statement on the findings of the ethologists Tinbergen, Lorenz, and Julian Huxley and that of primatologists such as Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, Birute Galdikas, Shirley Strum, and Frans de Waal), we surely need to accept clearly that freedom is a matter of degree. People are simply more reflective, and therefore more free, than other animals, yet they, too, are by no means wholly reflective or wholly free'(Midgley, pp.173-4).

moral decision in the sense of what ought to be is always a relative expression of human freedom (that way, immorality is but dissenting morality).⁴⁵ Advanced social, nonhuman animals are evidently as well capable of some degree of self-awareness, however limited in its scope of reflective integration, and therefore also of sensing conflicting motivations, however unfree in their resolution.⁴⁶ To the extent the reflection and therefore freedom of nonhuman animals is limited in comparison to the human one, they lack in memory, foresight, and imagination - the three pillars of human intelligence and morality. However, as long as humans do not question their very designation, they are not entitled to easily employ terms such as 'animal' and 'beast' for levelling moral judgements condemning the inhumanly coarse and cruel. In my opinion, the negative connotation implied by so doing does injustice to nonhuman and human animals alike.

I see no reason in the 'human' / 'nonhuman' divide to exalt the former and discredit the latter to the extent of turning it into a derogative. The familiar notion of the

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Domestic morality remains a relative expression of human freedom because the memory, foresight, and imagination that inform it are always relative to a conduct which is preferred because it corresponds to a collectively favoured worldview. As Mackie says, this moral conduct comes to be '...by modifying an agent's view of possible actions, by attaching to them a moral characterization, favourable or adverse, which has prescriptive entailments, and carries with it a corresponding characterization of the agent himself if he performs those actions'(Mackie, p.210).

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'As for simpler creatures, the difficulty we have in asking such questions (questions about the existence and degree of reflective self-consciousness and the consequent freedom) about them seems more a difficulty about being sure what is happening than a flat certainty that they are in no sense free'(ibid, p.174).

'human' is the legacy of a Roman civil idealism that not even the much later theory of evolution proposed by Darwin could lessen in its decisive and sharply negative connotation. To this day, the majority of people appears strongly convinced that there is a vast gulf between the human and the animal and that, whether they are *from* it or not, they are assuredly not *of* it. This attitude insists on a *radical* discontinuity between the nonhuman and human animal that is untenable and becomes paradoxical when human motivation is descriptively linked - like in labelling some human conduct as bestial - with that of a nonhuman specimen. But even today, the (Judeo-Christian) notion of human dignity remains strong in demanding a wider gap between ourselves and other species than current biology can deliver and rules out a priori any fair comparison of human to animal motivation (ibid, pp.115, 159).⁴⁷ I offer that the distinction between what is human and animalistic or bestial belongs to the same rough-and-ready, antediluvian category of cultural prejudice to which also belongs the classical distinction between *homo humanus* and *homo barbarus*.⁴⁸ The latter contrast rested on nothing but a sense of cultural superiority looking down upon those who could not and did not share in the educated Greco-Roman civility and the virtues it exalted and honoured.⁴⁹ And so it is with the

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I agree with Cantore: 'Ordinarily, people take for granted that man has a dignity of his own. In particular, they speak of man as the natural subject of inalienable rights as a person. But the dignity of man is far from being a self-evident reality, for obviously it is not enough to exist as a human being in order to possess genuine dignity in the ethical sense of the term' (Cantore *Scientific Man*, 1977, p.381).

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For more on this distinction, see section on humanism.

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The momentous Greek legacy to Roman culture was book learning, which most notably translated into a

contrast between the human(e) and the animalistic or bestial. Of course, saying that such and such person is like a barbarian or savage, animal or beast, can be taken as but a very strong expression of disapproval regarding a behaviour that is felt to be in extreme discord with what is cherished as proper conduct. What I find objectionable in the use of such expressions is, however, the unwarranted demeaning of both the human and the nonhuman animal. Basically, the Roman distinction between *homo humanus* (better: *homo romanus*) and *homo barbarus* speaks of an ingrained and entrenched cultural bias unwilling to allow for the equal legitimacy of a variant understanding and acting in the world while the rigorous distinction between the human and animal speaks of a like type of cultural bias that despite its dubiousness categorically refuses to allow for human beings to be *but* animals with a biological and cultural plus. In fact, this bias lends itself readily to notorious, human self-aggrandizement. To be sure, variance in the capacity to reflection (here: variance in the capacity to carefully consider what is vital to a certain mode of existence and its corollary moral sensitivity) may well be the hallmarks distinguishing *homo humanus* from *homo barbarus* as well as from the beast. But variance in reflection does neither establish superiority nor inferiority but merely difference that can be met with

strong emphasis on the technical study of language and literature (mainly: Greek, Latin, grammar, law, history, customs). Though Roman education varied somewhat in focus from the time of the Roman republic to that of the Roman empire, the virtues educated Roman civility exalted and honoured can be said to have been overall those of a formally educated, highly literate culture with its demands on mental and physical discipline: the capacity to attentively, patiently, and assertively reflect, analyse, and assess linguistic lore according to a complex logical and rhetorical tradition. This practice is elitist and begets a character type marked by restraint and careful consideration contrary to the supposedly heedless and wild barbarian or beast.

understanding and respect or simply be inflated and scorned. If homo humanus is elevated to the status of unrivalled excellence on account of its educated civility alone, humans ought to sincerely admit to themselves that, today, the derivative designation 'human being' is no longer unambiguously legitimized by the human animal embodying standards of eclectic Greco-Roman civility. Rather, it has become a convenient and presumptuous generic by which humans demarcate themselves from what they hold to be nonhuman(e) as creature or conduct - not more and not less. What usually counts as the typically barbarous or bestial appears to be a relative crudeness and passionate enthrallment inimical to the prudent deliberation and moral consideration that mark sophisticated, human civility. I suggest that, if humans dislike the conduct of some of their kind, they would do well to express their disapproval in terms that do not demean the nonhuman animal - for by virtue of its known capacity to reflection, it simply cannot share in typically human motivations and hence not offer any plausible basis for comparison - nor the human one - for by virtue of its capacity to sophisticated reflection, it simply has an intelligence at its disposal whose refinement and flaws are not shared by nonhuman animals. In due course, all human callousness is more properly addressed in terms that pertain to the human alone. In rejecting the derogatory use of the labels 'beast' and 'animal', I do not reject human animality as such, but I reject the implicit assumption that the natural behaviour of nonhuman animals represents in any way what is thought of as the worst of human conducts and vice versa. This is meant as an objection to Sloterdijk's ascription of bestial tendencies to human beings. From here on, I will consequently substitute 'sordid' for 'bestial'.

On the Bio-Information Society

By 'information society' I mean here the computer mediated communication society.⁵⁰ Information is factual data organized and endowed with relevance and purpose that becomes knowledge if internalized, i.e., if information is subjectively or collectively incorporated into relevant and purposive categories of meaning by learning, socialization, or identification, and wisdom if integrated, i.e, if information is incorporated into the subjective or collective constellation of meanings so as to render this constellation a harmonious whole determinative of congruous and consistent feeling, attitude, and action. Basically speaking, information is incomplete, widens the range of choices, is subject to multiple interpretations and constructions, comes in a multitude of forms, creates discourses at variance within the same linguistic environment, tends to divulge, and, once disseminated, is nearly impossible to extirpate.⁵¹ The information society, marked by a shift from a goods-producing to a service economy, an increasing reliance on theoretical knowledge, and an ongoing creation of computer-based, 'intellectual' technologies, is most prevalent in developing countries, i.e., in countries that provide the main thrust in

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'...the general concept of information society presupposes not only and not so much the technological type of society, but the social condition of digitalized habitat - a society becomes the information society if and only when IST (information society technology) becomes a decisive component of everyday social interaction' (Saulauskas *The Spell of Homo Irritatus: Amidst Superstition and Dreams*, p.3).

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For a more detailed exposition of the nature of information, see Anderson *Evolution Isn't What It Used To Be*, pp.58-60. See also Brin *The Transparent Society*, 1998, for more on information society and its probable and improbable divulgence.

developing and applying the key technologies fundamentally transformative of both the human social and geographical habitat.⁵² Information society increasingly obtains, processes, and utilizes biospheric, or ecospheric, information so that the term bio-information society (hereafter: BIS) expresses more adequately this comprehensive involvement of digitalized technology with living organisms including individuals, species, populations, and habitats as well as human and nonhuman cultures.⁵³

Underlying BIS are two simultaneously occurring processes: an increase in biological information and an explosive growth of various information and communications systems which establish, extend, and merge the linkages of the biospheric information network to comprise an ever greater flow of information about social,

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Admittedly, this definition of what counts as developing and what as developed is contrary to the usual concept of a developing country, i.e., a people that are in the process of acquiring standards already present elsewhere as compared to a people whose standards have become a model to aspire to. What made me not follow this pattern is my idea that what is normally regarded as a developed country may in some respects not be so evolved as one may wish for while a country that is normally seen as developing may in some respects be more evolved than the model it aspires to in one way or another. Consequently, I would find it more befitting to measure the ambiguous notion of 'development' - which, to me, designates a deliberate bringing out of possibilities by bringing something to a more advanced, effective, or usable state - in terms what is being done (developing, i.e., acting upon) by whom on whom (being developed, i.e., being acted upon) rather than referring it to a predetermined benchmark of excellence that is heralded in one place and sought after in another. However, within the context of above chapter, the following statement may be of some interest: 'Nowadays, it's the countries with the biggest flow of information (data) we call developed' (Harlan Cleveland, *ibid*, p.50).

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See Naess 'The Deep Ecological Movement: Philosophical Aspects', in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, p.197.

ecological, geological, and meteorological systems and the organisms constitutive of and embedded in them. Since a 'bio-information system' is any system involving information pertaining to some form of life and since all of these systems together shape the way humans conceive of and act in their habitat, BIS is indeed a special kind of human habitat 'decisively constituted by the social structures of digital technologies in a genetic, morphologic and functional sense, i.e., it points not to the existence and development of these technologies *per se* but to their *constitutive integration into the economic, cultural, political, and stratificational fabric of social being*' (Saulauskas, p.3). I extend Saulauskas' social being to include in its meaning a concern for the life, welfare, and relations pertaining to the biosphere as a whole, for:

'This ever-changing bio-information surround is the environment we live in now, and survival henceforth becomes a matter of learning how to adapt to it - while learning how to adapt it to us, because it is after all a human creation. We are in it, and it is in us, and for all purposes we are it' (Anderson, p.61).

The emergence of the digital information technology so fundamental to BIS presents yet another transition to a new system of representation and cognition apt to close in a further integrative move the perceived gap and discontinuity between humans and machines.⁵⁴ BIS is less about the technologies employed than it is about the new

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According to Bruce Mazlish, humans have already learned to close three such crucial gaps: so far, they learned (1) from Copernicus that our planet is not discontinuous from the heavenly bodies, (2) from Darwin that humans are not discontinuous from animals, and (3) from Freud that the conscious mind is not discontinuous from its preconscious origins. The fourth discontinuity now to be overcome is that

pattern of connections that their use establishes: this pattern increasingly involves biological information of, and connections between, all life forms and influences biospheric relationships, e.g., the kind of information created by the Human Genome Project and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Project.⁵⁵ This emerging pattern of connections indicates that humans and their hardware can constitute together one 'human organism' in the sense that all contraptions are augmentations and extensions of the human psychophysiological constitution which with their help has already come to include the micro- as well as the macrocosmic domains in its ambit. Because BIS' technology allows for an ever expanding understanding and manipulation of the world in the widest sense, the human worldview, including ecological projects of restoration, becomes certainly not less but more anthropocentric as biospheric data is increasingly captured and mediated by human technology and concepts. Put differently, with BIS, anthropocentrism persists and becomes all-inclusive. Already years ago, five main effects of information society's emergence have been officially reported:

between humans and machines (Anderson, p.57).

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The Human Genome Project is an international research effort to characterize the genomes of human and selected model organisms through complete mapping and sequencing of their DNA, to develop technologies for genomic analysis, to examine the ethical, legal, and social implications of human genetic research, and to train scientists who will be able to utilize the tools and resources developed through the HGP to pursue biological studies that will improve human health.

The International Geosphere-Biosphere Project is a research effort to develop an integrated biospheric knowledge base that links a relational data base to a dynamic simulation model which presents a new tool for analysis and synthesis providing both a resource for work on ecosystem services and a prototype for linking data bases and models that could be applied to many other biospheric problems.

'The trend to globalization: including the globalization of the economy (interconnected stock exchanges, frontierless capital markets, globalization of manufacturing and so on), the pervasive influence of globalized science and technology, and the growing need to handle issues, from trade to the environment to human rights and more, in supranational forms, networks, and organizations.

Atomization, democratization, and fragmentation: reflected in the increasing power of subnational governments, in growing regionalism, and in the proliferation of "multiple voices", that is, the increase in the number of groups organizing to assert a role in the process of government

A breakdown of the bureaucratic/industrial model of organizing: both public and private sectors are downsizing, stripping away middle management, contracting out work, and relying more on networks and task forces and other more flexible, decentralized ways of organizing.

A fundamental restructuring: the breakdown of the historical distinctions between industries, between the public and private sectors, and even between states, accompanied by a search for new relationships and alliances between those entities.

The decreasing possibility of secrecy, and the implications of that for governing systems that rely on a certain degree of confidentiality.⁵⁶

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These abridged findings originate from a research project conducted by officials of the Canadian government and are documented in detail in Rosell et al *Governing in an Information Society* (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1992), *ibid.*, pp.50-1. With regard to the decreasing possibility of secrecy, one may find that an increase in the use of encryption and a decreased possibility of privacy is to be reckoned with.

While the above has to do chiefly with political and economic organization, the posited connection between information technology and humans is its supplementing the power of human minds to think, communicate, and solve problems. This is of course no indication for information technology's suitability to apprehend and solve fundamental, *human* problems:

'Alas, in a word of Martin Buber, *imago mundi nova imago nulla - Homo Irrititus* (the avant-garde hypostasis of *Homo Informaticus* - one who nets in the net: the netting and at the same time netted human being) is left with only the fresh-caught formula of the pretty worn out question: How much, if any, we will manage to net from the emergent netted stance of ours in terms of rather commonplace personal happiness and social liberty?'⁵⁷

The augmentation of the human capacity to thought, communication, and problem-resolution rests on three systems of information: genetic (adaptability-enabling information stored and communicated by genes); cultural (information of signs and language enabling learning and communication), and exosomatic (information obtained from artifacts external to the human body but integral to human thinking, learning, and communicating). These information systems are constituted by three lineages of learning (biological, cultural, and exosomatic) each of which is more readily adaptable than the one preceding it in evolution so that culture changes more quickly than genes, and computers change more quickly than culture. Moreover, each of these lineages transforms the one that preceded and created it so that biological evolution changes with culture, and culture

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Saulauskas, pp.2, 10

changes with exosomatic artifacts.⁵⁸ The exceptional acceleration of change and variation inaugurated by the rapid exosomatic expansion requires from the constituents of BIS to learn ever new ways of learning more expeditiously and discern between ever more choices of valuable information. Thus, to become and be an informed member of BIS means not only to have access to the lore of digitalized information but also to know how to use it and, most importantly, to know how to imbibe the new ways by which its symbolisms are expressed. The exchange of information in BIS affects *all* local cultures and assimilating its modes of symbol exchange is crucial to keeping pace with especially exosomatic developments and maintaining one's competence and efficiency in dealing with them and the information flow they render.

To be sure, bio-information society advances are unstoppable and occur apace, wherefore the transitions involved leave many with a sense of being plunged into chaos:

‘This concept of chaotic habitat was brought about by the social forms induced by the advance of digital technologies that have essentially transformed the condition of the post-war western civilization - i.e., the campaign towards total computerization, the explosion of electronic media, rapid expansion of mass culture, and the globalization of political and economic processes. In reality, this plait of influences and transactions crossing states' borders means a radical transformation of the inherited orderly structured human habitat; it also introduces well known satellites of any sudden social change: the erosion of the habitual patterns of order and rhythm, devaluation of standards, and even the paroxysms of the political organization caused by massive

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See Goonatilake, in Anderson, p.181

uncertainty and despair. Western civilization has often been taught by its own painful experience that the hasty destruction of the old and creation of the new brings not only gratification to brave architects, but smoking ruins all around as well.⁵⁹

Though the transition to a full-fledged bio-information society is accompanied by the widespread contemporary perception that individuals come to increasingly live in a society that is 'a complex unstable whole of ever changing formations of social being composed of different social groupings, styles and practices' (Saulauskas, p.4) and will thus lose their cultural, political, and societal roots, the repercussions evoked by the emergence of BIS do not necessarily provoke anomie or estrangement and direct everything towards an unavoidable agony of the common. Following Saulauskas, the modes of BIS' being, first, intensively create and strengthen the social links and cohesion empowering the start and development of the new social derivatives, communal frameworks and forms of communication and, second, multiply the variety of the diversity of the world's social fabric by (1) stimulating a sporadic proliferation of social morphology that makes total unification more and more inconceivable, (2) enhancing the idiosyncrasy of discrete and difficult to predict change, and (3) reducing the uniformity of the manifold structures of digitalized habitat.⁶⁰ Both the fears and dreams attending the rise of BIS - fears that this society will eclipse the 'normal world order of normal people' (granting that the notion of 'normality' is at all tenable) and lose its power to manage

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Saulauskas, p.4

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Ibid, see pp.4-5

information while being itself subjected to information manipulation and dreams about (1) information society's members exchanging desired information without noticeable restraints of territory, time, freedom, and ability; (2) information or knowledge becoming the most important universal value and indisputable gauge of everyday interaction, social hierarchy, and global civilization; and (3) that the information society will end up enjoying all imaginable material and spiritual goods (ibid, pp.3-8) - all these, then, appear exaggerated:

‘...the dreads...of the decay of social solidarity and...pending informational total control are groundless...the first because Homo Irritus does not care to be either persuaded or put in doubt concerning any indubitable truths whatsoever, including received values of modern nationhood; the second because the native netted homeland of Homo Irritus makes its global nowhere and everywhere becoming habitat beyond the reach of any effectual centralizing control center.’ ‘...the cozy reach of the good life, envisaged in threefold terms of (a) unrestricted access to information wealth, of (b) information society's vision as the global culture of knowledge, and of (c) social information society's welfare, could be handicapped by the internal modus operandi of information society itself:

- the abundance of information that lies unconcealed on the open surface evades the easy grasp of the cognizing capacity due to the hypertextual exteriorization of meaning which makes it shallow, trivial and unaccomplished...;

- the endemic to *Homo Irritus*' (postmodern) posture of epistemic know-how habituation, that eventually replaces the recognized (modern) value of content-specific knowledge...will drive upcoming global information society into the cultural blackboard jungle of

cheap mass consumption of intellectual trivia and banalities due to an universal egalitarianism of meanings and values disseminated throughout the digital polylogue;

- the inner logic of the *modus agendi* information society presupposes not the long awaited triumph of egalitarian social justice and ubiquitous global village welfare, but the further acceleration of international and national differentiation and stratification processes in far from gaily accord with the well known modernizing developments of the last centuries.⁶¹

On General Systems Theory

General systems theory (hereafter: GST) views reality as a process involving self-organizing patterns of physical and mental events that can be discerned and formulated in systemic principles.⁶² It claims to be empirical, based on experiential evidence, and to rely neither on revelation nor on a priori reasoning. GST is a cross-disciplinary tool presenting a set of conceptualizations employed to increase the systemic understanding of observations afforded by tangible practice for purposes of more appropriate explanation, prediction, and control.

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Ibid, pp.10-1

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I am following here closely the interpretation offered by Joanna Macy in her book *Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory*, 1991. Considered more authoritative are the voices of systems pioneers Ludwig von Bertalanffy (biologist and so-called father of systems theory) and Anotol Rapoport as well as that of German social systems theorist Niklas Luhman. Interesting to note is that while Rapoport offers the opinion that the ancient world lacked the 'analytical tools' for a process-oriented concept of reality, others such as Magoroh Maruyama recognize that mutual causality has been the world view of many 'unscientific' cultures(Macy, p.17).

GST originated in the effort to scientifically perceive and understand phenomena which eluded the mechanistic model of reality.⁶³ The latter model's basic assumptions are that reality is analysable, that a whole can be understood in terms of its parts, and that the nature and function of a substance or an organism become comprehensible by reducing the latter to its material, externally observable components. These assumptions proved over time increasingly inadequate to scientific problems and evidence because notions of unidirectional causality were found (1) insufficient for mapping the flow of whole interactive and multivariable complexes; (2) inadequate in explaining the evidence that in parts of the universe - such as all living organisms - forms differentiate and evolve in complexity (anti-entropic processes); and (3) to breed a compartmental specialization blocking both the perception and the study of relationships crucial to understanding features of a systemic whole that cannot be explained by the analytical approach (Bertalanffy). GST, extracting and elaborating principles by which change becomes intelligible and navigable, sees dynamic interaction as central to reality in the widest sense. Based on the recognition of the omnipresence and inevitability of change, GST stresses

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'...general systems theory is not a theory proper in the sense of a single hypothesis about a given set of phenomena, so much as a coherent set of principles applying to all irreducible wholes. These wholes, be they molecules, cells, organisms, personalities, or social bodies, reveal common principles and properties that are amenable to understanding when we view them as self-organizing systems. What we have here is not a theory about a general system, but rather a general theory (or set of principles) about systems, which allows their dynamics and characteristics to become intelligible. While it has been popularly identified with its application in computer science and organizational management, its relevance is much broader, as seen in such fields as psychology, political science, ecology, and philosophy' (ibid, p.3).

that the essential nature of *all* is process, i.e., continuous, systemic action.⁶⁴ On this view, objectification amounts to a crude and ultimately erroneous and arbitrary human ordering since all there is is really *one continuum*. In the history of thought, this perception is no novelty - what is new however is that, for the above reasons, it finds increasing acceptance in the scientific establishment.

Generally speaking, any organism in the uncircumscribed sense, i.e., not seen as a self-contained aggregate, is a system. A system is a fluid pattern of dynamically interacting events whose existence and character derive less from the nature of its components than from their mutually causative, co-arising organization, i.e., their arrangement into a coherent unity or functioning whole where each component is reciprocally and simultaneously conditioned and conditioning. Here, the (linear) concept of simple, successive cause and effect relationships becomes untenable. There are open and closed systems. A closed system is an actually nonexistent abstraction, for absolute, systemic demarcations are naturally nonexistent. What I am therefore concerned with here are open, or natural, systems only. An open system, also called holon, maintains and

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Modern physics also show that a conceptual boundary between matter and energy is really untenable. There are no 'things' but only 'events' (or processes) in that all is impalpable, fluctuating patterns of energy with varying degrees of resistance to change. Since organized and organizing events of energy are ordinarily imperceptible to humans, their existence is established by aided observation and mathematical or non-mathematical inference. Epistemologically speaking, the notion that all is systemically organised energy (or, for that matter, processes) can be seen as *a myth on the same footing with physical objects and gods*, neither better nor worse except for the differences in degree to which it expedites human dealings with sense experience.

organizes itself through the continuous exchange of matter, energy, and (possibly) information with its environment. As such it is characterized by the tendency to differentiation and increasing complexity coupled with processes of self-stabilization and self-organization:

‘In all open systems, self-organization into greater complexity represents a movement away from structural stability. As the system becomes internally more highly organized and externally interrelated with more factors, it becomes less stable and less predictable. At the same time and by the same token, by virtue of increasing the variety of its responses, it becomes more adaptable. This gain in adaptability is won at the cost of structural stability and imperturbability, as the system becomes more open and susceptible to its environment. In order to register and respond to what is going on, the system becomes more vulnerable. This vulnerability in turn - and on ever more complex levels - enhances its capacity to cope, a capacity which system thinkers call “cybernetic (ultra)stability”. It is the built-in goal or value to which all (living!) systems, by their inherent nature, tend.’⁶⁵

Thus, the open, living system (also: autopoietic system) - never in equilibrium and its patterns persisting and growing in complexity - retains and increases its purposive (but by no means teleological) order within the overall tendency towards randomness and disorganization in spite of, and by means of, disintegrating forces: Positive and negative feedback processes, discernible throughout the observable cosmos, regulate the open system. The operation of these processes shows how any organism - viewed as an

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Ibid, p.85

information system maintaining its cybernetic stability - moves towards a goal. 'Positive feedback loops (corresponding to processes of "learning") reinforce or amplify deviations, each change adding to the next. Producing both novelty and instability, they can generate runaway growth or collapse unless stabilized anew within more inclusive negative feedback loops. When that happens, positive feedback conduces to modifying the goals of a given system. Negative feedback loops stabilize the system within its current trajectory. They reduce deviation between goal and performance, producing "homing-in" behaviour and reestablishing the status quo'(Macy, p.75):

'The systems self-organization is understandable in terms of the changes incorporated through positive feedback loops. When perturbations in the environment persist and produce a continual mismatching between input and encoded norms, the system either becomes dysfunctional or hits upon new behaviours which are adaptive to the new conditions. These are then stabilized at a new level of negative feedback. In the process, the system has altered its norms and complexified its structure for greater adaptability.'⁶⁶

The organic interdependence characteristic of the system's internal functioning typifies its relations with its environment: 'Whether it is an organism, cell or molecule, it functions and evolves within a larger system - in regard to whose character it is both dependent and indispensable. Systems enclose, and are enclosed by, other systems with which they are in constant communication (through the exchange of matter, energy, and information), in a natural hierarchical order (this hierarchy, also called holonarchy, is one

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ibid, p.76

of subsystemic bottom up organization, not one of rank or unidirectional agency)'(ibid, pp.72, 77). The following properties are characteristic of open, living systems:

'(1) The system is a nonsummative whole, that is, it cannot be reduced to its parts without altering their pattern. Aggregates...where components can be added or subtracted without affecting the relations between other components do not qualify; (2) The (autopoietic) system is homeostatic. It stabilizes itself through negative feedback; that is, the system adjusts its output to produce and sustain a match between the input it will receive and its externally coded requirements; (3) The system is self-organizing. Where a mismatch between input and code persists, the system searches for and encodes a new pattern by which it can function. Incorporating positive feedback, differentiation and complexification of structure emerge; (4) The system is not only a whole, but part within a larger whole. Whether a cell or organ, atom or animal, it comprises subsystems. It is also, itself, a subsystem within a wider system of whose character and in whose functioning it is an integral and co-determinative component. Open systems in interaction form more inclusive structures or patterns as a function of their mutual adaptations.'⁶⁷

For my treatment of the human park, I will focus on GST with regard to the self, society, and morality. Conventionally, a complex of interactive psychological and physical events is conveniently lumped together to constitute a stable and relatively isolated individual self giving credence to notions such as 'I', 'me', and 'mine'. In the light of GST, this categorical move proves to be a perfunctory and misleading one, for the notion of "I", though useful as a social and linguistic convention, is a mere fiction if taken to

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Ibid, pp.76-7

represent a fixed or separable entity. 'In system terms, *it is a construct which is dysfunctional to the extent that it distorts the system's perception of its own relation to the external world* (my italics)' (ibid, p.184). Seen from the standpoint of systemic relations, then, the self is but process and as such neither categorically distinct nor endowed with any changeless essence - any definite delineations between "I" and "other" are hence arbitrary:

'The feelings, sensations, and cognitions we identify as our "I" are not intrinsic or exclusive properties of that "I", so much as the coming to awareness of processes that extend beyond our conventional identity. To be a person, therefore, is to participate, at every level of our being, in a reality wider than that enclosed by our skin or identified with our name.'⁶⁸

As the physical identity of an individual does not consist so much of constitutive matter rather than metabolic processes, so also psychological activity does not consist so much of isolated than of fluid mind events occurring in ongoing, patterned interaction - this is the very nature of the cognitive system mapping its internal domain as well as its environment, thereby adapting to changes, extracting information, and evolving and projecting its interpretative constructs:

'In contrast to physicalist and behaviorist notions of the self, the systems view asserts the dynamic and irreducible nature of psychic activity. In so doing, it opens the realm of thought, feeling, and purpose to scientific inquiry in a new way - that is, without the idea that thought,

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Ibid, p.184

feeling, and purpose can be equated with or understood solely in terms of externally observed phenomena. Yet, while subjectivity is affirmed as a property of the system, as its internal or felt dimension, *the subject - the who that is thinking and feeling - is not considered separable or abstractable as an agent (my italics).*⁶⁹

Thus, the self as personal identity appears as emergent and contingent, defining and defined by interactions with the surrounding medium. Because that which decides and acts can no longer be neatly identified with the isolated subjectivity of the individual, the web of relationships which define an individual offers beyond conventional designations no clear lines of demarcation whereby its subjectivity can be convincingly asserted. Here lies the key to the synthesis of the self and its habitat into a continuum:

‘We must do away with the subject-object distinction in analysing experience. This does not mean that we reject the concepts of organism and environment, as handed down to us by natural science. *It only means that we conceive of experience as linking organism and environment in a continuous chain of events, from which we cannot, without arbitrariness, abstract an entity called ‘organism’ and another called ‘environment’ (my italics).* The organism is continuous with its environment, and its experience refers to a series of transactions constituting the organism–environment continuum.’⁷⁰

The systemic view that the subject of thought and action is in actuality a dynamic

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Ibid, p.110

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Lazlo, *ibid*, p.111

pattern of activity interacting with its environment and inseparable from experience can have far-reaching implications for morality and the social realm. The self, formed through sensory, affective, and cognitive interactions with its habitat, organizes itself by processing, transforming, and exchanging information. Information is provided by networks of biological and social relationships, in which it, like other open systems, is a holon, i.e., both an integral whole and part within a larger whole:

‘As a holon, the person’s existence is intimately, intricately and inextricably interwoven with other forms of life. No free-wheeling monad, his life is a tapestry of biological and socio-cultural relationships, from the organic substances which shape his body to the larger social and natural systems in which he functions. He can abuse neither subsystems nor suprasystems, neither body or society, without personal cost, for they compromise the raw material of his existence.’⁷¹

From the standpoint of GST, then, the individual self is both unique and inseparable from its social environment with which it arises interdependently and in which it profoundly participates while maintaining its particularity. This perception invites to coresponsibility in the widest sense and can ground the ideals of social equality, economic sharing, and political participation in a different way⁷²:

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Macy, p. 186

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It is important to note here that in this systemic view, ‘self, society, and world are reciprocally modified by their interaction, as they form relationships and are in turn conditioned by them. ...The Western, Rousseauian notion of social contract...contrasts with such a view to the extent that it assumes a free association between individuals who remain basically distinct and unaltered by such association’ (ibid, p 191).

'Self, society, and the world evolve by interaction and progressive differentiation. ...one is not a self-existent being nor are the institutions of society eternally fixed. They are mutable and mirror our greeds, as does indeed the face of nature itself. Co-arising with our actions, they, like us, can be changed by our actions. As our dynamic processes can be transformed, so can they.'⁷³

Moreover, since the dynamics of mutual causality are such that the interaction of open systems leads not only to cohesion but also to variety, i.e., to distinctiveness as well as adaptive integration, the idea of an inherent conflict between instinctual drives aiming at variety and cultural drives aiming at social order is, in the systemic view, erroneous: 'From this perspective, the notion that self-realization is at odds with harmonious interaction is a misconception; for it is in relationship, not in isolation, that beings give expression to diversity and distinctiveness'(ibid, p.187-8.). The perceived opposition between the instinctual and cultural, between variety and order, 'gives rise to tragic conflict within the individual, who then must trade off, weighing gratifications and autonomy against security and acceptance. Instead of a break and conflict here, the systems view perceives a continuum in the flowering of integrated heterogeneity'(ibid, p.187).

From the standpoint of the self as a fluid, changing organization formed through interaction between the world it experiences and the codes by which it interprets this experience, values emerge as formative as well as normative. While the former refers to the criteria by which the self measures and guides its behaviour, the latter refers to the values intrinsic to the harmony and continuity of the fabric of life. The mutual causal

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ibid, pp.189, 191

dynamics inherent to all life present a reality so structured as to require, for our conscious participation in it, that we live in certain ways.⁷⁴ 'Cybernetic (ultra)stability (the system's capacity to cope and maintain its homeostasis, i.e., the system's internal stability obtained through the coordinated response of its parts to any situation or stimulus disruptive of its normal condition or function) requires...a broadening of the sense of the self and its responsibility: an identification with others which includes both respect and self-restraint'(ibid, p.194).⁷⁵ In the systemic view, humans are called to recognize that their relationship with other systems (i.e., organisms) and levels of systemic hierarchy is collaborative and not competitive and must hence be informed by appreciation and a holding back rather than by utilitarian and exploitative attitudes. This realization of systemic relationships is bound up with the way the world is known. Fundamental to knowing of and acting in the world in a profoundly systemic manner is to recognize that knowledge itself bears moral character. The ethical import of systemic epistemology

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Macy qualifies: 'These norms presuppose, of course, a positive valuation of reality - whether the goal of conscious participation is in "the pursuit of happiness," or in terms of knowing, as in "enlightenment." *There is no logic to prove that such participation is desirable, but our experience disposes us to grant this assumption (my italics)*' (ibid, p.193).

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'It is questionable whether the human cognitive system, possessed of both free will and technological capacity, will choose to make the shift (from lack of identification with others at the cost of personal maturity towards such identification for the sake of planetary survival), but the nature of systemic invariances (if perturbations in the environment persist, produce a continual mismatch between input and encoded norms, and are not met by new behaviours adaptive to the new conditions - a process usually observable invariantly in any open system - the system becomes dysfunctional) indicate that it will not survive unless it does so'(ibid, p.195).

makes this clear:

‘The mutual causal paradigm presents an epistemology in which knower and known are interdependent.... Our consciousness, co-arising with sensory data, is modified by them, and the world we perceive is modified in turn by our projections and manipulations. Hence, perception is a highly interpretative process and the thinking mind itself a factor in the arising of phenomena. This causal interplay renders it impossible...to claim or to prove an ultimate truth. Any statement we make is relative to our position and perspective, our project and purpose. Data gathering and interpretation are not value-free, but freighted with emotional predispositions and cognitive preconceptions. We are, at all levels of our being, accomplices to the assertions we make, and accountable for them. By the same token, such a view summons us to live with ambiguity, an ambiguity in which we are both tolerant of difference and sceptical of certitudes. Final answers, absolutist dogmas and ideologies - whether those of others or our own - are unhinged and revealed as presumptuous, for all interpretation is partial at best.’⁷⁶

Since our theorizing is neither objective nor value-free but based on relative constructs which bear our moral responsibility, the domain of morality is extended beyond action to interpretation, beyond deeds to ideology. Glasersfeld and Varela rightly comment:

‘We are now beginning to see that the age-old dichotomy between the knower and an ontological reality-to-be-known was a rather dangerous illusion. It has led both philosophy and science into the attitude that has persistently kept man, the constructor of philosophies and

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Ibid, p.196

sciences, out of his own construction, fostering the belief that, in the last analysis, man was not responsible for the world he came to know and manipulate.⁷⁷

It appears, then, that the pillar of systemic morality proper is the perception of the self as an interactive process. This, together with the recognition of the overall systemic character of the world, can give rise to an informed and voluntary self-bridling coupled with considered and appreciative organic collaboration in the widest sense. I shall return later to the issue of why and how, to most profoundly effect such knowing of and acting in the world, systemic understanding is best obtained by information that is internalized rather than merely integrated.

On Humanism

‘In Greece the highest cultural and moral ideal was *paideia* (education or cultivation, but more than either). This was transmitted to Rome through some of the “middle” Stoic thinkers...who occasionally rendered it as *andreia* (manliness); this was translated into Latin as *virtus* (manliness), and also as *humanitas* (humanity)’ (Walter, p.10-1). In Roman times, then, the notion of *humanitas* was inextricably linked to ‘the art of living well and blessedly through learning and instruction in the fine arts, beginning with language and literature’ (ibid, p.20). Those who pursued *humanitas* in this sense were considered most ‘humane’. As such, *humanitas* is unique to the bipedal primate which consequently came to be called ‘human’ being. Solely by virtue of its biological and

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Glaserfeld and Varela, *ibid*, p.197

cultural plus could this biped attain to *humanitas*, and though it was in theory available to all such creatures, it was in practice restricted to an intellectual if not a social elite. Thus, to belong to this humanity implied the quality not so much of not being human in the philosophical sense as of not being civilized in a certain cultural (Greco-Roman) sense - here the contrast between the human and the barbarian first emerged. The Roman notion of humanity survived the coming of Christianity and became later one of the cultural ideals of western Europe. At one point, the terms humanist and humanism appeared as predominant labels in scholarly discourse and educational debate, merged, and acquired more meanings until they eventually became the most common terms for the present humanistic freethought ideology combining rationalist, secularist, ethicist, atheist, and naturalist views of the universe and of the human species.⁷⁸ To this day, the movement of humanist thought is multifaceted, theistically and atheistically inspired, and rather complex and confused so that its outcomes remain frequently uncertain, unclear, and disputed. One can say that although a certain perception of human being and being human is more or less altered with respect to the dominant, ideological light of a given time, it is never undefended or fully abandoned but rather retained in cultural memory as one more possible, albeit perhaps no longer commanding, feature of humanity. Persisting across the ideological gaps, some common fundamentals can, however, be established: (1) the basic concerns of humanism are interhuman relationships and the relationship of humans with the world; (2) the central questions of humanism are: 'What does it mean to be a human

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For a concise exposition of the humanistic movement's history, see Walter *Humanism: Finding Meaning in the Word*, 1998.

being? What does it mean to be human?'; and (3) the basic principles of humanism are the recognition of the equal humanness of all humans and the individual's cultivation of its essential humanity. The leading paradigms of today's world are secular-scientific. This implies a certain disaffection with traditional religions and an assent to the experimentally verifiable statements of empirical science.⁷⁹ Indeed, if one understands science as a body of rules and conceptions, based on experience and derived from it by logical inference, embodied in material achievements and a fixed form of tradition, and carried on by some sort of social organization, then the most simple human communities have science, however rudimentary in comparison.⁸⁰ Science as knowledge obtained by systematic observation and experimentation in the widest sense becomes, however, a detriment to the entirety of life when it is narrowly interpreted as scientism and turned into technicalism. Scientism is a reductionist philosophical tenet asserting that science is the one universal and uniquely acceptable form of knowledge. The consequences of scientism are actualism (reality is only that what can be tangibly observed here and now) and dogmatic subjectivism (the individual is not only the center but also the arbiter of reality); the attitudes emerging with it are pragmatism (interpreting science as void of humanistic meaning) and technicalism (interpreting science solely as a means to overriding

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To be sure, this disaffection does not necessarily mean that humans don't hold on to some religious belief and practice for means of personal comfort. It just means that, beyond the private and personal, this belief and practice no longer has any decisive bearing on the affairs of the most influential sectors of human society.

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Malinowski, cited in Cantore, p.391.

technological ideals)⁸¹. Though science can no doubt be recognized as a genuine form of knowledge, it is certainly not a uniquely reliable form of knowledge and much less one whose cognitive reliability is self-evident. Rather, the findings of science, the quest for discovering the intelligible structure of observable reality or nature through methods of systematic observation, theoretical elaborations of observed data, and experimental testing of theoretical deductions, are always provisional and mendable. Science is also an original and affective experience not only of the person engaged in it but also of humanity at large. As such it is humanistically significant because it discloses new perspectives to the self-understanding of humankind. The ethical significance of science lies not with valuation - for scientific knowledge can only provide the basis for valuation - but in its capacity 'to reveal, in a new and unprecedented way, the inherent *fallibility* of man as an ethical being' (Cantore, p.409). Scientistically interpreted science is dehumanizing because, disregarding the fact that lived and shared human experience is the starting and returning point for all scientific knowledge, it has no meaning left for humans but only for the technical products it can bring about. This is really a perversion of the scientific attitude and a suppression of genuine science as such. The emergence of BIS is a momentous development of the secular-scientific life and involves both science and scientific technicalism which is often popularly identified with science proper. It entails as well modes of change and unification by which a people with distinct visions, different

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Technology may be closely related to science and rely on its information, but the two are really distinct in that the former is a self-contained body of applied, practical skills or know-how whereas the latter is eminently a search for knowledge.

purposes, and contrasting values clash, are indiscriminately dislocated, brought together without much choice of their own, and become casualties of political and economical upheaval. In the context of this drastic, demanding, and occasionally devastating transition, the questions that arise are: (1) 'Can scientific technicalism be avoided or at least effectively checked?'; (2) 'What could be the common denominator enabling a convergence of human variety?'; and (3) 'On what basis can humans create a truly universal human nation?' Given the dominance of the secular-scientific paradigm, I hold secular humanism to be particularly suitable for meaningfully situating human beings in a world that is, generally speaking, no longer fundamentally and decisively moved by religious beliefs in the traditional sense, i.e., beliefs that point to an untestable transcendental or ultimate reality or absolute truth.⁸² Because critiques vehemently maintain that it is unable to provide adequate justification for moral obligation and responsibility, secular humanism came to be identified with a quasi-religious movement, a charge that Paul Kurtz, the so-called 'father of secular humanism', made his task to

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A radical variant of secular humanism is called 'Transhumanism': its proponents label themselves 'extropians'. Extropians eagerly anticipate a posthuman future and endorse values and goals such as boundless expansion, self-transcendence, dynamic optimism, intelligent technology, and spontaneous order. They are in favour of sweeping modifications to the inherited human genome, physiology, neurophysiology, and neurochemistry that will supersede the classification of homo sapiens and expect, for example, that the emerging, molecular nanotechnology (see ch.3, p.9, ft.10) will lead to a pervasive control over human physiology and morphology; transformation or control over human sexual orientation, intensity, and timing; and complete control over emotional responses through neurochemical manipulation (for more information on this movement see the webpage <http://www.maxmore.com> of Dr. More, a consultant, writer, and speaker on the impact of advanced technology).

contest.⁸³ Convinced that secular humanism can lead humans towards a good life and contribute significantly to human welfare and social justice without believing in theistic religions or ecclesiastical benefits, Kurtz, who believes that traditional dogmatic or authoritarian religions that place revelation, God, ritual, or creed above human needs and experience do a disservice to humankind, set out to establish that humans can be moral without theistic belief.⁸⁴ His secular humanism is a philosophical, scientific, and ethical outlook whose individual and social commitment to scientific rationality as the most effective value system available in the world today is fundamental to the good life it promises in terms of individual happiness and social progress. Kurtz endorses audacity, stresses the courage *to become* (as opposed to Tillich's courage *to be*), and holds science in knowledge, logic in meaning, and reason in practice to be the most effective instruments for human living.⁸⁵ He coined the term eupraxsophy to clearly delineate non-theistic,

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See Kurtz *In Defense of Secular Humanism*, 1983, and *Embracing the Power of Humanism*, 2000.

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The following presents Kurtz's catalogue of basic humanist moral principles that pertain to communal human living and are held to be universally acceptable to the theist and atheist alike: (1) *Integrity* through truthfulness, promise-keeping, sincerity, and honesty; (2) *Trustworthiness* through fidelity and dependability; (3) *Benevolence* through goodwill, nonmalfeasance as applied to persons, nonmalfeasance as applied to private and public property, consensual sexuality, and beneficence; and (4) *Fairness* through gratitude, accountability, justice, tolerance, and cooperation. These moral decencies are said to be at least in principle accepted by most civilized communities while their translation into practice depends on individual circumstance and social situation. For a more detailed account of the above principles, see Kurtz *Embracing the Power of Humanism*, pp. 143-56.

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With his remarkable audacity, Kurtz announces, 'Whether humankind eventually destroys itself or propagates (to) the solar system and stellar systems beyond is the frightful *yet exciting* (my italics) option

secular humanistic beliefs and practices from other systems of belief and practice⁸⁶:

‘...eupraxsophy...attempts to draw philosophical implications of science to the life of man. It seeks to develop a cosmic perspective, based on the most reliable findings encountered on the frontiers of science. It recognizes the gaps in knowledge and the things we do not know that still need to be investigated. It is keenly aware of the need for fallibilism and agnosticism about what we do and do not know. Yet it boldly applies practical scientific wisdom to life. Eupraxsophy, unlike philosophy or science, does not focus on one specialized field of knowledge; it seeks to understand the total impact scientific knowledge has on a person’s life. Yet the areas of philosophy, science, and eupraxsophy are not rigid. Philosophers can assist scientists in interpreting their discoveries and relating them to other fields of inquiry, and in developing a broader point of view. Still, eupraxsophy moves beyond philosophy and science in seeking to present a coherent life view as the basis on which we are willing to act. It is the ground on which we stand, the ultimate outlook that controls our view of reality. Accordingly, the primary task of eupraxsophy is to understand nature and life and to draw concrete normative prescriptions from this knowledge. Eupraxsophy thus draws deeply from the wells of philosophy, science, and ethics. It involves at least a double focus: a cosmic perspective and a set of normative ideals by which we may live.’⁸⁷

of the future’(ibid, p.72).

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‘*Eupraxsophy* is derived from the following (Greck) roots: *eu-*, *praxis-*, and *sophia*. *Eu-* is a prefix that means “good,” “well,” “advantageous.” *Praxis*...refers to “action, doing, or practice.” *Eupraxia* means “right action” or “good conduct.” The suffix *sophia* is derived from *sophos*...and means “wisdom.”’(ibid, p.169)

⁸⁷

Ibid, p.173

Practising eupraxsophy implies a concern with wisdom as the basis for right action and the courage to become what one wishes to be as well as with facing the nature of life and death unflinchingly and without resorting to the gloss of wishful thinking. As aforementioned, wisdom is integrated information, i.e., information incorporated into the subjective or collective constellation of meanings so as to render this constellation a unified, interrelated whole marked by a harmonious unity determinative of congruous and consistent feeling, attitude, and action. In other words, wisdom implies the comprehensive and intrinsic understanding of, and response to, reality as a factually and meaningfully ordered unity of mutual interrelationships. Since the integrity establishing such wisdom is *usually* ever in the making, wisdom is never complete, always approximate, and remains an ideal free to be aspired to in order to progressively develop human intelligence and potentials. Thus, right action can be more than just a permissible act in the optional or obligatory sense. Ensued by wisdom, rightness of action is established by both knowing and acting in that the meaning of reality perceived elicits an harmonious and personally original response that engages one's whole being - i.e., the physical, intellectual, and emotional - is creative, and fosters the sapiental strive. In either case, the right act is never an automated response occurring in isolation but always harmonious action issuing from, and adequate to, a perceived whole of meaningful relationships while, in the sapiental sense, it is '*self-transcending*'. Eupraxsophy, by engaging the entirety of testable human knowledge and being non-dogmatic in character, i.e., being not unverifiably propositional while at the same time claiming indisputable authority, is a befitting response to the human quest for meaning that must now orient itself in a secular-scientific environment. As a

suitable model for scientific humanization, it can substantially contribute to the formulation of a viewpoint that situates human beings, religiously inclined or not, in the dominantly secular-scientific world in a manner that is not only meaningful and conducive to the sapiential strive but also unprecedented in its comprehensiveness and binding universality. This secular-scientific viewpoint is (1) the combined product of empirical observation, authoritative vision, accredited interpretation, and human needs and wants; (2) situating and orienting humans - regardless of their denominations - within the framework of a systemic universe; (3) outlining human conduct with perspective on sustaining the conceived cosmic order; (4) regulative of a wide range of cultural phenomena such as society, morality, politics, and economy; (5) non-monolithic for its capacity to accommodate an immense diversity of cultural expression; and (6) determining and channelling sapiental striving in that it is pregnant with explanatory and moral significance providing the context by which one is able to locate oneself and act adequately in the overall cosmological process, i.e., one is able to clearly identify one's situation and follow a path which, in helping to steer clear of pitfalls and unwholesome influences, points beyond them to something more advantageous. In short, then, eupraxsophy is a secular-scientific-humanist worldview and a philosophy of living with possibly global significance. I will now very briefly introduce the eupraxsophic principles tentatively drafted by Kurtz in his latest humanist manifesto⁸⁸:

Scientific naturalism as the means to a coherent worldview disentangled from

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Kurtz Humanist Manifesto 2000: A Call For A New Planetary Humanism, 2000.

metaphysics or theology and based on the sciences: (1) it is committed to a set of methodological prescriptions, (2) the opportunities that the sciences afford for expanding our knowledge of nature and human behaviour are enormous; (3) there is insufficient scientific evidence for spiritual interpretations of reality and the postulation of occult causes.

The beneficial value of scientific technology: (1) strenuous objection to efforts to limit technological research or to censor or restrict inquiry a priori; (2) issues concerning technological applications are best dealt with by informed debate, not by appealing to absolutist dogma or emotional sloganeering; (3) technical solutions cannot be abandoned; (4) technological innovations that reduce the overall human impact on the environment must be encouraged; (5) the spread of intermediate technologies that are affordable to the poor should be encouraged.

Ethics and reason: (1) the dignity and autonomy of the individual is the central value. Freedom of choice should be maximized; (2) defending individual self-determination does not mean condoning just any kind of human conduct; (3) an ethic of excellence is defended; (4) responsibilities and duties to others are recognized; (5) the virtues of empathy and caring are essential for ethical conduct; (6) children and young people are in need of moral education; (7) reason is recommendable for framing ethical judgements; (8) ethical principles and values should be modified in the light of current realities and future expectations; (9) an ethics of principles should be respected.

The universal commitment to humanity as a whole: (1) the underlying ethical principle of Planetary Humanism is that the dignity and worth of all persons in the world community is to be respected; (2) human suffering is to be mitigated and the the sum of human happiness increased; (3) overemphasis on multicultural parochialism should be avoided; (4) respect and concern for

persons should apply to all human beings equally; (5) these principles should apply not only to the world community of the present time but also of the future; (6) each generation has an obligation, as far as possible, to leave the planetary environment that it inherits a better place; (7) the survival of future generations should not be endangered.

A planetary bill of rights and responsibilities: (1) we should strive to end poverty and malnutrition and to provide adequate health care and shelter for people everywhere on the planet; (2) we should strive to provide economic security and adequate income for everyone; (3) every person should be protected from unwarranted and unnecessary injury, danger, and death; (4) individuals should have the right to live in a family unit or household of their choice, consonant with their income, and should have the right to bear or not to bear children; (5) the opportunity for education and cultural enrichment should be universal; (6) individuals should not be discriminated against because of race, ethnic origin, nationality, culture, caste, class, creed, gender, or sexual orientation; (7) the principles of equality should be respected by civilized communities in four major senses: equality before the law, equality of consideration, satisfaction of basic needs, equality of opportunity; (8) it is the right of every person to be able to live a good life, pursue happiness, achieve creative satisfaction and leisure on his or her own terms, so long as he or she does not harm others; (9) individuals should have the opportunity to appreciate and participate in the arts; (10) individuals should not be unduly restrained, restricted, or prohibited from exercising a wide range of personal choices.

A new global agenda: (1) global security must be ensured; (2) human progress must be maximized on the global scale; (3) the planetary bill of rights and responsibilities must be central to questions of social justice; the applicability of the declaration of human rights to the private home, family, and community must be reemphasized; (4) the nature of global conglomerates must

be reformed; (5) the global community is in need of an international law that transcends the laws of separate nations; (6) global environmental problems must be dealt with at the planetary level and a view on the unsustainability of the current lifestyle in the industrialized North.

The need for new institutions: (1) the world needs at some point in the future to establish an effective world parliament - and elections to it based on population density - which will represent the people, not their governments; (2) the world needs a workable security system to resolve military conflicts that threaten the peace. We need to amend the United Nations Charter to achieve this aim. Thus the veto in the Security Council by the Big Five needs to be repealed; (3) we must develop an effective world court and an international judiciary with sufficient power to enforce its rulings; (4) the world needs a planetary environmental monitoring agency on the transnational level; (5) an international system of taxation in order to assist the underdeveloped sectors of the human family and to fulfill social needs not fulfilled by market forces; (6) the development of global institutions should include some procedure for the regulation of multinational corporations and state monopolies; (7) we must keep alive a free market of ideas, respect diversity of opinion, and cherish the right to dissent.

On Human Genetic Engineering

All definitions for the technical terminology of this section is taken from an online dictionary.⁸⁹ Though still a non-actuality at the time of writing, I shall concern myself here exclusively with what Rifkin calls 'reprogenetics', i.e., the application of augmentative

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Biotech's Life Science Dictionary at <http://www.sciencekomm.at-advise-dict.html> (at the time of writing, the link to the dictionary was dysfunctional).

hereditary genetic engineering to human life. I am not using the term cloning to refer to this practice because of the misleading connotations frequently associated with it.⁹⁰

Genetic engineering is the manipulation of an organism's genetic endowment by introducing or eliminating specific genes through techniques of molecular biology. I am referring in particular to the practice of somatic cell nuclear transfer (hereafter: SNT).

SNT involves the removal of the nuclei from a fetal cell and its subsequent fusion with an ovum whose nuclei has been removed. Thereby, the dormant genetic material of the adult cell is reactivated, the cell becomes totipotent and can develop into a fetus.⁹¹ Genetic engineering can take place when the cell is in the state of totipotency. SNT is the only

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I am referring here specifically to the irrational fears and fictional scenarios that currently play a dominant role in determining ethical attitudes towards embryo-splitting. In scientific practice, the term cloning has been used in three broad areas: (1) in genetic research, where millions of identical copies of genes of molecular size are produced in order to have sufficient material for testing; (2) in the production of cell-lines that have identical properties in order to study the biology of specific cells without bias from small dissimilarities (cell-cloning); and (3) in the multiplication of embryos by nuclear transplantation, which is the process of introducing nuclei from the cells of early preimplantation embryos into unfertilized eggs from which the nuclei has been removed. An exception to the above was made by Hall and coworkers who used cloning instead of blastomere separation to describe the artificial procedure of identical twinning or splitting of embryos (Cohen, Tomkin 'The Science, Fiction, and Reality of Embryo Cloning' in Teays, Purdy, ed. *Bioethics, Justice, & Health Care*, 2001, p.646). Since identity in genotype does not imply identity in phenotype, a clone is never an exact duplicate of the genetic original and may have no confusions about her identity and place in society - for example, both scientists and society never regarded natural twins as clones. When using the term HGE, I have first and foremost the creation of unique individuals in mind.

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Totipotency denotes the very early phase of a cell's development where it is capable of developing into any kind of particular cell; a whole organism can be planned and developed from totipotent cells (also: stem cells).

known type of reprogenetics by which a genome is replicated without the intermixing of female and male genes and allows for the planned manufacture of progeny like no other procreative method. The procedure of SNT can be differentiated into somatic cell gene therapy (hereafter: SGT) and germ line therapy (hereafter: GLT). SGT involves the incorporation of new genetic materials into cells for therapeutic purposes - this genetic material is not transferable to offspring. GLT is the experimental process of inserting genes into germ cells to cause a genetic change that can be passed on to offspring.⁹² One of GLT's possible applications is to eradicate a hereditary, genetic disorder; another possible application can be to model the genome in order to produce a specific hereditary genotype. This genotype may then produce a favoured phenotype and maybe even a favoured, psychological constitution - though research, especially regarding the latter, has so far remained uncertain and inconclusive since the correlation between genome and mental traits is unclear and of a highly hypothetical and controversial nature.⁹³ By human genetic engineering (hereafter: HGE) I mean specifically the practice of GLT for other than purely therapeutical purposes. One should note the ambiguity of the term therapeutic here: although both options of genetic alteration offered by SNT are labelled therapeutic, GLT might clearly go beyond SGT and mere medical purposes to the deliberate and perhaps complete creation of a human being. Here begin reprogenetics and the distinction

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A germ cell is a reproductive cell spermatocyte (a mature, male reproductive cell) or an oocyte (an ovum just before ovulation) or a cell that will develop into a reproductive cell.

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Evolutionary psychologists are currently working to discover whether and in what way human psychology is genetically determined.

between 'genrich' and 'genpoor' (Rifkin). The points of contention are whether such creation of human life is at all desirable, advisable, and permissible. The underlying question is whether it is outright covet or, with reference to a predecessor found to be genetically wanting, can indeed be considered therapeutic. For want of a better term, I will provisionally continue to apply the label 'human' to the hypothetical and plenary genetic construction of an anthropoid life form - though it is questionable whether it can any longer be properly considered human or, rather, 'something' post- or trans- or even superhuman. To be sure, despite the dispute and indignation, efforts are under way to make HGE a tangible and full-fledged reprogenetic reality involving in vitro fecundity and artificial wombs and perhaps the dawn of a new genetic aristocracy - the *genetocracy*.⁹⁴ I will now catalogue some considerations on the permissibility, contrasting opinions, future prospects, and questions attending HGE:

Permissibility: although research on SNT is undertaken with the sponsorship and under the auspices of the government, government regulations may not be stringent for privately funded research centres that wish to explore the hereditary variant. In any case, regulations are frequently sunset clauses, provisional rather than permanent, cautious rather than forbidding, and regularly reviewed in light of the current understanding. For

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At present, the nuclear physicist Richard Seed and the collaborating fertility specialists Severino Antinori and Panos Zavos boast that, in spite of all objections, their first cloning of a human being is forthcoming. Rifkin mentions the current international research aiming at the creation of artificial wombs and the anticipation of a segregative genetocracy (Rifkin *The Biotech Century*, 1998, pp.30, 168-9). It is also interesting that, after the completion of the Human Genome Program, the DOE (U.S. Department of Energy, Biological, and Environmental Research) has initiated the so-called 'Genomes to Life Program'. This program is meant to venture beyond characterizing individual life components such as genes and other DNA sequences towards a more comprehensive, integrated view of biology on a whole-systems level and lead to a more fundamental, complete, and systematic understanding of life (see <http://doegenomestolife.org>).

the time being, HGE remains ethically officially unacceptable because public opinion is not free of virulent antagonism and the relevant genetic technology is so far unable to guarantee agreeable results. Biomedical research groups are, however, contesting any legislation that criminalizes and outlaws research on SNT on account of its potential to manufacture planned human progeny because this would constitute a major impediment to scientific research on the medical usefulness of this technology.⁹⁵

Presently, bioethics is, save for its moral certitude in terms of safety, conceptually too ill-equipped and weak to normatively address the issue of HGE in all its possible implications. The main conceptual weaknesses are: (1) sunset clauses are morally dubious; (2) the dearth of any serious discussion about what future generations need for a 'good life' and how HGE might respond to these needs; and (3) public interest rendering a *consistent* 'common good' perspective on the appropriate limits of scientific research is absent. Rarely challenging the cultural tide, bioethics, reluctant to devise or argue for community ideals or to challenge individualist notions, ordinarily embraces a minimalist ethics. To its disadvantage, it is currently held captive by two decisive, reigning ideologies: (1) that it is wrong to link the pursuit of reproductive rights to the pursuit of the welfare of children in general; and (2) that, in a pluralistic society, it is not legitimate to seek agreement on moral ideals, even if it is about how to procreate or to raise children. In summary, bioethics has so far neglected the far-reaching aims and aspirations of genetic research as an area worthy of moral exploration: it has not undertaken a careful

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It is remarkable that governmental interest in a technique only once used successfully on a mammal is historically unprecedented and contrasts the usual procedure where ethical and legal deliberations precede the formulation of law.

examination of the implicit models of human life and welfare and concerns for the human future that underlie the HGE research enterprise. And, in any case, there appears to be no way by which any law can produce a *fail-safe* restraint on unwelcomed HGE experiments. Thus, the unanimous formulation of a normative 'anthropotechnological codex' is, for some unknown time to come, unlikely. Moreover, the issue of HGE is simply too new to categorically articulate insights about what exactly should be forbidden, why, how, and by whom. However, some ethical considerations appear desirable from the onset: (1) assurance that, in establishing and using HGE, no sentient life, whether subject to HGE or not, must endure suffering (this includes the genetically engineered individual's potential identity-related, psychological and emotional suffering - if need be, prevailing kinship and social systems must be adapted so they can readily accommodate HGE and its products in a non-oppressive manner); (2) no genetic technology or its product is to be publicly propagated and implemented before it is fully understood and mastered. The commercial thrust aiming at the marketing of, and the generating of profit by, HGE is to be arrested through stringent regulations advised by independent research panels, supported by informed beneficiaries, and enforced by the government; (3) information on developments and prospects of HGE must be generally understandable, true, impartial, and easily available to everyone; and (4) there must be public discussion panels or decision procedures carrying legal authority where the concerned can poll on crucial decisions pertinent to the advancement of HGE as well as a wide distribution of relevant information that is easily accessible to everyone through pamphlets, general broadcasting on a regular up-to-date basis, and the provision of informative material upon private request.

HGE is discussed in three ways: (1) *Technological* - it is a neutral technique that assists in reproduction and determining the genetic makeup of children; (2) *Liberal* - it is

just a new and liberating option for exercising an individual's right to reproduce or to have the kind of child one wants; and (3) *Meliorist* - it is a novel prospect for improving human beings in terms of health and enhancement of inborn capacities. Also being discussed is the patentability of human, biological material: while inventions related to the human body and sequences or partial sequences of genes may be patentable, the processes of HGE, i.e., the processes for modifying the germline genetic identity of human beings, and the use of human embryos for industrial and commercial purposes are, for the time being, excluded from consideration.

Voices Pro: * HGE is a profitable market; supply will create enormous demand; * HGE helps us overcome the unpredictable variety that still rules human reproduction and would allow us to benefit by perpetuating superior genetic endowments; * a beloved spouse or child that had died could be 'brought back', and one could guide 'one's very flesh' through a second existence by transmitting all of one's accumulated learning to one's biological double; * homosexuals and lesbians could reproduce their kind without having to resort to the other sex; * radical feminists: through parthenogenesis, males would become unnecessary - in fact, sexual reproduction as such would become unnecessary; * one could have a child with the genotype of one's own choosing, not excluding oneself; * genius, talent, or beauty could be selected for and transmitted to future generations; * human beings have always played God and will continue to do so - they have always bred themselves and other creatures in certain ways, and HGE is simply a new means to do so in a more promising and effective manner; * voices against HGE are those of timid, nostalgic, sentimental, and superstitious Jeremiahs and testify to the usual birth pangs of a new era which will give way to acceptance and enthusiasm as soon as cloning technologies can yield satisfactory success and pleasing results; * human beings

can adapt to anything, and HGE should be pursued simply for the sake of seeing where it can bring us; * HGE can give rise to a (human) being that is not what we are but what we intend and design it to be so that it may propel further evolution; * HGE is what we can, should, and will do - as a field of crucial, scientific inquiry, it is a sublime cause to which all other concerns must be subordinated; * it is more advantageous for parents and society to have a child of their own choosing than to have a child of their own making; * there is little reason to fear - and certainly not enough to prohibit further genetic research - that HGE renders streamlined, future generations prone to random deformation and decimation through inhibited bio-adaptability; * the philanthropic potential of HGE outweighs the initial imbalance issuing from its privileging the rich; * public fear is not so pervasive that it justifies urgent legal action to oppose HGE - in fact, for many, it holds a decisive fascination.

Voices Contra: * unless the general public is adequately informed and has a say in biotechnological projects, HGE must be prohibited; * scientists and academics supporting biotechnology are biased industry affiliates that cannot to be trusted; * HGE does not allow for new, protective genetic traits to arise by adaptive mutation to an ever changing environment nor does it, by its tendency towards relative homogenization, allow desirable physical features to compete and win by an appeal to the judgement of the opposite sex. In the first case, bio-adaptability is problematic, in that genetically engineered specimens could be easily wiped out by some new epidemic. In the latter case, procreative choice is shifted from intuitive mate-selection to a pragmatic deliberation that drastically reduces biodiversity. In both cases, human evolution is halted because environmental adaptability, either in terms of disease-resistance or human screening of desirable traits to be passed on to future generations, is being rendered stagnant through its dependence on technological

innovation. Evolution is halted also in the sense that, by technologically cancelling out undesirable traits and producing desirable ones, the practice of problem resolution turns away from addressing fundamental questions concerning the human condition to veiling and shortcutting them by a technical feat that does not resolve but rather discards the problematic without questioning it. Thus, self-scrutiny, relevant self-cultivation, and even eugenics become superfluous since the problematic can be conveniently overcome otherwise. In other words, human evolution in terms of applying intelligence to the internal practice of problem resolution, which in turn enhances intelligence, loses out to a technical ingenuity that denies and invalidates this very enhancement; * there is neither a legitimate reason for cloning humans in our society nor is the public invited to assess the value and significance of cloning technologies; * HGE is against nature and God's will because it obliterates human sexual congress and divine inculcation of a soul - it is a deep violation of our given nature as gendered and engendered beings and deprives sexuality and human renewal of its mysterious character; * HGE holds too many incalculable dangers and is neither understood nor mastered well enough to merit general trust; * it is but naive faith to think that the evils humans fear from HGE can all be avoided by compassion, regulation, and a respect for autonomy - radical activism must oppose this development; * the programmed reproduction of humans will lead to a dehumanized rationality; * the mere prospect of HGE is offensive because it is 'simply not right' to treat human life and the dignity of the human individual that way; * human beings attempt to take evolution, including their own making, fully into their own hands, but it is improper for them to play God like this; * the majority feels intuitively and without argument that cloning is a violation of things they rightfully hold dear and that repugnance at the very thought of HGE is a natural and healthy response that must be given legal weight in spite

of its irrational appearance; * HGE is the climax of humans' seeking to escape entirely from nature and, as such, is self-contradictory in theory and self-alienating in practice - it is the technology of narcissism; * HGE is inhumane - it means the manufacturing of human beings as a commodity, the pollution and perversion of human begetting and belonging, and the erosion of the respect for the mystery of sexuality and human renewal; * to allow HGE amounts to eroding known kinship relations, overthrowing accepted ideas of meaning, belonging, and obligation, and viewing social practices as cultural constructs that can be altered with little human cost; * HGE entails parental despotism over the progeny by controlling its appearance and future as well as the practitioner's tyranny of expertise over it; * any attempt at HGE is an unethical experiment on the child-to-be - in fact, it is in itself a form of child abuse because the offspring will be victims of despotic determination, will experience confusion over identity, and will suffer from being artifacts; * it is not clear to what extent an artificially created human being could be an agent of genuine, human morality; * by depriving the genetic pool of the genetic variety that symbolizes the uniqueness of each human life, HGE renders life worthless and undignified; * to prevent the violation of human equality, freedom, and dignity, it is better to give existence to another human being by means of what we are than by rigorous planning through HGE; * HGE is narcissistic, should be declared unethical in itself and dangerous in its likely consequences; * HGE means abandoning humanity altogether, and must be outlawed for good; * HGE must be forbidden because it's illegitimate: legitimate uses cannot be readily distinguished - the ethical distinction between therapy and enhancement is too easily blurred; * HGE leads us on a slippery slope that can render us slaves to an unregulated progress and, ultimately, its artifacts - it is preferable to remain free human beings who are not means but ends in themselves and, as such, guide technology towards the enhancement of human dignity; * since HGE is expensive, only the affluent could make deliberate use of

it - this contributes to the gap between the progenies of rich and poor and may eventually lead to a class conflict between 'privileged' and 'underprivileged', 'enhanced' and 'ordinary', 'unnaturals' and 'naturals'; * the utilitarian reasoning behind cloning is blind to the deeper meaning of things; * a society that legitimizes human cloning has come to rationalize away the abominable; * sexual procreation is simply more fun than HGE - artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization already preserve the element of genetic chance most would favour so that human cloning is really superfluous; * HGE is not evolution but devolution because it technologically veils and short-cuts fundamental, human problems that remain unresolved; * HGE's legal ambiguities and its potential for abuse are prohibiting; * the poor and powerless could be lured and coerced into genetic experimentation; * nightmare scenarios could emerge from intentional or unintentional genetic damage done by HGE - more than ever, the client cannot really know what is being sold in the name of profit; * the shift in the whole nature of the uniqueness of each human from a genetic point of view is so radical that we are psychologically unprepared for the entire concept of HGE and hence invite immensely problematic, if not unsurmountable, moral and ethical dilemmas; * HGE could give rise to genetic terrorism.

Future prospects: * it is possible to envision the genetic engineering of fully grown, higher species as well as individual cells and other elementary organisms - in the future it may well be possible to alter the genetic heritage of a zygote to generate not only desired physical traits but also mental and emotional ones; * research on human cloning will proceed and is likely to become more permissible with success; * if HGE goes beyond its experimental status, children could be the product of parental choice and eugenic planning; * the quality of our offspring can then be totally controlled; * if banned, HGE

will be carried on underground; * both scientific and political abuse of HGE as well as genetic piracy and the diminishment and violation of genetic privacy are to be expected - genetic screening and monitoring will lead to an increasing accumulation of individual information accessible by institutions such as insurance, employment, and government agencies; * the technological intervention into the human body and mind will topple our moral convictions and effect unknown, fundamental, and irreversible changes in human nature, basic human relationships, and what it means to be a human being - our most fundamental ideas about ourselves, life, and the world in which we live will be put into question and will undergo a radical transformation; * to mandate a prior restraint on a speculative technique (HGE - so far rudimentary and outlawed) under a false sense of urgency is to invite an unfortunate precedent that elevates politics above science and emotion above insight. A preferable alternative is to construct a HGE policy that combines private and public considerations and that, apart from the hypothetical possibility of HGE, incorporates two other potential methods of replicating genomes - twinning and embryo cell nuclear transfer⁹⁶; * clearly differentiating twinning, embryo cell nuclear transfer, and GLT can suggest more refined questions and will help to produce a richer understanding of the motives that might prompt their respective use (for example: What is

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Twinning, first in technological imminence, is employed to multiply an individually fertilized in vitro embryo. When the embryonic cells are totipotent, they are artificially divided into blastomeres and transferred to wombs where they develop further into embryos. All resulting embryos are identical in genotype and may be frozen and thawed for later transfer. *Embryo cell nuclear transfer*, second in technological imminence, is the removal of the nuclei from the cells of a four- to eight-cell embryo and their transfer to enucleated donor eggs. That way, a large number of genetically identical embryos could be produced that would have identical nuclear DNA but differ in cytoplasm and mitochondrial DNA. This practice would be performed primarily to generate more embryos for transfer during infertility treatment. *GLT* is third in technological imminence.

it about each procedure that is felt to be disturbing? What, if anything, about each practice should be limited? If limits are advisable, upon which grounds will those limits be justified? What will be the enforcement mechanisms? Will those mechanisms conform to constitutional practices?).

Questions: * Can we apply the developments in human reproductive technology in such a way as to assure the greater good of human dignity and individuality in a moral manner? * Will procreation by means of HGE supersede the satisfaction of love and sex, of dating and of families? * Must the non-scientific public fear deliberate misinformation designed to dispose them to a more favourable view of HGE? * Since we cannot know what will be known tomorrow, is it legitimate to fetter research on human cloning thereby arresting progress? * Is our sense of identity and social relation natural, biological, and essential to us beyond question? * In the face of genetic technology's development, will the notions of 'nature', 'natural', 'human being', 'being human(e)', and 'human dignity' have to be radically rethought and, if so, what could they come to mean? * Can it be justified that human beings normally and 'rightly' shudder at the thought of being considered merely as means to an end rather than ends in themselves while treating the rest of creation as means to *their* ends? * Must research on HGE really go unrestrained to avoid interfering with beneficial applications of genetic technologies? * If HGE becomes a practical reality, is it a reality that humans can and should countenance? * What is to be the legal status of a human clone? * Is an artificially created life form capable of safeguarding, propagating, and advancing original life? * Can (and how would) genetically engineered individuals change society? * Is HGE, leading as it does, to the complete obliteration of kinship categories, to the complete depersonalization of procreation, to the

complete manufacture of human beings, and to the complete genetic control of one generation over the next, in fact basically unproblematic ethically and, in essence, not different from current forms of assisted reproduction? * Can and should HGE be only allowed on behalf of two married, heterosexual partners? * Must the burden of moral argument in terms of the social good of HGE fall exclusively on the advocates of this practice? * If a human being is made in the image of God, can humans artificially create themselves and still be in God's image? * Even if the benefits of HGE wouldn't be compelling enough to induce scientists to risk their careers, would they not take the same risk only to understand how genes work? * Can the borderline shift between chance and determination be dismissed as a normal and inevitable consequence to which our prevailing value standards must naturally adapt? * Can experts in genetic counselling come to claim technical as well as moral competency to an extent that an influential philosopher-scientist elite emerges to determine the proper application of HGE? * Is the media coverage of biotechnological issues adequate and sufficient for educating the general public? * If the technical problems pertaining to HGE were to be solved, thereby greatly increasing the foreseeable individual, societal, and scientific benefits, should not those who wish to limit further research bear the onus of proving wrong such research?

Chapter Three

Assessing the Human Park

In the following, I will assess Sloterdijk's three theses introduced in chapter one.

I

'Human beings are animals of which some breed their like while others are the bred.'

This claim is correct. Breeding is the deliberate, hereditary transmission of favoured, physio-psychological traits (as far as the latter is tenable). First and foremost, domestication is the institutionalized generation of favoured psychological traits that are not hereditary, for modes of domestication and domestic requirements change over time and require a flexibility in adjustment that breeding as a purely biological undertaking cannot provide. Domesticating institutions approve and disapprove ways of behaving and relating, are informal (customary) or formal (legislative), and issue from, and in, the patterns humans have decided to live by in order to distinctively shape individual and collective experiences. Domestication rests on breeding, for the breed dictates the course of domestication through the needs and wants relative to its kind - here, we can locate the practice of breeding as determinative of domestication. Breeding, in turn, rests on domestication, for standards of domesticity direct the relative course of breeding desirable progeny - here, we can locate the practice of taming that enables humans to live in close association. Such taming is the result of countless bred generations and their successive needs for institutions that safeguard and transmit respectively obtained levels of domesticity - this preservation and conveyance of domestic modes is called tradition.

Breeding has so far remained a rather chancy matter because direct control leading to mastery over the human genetic heritage was hitherto impossible and hence restricted to the thinning out of defectives (and unwelcomed) through the practices of choice mating, infanticide, and abortion. More recently, amniocentesis, artificial insemination with choice semen, *in vitro* fertilization, and embryo-implantation have entered the stage of breeding practices.⁹⁷ All of these methods may, however, become redundant with the emergence of HGE as a viable practice which allows for complete, initial control over the human genome so that the genetic choice progeny can be produced *originally* free from undesirable traits and equipped with desirable ones. Human breeding and domestication are thus inextricably linked, but, since breeding refers more properly to the biological propagation and selection of progeny and domestication to the generation of a certain compliance adequate to safeguard the breed, I will, in assessing Sloterdijk's thesis, consider breeding only as a biological process.

That 'some breed their like' is evidenced throughout human history and clearly

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With regard to the latter, I like to draw attention to the ethical borderline case of the medical child. Selected by means of pre-implantation diagnosis from other genetically manufactured embryos, an American mother of a girl afflicted with a blood disease had a choice male embryo implanted whose blood type was compatible to that of the girl so that blood cells urgently needed for the girl's therapy could be taken from the umbilical cord. The employed method of choosing 'the remedial' offspring is a valued alternative to conventional amniocentesis which is comparatively uncertain and stressful to the mother. Although chances for overall success were less than 100%, the parents were willing to welcome the donor-child as a second child of their own. This incident presents a case for the manufacture, storage, and application of human embryos for the medical treatment of human life ("L'enfant-medicament: aux frontières de la science et de l'amour" *Le Journal de Montreal*, October, 5, 2000).

relates to the maintenance of power structures.⁹⁸ I am referring here to those methods of procreation that are meant to secure, contain, and continue power-bestowing lineages. Power denotes the human will *and* capacity to markedly influence others as well as oneself in the widest positive and negative sense and ranges in motivation from altruism to philanthropy, from creation to destruction, from sophism to blunt coercion. I am concerned with power applied to others in any of the ways mentioned. A sphere denotes the environment within which humans exist, act, and operate. Spheres of power and the right to wield power have always been sought to restrict exclusively to those with a statutory entitlement to it. The proper claimant to this entitlement is either a direct descendant or a group of individuals related by lineage. Biological propagation of the powerful is approved of if it keeps the sphere of power isolated from those with no legitimate claim to it and involves those with traditional birthright and proof of special suitability. Methods of safeguarding hereditary power structures include the practice of inbreeding, or incest, and the select propagation by those who are either entitled to power by a claimant lineage or belong to a lineage the fusion with which is deemed generally advantageous or, in rare instances, feature other characteristics considered specially expedient to the exercise of power. Thus the powerful, aiming at securing their privileges and influence by limiting propagation to that of candidates deemed appropriate on the basis of lineage and suitability, indeed breed their like. Such eminent power-oriented

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In the traditional Hindu caste system, the religiously sanctioned practice of caste-inbreeding presents a particularly exclusive and simultaneously most comprehensive and systematic division of human society by breeding strategies that not only isolate the powerful but apply to all with respect to race, ethnicity, and social standing. This exceptional organization is now officially outlawed on humanistic grounds of equity and its structures eroded by the modes of modern economy and its efficiency-gear'd demands for greatest possible access to human resources and mobility across social boundaries.

inbreeding is a hallmark of the imperious.

In our times, with the ever more invasive paradigm of a global society endorsing the tenets of liberalism and 'democracy', breeding one's like takes on a more permissive and multifaceted appearance than is traditionally desirable for a claimant to the privilege of power. Transmitting the right to power over others or simply to maintain such a position is no longer strictly tied to narrowly delineating spheres of influence but comes (at least hypothetically) to include the whole range of what is now considered to be legitimately admissible across spherical boundaries. The socially privileged and distinguished ones and their circles of close relatives and affiliates (who usually mingled and propagated with their like in terms of distinction and capability), are faced with the possibility that the hitherto unrelated encroach upon their domains. Liberal modes of life can erode the relative autonomy of power spheres and render their insulation problematic unless they avoid attraction by being remote and inconspicuous and curb desert by threat of ostracization. Where the deterrents are inadequate, the relatively homogenous spheres of the privileged and powerful can become heterogenous and thinned by the sheer caprice of affectionate outbreeding, i.e., propagation across social boundaries with other than one's proper kin. The significance of HGE in this process of dilution arises with the hypothetical possibility of genetically classifying human beings.⁹⁹ If it can be established

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'Segregating individuals by their genetic makeup represents a fundamental shift in the exercise of power. In a society where the individual can be stereotyped by genotype, institutional power of all kinds becomes more absolute. At the same time, the increasing polarization of society into genetically "superior" and genetically "inferior" individuals and groups could create a new and powerful social dynamic. Those families who can afford to program "superior" genetic traits into their fetuses at conception could assure their offspring an ever greater biological advantage, and thus a social and

with certainty that a particular genome corresponds to features dominant in, or specially appreciated by, some part of the human population and, moreover, is generative of such features, HGE has the potential not only to abate the fear of genetic dilution (of power spheres) and the consequently dreaded decline of distinguishing qualities among the powerful but also to secure anew and in an unprecedented manner definite spheres of power and status. From this standpoint, HGE can give rise to a novel disparaging class system discriminating between the genrich and genpoor (a genetocracy), and like any class system that draws on distinctions between haves and have-nots also this organization potentially contains the seed of its undoing because it cannot avoid being inherently conflictive.¹⁰⁰ Since HGE will (at least initially) be costly, only few will be able to afford reprogenetics while access to it is denied to the majority. The result is that few will originally be in the possession of deliberately created, specially advantageous qualities while the majority, willingly or not, has to be content with a mere natural endowment. What remains to be asked is if, and in what sense, the genrich will be isolated from the genpoor and whether, and how, they can and will in fact propagate with the objective of

economic advantage as well. For the emerging "genetic underclass", the issue of genetic stereotyping is likely to lead to growing protests and the birth of a worldwide "genetic rights" movement as an increasing number of victims of genetic discrimination organize collectively to demand their right to participate freely and fully in the oncoming Biotech Century. *Some genetic engineers believe that a future genetocracy is all but inevitable (my italics)*' (Rifkin, p.168).

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At this point, the question is whether and how we will be able to live with our own product. The conflict between the genrich and the genpoor can have two causes: either humans create too many of the genrich too fast and too smart and thus inaugurate their own undoing or they follow their infamous habit of persecuting what is felt to be alien in the case of which the genrich as well as their producers are likely to be pursued. The issue of coexistence with the genrich appears to be even more worth considering than quibbling over whether human reprogenetics is desirable or not - this will be as usually decided by those with the will and means to make it happen.

furthering the augmentation of their particular kind to the exclusion of all others. The emerging dilemma is that, on one hand, the democratic ideal can counteract the powerful's fear of dilution because, to the extent they assent to it, they may be inclined to deem the process necessary for its actualization while, on the other hand, HGE can counteract the democratic ideal by giving rise to a genocracy marked by a new and drastic imbalance of power through the creation of a genrich subspecies. The question arising here is whether the combined paradigms of BIS, GST, and eupraxsophy can bring about a harmonious integration of technological and social tendencies together with, or in spite of, HGE so as to avoid potential genocratic excesses.

'Others are the bred' to the extent that some are deliberately barred from *power-bestowing* inbreeding and left to propagate their relatively 'inferior' kind, at all times more or less evidently overshadowed by, and at the disposal of, the powerful. Because HGE, with its alleged potential to create a choice human subspecies - thus perhaps leading not only to an imbalance of power remindful of the gap between the literate and illiterate but maybe also to the generation of serfs¹⁰¹ - is, so far, not a reality, I will consider the breeding of others only with respect to those who are conventionally excluded from spheres of power simply because they do not belong to it by status or capacity.

More properly speaking, then, the bred are those who don't share in the health,

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The genetic manufacture of 'serfs' is, however, rather unlikely because androids appear to be by far more economical in production and maintenance. Presently, some androids are already for sale and researchers in various countries, most notably Japan, work on ever more sophisticated models. I learned recently that a team of Japanese scientists currently seeks to develop a type of android that, within a few decades, could be employed to tend to the populations's seniors. For more information on this, see <http://www.androidworld.com/prod01.htm>

wealth, and influence of the powerful inbred. Constituting the sphere of commonalty, they are accustomed to propagate among themselves and aspire to the best possible livelihood with respect to their preconditioning and predisposition and the opportunities open to them. Precondition, predisposition, and opportunity are ideological creations, i.e., they are institutionalized bodies of guiding ideas suggested by a process that seeks to create, preserve, or transform a particular distribution of powers, choices, and directions by making them appear natural, fair, and normal so that their arrangement appears as an expression of a shared common sense, as the best (or only) thing to have, to be, or to do. A society's claim to democratic order should not divert from the fact that democracy is, at best, approximated and, at worse, a mirage. Considering that, so far, no unanimous definition of it exists, 'democracy' is nothing but a vague and beguiling idea (and an idealistic mirage born of the suffering of the downtrodden which, considering the prevailing anti-egalitarian thrust of human egoism, is destined to remain unfulfilled for some unknown time). Indeed, whoever takes the foundations of a democratic society for granted is in error, for elusive and inherently inequitable power structures prevail in any so-called democracy - most remarkably: the preemption of knowledge and technology by entrepreneurial holders of wealth who, in a marketable ideological guise, feed them back to society for gain in profit and power. Though concessions to the commonalty are made under pressure of interest groups, corporate power structures are generally maintained and, albeit with occasionally modified strategies, continue to function in their exclusive and blatantly manipulative fashion. Social mobility in terms of equal opportunity for health, wealth, and influence is thus limited: moving up on the ladder of authority and, consequently, up on the scale of living standards is certainly possible for those whose

talents and ambitions are the sap of productive efficacy, but it is immensely difficult, if not impossible, for the otherwise inclined to penetrate influential circles of top governors, assume like positions of power, and enjoy the same benefits.¹⁰² The relatively homogenous sphere of commonalty and spheres of power can be envisioned as overlapping but not necessarily interpenetrating one another, the coinciding areas being areas of interactive negotiation, production, and consumption. The breeding of commonalty is indirect, implicit, and unintentional. It is indirect in that the sphere of commonalty is self-maintaining by offering a limiting choice of possible lifestyles and social associations; it is implicit through its positing as an inevitable normality, as 'the way things are'; and it is unintentional because the mere isolation of spheres of power from the commonalty does not necessarily present a deliberate intent of creating a pool of inbreeding, disadvantaged outsiders. Considering the ideological character of precondition, predisposition, and opportunity cutting across spherical boundaries, it becomes clear that those who breed their like as well as those who are the bred exist in isolation relative to the respective body of ideas they acquiesce to and the power conferred by it. Those who breed their like do so in deliberate effort to preserve and exalt their kind while those who are bred are so only in a passive sense, namely by being left to voluntary inbreeding. Thus, the former get on the active side of selection and the latter on the subjective side. With HGE, the gulf between the two widens and can become virtually unbridgeable so that a conflict between the breeders of grandness (pro unlimited rerogenetics) and the breeders of commonalty (contra rerogenetics or genetic

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And I suspect that if one does, one succumbs more readily to the temptation of self-aggrandizement than to advancing equity.

engineering as such) is indeed conceivable. The extreme scenario is that the genrich leave the genpoor to their devices and gain increasingly in power on account of their unparalleled qualities - with that, a genetocratic order can become actual and yet another notorious - but most decisive - *battle between maxims* is within reach.

II

‘Human beings have a natural history of comportment which enabled them to become the cosmopolitan, world-competent animal as well as a social history of domestication by which they experience themselves primarily as self-controlling creatures.’

This claim is correct. I suppose that the peculiar hominid self-awareness results from the evolution of an organic complexity that necessitates elaborate self-monitoring and decision-making for adapting successfully to a given situation.¹⁰³ Self-awareness is fundamental to intelligence which, in turn, is fundamental to comportment. Comportment involves learning, understanding, and deliberating and begins with a search for the best means to a familiar end judged advantageous and a search for the best among such possible ends. This search requires halting to consider before a decision is taken so that the question of ‘what ought to be in order to...’ - the cradle and essence of all morality - can be answered. The answer, then, gives rise to patterns of behaviour relative to

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I rely here on Macy’s account of the natural system’s progressive complexification that compels adaptive self-maintenance by positive and negative feedback processes. The cognitive system organizes and sustains itself in the same manner. Along these lines, self-awareness seems to result from cognitive processes of extracting and transforming experiential data that is reconstructed and projected onto experience with the purpose of distinguishing and preserving the agent of cognition who then comes to map, manipulate, and modify the environment as seen fit for self-sustenance (Macy, p.186).

attaining a desired end. To the extent this behaviour runs counter to whatever other drive may be present but is subdued for the sake of what is perceived as an end greater than that what could otherwise be procured, it can be called comportment or self-controlled bearing. When the natural history of comportment began is open to dispute, but I offer that it must have originate in primordial times with the hominid quest to secure the basic necessities for survival. Over time, the number of hominids increased, and the symbols needed to master, negotiate, and secure an ever more complex coexistence became by necessity more refined until they eventually culminated in articulate language. The hominids migrated and evolved into cosmopolitan, world-competent animals whose ways of life developed into progressively distinct and intricate clusters of culture of which most came to eventually adopt a sedentary mode of existence. With this growth of variety, familiar and desirable ends and the modes of comportment relative to them became more diverse until, in comparison, and across cultural boundaries, it could be found that some of these ends were essentially the same everywhere because they corresponded to universal hominid needs for security and safety. This desideratum presents the basic necessities of hominid survival, but, because of the current, vast disparity of cultures - each of which is a synthesis of copious idiosyncracies - the ways in which basic needs are interpreted and expressed as well as the manners by which they are met have come to vary greatly.¹⁰⁴

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Three ways of securing the universal needs can be discerned: that of tool-users, of technocrats, and of technopolists. The first employ simple tools under a binding social or religious system to solve specific and urgent problems of physical existence and may be either contemptuous or enthusiastic about tools; the second make tools the hub of their culture by elevating intellectual values over moral ones so that social and symbolic worlds are increasingly subordinated to the requirements of developing tools; and the third exalt tools to a degree that all else becomes irrelevant through the continuous redefinition of the social to make it fit the ever newer requirements posed continuously by technological development - in this sense, a

What all cultures have apparently in common in spite of their differences is that they rest on the affirmation that claims of communality and the abiding shall supersede claims of the individual and transient. This affirmation lies at the heart of any morality concerned with secure and safe communality and is the foundation of domestication aiming at predictable self-restraint to render individuals adequate to a social whole. Domestication, then, is the formidable means to ensure both communality and abiding, and tradition, i.e., the handing down of institutionalized customs, is a function of domestication. With tradition begins the social history of domestication by which humans experience themselves as self-controlling creatures.

Proper comportment, cosmopolitan world-competence, domestication, and an overarching concern with preserving the communal shelter are the active components of hominization, the process of sapiens-animal becoming sapiens-human that is initiated when biological birth is joined by a cultural one. The natural history of comportment is revealed through the ambitious anthropocentric efficacy of the hominid line that has persisted to this day in an ever more assertive manner. The social history of domestication is revealed through the many practices that were established over time and successively taken up, adapted, and reformed by countless generations with the sole purpose of turning individuals into adequate constituents of a group. The experience of self-control is revealed in the self-constraining consciousness of the necessity to negotiate internal

technopoly is a totalitarian technocracy (see Postman *Technopoly* 1992). Naturally, a technopoly and a tool-using culture differ radically in how needs for security and safety are interpreted, expressed, and met within their confines. Today, the technopoly assumes global significance and BIS (its functional principle), GST (its integrating principle), planetary secular humanism (its organizing principle), and HGE (possibly a new factor in technopolitan sociality) are constitutive of this worldview that exists in great tension with traditional ones.

impulses with external requirements in order to blend and forego alternative desires out of fear for the consequences that dissidence would hold out. BIS, GST, eupraxsophy, and HGE present new milestones in the natural history of comportment, new elements in the social history of domestication, and new experiences of (self-)control with their potential to radically alter the course of hominid becoming - especially if some, or all, of these developments converge to give rise to a revolutionary metamorphosis of genus and cosmology. The first because a genus that is progressively exosomatic, netted and netting, genrich and perhaps nanotechnologically augmented¹⁰⁵, more extropian than eupraxsophic, versed in systems thought, and functioning in an expanding and inclusively anthropocentric universe can be ultimately assertive through the maximization of self-referential experiencing, understanding, and effecting; the second because such genus can actualize the pinnacle of domestication, namely the constitution of a streamlined collective to which notions of individuality are irrelevant and, at best, auxiliary, and whose sole common goal is the efficacious advancement of *itself* as a whole; the third because this genus can experience self-control no longer as relative to a partial individual circumstance but only as relative to its total collective involvement, which could make self-control less a deliberate response than an informed reflex.¹⁰⁶ To be sure, the above scenario stressing

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Nanotechnology is the molecular manufacturing process employing atomic precision construction of molecular devices. It is postulated that nanotechnology will lead to extraordinary innovations such as self-assembling and -replicating consumer goods; computers billions of times faster; safe and affordable space travel, molecular medicine - the end to illness, ageing, and death; no more pollution and automatic cleanup of existing one; molecular food synthesis - the end of famine and starvation; access to superior education for every child on earth; reintroduction of extinct plants and animals; and the forming of the planet and solar system (for more information on nanotechnology, see <http://nanozine.com>).

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Regarding the idea of informed reflex, I like to cite Anderson: 'I suspect that computers will change so

total control is a fantastic conjecture. On a less imaginary line, BIS and GST can help us to better understand our being and role in the world in terms of our overall scientific knowledge of and technological involvement with it and ourselves - comportment, domestication, and self-control could become relative to the ends suggested by this new kind of self-referential biospheric cognizance; eupraxsophy can help us implement and maintain a binding set of basic universal moral decencies that ensure a relatively ordered course of life - comportment, domestication, and general restraint following eupraxsophic principles could become means to a scientific humanization pertinent to the secular-scientific world; HGE, in a secular-scientific world following eupraxsophic principles, could allow human beings liberal self-determination in a most intimate and comprehensive sense while, along more extropian-scientistic lines, HGE and nanotechnology can help transform humans into beings best adapted to (and equipped with) technology through the creation of appropriate traits and the elimination of all that is physio-psychologically disadvantageous to it. In both cases, comportment, domestication, and restraint, no longer confined to 'normal' experience alone, could come to reflect but the preconditioned preferences of those enthralled by the promises of reprogenetics, nanotechnology, and other species- and power-enhancing technologies while the concerns of those outside of, or not partaking in, this technopoly are belittled, if not ignored or discriminated against.¹⁰⁷

quickly that they will..ccase to hold the conspicuous position they currently occupy...and be all around us in the form of smart tools, smart houses, possibly even smart clothes. The people at MIT Media Lab have been promoting the concept of the "Bodynet" - the human body in a sense wearing its computer and connected through it to other people or information systems'(Anderson, p.183). I think that with the Bodynet, activity, rather than being voluntary and considered, can become informed reflexes elicited by one's nettedness and netting.

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'Technopoly is a state of culture. It is also a state of mind. It consists in the deification of technology.

It remains to be seen whether eupraxsophy and, especially, GST can converge and integrate BIS on the grounds of systemic understanding coupled with eupraxsophic principles or whether, driven by corporate industries, nanotechnology and HGE will develop an independent dynamic so overpowering that the formative and normative determination of hominid life along *scientific* power structures becomes ineluctable unless one retreats to the outlands (if one can and if there are any left) and is content with existing as a 'voluntary' exile, outcast, or maybe rebel.

III

'Modern mass society can produce its political and cultural synthesis only marginally through the literary, postal, humanist media.'

This claim is correct. First and foremost, a mass society can be defined as a dependent clustering of individuals in the Tocquevillean (the tyranny of the majority opinion) and Orwellian (the tyranny of a totalitarian regime) mold of a bland, cultureless 'groupthink'. Bell's definition of the process by which a mass society forms is worth quoting here at length because it explains (and stresses) the tie between collective dependency and technology:

'The revolutions in transport and communications have brought men into closer contact with each other and bound them in new ways; the division of labour has made them more interdependent; tremors in one part of the society affect all others. Despite this greater interdependence, however, individuals have grown more estranged from one another. The old

which means that the culture seeks its authorization in technology, finds its satisfaction in technology, and takes its orders from technology' (Postman *Technopoly*, p.71).

primary group ties of family and local community have been shattered; ancient parochial faiths are questioned; few unifying values have taken their place. Most important, the critical standards of an educated elite no longer shape opinion or taste. As a result, mores and morals are in constant flux, relations between individuals are tangential or compartmentalized rather than organic. At the same time, greater mobility, spatial and social, intensifies concern over status. Instead of a fixed or known status symbolized by dress or title, each person assumes a multiplicity of roles and constantly has to prove himself in a succession of new situations. Because of all this, the individual loses a coherent sense of self. His anxieties increase. There ensues a search for new faiths. The stage is thus set for the charismatic leader, the secular messiah who, by bestowing upon each person the semblance of necessary grace and fullness of personality, supplies a substitute for the older unifying belief that the mass society has destroyed.¹⁰⁸

Therefore, a mass society is one that is created by a breakdown of communication at various levels of society. According to Bell, this breakdown, brought about by shattering the critical standards of the educated elite, has the effect that the public loses its moral compass. Another, more radical, critique focuses 'on the demobilization of the masses, on their exposure to manipulative control, and on the intent of domineering elites to contain any movement aimed at radical change' (*James Carey: A Critical Reader*, p. 19). Arendt champions the latter view:

...that the masses grew out of the fragments of a highly atomized society whose competitive structure and concomitant loneliness of the individual had been held in check only through membership in a class. The chief characteristic of the mass man is not brutality and backwardness, but his isolation and lack of normal social relationships. Coming from the class-

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Bell 'The Theory of Mass Society' in *James Carey: A Critical Reader*, p. 18.

ridden society of the nation-state, whose cracks had been cemented with nationalist sentiment, it is only natural that these masses, in the first helplessness of their new experience, have tended toward an especially violent nationalism, to which mass leaders have yielded against their own instincts and purposes for purely demagogic reasons.’¹⁰⁹

It seems that, in the first case, mass societies are partly created by a lack of leadership at the top and, in the second, by the imposition of a partial leadership. In either case there is a concern with the loss of tangible, effective leadership sympathetic to the many, a loss engendering a pervasive sense of disorientation that sets a people adrift. Propaganda (i.e., ideology) of any kind is easily disseminated in mass society because the people is numbed to its leadership (which is felt to be either absent, distant, or obscure yet domineering); they are therefore more easily led by whatever ideology, inconspicuous or not, promises the reconstitution of meaningful guidance.

According to Mills, four points distinguish the typical mass society: ‘(1) Far fewer people express opinions than receive them; for the community of publics¹¹⁰ becomes an abstract collection of individuals who receive impressions from the mass media; (2) the communications that prevail are so organized that it is difficult or impossible for the individual to answer back immediately or with any effect; (3) the realization of opinion in action is controlled by authorities who organize and control the channels of such action; (4) the mass has no autonomy from institutions; on the contrary, agents of authorized

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Arendt ‘Origin of Totalitarianism’ in Bramson *The Political Context of Sociology*. 1961, p.35.

¹¹⁰

A public represents a particular community of participants brought together by a common purpose, heritage, or social identification. Any given member of a public can also belong to other publics corresponding to his or her social, class, economic, ethnic, corporate, educational, etc., career.

institutions penetrate this mass, reducing any autonomy it may have in the formation of opinion in discussion'(Mills, p.304). But it seems that nowadays, and at least within the reaches of BIS, (1) many more people are able to express opinions as they receive them; (2) public communications are so organized that there are more chances to immediately and effectively reply to any opinion expressed in public; (3) opinions can readily find an active outlet, even, if necessary, as actions directed against the prevailing system of authority; and (4) authoritative institutions do not so much penetrate as monitor the public, which is thus more or less autonomous in its operations. Be that as it may, the social being of mass society is not fundamentally altered but, rather, becomes more and more a global norm the latest manifestation of which is, precisely, BIS. In other words, what looks like promises of a newly won freedom and steps towards community and a more democratic order is nothing but a function of yet another levelling paradigm in which individuality - of persons or cultural factions - is defused and exists only as a much enervated reaction to a peremptory communality.¹¹¹ Discretely but pervasively governed

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With regard to the defusion of the individual, I am reminded here of Brin's exposition concerning the implementation of unnoticeable, digital miniature cameras coupled with tracking systems and image processors that scan for infractions against the public order (already existent in some locations in England, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, and the USA and spreading!). The question of who controls the surveillance technology affords two possible scenarios: (1) a myriad of surveillance devices report to an exclusive headquarter and citizens are always aware that any word or deed may be noted by authorities; and (2) surveillance devices are everywhere, including centres of authority, and citizens can at all times tune in to any of them to retrieve information for their own interest. Surveillance technology being a normal aspect of BIS, the issue is whether we will be the watched or be watching the watcher. What remains to be asked is: 'Can we stand living exposed to scrutiny, our secrets laid open, if in return we get flashlights of our own that we can shine on anyone who might do us harm - even the arrogant and strong?'; and 'Or is an illusion of privacy worth any prize, even at the cost of surrendering our own right to pierce the schemes of the powerful?'. For more on the technical and philosophical intricacies of this scenario, see Brin *The Transparent Society*, 1998.

by a supposedly representative administration whose bureaucracy relies on the logics of mass statistics and expert opinion to monitor and regulate it, mass society becomes an administered collection of marketable job holders engaged in the economy of collective housekeeping whose sociality is maintained by a host of functionaries under the influence of ideologies equal to the ones of those they manage. The gross aggregates of housekeeping are propagated by secular messiahs of technological evolution who hold out vistas of meaningful self-realization along the lines of those paradigms that enjoy eminent appeal in the secular-scientific world - those pertaining to the Promethean spirit. Prometheans have however no licence for regardless permissiveness, for in contemporary mass society, human behaviour is first of all determined by what is doable and deemed desirable with respect to the economy of its multifarious components and the construction of artifacts that serve to integrate them. Models of formal equality - the most recent and conspicuous one being that of the global society - exist on a 'supreme level' of authority where decisions are more the outcome of persuasion than plebiscite and prepare the grounds for an a priori value system by which to orient human life. Such a model delineates lives and limits human activities to preordained institutional structures that are reified and articulated and can first and foremost be acknowledged only in their concrete existence which, in the case of globalization, is suggested by the expanding and assimilating reification propelled by the global political economy of science, technology, and corporate industry. The currently emerging model promising mass society's directive authority and formal equality on a global scale comprises BIS and GST while eupraxsophy can be taken as complementary. HGE is still an undecided factor in the overall scheme.

During its heyday (19th and 20th centuries), humanist literature was an academic

means employed to inculcate, especially in the future elite, an autonomous, balanced personhood based on the reading of a traditional canon with the aim to create the vision of an ideal nation possessing one history, one culture, one ethnicity, one sexuality, and one language. During this time, a university student was perceived as a blank to be filled by an education aimed chiefly at the creation of a philosophical mind. In the age of BIS and globalization, the intellectual atmosphere differs and the old motives of humanistic indoctrination become questionable: the leading elite has not been dismantled but only become more inconspicuous while at the same time the notion of autonomy can now be discredited because of its incompatibility with systems thought and because individual comportment is established by assent to the prevailing model of formal equality as a member of BIS and the global citizenry. Nowadays, university students are seen as developed personalities making rational choices; education emphasizes administrative, scientific, technological, and cultural studies in concord with BIS and the process of globalization; and educative instruction is no longer conveyed by literature alone but as well via the electronic media. Thus, the nature of the humanistic lore has changed: it has become more suggestive than imperative in its principles, more general than specific in its articulation, more diversified than singular in its expression, more inclusive than exclusive in its scope, and, most importantly, it is no longer tied to the literary media - but, as long as *humans* exist, it is no doubt extant. Sloterdijk is, however, correct in proclaiming the marginal ability of the literary humanist media to produce the political and cultural synthesis of modern mass society, for this synthesis is for the time being achieved by economic forces - through the marketability of worldviews and lifestyles if one will - under the helm of a model of formal equality directing the production, distribution, and use of

income, wealth, and commodities in concord with its defining ideologies, i.e., globalization and BIS. In other words, mass society only marginally relies on the humanist media for its synthesis because it is now achieved by a consciously defined political orientation towards the paradigm imposed by assent to the dominant model of formal equality. But although mass society's synthesis is chiefly economic and political in nature, it is, after all, a human operation requiring appropriate comportment and, as such, it is not exclusive of, or indifferent to, humanistic considerations - which must not be formal but can manifest themselves already in a warm smile or spontaneously helping hand. Which one of the secular humanist voices, formal and informal, will be given overbearing attention remains to be seen and will depend on how human being and being human is predominantly conceived of in the secular-scientific world of markets. Such conception is certainly not carved in stone but may change with appeals of scientific insight and technological feasibility coupled with the economic rule and cultural bias engendered by mass society's *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi* - here, domesticating modes may well range from forms of character training to physio-psychological reprognetics. Scientifically speaking, domesticity in mass society can come to be understood through GST and the global context; scientistically speaking, domesticity can come to be understood through GST, the global context, and a genus' distinguishing reprognetic augmentation. While scientific domesticity involves the usual ideological disagreements between various human denominations and temperaments that can be negotiated on the basis of respect and tolerance, empathy and acceptance, the latter (scientism) intensifies ideological discrepancies by its tendency to relegate or ignore discordant voices and by its especially controversial potential to give rise to fundamentally distinct specimen engaged in mutual

discrimination. Eupraxsophic principles can, however, apply to both the scientific and scientific approach, for, after all, both involve human relationships and, what is more, the second possibly also the creation of a genus which is by necessity embedded in human society and presents the very embodiment of human desire. Both the arbiters of scientific and scientific domesticity ought to be intelligent enough to realize that any conflict leading to the frustration of potentials and resources is wasteful and detrimental to establishing mass society as an efficiently functioning whole. Whether mass society can indeed be gathered into such a whole, into an efficient collective with a common objective lending purpose and cohesion, is questionable.¹¹² So far, any attempt at streamlining and molding humans has but led to an array of neuroses and other disorders and, sooner or later, to revolt - one need only remind oneself of the tensions produced by the protracted imprisonment and enclosure within a society whose pacifying constraints are meant to secure efficiency and productivity. Representing desires for the atypical, these tensions are in need of sublimation and are best vented, for example, through ambitious enterprising and sports and worst through subtle malice and occasional mayhem. Be that as it may, the one purposive human collectivity is not an identifiable given and remains, for now, mere conjecture. I think, however, that mass society has clearly a collectivizing tendency that will be accompanied by sporadic sedition until a common purpose crystallizes out of its own dynamics and is impressed on it by an undeniable advantage. Nietzsche had certainly more than an inkling of this:

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Whether it is nevertheless desirable is another question: if I consider the wasteful aspect of human conflict, i.e., the waste of resources, time, and potential, I wonder whether humans can be *made* to belong to one body, all having similar strength and value standards, so that they refrain from injury, mutual violence, and mutual exploitation and equate their wills.

'Today it seems *to do everyone good* when they hear that society is on the way to adapting the individual to general requirements, and that *the happiness and at the same time the sacrifice of the individual* lies in feeling himself to be a useful member and instrument of the whole: except that one is at present very uncertain as to where this whole is to be sought, whether it is in an existing state or one still to be created, or in the nation, or in a brotherhood of peoples, or in new little economic communalities. What is wanted - whether this is admitted or not - is nothing less than a fundamental remolding, indeed weakening and abolition of the *individual*: one never tires of enumerating and indicting all that is evil and inimical, prodigal, costly, extravagant in the form individual existence has assumed hitherto, one hopes to manage more cheaply, more safely, more equitable, more uniformly if there exist only *large bodies and their members*' (Nietzsche *Daybreak*, p.132).¹¹³

The above was first published in 1881, but the tendencies the excerpt addresses appear to have persisted to this day. That being so, the literary humanist media is not only marginal but perhaps even dispensable to the political and cultural synthesis of modern mass society, for by definition, humanist thought stands and falls with the *human individual* - and that is just about to be abolished.¹¹⁴ Perhaps, if the domestic mold doesn't

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Hollingdale ed. *A Nietzsche Reader*, 1977, p.94

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Dissolving individuality in the collective is aided by dissolving traditional family structures to maximize economic efficacy, for, as long as humankind is emotionally and organizationally fettered by family dynamics, collective productivity and efficiency cannot be consummate. I think that, with the rise of artificial wombs and HGE, the traditional family could be given its death blow. Creatures who are produced in vitro and according to preordained, favoured profiles, who gestate in artificial wombs, and who are perhaps even reared in special, streamlining institutions, are delivered over to the collective as functional and at any time replaceable components. Here, family has at best become a romantic echo from a distant past. Even without alluding to the collective model and considering only the business of involved humans today, it seems as if abolishing motherhood and family responsibilities could simply be a

fit humans, hominids can be made to fit the domestic mold - with it, the mold and the molded would become identical and 'humanist' ideas altogether expendable. But this may be but a hyperbolic scheme of total control, general impotence, and a quasi-conspiracy with nobody in particular to blame. With regard to the dominance of the electronic media and its alleged corrupting of the human character, let it be said that, so far, no unanimous evidence could be found that the electronic media, with its ever expanding offer of multitudinous information and entertainment, indeed supercedes the literary one as there is no proof that it in fact leads to a crucial decline in literacy and, as Sloterdijk has it, the erosion of rationality and human(e) concern - as it stands, these are unfounded scenarios of moral decline and societal dissolution. What can be admitted at most is that, before as well as after the rise of literacy as a mass phenomenon, reason is more refined with some than with others and not everyone is equally concerned with profound literature or their fellow beings. I don't see why, under the influence of the electronic media, this normal state of human affairs would be aggravated. In addition, literary works, which abound today more than ever before, have gained a wide circle of aficionados who value them on their own terms but don't despise the electronic media neither. What has changed, though, is that humanist literature - in any case, now as ever an affair of and for an educated clique - has become largely ineffective as a nation-forming influence. Nowadays, humankind is once again *learning* to organize itself *differently* (not better or worse!), but this does not mean that sympathy and empathy, trust and consideration, fairness and benevolence are about to be replaced by utter sordidness or, in Sloterdijk's words, by

welcome convenience for many.

'bestial' tendencies.¹¹⁵ Human beings are surely imperfect rascals and imperfect saints, but, as a rule, they seek to somehow manage together (notorious power surges and unsolicited impressions admitted) - especially if they can be gathered under maxims such as 'the global village' or 'one people, one world'. Humanist moral decencies are not obsolete because human(e) concerns are everywhere and constantly being raised and, with or without humanist literature, usually responded to with some measure of goodwill. Moreover, because BIS fosters divulgation and liberty of expression, suspicion of authority (popular culture's moral concern par excellence) is easily voiced, disseminated, and mobilized. More than ever, numerous indignant individuals and watch groups are baying for waste or corruption to be exposed and secrets and nefarious schemes to be unveiled. This clearly indicates a strong tendency to apply criticism and accountability to any authority deemed suspicious. Of course, the ensuing process of arguing out the details does not always yield the results that are hoped for and many of the gaffes, bumbles, and inanities of authorities still get covered up, but at least disclosure and confrontation persist and are encouraged by the very dynamics of BIS. Thus the powerful are, to some extent, checked and no longer left at total liberty to make devastating blunders without consent or at least some critical comment from below. But to call this state of affairs 'democracy' is idealistic and merely a matter of personal taste. In any case, attempts at dialogue and negotiation are usually frustrated when concerns and worldviews

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A daring conjecture: maybe, at some point in the future, reasoning is no longer linguistic but based on visual imagery and sounds. For one who reasons in terms of language, it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine such a mentality. Given the increasing influence of the visual media, this development would no doubt present an exemplary instance of the symbiosis of a species and its technology. However extreme this thought may appear, it is questionable whether such a mode of existence would change fundamental commiseration, for it is not the content of association that is altered but only its medium.

dissenting from the general opinion are overshadowed by the thrust of a majority's bias and asininity or when the sheer variety of standpoints involved excludes consent from the onset (as it seems to be the case today).

Considering the sheer proportion of today's human populace, I find that, in spite of our differences, humans manage surprisingly well and are no more - but perhaps also no less - given to the sordid than ever before. Granted, catering to the still growing number of human beings greatly tolls the environment, and changing patterns of sociality can lead to desolation and alienation and uproot whole cultures, but I think that these effects are the unfortunate though inevitable results of a fallible humanity, administering and administered, acting as it can and thinks best at a given time and place. And so it goes on - to human beings and their divergent concerns, this world has never been a perfect paradise and never will be; the common good can only be approximated, and quarrelling over the question whether it is, for example, reasonable and legitimate to genetically enhance our species to rear a posthumanity in the name of this good is, essentially, of no avail. The initiative always lies with those who have the means; what remains to be done by all others is to remain open to the human experiment lest they be crushed by it (or resist their being crushed in avowed rebellion). Remaining open means to at least allow for the possibility of something radically new and, if that is found wanting, to try to negotiate its characteristics with its arbiters or to effect its prohibition. In our loosely democratic society, this involves an expertly, and very demanding, legalistic undertaking, for power is governmentally vested, secular-scientific, and commercial, and must be persuaded on all three grounds. In addition, the establishment thrives by the lure of benefits and promises it holds out to the mass of its partisans which, when made to believe that their interests are

at stake, can easily be turned into a force decisively opposing any daring challenger.

Though attempting to regulate the new is what can be done, nothing will be fixed for all time to come. The regulations of today are never those of tomorrow if the new has proven useful and trustworthy and future generations grow accustomed to it. And, of course, this also applies to genetic technologies and the novelties they may engender, whatever they may be.

Chapter Four

Voices of the Human Park

Here I will sample some ideas pertinent to the human park that respectively direct attention to various ills obtaining in the secular-scientific world. In addition to those heard in previous chapters, I have chosen them because they offer unique, thought-provoking alternatives to the exclusively scientific, commercial, and scientific-technological discourses permeating society. Each voice is representative of a worthwhile concern that today is all too easily overlooked, relegated, or dismissed and presents a vista inviting to ponder a new moral and ethical sensitivity conducive to the human enterprise of today and tomorrow. I will then proceed to expand on own understanding of the human park and HGE.

The Scientific-Spiritual

Somerville foresees the promise of a new societal paradigm due to the irreconcilable clash between the 'pure science' and 'pure mystery' views. She defines 'pure science' as the view that humans are nothing more than the biologically active products of their genes, whose highest attributes are logical, cognitive, rational functioning. From this rather scientific perspective, 'mystery' and 'spirit' are irrelevant. By contrast, those with a 'pure mystery' view hold to fundamental religious dogmas and espouse an anti-scientific creationist theory instead of an evolutionist one. The approach described by Somerville is the 'science-spirit' view - a sense of the 'secular sacred' and an acceptance of a 'space for spirit'. This view is 'perhaps...best described as an openness to

all ways of knowing, a comfort with uncertainty, ambiguity and paradox, and the courage to admit that one does not know and to change one's mind. It is a complex, active, constantly changing interweaving of certainty and uncertainty - with the certain open to becoming uncertain and vice versa'(Somerville, p.20). Those with the 'science-spirit' view hold to aspects of the 'pure science' and 'pure mystery' views but seek to find a non-competitive structure that accommodates both - they are amazed at the achievements of science but also awe-struck by the mysteries that knowledge reveals and the possibility of 'something beyond'. Somerville believes that the inherent tension between science and 'spirit' is fundamental to the disclosure of a third dimension (the scientific-spiritual one), i.e., a space that can hold us as fully living human beings (and fully human living beings) and allow us to escape the linearity of either the science or mystery view. She is especially concerned about the way those with one of the 'pure' views tend to summarily dismiss those who endorse the opposite view - each polarity is simply ignoring the other. Somerville seeks an arrangement that permits at least a consideration of spiritual implications - despite the uncertainties of what 'spirit' or its implications may be. Along this line, she imagines a new, societal worldview that would help humans live both as individuals and as local and global societies at the peak of their ethical potential in the context of both science *and* spirit. She believes the inevitable uncertainties in the 'science-spirit' approach demand a high degree of courage. Humans must promote active tolerance and learn to live with irresolvable conflict. In conclusion, she hopes for a time when humans depend more on trust and responsibility than on rights. At this time, individualism will still hold sway, but it will be enhanced by a broader sense of human

spirit and community for each and all in society.¹¹⁶

Somerville points to the need of preserving an open-minded spirituality that accommodates both the mysterious and scientific, lest humans lose all sense of reverence for the marvels of creation and because, no matter how it has been denigrated in the secular-scientific world, concern about the 'spiritual' appears to be a persistent, human trait in the face of the unfathomable mystery existence ultimately was, is, and, in all likelihood, will be. Along this line, Somerville's plea for the science-spirit view is the least problematic, for, despite the efforts to argue the 'spiritual' out of existence, it remains an apparently unresolvable riddle essential to human existence. The spirit-physicality dualism is a consistent mystery and the spiritual itself eludes the credibly conclusive grasp of secular theorists. By allowing a sense of the stupendously, unfathomably, and ultimately mysterious to inform human undertakings, the worldly hustle and bustle is put into perspective because it can be asked whether there is not, after all, some essential foundation of human existence that is being violated by rigorously discounting the

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Somerville *The Ethical Canary*, 2000. Her work has been criticised by Arthur Schafer: '...our goal should be to obtain for humanity the maximum benefits from...new medical technologies while minimizing the risks of serious harms. We should also seek to distribute the resulting benefits and harms equitably. This is likely to be the greatest challenge we face, and there is little to be gained from Somerville's quasi-religious appeals to "respect for the human spirit." Instead, we would be well advised to create independent regulatory bodies and careful regulations which will enable us to resist both the powerful religious lobbies who would dismiss the new technologies as "unnatural" or inherently wrong" and the greedy corporations which want to plunge full-steam ahead into risky territory' (Schafer, CAUT Bulletin ACPPU, A 11, March 2001). Though he overestimates the power of religious lobbies in a liberal environment, I think Schafer is correct in his criticism but ignores the reconciling potential of Somerville's notion of the 'science-spirit' view.

spiritual. Thus, worldly zeal combines with doubt and wonder and gives rise to the conciliating science-spirit view.

Prudential Apprehension

Jonas argues that modern technology is marked by a radical departure from everything previously known. It has disturbed the balance between humanity and nature in ways that are long-range, cumulative, irreversible, and planetary in scale. It has permanently altered the biosphere, it has challenged our definitions of life and death, and it has created a freedom without values. Traditionally, ethics presumed that the effects of human activity are limited, but this perception has changed with modern technology. In its view, nature is assimilated to the technical paradigm and has ceased to be an end in itself. In this context, humans may matter to themselves but a larger, self-transcending system of values that gathers all under its tenets is no longer available. In consequence, humans become the objects of their own fabrications. Jonas senses a moral nihilism pervading contemporary human society that deprives humans of a consistent image of humanity and hence deflects any responsibility for the future of humankind and the planet. The danger of disaster through scientific technology arises mainly through the magnitude of its success, which is most notably economic and biological. Against this, Jonas sets his 'imperative of responsibility' - here, responsibility moves to the center of the ethical stage. Modern technology has introduced actions on such novel scale, objects, and consequences that the framework of former ethical systems can no longer contain them. Because no previous ethics had to consider the global condition of human life and the distant future - and even existence - of the human species, a new dimension of responsibility must be

applied for a reform of ethical considerations. The new questions demand a conception of duties and rights for which previous ethics and metaphysics cannot even provide the principles, let alone a ready doctrine. Jonas' imperative of responsibility responding to the new type of human activity and addressed to the new type of agency that operates it is to ensure that present choices include the future wholeness of humanity among the objects of human will so that human activity is such that its effects are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life. What is needed in order to fulfill this imperative is a scientific futurology because responsibility as a correlate of power must be commensurate with the latter's scope and that of its exercise as well as an imaginative heuristic of fear that tells humans what is possibly at stake and what they must be aware of. For the sake of prudence, prophecies of doom must assume precedence over prophecies of bliss.¹¹⁷

Jonas points to the need of preserving a foreboding attitude towards modern technology lest humans accede credulously to their undoing through instrumental objectification. His appeal lends itself readily to arguments of the fallacious Slippery Slope type, but considering the widespread and blind enthusiasm for technological contrivances that has become a hallmark of the secular-scientific human, his words of caution are appropriate because only a considerable degree of fear seems to be able to counter the thrall of ill-advised passions. However, to the extropian, Jonas' admonition is likely to amount to little more than an old-fashioned fancy.

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Jonas *The Imperative of Responsibility*, 1984.

Democratic Dialogue

As an advocate of public matters and of 'enlightened rationalism', Habermas raises philosophical concerns with global significance, and his main questions are: (1) How can the legal norms of our constitution become justifiably obliging for all?; and (2) How is consent in a democracy and among states possible in spite of a plurality of opinions and interests? Basic to answering these questions are the insights that (1) reason must become an intersubjective discourse reversing the traditional notion of reason as subjective possession¹¹⁸; and (2) a community operating under ideal discursive conditions can develop a consensus that permits a conception of progress *and* democracy.¹¹⁹ Habermas' work involves 'public space' as a novel typological, historical, and critical concept. His idea offers four perspectives: (1) the paradox of public is that it is a social space in which private persons think and act; (2) reason, rationality, and truth can be created, are no longer subjectively related, and are no longer individual possessions¹²⁰; (3) it is necessary

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The intersubjective sharing of linguistic meanings means that at least two basically different individuals meet with the intention to share perceptions which they uphold as true or accurate. That interlocutors, however, meet with the intention of sharing and negotiating perceptions rests on Habermas' disputed thesis that one always and only begins communication with an other in order to arrive at a consensus (that is ideally mutually gratifying):

'Habermas meint mit dieser...These, dass man überhaupt nur etwas sagt um mit dem Gegenüber einen Konsensus zu erreichen'(Habermas: zur Einführung, p.71).

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In brief, the ideal conversational situation obtains when all interlocutors (1) have equal chances to use acts of communicative speech; (2) have equal chances to contribute to and manipulate the discourse; (3) can actively express themselves through representative speech; and (4) can make actively use of regulative speech(for a more detailed exposition of these four points, see *ibid*, pp.55-6).

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With Habermas, what can be admitted to the discourse community as reasonable and rational is

to try to make transparent the individual and collective interests motivating the production of knowledge inside and outside the academic sphere; and (4) like Habermas, intellectuals must assume their role as successful and effective thinkers in, and for, the public (the influence of intellectuals can however have multiple and unnecessary negative effects and must not be overestimated). His theory of communicative action states that reason lies in the way by which we clarify and bring to bear our points of view in discussion. The following principles apply to this theory: (1) it must be clarified what entitlement to consideration is; (2) it must be clarified what the difference is between claims to consideration of truth, accuracy, and veracity; and (3) certain relationships between claims to consideration must be analysed.

Habermas criticises the political situation and the lack of intelligent communication in the political sphere. His response to this predicament is: (1) we must realize that standards and manners of communication and their procedural characteristics are central to the improvement of public structures; and (2) the formation of democratic opinion and life must guarantee, first, that the procedure involves relevant themes; second, that the greatest possible spectrum of divergent opinions, including marginal, active, and passive voices, is consulted; and, third, that the information is reliable. But considering the extent

determined by the functional conditions obtaining in the 'ideal, conversational situation' for discourse. Truth is not a consensual criteria but surfaces where the discursive discharge of claims to validity explains the *meaning* of that moment of absolute necessity that we associate with truth.

'...führt er die "ideale Sprechsituation" ein, die als Eingangsvoraussetzung für den Diskurs gelten soll. Ich verstehe die Diskurstheorie der Wahrheit so, dass sie den diskursiv erzielten Konsens nicht als Wahrheitskriterium auszeichnen soll; vielmehr soll sie anhand der diskursiven Einlösung von Geltungsansprüchen den Sinn jenen Moments von Unbedingtheit erklären, das wir mit dem Begriff Wahrheit verbinden' (ibid, pp.54-5, 56).

to which the public is commercialized, this cannot work because the sphere of public argumentation cannot be drafted on the market model. Because it is important that we resolve fundamental controversies, it is to be hoped that the 'democratic' society is capable of employing policies and regulations that can productively guide the discourse.

To Habermas, discourse is like narrating a story by which the nature of human action can be discerned. Since a story is the basic form of discourse, humans must learn how stories are told. In order to understand the nature of a story, literature and philosophy must converge. With regard to the democratization of the public, two points should be noted: (1) if there is an immense variety of public actors, consensus is no longer the foremost problem but rather the standard of communication; and (2) the mass media and electronic communication are, of course, needed, even though a progressive loss of quality is evident.¹²¹

Today, news are produced by more or less large, biassed organizations with vested interests. With a bit of institutional fantasy, this state of affairs can be countered by an electoral procedure which allows every voter a second voice for some particular interest group (e.g., some environmental or human rights organization). This offers a possibility to balance the organizational advantage of dominant interest groups which divide the production of information among themselves. With yet another bit of institutional fantasy, a framework for public communication could be cultivated that is more lively, more diverse, more pluralistic, and more sophisticated. And with that, democracy stands or

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Habermas states that, in the past decade, there has been an almost daily, observable decline of excellence in electronic communication and mass media (*Jürgen Habermas in Stanford, 1999*).

falls! Moreover, with the growth of global networks and markets, etc., increases the variety of possible contacts and information. But this process is not also an expansion of a common world because an expanding, public consciousness requires an ever greater universe of *common* visions and meanings. It remains unclear whether the expanding public consciousness, still rooted in subjective life-worlds, can comprehend systemically differentiated relations or whether postulating autonomous systemic processes fragments the consciousness and colonizes the life-world¹²². In the same vein, the globally increasing density of communicative correlations does not necessarily create a public consciousness integrated around the same topics. Rather, it does *not* mean the interrelation of relevant viewpoints, themes, and contributions. This, however, is in ever more comprehensive arenas necessary for the formation of meanings and intentions fundamental to a world public. The globally accessible inventory of thoughts and information show us the inscrutable interdependence of the chain of occurrences and the unpredictability of non-intentional side effects. With it, the consciousness of the giants produced by society itself is intensified while the initiative for private action weakens. What is necessary is to evoke a desire to act as the praxis of citizens which communicate in order to autonomously organize their cohabitation. This implies, for example, that fundamentalist claims must be compatible with the rights of multiple coexistence and that rationality tackles problems with a view to a commonly agreeable resolution.

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The 'colonization of the life-world' refers to Habermas' notion that, historically, society counters the stress of increasing complexity by introducing relief systems (e.g. BIS and GST) which then assume independence and react upon the life-world itself.

'...eine Gesellschaft, die bei steigender Komplexität in einem historisch zu verfolgenden Entkoppelungsprozess zu ihrer eigenen Entlastung Systeme auf sich entlässt, die sich verselbständigen und...in die Lebenswelt zurückwirken. Das nennt er...Kolonialisierung der Lebenswelt' (ibid, p.82).

I have provided a comparatively lengthy introduction to Habermas' theory of communicative action because in this time of a citizenry's dubious, public conversations, his model of a politically empowering discourse seems to be of special significance. Habermas points to the need for an enlightened, political discourse that involves the public in decision-making processes, lest it be helplessly handed over to the arbitrariness of power. But criticizing the actuality of centralized, interested dissemination of marketable, biassed information is not enough - his theory of communicative action must answer to further, and perhaps more fundamental, problems. For one may well wonder how, in a world whose approximately 3600 languages are for the larger part non-literate dialects, he will account for the illiterate voices of the human community to further the democratic cause. If, in this time of planetary paradigms, toying with the elusive idea of democracy remains a privilege of developing countries, one is entitled to denounce aspirations to a global democracy not only as illusory but also as hypocritical, for such 'democratic' order would really be promulgated by a minority. Contributing also to this problematic is the issue of exclusive domains of discourse evident where highly specialized, professional jargons pertain. By their very nature, such linguistically delineated discourses maintain disparity and are essentially undemocratic unless they are rendered commonly accessible and can thus be democratically assessed. Other fundamental and undemocratic institutions to be noted are those of jurisprudence and education: of what use to a citizenry concerned with equity is a body of law so extensive and intricate that it not only requires highly-trained specialists to penetrate and sort out its convolutions but is, because of its complexity, also substantially lost to all those wishing to readily know of their rights (and responsibilities) as democratically-disposed citizens?; and of what use to a citizenry

(supposed to be) concerned with democracy is an educative system that is predominantly geared at producing the utility of a conformable labour force and hardly capable of imbuing any deeper meaning than personal, material gratification?

With regard to HGE, Habermas claims that a relation between creator and rerogenetic creation contravenes the principle of reciprocity that ensures equality of status and treatment. That way, HGE would violate the morality of reciprocal acknowledgment, the very basis of 'our' sociality.¹²³ This claim is problematic because by resting on a human/nonhuman divide and the fuzzy notion of cloning, it presupposes that HGE necessarily leads to a fundamental inequality between (human) manufacturer and (nonhuman) product. But this can only be so as long as the rerogenetic produce is categorically considered nonhuman. Nothing could credibly warrant this move. But if the genrich must be considered human (and - since 'humanity' is not innate but a type of domestication applicable as well to the genrich - what would speak against it?), the morality of reciprocal acknowledgement must obtain by necessity. And what if the creator itself is genrich? Habermas' worry about reciprocity becomes more plausible if one considers the possibility that a genrich *posthumanity* could come to look down on traditional *humanity*.¹²⁴

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'...die Grenze...die das Verhältnis der Wechselseitigkeit betrifft...darf nicht überschritten werden, damit nicht anstelle eines Verhältnisses von Gleichgestellten eines von Schöpfer und Geschöpf entsteht, das man als genetisches Vorbild und dessen Nachbildung bezeichnen muss. Dies wäre...beim Klonen der Fall. Das Klonen würde die Moral der wechselseitigen Anerkennung, die die Basis unserer Sozialität ist, verletzen' (ibid, p.62).

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For Jürgen Habermas' opinion on HGE, see his book *Die Zukunft der Menschlichen Natur: Auf dem Weg zu einer liberalen Eugenik* ('The Future of Human Nature: Towards a Liberal Eugenic'), 2001.

Market Socialism

Roemer envisions a market socialism that would put an end to the commercial lobby and thus rid society of the inequities and corporate tyranny engendered by capitalism. According to his hypothetical model, a nation's public firms, i.e., those firms that have been nationalized once they have attained a certain size, are a resource and a liability possessed by all citizens. A strategy of billing accountability comes as a life-time grant (delivered to a citizen at adulthood and returned to the national treasury upon his or her demise) of a marketable but non-exchangeable, non-transferable in right, variable social dividends in the form of mutual funds coupons that constitute the nationalized share in firms in form of a citizen's per capita dividend in the nation's profits. Nationalized firms cannot legally be captured by interested citizens whose corporate shares consist of social dividends. Wage and salary differentials are narrowed and the remaining inequality balanced by everyone's share in society's overall profits. National firms are monitored by banks which are, in turn, nationally owned and overseen by a democratically elected board of directors. Roemer's system of market socialism adjusts existing democratic-capitalistic structures to an acceptable degree to socialist ideas so that some utilization of existing political and economic dynamics - albeit with a decisively socialistic slant - is allowed for. The fact that everyone shares in the economy of the nation is taken to instill a common concern about the course of economic operations whose ensuing repercussions, beneficial as well as detrimental, are now the affair of all. Roemer's model is pro market competition, pro parliamentary democracy, pro welfare, pro equalization of education and income, pro equalization of responsibility, and, at heart, geared to the maximising of human self-realization and self-esteem as essential to a greater social harmony and

commonweal while acknowledging the necessity of an incentive principle able to accommodate people as they are, namely, self-regarding. It advocates a market socialism that stresses not some form of planning or market but a functional unity of these two essential and dynamic economic ingredients, and it combines the strengths of the market with socialism through the synthesis of efficiency and egalitarian aspirations.¹²⁵

Roemer points to the need for replacing the traditional capitalist system with a more egalitarian one, lest humans perpetuate the economic inequities that are the source of so much antagonism and hardship. Most importantly, with the nationalization of firms, genetic engineering as an economic enterprise becomes divulgate and a liability for all citizens. That way, abuses, excesses, and other unsolicited ventures could be swiftly and effectively checked and punished by a nation's body of discontent shareholders who can wield a democratic power to veto by the possibility to withdraw funds from any business project that is felt to transgress the limits of the agreeable. Though doubtlessly a noble idea, the notion of market socialism is also an immensely problematic one. In countries where the capitalist attitude is an accepted and well-established part of the fabric of life, the very idea of market socialism goes against capitalist *and* popular sentiments so that it can be expected that the acquisitive-minded will be in vehement opposition to relinquishing their inclinations, prospects, and privileges under such a radically levelling model. Be that as it may, the dynamics of Roemer's market socialism would make the enterprise of genetic research and technology certainly accountable to more than an elitist clique with vested interests - it is even questionable if it could take off at all, for the

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Roemer *A Future for Socialism*, 1994.

genetic industry would be nationalized and substantial, vital support could be withdrawn from it in a sweep the moment its undertakings become dubious to many. The good side of this model is thus that it makes industries vulnerable to more than just the whims of the market - it makes them vulnerable to public opinion to an unprecedented extent and ensures that industries will comply with what is felt to be agreeable by the many.

Redemption from Self

Part of Macy's exposition of general systems theory and its parallels to the Buddhist theory of mutual causality is her concern with the effective instillment of moral values. Moral values are not acquired by intellectual assent alone but involve a reorganization of personality. By the same token, unless moral values transform the actor, they do not transform society. Her stress on looking through the mirage of the abiding self to break the bonds of self-centeredness is consistent with GST and emphasizes the cognitive system's purging itself from malapropos modes of awareness of which the cardinal illusion of separate selfhood is especially havocking because the pursuit of the self's claims, certitudes, and possessions is dysfunctional both to the cognitive system and to the larger systemic hierarchy. The self is not a self-existing entity but a fluid and changing pattern, a process interlinked and co-arising with the universe. The personality patterns making up the self constitute an open system and go through stages of 'positive disintegration' before they reorganize into a more inclusive and adaptable whole. This metamorphosis involves the positive feedback process of the individual's progressive 'dying' to its separateness and increasing internalization of the needs and joys of other beings. Realizing the illusory nature of self is, however, so contrary to the ingrown

operating assumptions of humans that it requires diligent practice to unhinge them, to defuse the defences that trigger craving, aversion, and anger. These egocentric reactions are not to be suppressed so much as dissolved in the clear strong light of meditative awareness. Meditative awareness shows a void where before a substantial self was thought to reside and leads to a sense of greater connectedness with the phenomenal world of beings - a sense of intrinsic relatedness that becomes both the occasion for and means of a love that is no longer a narrow affirmation of likeable idiosyncracies but, in the most general sense, an affective but impartial realization of unity in diversity. Meditative practice that makes this possible is not, therefore, at odds with the imperatives for social action. Nor are efforts for institutional change antithetical to the search for such enlightenment. Personal development in its contemplative mode has often been seen as an escape from social engagement and responsibility, and it can be an escape if the inner objects of contemplation are considered more valuable than the world outside. But skilful meditation is a journey where humans confront their self-deceptions and delusions and are, in turn, empowered to act socially and find the freedom to respond in simplicity and immediacy to their fellow beings. Because it overcomes disassociation and fosters a sense of interdependence, meditation is a formidable means for the reorganization of personality in order to arrive at an attitude conducive to the maintenance of systemic harmony.¹²⁶

Macy points to the need for an abiding realization of the self's illusoriness, lest humans remain entrapped in this inherently conflictive image of their own making. This idea is problematic because it is far from clear how humans can plausibly be made to

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Macy Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory, 1991.

endorse introspective self-scrutiny to the extent that the perceptual foundation underlying their very being as self-conscious entities is seriously questioned and successfully decentred. The very thought of it can indeed be deemed unnatural and contrary to what is commonly considered natural, desirable, and feasible. Still, the contemplative life on a communal scale, however fantastic and remote in its actualization, may hold out the only effective key to resolving the conflictive inherent in human thought whose variant tendencies become manifest in societal discord and are in turn nourished by it.

A Personal Perspective

Like no other creature, self-cognizant *homo sapiens* is alarmed about its timidity and vulnerability and in pressing need of safety and security - and that even more so in the secular-scientific world where the traditional shelter of the spiritual, i.e., the religious, the sacred, the incorporeal, has come into disrepute. Underlying all human attempts to soothe existential angst and escape the vicissitudes of existence through the guile of technological sheltering is, in general, really a rebellion against existence as it is given and, in particular, a rebellion against human nature with its feeble physicality and mental dread. Human ingenuity in the service of this sheltering is, with all its powers to adjust the affairs of existence, only a function of the perceived frailty and fear and, as such, no indicator of greatness but of weakness.

Countless human beings are presently struggling with adverse economic, political, and social circumstances brought about by clashes and drastic transitions of worldviews, and all the while, the Promethean enterprises of science and technology are boldly and gaily pushing the frontiers towards an allegedly better world for all, moral ambiguities

notwithstanding. Considering the enormous diversity of lives affected and the uproar of conflicting temperaments, standpoints, and customs to be settled along with the ills of the shopkeepers' more or less subtle lobbying that has befallen the Promethean enterprise, it becomes clear that this cannot be a smooth ride for anyone but for the most comfortable, complacent, and blindly enthusiastic. This is the path which humanity will tread for some time to come - longing back to the 'good old times' is a futile self-deception while being credulous and reckless in the conviction that the genuine and good global community is just around the corner is based on an all too arguable estimation of human affairs. If worse comes to worst (and this is likely), the global community will be an economically and technologically enforced amalgam attained at considerable cost to humanity and thus not a 'good' achievement but rather one that deserves the infamous label 'grandiose'. To my knowledge, humans have never unanimously embraced any cause, and so contesting maxims, power struggles, and the dynamics of victors and underdogs are likely to persist despite the gloss-over provided by media hype and prophets of progress. Considering the widespread acquiescence to ideologies of power with their cunningly self-serving marketing of demeanor, the conflict of maxims can intensify sharply as modes of human being strive for dominance that advocate a remodelling of human life and physiognomy so radical that a no less radical opposition is to be expected if persuasion by the novelties' presumed blessings fails. To be sure, well-meaning voices recommending this or that for the proper upkeep and amelioration of the human park are not lacking, but what has been so far impossible to achieve is the formulation of a recipe for life on which at least the human majority can unanimously agree. Any idealistic projection of such a recipe, a comprehensive theory for human life if one will, is wishful thinking and clearly an

implausible piece of fiction - which is the reason why, contrary to my initial intention, I refrained from espousing it and wound up having nothing else to offer other than this broad and inconclusive engagement with the human park. Even if the moral decencies and institutional reforms outlined by Kurtz were in fact universally applicable, it remains that humans are always afflicted by something, are never satisfied for long, and are never in total agreement. There is simply no ethical concept or moral sense that can settle arguments once and for all and rescue humans from the scourges *and* blessings of their own making. Indeed, by looking at the contesting attempts to make sense of the fleeting multitude of ideational constructs and their practical manifestations it appears as if all aims are, in the end, transitory or abortive; all achievements unsatisfying or evanescent; and all works so and so much labour of effort and success and failure which consummate in nothing definitive - all intellectual and tangible finitudes of human life are in form only, and these forms pursue one another in a futile circle. Whoever (including, of course, the author) claims that one's notion of the human condition is more fact than fiction forgets that it is abundantly clear, as revision after revision revolutionizes any field of inquiry, that, at the most fundamental level and in all fields of inquiry, humans live in a lofty web of imagination - but, then, that is perhaps all they can do. Alas, I am afraid that as long as the notion of self and its corollary egocentrism reign the mind, the human tragedy is insoluble. In this sense, I appreciate Macy for her contemporary take on the key idea of self, which is the very pillar of egoism and root of all human conflict.

Human being is not human in the essence of being but a hominid becomes so by being human, and being human depends in turn on the humanizing influences without which *homo sapiens* ceases to be human. Human being is first and foremost a matter of

becoming, it is learned through domestication (the enculturation and trials entailed by social living), and what is produced as meaning in this context has meaning only in relation to human beings. Thus, being human is either a coming into the meaning or a betraying of it, churning out moral agents that are faced with the problem of how to be and even how not to be. As the producers of meaning, they live in a world of their own making and are pressed to adequately assimilate their being human to it, lest the conception they have of themselves as human beings be at odds with the barely envisioned and understood constitution of the very world necessary to ensure the meaningfulness of their existence. In assimilating their being human to the world, humans must keep in mind that being human is a desideratum inherent in human being, which is not given explicitly but comes as an interpretation of experience. The inquiry into the meaning of being human must then begin with an analysis of the underlying experience, which, with the rise of HGE, poses the question whether a hominid will remain a humanized and humanizing animal or can become also a domestic product whose humanity is not only determinable like never before but disputable as well.

The world of human artifacts is, to use Heidegger's notion, within the house of Being, which is an intuited, ontological whole beyond subjective objectification and only to be glimpsed in a moment of 'noetic calm'. So far, recognition of the house of Being and a home in it has been reserved for devout ascetics. The majority of humans does not belong to these elect, must remain ignorant of the house of Being, and find their home elsewhere or be restless wanderers. But genuine wanderers unbound by deed and creed and openly pledging to the sojourner's fate are an outmost rarity, for in a world of fashioned and fashionable necessity, only very few are willing to forsake the identity and

comfort that comes with the reification of ideas. To the majority, then, the world of artifacts offers itself as their one and only home because it is here where human weakness can be readily - and in ever more promising ways - accommodated by fashionable technologies of which HGE and nanotechnology are the most recent, significant novelties. In this particular case, human ingenuity is the function of a frailty that has the potential of translating into an unprecedented mode of domesticity. Also, coexistence in the superficiality of a well-controlled and decorous habituation can be ascribed to the continuous, visceral awareness of human frailty in need of a safeguard. This shelter is a convenient and, depending on the level of civil sophistication, even a prestigious home, and *homo faber* has taken on the monopolist task of presenting and providing it as an appealing part and parcel of the world. The appeal of *homo faber's* home in the house of Being is always relative to the contrivances which are developed and endorsed over time, for it is their sheltering potential that stimulates the mind and stirs the emotions of both the potent and weak the most. With HGE, this home in the world of artifacts has gained a new significance: it is about to be fashioned from the very material that constitute the building blocks of life. In this sense, HGE hints at the possibility that the human psychophysiological organization itself might become the eminent space for promising a shelter from the vicissitudes of existence, *for promising perfection*. As genetic research advances and makes available an ever increasing variety of human and nonhuman genetic material, the concern with life comes to lie more with what can be made *of* life rather than *for* life. The underlying Promethean mission allegedly takes place in the name of human welfare and proceeds under the auspices of lobbyists while ethical boards and anxious moralists are out to regulate its course by inciting public or legislative concerns as a check to the

excesses of scientific enthusiasm and the dictates of commerce. Of course, the reprogenetic undertaking is hard pressed because, for the time being, it poses a radical challenge to customary morality and a seemingly unsurmountable ethical problem. To make things worse, the venture also admits bluntly of genetic piracy, adamant commercialization, and genetic discrimination.¹²⁷ HGE promises to complement the world of *homo faber* in a crucial way by providing an albeit questionable meaning where meaningless and confusion about human being and being human reign. There ensues a new understanding of human being either in the form of a new home for human being and a new way of being human or as an evolutionary stage to be transcended. In a more critical tone, I may add that the reprogenetically altered human body becomes the esteemed locus of meaning for the potential complacency resulting from the promise of its perfection. In a way, then, the human body is genetically assimilated to the highest expectations humans or aspiring posthumans can have with regard to the persisting quasi-sanctity of existence. Meaning becomes thus a function of that human physio-psychological well-being or perfection that provides a formidable, because 'reliable', resort to direction and purpose, comfort and stability, safety and security. I hasten to say that exclusively celebrating excellence in form of a reprogenetic perfection of the human physio-psychological constitution is an extreme form of anthropocentrism that, if not dispelled by the inalienable consciousness of an incorporating and transcending systemic

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Apropos of commercialization: in the fall of 2000, I observed several times a television advertisement for the benefits of genetically altered rice. Curiously, after a short while, the campaign was discontinued without apparent reason. I suspect that this was a pilot project meant to survey the public response and that, should HGE become a reality, it is only a matter of time before the ideal progeny is advertised in much the same way.

involvement, can be safely considered a pathological form of narcissism. To prevent this malaise, it is to be desired - not to be bemoaned - that human *individuality*, as the space promising meaningful perfection, be dissolved in systemic processes, i.e., if the consciousness of self is superseded by the consciousness of systemic involvement.

Correspondingly, my ideal projection of the hominid species is that of a contemplative genus that has overcome conflict because it has overcome self-regard. A, at least for the time being, no less fantastic projection (albeit with a, to me, more realistic ring to it) is that of the hominid species as a quasi-enforced global collective whose affairs are informed by the dictate of its aggregated egocentrism. By its very homogeneity and exclusivity, this collective must be continuously on guard against forces that could upset its integrity and is likely to engage in conflict with whatever is alien to it and cannot be naturalized (which includes the forcible assimilation of what is not of its kind but nonetheless useful to the sustenance of the collective).

GST challenges the conception of traditional dichotomies and recognizes instead the universal interrelationships of open systems. Information feedback and processing serve as a kind of all-embracing scientific description of how organisms anticipate and respond to changing conditions over time. GST is a philosophy of becoming par excellence because it stresses the interdependent co-arising of open systems, the totality of which constitutes a patterned network of organic activity. The smallest genetically relevant constituent of a life organism is DNA, which presents encoded information that is fundamentally determinative of that organism's structure and function. GST, as a theoretical paradigm, cannot overcome anthropocentrism, but it can help by shifting its emphasis away from aloof disregard to concerned inclusion - away from a being over and

against to a sense of *being of*, *being with*, and *being in*. That way, GST appears to be the most promising 'truth' humans have come up with in their long history of scientific inquiry into the nature of existence and seems to indicate nothing short of a dawning, cognitive revolution. Together with Roemer's model of market socialism and Habermas' model of empowering communication, this ideal reform of human cognizance could provide an effective check to undertakings detrimental to systemic integrity through the re-politicalization of a citizenry now accountable as a whole for the health and wealth of society. The economy nationalized (or, under the appropriate government, even globalized), the inordinately acquisitive class of capitalists and their share-holding supporters dismantled, systemic understanding waxing, and a more democratic participation in policy-making enabled, a society could emerge whose axiology is informed by a public sphere in which enlightened participants are liberated from the malaise of conscience-stupefying, socially numbing influences of manipulative, status- and profit-oriented marketing strategies that nowadays brazenly corrupt democratic aspirations and principles.

Until such a revolution - the overall re-organization of humanity around principles of systems thought - occurs, meaning continues to come in ambiguous form to human beings and renders quandaries and conflict inevitable. Encouraged by the practical successes of the scientific-technological venture that led to discontent with remaining in the divine fold, humans have become the instigators, propagators, and voluntary and involuntary partisans of an exploratory, frontier-pushing audacity which constitutes the very lifeblood of the Promethean enterprise - the principle nexus for orienting themselves in the world and life. Consequently, they have become wagerers for understanding,

explanation, and meaning to whom traditional religiosity is no longer the chief existential guidance but either subordinate to the Promethean strive, remote and insignificant, or irrelevant (at least as long as no drastically upsetting circumstance unsettles the secular-scientific trust and thrust). Here, meaning is no longer preordained but, first and foremost, a matter of negotiating the influences that, for a given time, come to constitute humanity - if negotiation is omitted or fails, power comes to equal meaning. Considering the function of BIS, it appears paradoxical that its systemic dynamics might have the potential to contravene an ascent to a 'higher' systemic realization - the synergetic-symbiotic consciousness of being part of a systemic whole and its corollary, ecumenical mindfulness and care liberated from hopeless confusion, inconsideration, and the spell of no longer appropriate 'truths' - through the proliferation of a superabundance of trivial surface meanings. GST, in order to imbibe the systemic sensitivity, must, therefore, ideally come to supersede attitudes and conceptualizations which create perceptual shallowness, interested boundaries, and excesses violating the systemic integrity. The question that arises here is how it can be avoided that what has been so far suggested does not amount to a mere fanciful overtaxing of the humanly normal and feasible. In unison with Arendt, one answer can be that humans must come to think what they do - that is, they must develop the cognitive maturity necessary to overcome thoughtlessness in action in order to effectively participate in the arena of politics instead of merely remaining, for the most part at any rate, bamboozled and administered partisans - , and I think that Macy's idea of personal development in its contemplative mode (through the cultivation of skilful meditation) is a formidable means to this end. But it is a most challenging direction to take, for it puts into question, and works against much of, what has come to be

acknowledged as humanly desirable.

As it stands, humans are involved in ongoing strife and conflict, engaged in a struggle for a suitable existence, seeking peace and happiness, and cultivating tolerance and fellowship while, at the same time, they foster racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, national, and ideological divisions. Under the thrall of selfhood, humans breed contradiction and confusion in thought, feeling, and action: they preach non-violence and love while maintaining weaponry and attitudes that perpetrate hatred and bloodshed; they justify and encourage ruthless competition in almost every walk of life in the name of profit, status, society, culture, and civilization; and they champion the causes of freedom, fraternity, and equality while availing themselves of every opportunity for dominion, self-advancement, and superiority. As a result, human life is but a series of conflicts that constitute a veritable battleground on which humans are constantly engaged in a struggle between what is and what should be, between thesis and antithesis. Thus, upon sincere scrutiny, a human life shows itself to be, from birth to death, and more often than not, a constant fray, a never-ending toil characterized by fear, loneliness, and despair, a wearisome routine of repetition and boredom and a notorious lack of affection occasionally relieved by some petty pleasure or narrow infatuation that is mistaken for love - and these are the modes of human being mirrored by society. In this context, it is no surprise that humans have come to place a premium on the intimate, communal, and emotive (however illusive, superficial, and hypocritical it may be). The human predicament, then, shows that no human successor emerging with such a disposition from such a society can ever plausibly lay the foundations for a wholesome community. There must be a groundbreaking cognitive reformation: the whole approach to life has to be

radically transformed. In order for such a revolution to happen, it must issue from within the individual who thoroughly understands and has overcome its own problematic nature, has attained that place in which it can stand secure and serene to move the world. Only the action of such an individual can be called truly revolutionary in that it is not merely applying techniques of revolution but is itself *in* revolution in the most profound sense. I believe that systemic knowledge can be revolutionary and reformative in this sense. But GST, being a universal methodology for more adequately understanding and describing the complexities of the world, may well end up implicitly reinforcing the belief that linguistic signs are eminently suited to the task of this description. Naturally, this would re-confirm articulate language as the only acceptable route to knowledge and hence to the human understanding of the world. GST would then become a primarily linguistic matter and not one of sensitive experience. Therefore, undue emphasis on fixity must be substituted for a genuine recognition of flux, change, and process and the individual particularities of event-concrescence native to the systemic habitat. Perceiving the world as a continuum, as a dynamic, multifaceted organism, as a rhythm comprised of an infinity of lesser rhythms, would sensibly locate human being among, and within, other beings. Such awareness entails that the individual is no longer substantially separate from other entities but a flowing locus of relationships to which *correlation is more real than physical delimitation*. The problem is how - without resorting to logocentric objectification and linguistic calcification - to bring about such a realization, and I think Macy's suggestion offers an acceptable solution here. Of course, exactly what skilful meditation is to be cultivated has to be worked out with those pre-eminently experienced in the practice. The key to the dissemination and reformative influence of meditation

practices lies with their introduction into the curriculum of educational institutions, starting as early as possible. The common objections against integrating instruction in meditation into the curricula of schools are that it smacks of religious indoctrination, is not equally natural to everyone, and that the very engagement in it is contrary to human nature and more preferable ends so that it can never be an elementary condition on which to base human existence (as if, for example, formal logic were!). I doubt that this is in fact the case and propose that depth, as well as a looking through and transcendence of thought, is a matter of favourable circumstance, training, and habituation and not the peculiar capabilities of a privileged few. Moreover, meditation as a psycho-therapeutical methodology is independent of religious dogma, and because human nature and its ends are without exception the product of domestication, Sloterdijk's question, 'Can the archive cellar also become a clearing?'¹²⁸, can find its affirmation here, for the archived, domestic wisdom of old may well be able to remind humans also of the beneficial aspects of contemplative practice by which human minds may become the clearings that enable human beings to become creatures capable of greater harmony. Thus, meditation could become (at least hypothetically) a credible pillar of world community. If successful meditation can lead to that inner stillness allowing an ineffable insight into the systemic nature of being¹²⁹, then, through the transformative impression of this experience, the

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Appendix, pp.208-9; Sloterdijk, p.56.

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Krishnamurti illustrated this beautifully: 'The outer and inner are one, a unitary movement, not separate, but whole. One may perhaps intellectually comprehend it, accept it as a theoretical statement or intellectual concept, but when one lives with concepts one never learns. The concepts become static. You may change them but the very transformation of one concept to another is still static, is still fixed. But to feel, to have the sensitivity of seeing, that life is not a movement of separate entities, of the external as

world ceases for good to be a bewildering and threatening outside of and apart from one's self, for now, self-perception is relative to the systemic consciousness of decentred interrelationships and thus deprived of its imaginary centre. If the notion of selfhood and its extreme manifestations as egotistic 'I', 'me', and 'mine' can thus be dissolved, humankind makes a quantum leap towards holistic becoming. The social could then come to mean the systemic totality of organisms constituting the synergetic-symbiotic dynamics of the world organism. Morality and ethics pertaining to this totality would no longer be the result of negotiating quandaries and the tensions between mutually exclusive standpoints but correspond to a common sensitivity for and concern with systemic integrity. Descending from the heights of these lofty speculations to the realm of practicality, it must be granted that humans' reifying activity requires a defining of working conditions that are such that these conditions (and the organisms on which they bear) conform to the desired overall design. Consequently, the future is, as far as human prescience goes, in accordance with what humans project of it - this is the way by which human beings secure their home within the house of Being, and it is the clearing in which they perceive and approach new horizons and decide their destiny by learning what can be formally understood and expressed, no matter how inadequate and conflict-ridden this may be. I am, however, afraid that meditative practice will not be part of common

opposed to the internal, to see that it is one, to realize that inter-relationship is this movement, is this ebb and flow of sorrow and pleasure, joy and depression, loneliness and the escape, to perceive *nonverbally* (my italics) this life as a whole, as a continuum, not fragmented, not broken up, is to learn (to be in revolution, to live the systemic). Learning is not a matter of time, though, not a gradual process, for then time again becomes divisive. Time acts in the fragmentation of the whole. But to see the truth of it in an instant, then it is there, this action and reaction, endlessly - this light and dark, the beauty and ugliness. That which is whole is free from the ebb and flow of life, of action and reaction. Beauty has no opposite. Hate is not the opposite of love' (Krishnamurti, pp. 130-1).

learning any time soon, for the ensuing scrutiny of human identity would be probably too hard to bear and lead to an unwelcome rupture of the anthropocentric complacency so fundamental to today's society and human self-understanding. To be honest, I am taking part in this complacency, and all my talk of the contemplative ideal is rather hypocritical in that it is as if I, sick from eating sugar but persisting in it, admonish others to overcome the habit for the sake of their well-being. In the following, I will return to what I think is humanly more feasible and, in due course, express my view on HGE.

In the light of a teleological (acts have instrumental value only but consequences have intrinsic value) and (act-)utilitarian (the right act in a situation is one that results, or is most likely to result, in the best consequences) ethics (Pojman, p.278), HGE appears to be a boon rather than a bane. Being sympathetic to the above principles, I see HGE offering a grand, albeit somewhat unpredictable future, but surely not the doomsday scenarios predicted by notorious fearmongers. Certainly, those who set aside angst about changing human nature, and embrace the possibility of the rerogenetic diversification of life forms, are preparing the grounds for a new moral and political philosophy for the future. The most common argument levelled against rerogenetics is that current generations would be violating the self-determination of future generations by doing so. But even without HGE, humans already make a number of breeding choices that determine the biology of future generations, the most fundamental and obvious of which is simply the choice of partner. The prospect that HGE can take this common attitude to higher levels of accomplishment (and even beyond mere biological determination) seems to me to be indeed but a natural extension of what humans have always sought to do - namely to ensure the most favourable thriving conditions for the species. Whether the

offspring is any longer called human or not is, in my opinion, a secondary and rather trivial matter amounting to nothing more than a matter of personal preference. Only modifications which remove decision-making autonomy from future generations *altogether* would truly raise issues of 'self-determination' and deserve to be opposed.

My broad assertion is that HGE can, and probably will, give 'humans' longer, happier lives, with more choices and greater happiness. In fact, HGE offers the possibility that humans will be able to experience utilities that hold more significant potency than those on their current mental pallet. Apart from the advances in pharmaceuticals and therapeutic treatment of disease that can ameliorate many illnesses and forms of suffering, HGE might make it possible to enhance, for example, sense organs to allow for unprecedented vision and auditory experiences, the body to increase resistance to environmental influences and permit engagement in more strenuous activities, and the cerebral apparatus to enable more profound and intense cognitive processes. If utility is an ethical goal, direct control of our body and mind, through HGE, cybernetics, nanotechnology, prosthetics, or whatever, suggests the possibility of unlimited utility and thus an immeasurable good. The rule of, or right to, self-determination requires that regulatory bodies should have very good reasons before interfering with competent adults wishing to apply genetic technology to their lineage. Self-determining individuals must be allowed the opportunity and privacy to do what they want with their bodies and progeny, except when they are demonstrably not competent or when their actions will cause unacceptable harm to others. I hold that the concerns with HGE do not amount to a clear and present enough danger to public safety to justify the violation of bodily autonomy and personal liberty by banning it. An intervention in the personal liberty to make use of HGE

is especially objectionable if it rests on nothing but emotional, moral appeals to defend ambiguities such as 'human nature', 'human dignity', 'human spirit', 'human soul', 'nature', 'the sacred', 'public morality', and so on. Thus, acknowledging self-determination as an ethical starting point addresses half of the revulsion to genetic engineering: the concern that individuals will be forced to conform to eugenic policies. Ideally, no one should be forced to have or abort children or to modify their own or their children's genetic code, but some qualification seems appropriate: HGE promises freedom and self-determination at the level of 'biological necessity' through the potential mastery of the human genome and, hypothetically speaking, thereby of birth, illness, aging, and death. What is more, HGE promises the creation of a more equal society by eliminating congenital sources of illness and disability that create the most intractable forms of social inequality - this may even require that the obligation to do so is imposed if and only if it can be demonstrably shown that the offspring will be impaired beyond any functional efficacy whatsoever. Apart from this exception, regulation of HGE should ensure that society's common goals, such as solidarity and equality, can be pursued. With adequate technology assessment and anticipatory regulation, there will be sufficient time to regulate genetic technology as it advances. So far, none of the risks possibly involved seem to be sufficiently weighty, individually or cumulatively, to outweigh the potential benefits. Moreover, to me, there are no 'divine' limits discernable and an 'original, natural order' does not exist except for the one humans conceptually superimpose. Thus, there are *no* 'natural limits' to the human control over their biology or ecology to be had. In short, I advocate a critical support of HGE along liberal, meliorist lines.

Conclusion

Intrigued by Peter Sloterdijk's book *Regeln für den Menschenpark*, I have introduced this work here and appended a translation of it to this paper. I have presented (ch.1), affirmed, and expanded on Sloterdijk's three theses (ch.3). I have also tried to provide an overview of the, in my opinion, most decisive influences presently bearing on the human park (ch.2) and offered my own understanding of their nature and prospects as well as a sample of annotated voices critical of various aspects of the human park that I deemed worth mentioning (most notably: ch.4). It was Sloterdijk's book that sparked my, initially rather uncritical, interest in HGE. After a first and less than careful reading of the work during which I read more my aberrant resentment into the lines than I understood the author, I was naively taken in by the idea of a genetically reared, platonic society. But while I translated the text and read other authors concerned with the probable and improbable implications of HGE, I came to realize quickly that I had misread Sloterdijk and fancied a dubious ideal. Consequently, my inconsiderate enthusiasm for genetically forging the 'perfect', posthuman society gave way to a more prudential approach. This paper is also a reflection of this newly won cautiousness. Because of my own limitations and the subject matter, I found it inevitable to utilize generalizations and hyperbole.

I had also to abandon my initial plan of suggesting a comprehensive, marvellously integrative cosmology emerging from the conciliating influence of eupraxsophy combined with the insights of GST and the more tangible, systemic interrelationships informing human existence in BIS. Contemporary, secular humanism, being no more than a friendly gesture, lacks the binding force necessary to unanimously gather humanity under the

formal authority of a secular humanist axiology, and the considered audacity posited by Kurtz as the hallmark of the genuine eupraxsopher refers surely only to the attitude of some, whereas the many remain more or less involuntary actors on the world stage caught in an obscure bio-cultural drift to which they bow either out of carelessness, sheer necessity, or blind docility. The sweeping cultivation of the contemplative life through public and private educational institutions and along the lines of GST as presented by Macy, i.e., with the objective of overcoming the sway of the self, is a practical impossibility because the mere suggestion of it is likely to meet with rejection if not outrage and hostility for its questioning what the majority believes is the inalienable crux of human existence. Moreover, it can be projected that it would lead to a revolutionary, societal integration only at the considerably painful cost of disintegrating, and dispensing with, prevailing patterns of human arrangement that are considered to be perhaps not the best, but cherished as the best, we can do - a cost very few would be willing to pay. And BIS (of which HGE is a function), rather than being the acclaimed benefactor, appears to be more of a moloch to which large parts of humanity, for better or worse, would have to sacrifice their accustomed or preferred ways of life. This moloch is invoked by a few and worshipped by the many, all of which seem to be driven by a sense of profound loneliness, the remedy to which is sought in an artificial network of explicit relations offering to enliven the inner desolation with additional enterprising and easy access to pleasurable trivia and a superabundance of information stimuli. Curiosity, the meliorist stance, and progress are shallow reasons for propagating BIS, for despite its alleged advance and advantage, it (BIS) is but another gloss deceiving humans into believing that experiencing and knowing more equals living a better life. On the possibility that humans will in fact set

out to breed themselves into perfection by rerogenetics, HGE itself is really egotism manifest, setting itself a monument of its ideal consummation.

In the end, the future of the human park must remain uncertain - suggesting a moral, ethical, or institutional recipe that would make all fall neatly into place so that the likely fate of humanity could be projected in a pleasing and plausible manner exceeds my capabilities and is, in the face of the vicissitudes of existence, an anyway rather naive undertaking. Human attitudes and activities are fickle, complex, and erratic - their ideational synthesis is never conclusive nor congruous. Alas, having arrived at the end of this academically sanitized exercise in intellectual plumbing, I have no solution to offer for credibly resolving the human tragedy in which ignorance persists over time in ever new guises. But a few more words remain to be said on Sloterdijk's human park.

I don't share Sloterdijk's estimation of humanity as exclusively 'sociobiologically' determined. He misses out on the very cognitive dynamics that underlie this very determination and fails thus to address what really lies at the heart of all human troubles - *divisive thought that gives rise to and nourishes the self*. Only Heidegger and Macy dare to tackle this root of the notorious conflict obtaining in the human condition without being diverted by the more readily available superficialities of human life. Sloterdijk dismisses Heidegger's contemplative suggestions as insufficient and ultimately misleading and states that nothing more will come out of it than 'an invisible church of scattered individuals, each of which listens to the tremendous, and awaits the words (of Being) which voice what the speaker is assigned to say by means of language itself' (app., p.190; Sl., p.29). And I am afraid that, with Sloterdijk, Macy's proposal would not fare any better.

Sloterdijk's biological and cultural approach to human dynamics is communal in thrust but superficial in application, for human biology and culture may go some way in explaining human dynamics but never touch more than mere outward form. Such an approach relates to tinkering with human institutions and biology but does not address what is essential to human existence. Because this approach disregards the profundities of human life, its result can only be a reorganization of forms, not the overcoming of their inherent conflict. Heidegger and Macy, on the other hand, begin with the individual, and this, to me, is the more credible approach, for society cannot be fundamentally changed before the human individual changes profoundly by experiencing being beyond thought.

It astonishes me that humans seem to always find use for yet another appliance, but I am even more astonished by the way technological innovations literally creep up on us. In rapid fashion and with successive claims to inevitability and fulfilling genuine needs, they more or less subtly infiltrate and alter human existence without much ado and, most importantly, usually without common consent, a consent that is solicited only afterwards. After perhaps some initial apprehension, new technologies, as they are made-believe, believed, or found to be advantageous and relatively safe, become increasingly disseminated and quickly a part of our everyday life. Much of what was peculiar and suspect yesterday is normal today because conciliating generations simply grow sympathetic and accustomed to the new, and this will also hold good for HGE and its products. To be sure, the projected inevitability and need driving technological innovation is itself more often than not an innovation of the most cunning sort serving to produce profitable meaning. A reconsideration of whatever has been hailed as the inexorable, desirable, and safe happens only when considerable drawbacks become evident which, if

ignored, would lead to unsettling, popular discontent. Genetic technology is one such decisive domain of tireless innovation whose practical and theoretical implications for human existence are being discussed and argued while the enterprise itself has gained a momentum that easily undermines reasonable deliberations, save for those pertaining to its advancement. Considering the nature and dynamics of today's society, it is not surprising that this state of affairs has come to pass, for a dominant form of this sort of glorified tribalism has come to be a media-saturated technopoly with formative, global significance. It is maintained by ludicrous slogans (not that this has ever been different!) and overarching, corporate structures, overseen by a government vulnerable to the pressures of commercial lobbying, administered by a host of functionaries and its bureaucratic apparatus, and moves to the tune of a market that promotes the lowest common denominator, i.e., the sensationalistic and materialistic. This society is legalistic and only superficially a democratic one, the instigative and reformatory power of its citizenry as a whole diluted, if not neutralized, by an ideology espousing a utilitarian paradigm coupled with a stress on individual autonomy and self-interest, by its segregation into countless and often contending interest groups, and by the preoccupying grind of making a decent living in a highly competitive environment with its attendant careerist conformism. Here, a minimal morality obtains at best, ethics is a matter for experts, and the law is reflective of deliberations meant to ensure the smooth functioning of society rather than the integrity of its constituents. In this society, representation takes the place of the citizens' direct political involvement while there is no guaranteeing that the delegates will in fact succeed in making the concerns entrusted to them bear on policy-making. Though it is, in principle, not impossible for ordinary citizens to engage in the body politic, debate freely,

and influence decision-making processes, it is certainly a highly demanding undertaking that, apart from the limitations of ends imposed on it by more powerful interests, asks the utmost, if not impossible, from any concerned citizen in terms of being informed of, and, most importantly, available to, the democratic dialogue. What makes democratic coordination difficult still is emotive manipulation and the apparently widespread resistance to critically examine and question ourselves and our affairs, coupled with a chief concern for economic security and advancement aggravated by disproportionate self-regard. All of this society is organized in institutions which we have allowed to form, are formed by us, and form us. The gross institutions jointly accommodating genetic technology are those of the scientific, commercial, and governmental establishments whose interests filter down to the educational establishment and reach across national boundaries. Together, they claim to promote the common good: science in the name of the Promethean spirit and objective knowledge obtained by rational inquiry; commerce in the name of a market economy alleged to generate the wealth and provide the goods that together will bring about a general amelioration of living standards; government in the name of prestige and reputation; and education in the name of that notion of common good that the triad of science, commerce, and government proffers as the worthwhile mode of societal living to be advocated and advanced. Opponents of this institutional organization and its ideological self-justification and -perpetuation must wage a battle against vested interests and ideas and structures which inform and shape social attitudes and constitute thus an effective bulwark against critique. In order to find at least some consideration, dissident voices must express themselves through respective and accredited interest groups which, as long as their cause remains peripheral to the attention and

interest of the protagonist majority, can dispute matters of concern but must be content with whatever the establishment is ready to yield as a concession to civility. Profound and radical change such as a 'quiet revolution' is inconceivable as long as engagement over controversies is confined to diplomatic negotiations between limited interest groups and the authoritarian establishment while the majority lingers ensnared by captivating routines and enthralled by a cunning rhetoric of comfort, progress, and freedom, readily absorbing whatever is presented to it as concordant with these maxims. I think the implications this state of society holds for the genetic industry are clear and already evident: if genetics is good business bolstered by an appealing ideology, it can well come to include the commodification of the entire human make-up including, if feasible, character.

I believe that the totalizing practises that are entailed by BIS and conceivably issue into a certain levelling of existential understanding are not a problem for which humans can, nor have to, find a solution. Rather, they constitute what Sloterdijk calls a 'bio-cultural drift' - somewhat inadvertently launched by a few and propelled by the many. They are an emergent, ontological condition of human making that requires a fundamental transformation of the human understanding of being. I agree with Sloterdijk that integration via the contemplative life is not a feasible option on the societal scale, but, on an optimistic estimation, I hold that such a mode of life, regardless of the dynamics of BIS and necessarily beginning with the individual, can proliferate by its inspiring example and thereby have more influence than he is ready to concede. Sloterdijk's book is valuable for two reasons: (1) it raises the question how, with the relegation of the literary humanist canon, a binding morality can still obtain; and (2) it rightly draws attention to the bio-cultural nature of human being and being human. This is simultaneously disquieting and

promising. It is disquieting to human complacency because it shows that 'humanity' is not a natural and elevating feature of the hominid species but the result of hominid (self-)domestication relative to the biological and intellectual bias of a given time and place. What is more, pointing to the relegation of the humanist canon, it poses the uncomfortable question about the nature and adequacy of values that have been allowed to form and inform contemporary, human life. Though it does not offer concrete, axiological recommendations, the book is promising in that the posited, conceptual malleability of 'humanity' allows for the possibility of unprecedented interpretations of human being and being human. Whether a new interpretation of human being would still correspond to humanity in the traditional, humanistic sense of civility or drastically obliterate what has come to be cherished as human(e) remains to be seen. In any case, some form of domestic and tamed life obtains as long as the forming of life, rerogenetic or not, is subject to anthropotechnology, i.e., deliberately controlled. Juxtaposing traditional and potential standards of domestication and bemoaning the demise of old ways is nothing but a habitual, romantic harking back to the past in the face of the unsettling new - a typical traditionalist attitude. Sloterdijk does not explicitly romanticize, but his concluding allusion to the archived wisdom of old that, for want of better means, could be again consulted as potential guide for today's affairs amounts to exactly that. Modes and labels of domestication change over time, but because domesticity is always the product and initiator of a certain way of thinking and doing, comparisons are nugatory. After all, from the limited perspective of a human lifetime, who can credibly claim to know what kind of domestic mode is best for the hominid strand and what not? Humans cannot know what they don't know (and have never known) and must (and will) dare the adventure in order

to find out (if they can). How they organize, change, or even transcend themselves in the course of this quest remains as well to be seen. The future is open, and Sloterdijk's book - though suffering from an implicit and, to me, unfounded moral angst - happily leaves it at that. Thus, modes of taming change, and what minimally tames human beings even in an alleged time of moral decline is the domestic habituation entailed by the impetus of associative standards tested by experience and felt to be agreeable by most. There is no 'bestializing' of humans to be perceived unless one takes as a yardstick for conduct one specific form of human domesticity (here: that of a nation based on a literary, humanist canon) by which any other organizational manifestation of human being is judged. Such comparison is, however, not only arbitrary but also an illusion to which especially those are prone who are suspicious of anything unaccustomed and radically new and thirst for the safety of tradition. Basically speaking, a radical overhaul of the human species by means of reprobogenetics is not better or worse than leaving it as it is, for either way, human beings undercut themselves because both pervasive control as well as circumventing self-scrutiny betray the human capacity to integrity.¹³⁰

Philosophy, an eminent product of divisive thought, has never so much abetted as it perpetuated the infamously conflictive in the human condition by being in essence nothing but an ongoing and ultimately inconclusive stream of and quarrel over ideas. Also

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It would be indeed a remarkable 'coincidence' if, as Trounson predicts, the human Y-chromosome deteriorates to the extent that humans devolve into a sexless species where reproduction is controlled and tooled in a very specified manner in order to meet the challenges of a pervasively controlled environment (*Sunset Clause on the Y-Chromosome?* - an interview with Alan Trounson). Here, the charge of undercutting can be dismissed because humans have no other choice than to resort to reprobogenetics if they wish to preserve the species (however egotistic this desire for posterity may be).

endemic to the philosophical enterprise (particularly to the academic variant) are notorious attempts at outwitting opponents in thought by cleverly constructed counter arguments. As such, philosophy is self-centered conflict taken to the intellectual level where it assumes an air of elevated normality because its contending practitioners can have some claim to prestige by virtue of tradition, erudition, and shrewdness. Granted, in its limited way philosophy can help us to see how we think by showing us the invisible layers of thought which always stand between us and everything we see. As such, it is an activity of disclosure and relative illumination, but because it is *of* and *about* thought, it does not overcome the personally conflictive to plant a seed of genuine peace, and is thus far from being integrative to either individual or community. In the end, philosophy is just another unsatisfactory human affair. In this sense, one may find some truth in the following statement made by Heidegger in a letter from 1928: 'Perhaps philosophy shows most forcibly and persistently how much Man is a beginner. Philosophizing ultimately means nothing other than being a beginner.' If being a half-baked novice of philosophy has taught me anything, then it is to remain quiet but vigilant amid the uproar of human allegations and focus on the cultivation of a simple life, i.e., a life free of acquisitiveness, free of addiction, free of distraction, and free of contradiction. This, I feel, is, despite all propaganda and leanings to the contrary, most advantageous to life in the widest sense.

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Appendix

Regulations for the Human Park

A translation of Peter Sloterdijk's *Regeln für den Menschenpark*

Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1999

(7-9)Books, as the poet Jean Paul once noticed, are bulky letters to friends. With this sentence, he had gracefully named the quintessential nature and function of humanism: it is a friendship-instigating telecommunication by writing. What, since the days of Cicero, is labelled *humanitas*, belongs, in the most narrow as well as widest sense, to the consequences of alphabetization. Since the existence of philosophy as a literary genre, it (philosophy) recruits its adherents by way of writing infectiously of love and friendship. Not only is it talk about love for wisdom - it seeks also to persuade others to this love. Indeed, that philosophy, after its beginnings more than 2500 years ago, could remain communicable till the present day, is due to its capacity to beget friends by means of text. It could be continued like a chain letter throughout generations and, in spite of all errors in copying, yes, maybe because of them, it captivated copiers and interpreters with its befriending spell.

The most important link in this chain of letters was without doubt the reception of the Greek transmission by the Romans, for only this acquisition has unlocked Greek writing for the *imperium* and, at least indirectly and beyond the decline of Western Rome, made it accessible to later European cultures. The Greek authors would have been certainly surprised about the sort of the friends which, one day, would respond to their

letters. It belongs to the rules of literary culture that the senders cannot foresee their actual recipients. Nevertheless, the authors dare the adventure to send their letters to unidentified friends. Without the codification of Greek philosophy on portable scrolls, the mail which we call tradition could have never been sent; but without the Greek editors, who offered their services in deciphering the letters from Greece, the Romans would have been unable to befriend the writings' senders. Thus, this far-reaching friendship needs both - the letters themselves and their delivery agents or interpreters. On the other hand, without the Roman readers' aptness to befriend the Greek transmissions, the recipients would have been lacking; and had the Romans, with their excellent receptivity, not have dared the game, the Greek transmissions would have never reached Western Europe, which even today is inhabited by those interested in humanism. There would be neither the phenomenon of humanism, nor any other serious form of Latin philosophical discourse, nor the later cultures of philosophy in national tongues. That we can speak here and now of things humane, we owe to the willingness of the Romans to read the writings of Greek teachers as if they were letters to friends in Italy.

(9-11) Considering the epochal consequences of the Greek mail, it becomes evident that the writing, sending, and receiving of philosophical texts is a peculiar matter. The sender of this kind of good-will letters obviously sends his writings into the world without knowing the recipients - or, if he knows them, he is conscious of the mail reaching beyond them and its potential to provoke an indeterminate multitude of possible friendships with anonymous or often yet unborn readers. Viewed as 'eroticised' (*in erotologischer Sicht*), the hypothetical friendship of the books' and letters' writer with the recipient of her transmissions constitutes a case of aloof love - and this accords perfectly with Nietzsche

who knew that writing holds the power to inspire the unknown, distant, and coming life with brotherly and charitable love; writing not only effects a telecommunicative bridge between proven friends, which at the time of mailing lived far from one another, but it initiates as well an operation in the unproven, it launches an enticement into the distant, in the words of old European magic an *actio in distans*, with the aim to expose the unknown friend as such and induce him to join the circle of friends. Indeed, the reader exposing himself to the bulky letter can understand the book as an invitation, and if he takes to the reading, he announces himself to the attracted circle in order to acknowledge the transmission's reception.

One could therefore reduce the communal phantasma underlying all forms of humanism to the model of a literary society where those involved discover through canonical readings their common love for inspiring senders. We can find that, at the heart of humanism thus understood, lies a sectarian or club fantasy - a dream of the fated solidarity of those chosen to be readers. For the old world, yes, till the eve of the modern nation state, literacy meant, in fact, something like membership in a mysterious elite - in many places, grammatical knowledge passed for the epitome of magic: in medieval English, *glamour*¹³¹ was actually evolved from the term *grammar*: one capable of reading and writing will also be at ease with other impossibilities. (11-14) At first, the humanized are nothing but a sect of alphabetized which, like many other sects, also brings expansionistic and universalistic projects to light. Where the alphabetization took fantastic and assuming forms, a grammatical or literal mysticism, the kabbala, came into existence,

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The term for magic springs from the word for grammar (*Der Ausdruck für Zauber geht aus dem Wort für Grammatik hervor.*).

devoted to accessing the notation of the world's author¹³². On the other hand, where it became pragmatic and programmatic, as in the grammar school ideologies (Gymnasialideologien) of 19th and 20th century civil nation states, the model of the literate society developed into the norm for the political society. From this moment on, humans organised themselves into alphabetized associations of compulsive friendship, each (association) obliged to vow for the binding, canonical reading of its respective national domain. That is why now, besides the common European authors of Antiquity, the national and modern classics are also mobilised - whose letters to the public are, through the book market and institutions for higher learning, unduly exalted to effective, nation-creating motifs. What are the modern nations other than the effective fictions of reading citizens which, by the same text, would become an association of like-minded friends? Common conscription for the male youth and, for the youth of both genders, the general compulsion to read classics, characterizes the classical civil age (klassische Bürgerzeit), say the era of an armed and well-read humanity, to which the new and old conservatives of today look back in simultaneous nostalgia and helplessness, being completely unable to theoretically hold themselves accountable to the media for the sense of a canonical reading - to gain a topical impression of this, one need only glean the pathetic results of a recently attempted German-national debate on the supposed necessity of a new literary canon.

In fact, from 1789 to 1945, the reading-enthusiastic, national humanists were at

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That the secret of life is closely connected with the phenomenon of writing is at the same time the great intuition of the legend of golem. Compare Moshe Idel *Le Golem*, Paris 1992; in the foreword to this book, Henri Atlan points to the report of a commission appointed by the US president and titled *Splicing Life: The Social and Ethical Issue of Genetic Engineering with Human Beings*, 1982, whose authors refer to the golem-legend.

their best; in their midst resided the caste of old and new philologists, power-conscious and like babbitts, conscious of their entrusted task to initiate the descendants into the circle of recipients of authoritative, bulky letters. During this time, both the teachers' power and the key role of philologists were based on their having privileged knowledge of those authors considered to be the senders of community-endowing texts. Substantially, civil humanism was nothing other than the authority to force classics upon the youth and averring the universal validity of national reading matters¹³³. Consequently, civic nations are, to a certain degree, literary and postal products - fictions of a fated friendship with distant compatriots and sympathetic readers of plainly enthusing, common-individual (*gemeinsam-eigenen*) authors.

That this epoch appears today irrevocably expired is not because human beings in their decadent mood would be no longer willing to fulfill their literary stint; the epoch of national-civic humanism has come to an end because the art of writing love-inspiring letters to a nation of friends, no matter how professional in execution, has become insufficient to constitute the telecommunicating link between the denizens of modern mass society. On account of the medial establishment of mass culture after 1918 (broadcast) and after 1945 (television) and, what is more, through the current network revolutions, the coexistence of humans in topical societies has been newly grounded. It can be shown without effort that these (the topical societies) are post-literary and post-epistolary (*post-epistolographisch*) and hence post-humanistic. Who thinks the prefix 'post' in these formulations is too dramatic, can substitute it for the adverb 'marginally' - that way our

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Of course, also the national validity of universal reading matters.

thesis goes: modern mass societies can produce their political and cultural synthesis only marginally via the literary, postal, humanistic media. This implies by no means the end of literature, but, because it has differentiated itself out (*ausdifferenziert*) and become a subculture *sui generis*, its days of being overestimated as carrier of national spirits are over. The social synthesis is no longer - and also no longer apparently - mainly a matter of books and letters. In the meantime, the new media of political-cultural telecommunication have assumed leadership and pushed the pattern of letter-born friendships back to a modest measure. The era of modern humanism as a model for schools and education has passed because the illusion that economical megastructures could be organized according to the amiable model of the literary society can no longer be maintained.

(14-17) This disillusionment, due to be acknowledged by the humanistically educated since at least the first world war, has an oddly warped history marked by distortions and turnabouts. For, during the dark years after 1945, the humanistic model had to experience yet another flourishing; this time it involved an arranged and reflective Renaissance which, since then, has delivered the model for all small reanimations of humanism. Would the background not be so dark, one would have to speak of a waging romanticism and self-deception. During the fundamentalistic mood of the years after 1945, it was, for apprehensible reasons, and for many, not enough to return from the horrors of war into a society which presented itself again as a pacified audience of friends of reading - as if the Goethe-youth could consign the Hitler-youth to oblivion. At that time, it appeared congenial to many to open, besides the newly reprinted Roman lectures, also the second, biblical, basic European reading matter to adjure the Christian-humanistic foundations of the once more so-called Western world. This neo-humanism, via Weimar

desperately looking back at Rome, was a dream of rescuing the European soul by means of a radical bibliophilism - a melancholic-hopeful enthusiasm about the civilizing, humanizing power of reading classics - if, for the moment, we take the freedom to conceive of Cicero and Christ as classics.

In these postwar humanisms, no matter how illusory they may have been, is disclosed a motive without which the humanistic tendency on the whole can never be comprehended - neither during the days of the Romans nor in the era of modern, civic nation states: humanism, as a word and object, has always an 'against what?' (*Wogegen*), because it is the engagement for fetching back humans from barbarism. It is easy to understand that especially those ages featuring a particular experience with the barbaric potential unleashed by violent human interactions are simultaneously the ages that foster a habitually louder and more demanding call for humanism. He who today asks about the future of humaneness and humanizing media, wants to know basically whether there is hope to master the human tendencies towards the bestial. Therefore, it is of disquietingly critical importance that, today as ever, a soaring unfoldment of power foments the bestial, be it directly as warlike and imperial brutality, or be it as the everyday bestializing of human beings by the media of uninhibiting entertainment. The Romans provided the model for both - on the one hand by their pervasive militarism, on the other hand by their advanced entertainment industry of sanguinary games. So the latent theme of humanism is the de-bestializing (*Entwilderung*) of human being, and its latent thesis runs as follows: right-reading makes tame.

(17-18)Especially nowadays, the phenomenon humanism deserves attention

because - however shrouded and timorous - it calls to mind that, in a high culture (*Hochkultur*), human beings are incessantly taken up by two formative powers together - to simplify, we wish to call them here simply the inhibiting and uninhibiting influences. To the credo of humanism belongs the conviction that human beings are 'animals under influence' (*Tiere unter Einfluß*), and that is why it is imperative to subject them to the right kind of influence. The etiquette 'humanism' reminds - with deceptive harmlessness - of the continual struggle for human being, manifest in the struggle of bestializing and taming tendencies.

In Cicero's epoch, both influences are still easily identifiable because each has its respective, characteristic medium. Concerning the bestializing influences, with their amphitheatres, their animal chases, their terminal combat games, and their execution spectacles, the Romans had installed the most successful mass media network of the world. In the clamorous stadiums around the Mediterranean, the uninhibited *homo inhumanus* got its money's worth like hardly ever before and rarely thereafter¹³⁴. During imperial times, supplying the Roman masses with bestializing fascinations became an indispensable, routinely extended, governmental technique which, thanks to the juvenile 'bread-and-circuses' formula, is still remembered today. (18-19) One can understand the humanism of antiquity only if one understands it also as a partial position in a media conflict - that is as the book's resistance to the amphitheatre and humanizing, calming, reflection-instigating opposition to the dehumanizing, impatient ebullience of the stadiums'

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Only with the genre of Chain Saw Massacre Movies is the leveling of modern mass culture with the antique consumption of bestialities consummate. See Marc Edmundson *Nightmare on Mainstreet. Angels, Sadoomasochism and the Culture of the American Gothic*, Cambridge, MA. 1997.

sensationalistic and intoxicating thrall. What the Romans called *humanitas* would have been unthinkable without the demand for mass culture's abstinence from the theatres of cruelty. Should the humanist himself stray into a roaring crowd someday, it was then only to ascertain that he is human also, capable of being infected by the bestial. He returns home from the theatre, ashamed of his spontaneous participation in the contagious sensations and now willing to admit that nothing human is any longer strange to him. But this does not mean that human being consists in choosing the taming and renouncing the uninhibiting media for the development of one's own nature. The meaning of this media choice lies in the possibility of curing oneself from the bestial and taking a distance from the dehumanizing escalations of the theatrical, roaring mob.

These hints clarify: the question of humanism means more than the bucolic assumption that reading educates. It addresses nothing less than an *Anthropodizee* - which means a human's destiny in view of her biological openness (*biologische Offenheit*) and moral ambivalence. Above all, the question as to how a human being could become a true or veritable human is, from now on, to be posed as an unavoidably medium-related one if we understand by media the communal and communicative means by use of which humans educate themselves towards what they can and will be.

*

Amidst the misery of the European postwar period, the philosopher Martin Heidegger wrote his now famous essay on humanism in the fall of 1946 - a text which, at first glance, could also be seen as a bulky letter to friends. (20-21) But the mode of befriending it brought into play in his (Heidegger's) favour, was simply no longer that of

civil, beautifully spirited communication, and the notion of friendship claimed by this memorable missive was by no means any longer that of a communion between a national public and its classic. As he formulated his letter, Heidegger knew that he would have to speak with a fragile voice or write with a hesitating hand and that the pre-stabilized harmony between the author and his readers could in no way be taken for granted anymore. At the time it was not even clear to him anymore whether he has any longer friends at all, and, if so, whether the friendship's premise would have to be redetermined beyond all that which, in Europe and the Western nations, was hitherto considered to be the basis for a friendship between intellectuals. At least this is evident: what the philosopher brought to paper in that fall of 1946 was neither a speech directed at his own nation nor one directed at a future Europe; it was the author's ambiguous and, at the same time, prudent and bold experiment to still imagine a recipient well-disposed to his message at all - and what emerged was, oddly enough for a man of Heidegger's regionalist disposition - a letter to a foreigner - a potential friend in the distance, a young thinker who, during the German occupation of France, had taken the freedom to let himself be enthused by a German philosopher.

(21-22)So, only a new technique of befriending after all? An alternative mail? A different manner by which to gather assenting and pensive fellows around a writ sent abroad? A new attempt at humanizing? Another associative contract between bearers of a disengaged, no longer national-humanistic, thoughtfulness? Of course, Heidegger's opponents didn't fail to point out that the clever, small man from Meßkirch instinctively took the first chance offering itself after the war to work on his rehabilitation: that way, he slyly exploited the obligingness of his French admirers to deflect from his political

ambiguity and ascend to a plateau of mystical contemplativeness. These suspicions may sound suggestive and cogent, but they miss the ruminative and communication-strategical event which the attempt at humanism, firstly addressed to Jean Beaufret in Paris, later self-published and translated, represents. Because Heidegger reveals and questions the conditions of European humanism in this writing, which would be formally a letter, he opened a trans-humanistic or post-humanistic¹³⁵ space for thought in which a substantial part of the philosophical thinking about human being has moved ever since.

From one of Jean Beaufret's letters, Heidegger took in one formulation above all: *Comment redonner un sens au mot 'Humanisme'?* The letter to the young Frenchman contains a gentle rebuke of the enquirer which betrays itself most precisely in these two immediate replies:

"The question springs from the intention to retain the word 'humanism'. I ask myself whether this is necessary. Or is all the mischief perpetrated by titles of this kind not overt enough?" "Not only does your question presuppose that you want to retain the word 'humanism', but it contains as well the concession that it has lost its meaning." (*Über den Humanismus*, 1949, 1981, pages 7 and 35)

(23-24)With that, a part of Heidegger's strategy becomes manifest: The word humanism must be forsaken if the real task of cognition, which, in the humanistic and metaphysical traditions, was allegedly already resolved, is to be re-experienced in its initial

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This gesture is mistaken for a fatuous formulation suggesting a metaphysical form of misanthropy by those who chose to see in Heidegger's onto-anthropology (*Onto-Anthropology*) something like an 'anti-humanism'.

simplicity and inevitability. Critically speaking: Why praise human being and its overriding humanist-philosophical self-portrait anew as the solution when the present cataclysm exactly demonstrates that the problem is human being itself together with its systems of metaphysical, superfluous self-elevation and -legendizing? The reprimand to Beaufret's question is not without masterly mischief because it presents, in Socratic manner, the pupil with the false answer contained in the question. At the same time, (in reprimanding Beaufret) it is philosophically earnest because it characterizes the three chief curatives to remedy the European crisis of 1945, Christianity, Marxism, and Existentialism, side by side as varieties of humanism and only superficially distinct from one another - tartly said: as three methods to shirk the ultimately radical question as to the nature of human being.

Heidegger offers to terminate the vast neglect of European thinking - namely that of not inquiring into the nature of human being in the solely adequate, existential-ontological, manner; but the author indicates at least his inclination to attend, in however interim changes of evocation, to the question appearing properly at last. With these ostensibly modest moves, Heidegger reveals dismaying consequences: humanism - in its antique, Christian, and enlightening guises - is attested to be the agent of a 2000 year-old non-cerebration; it is charged with having impeded the rise of the actual question as to human being's nature by giving hasty, seemingly evident and undeniable interpretations. Heidegger explains that, beginning with *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time), his work is directed against humanism not because it (humanism) had overestimated *humanitas* but because it has not appraised it highly enough (*Über den Humanismus*, p.21). But what does it mean to value the nature of human being highly enough? It means, first, to dispense with a habitual, false depreciation. Unless one takes a distance to the oldest,

most pertinacious and ruinous, exercise of European metaphysic - to define human being as an *animal rational* - the question as to the nature of human being remains improperly channelled. According to the above definition, human being is to be understood as being of animal nature (*Animalitas*) with a capacity enhanced by mental amendments.

(25-26) Heidegger's existential-ontological analysis revolts against this because, to him, the nature of human being can never be put into the words of a zoological or biological perspective even if a mental or transcendental factor is regularly reckoned with.

In this point, Heidegger is unrelenting, yes, he steps like an angry angel with crossed swords between the animal and the human being, refusing them any ontological communality. In his anti-vitalistic and anti-biological affect, he lets himself be carried away to almost hysterical pronouncements when, for example, he states that apparently 'the divine nature (*das Wesen des Göttlichen*) is closer to us than the displeasing animate nature (*das Befremdende der Lebe-Wesen*)' (*Über den Humanismus*, p.17). The essential and effective insight of this anti-vitalistic pathos is that under no circumstances is it legitimate to understand a human being as an animal with a cultural or biological plus because it stands to the animal in ontological, and not in specific or generic, difference. Rather, the mode of being human itself is essentially and ontologically different from that of all other botanic and animalic beings; for human being obtains world (*hat Welt*) and is in the world while plants and animals are only contextured in their respective environments.

If there is a philosophical reason for speaking of human dignity, then it is just because the human being is addressed by Being (*vom Sein angesprochen sein*) and, as Heidegger as a pastoral philosopher liked to say, is appointed to guard it. That is why

human beings have language - but, according to Heidegger, they possess it primarily not only to communicate among each other but to reciprocate taming by this communication.

“Rather, language is the house of Being in which the human being resides in ecstatic existence (*Ek-sistenz*: probably formed from ‘*Ekstase*’ and ‘*Existenz*’), belonging, by guarding it, to the truth of Being.

Thus, determining the humaneness of human being as *Ek-sistenz* depends on human being not being essential but Being as the dimension of the ecstatic in *Ek-sistenz*.” (*Über den Humanismus*, p.24)

By listening to these initially hermetical formulations there arises an idea about why Heidegger’s critique of humanism deems itself so safe not to lead to an inhumanity (*Inhumanismus*). For, by rejecting the claim of humanism to have sufficiently interpreted human nature and by confronting it with his own onto-anthropology (*Onto-Anthropologie*), he holds yet indirectly onto the most important function of classical humanism, namely the befriending of human being with the word of the Other (*mit dem Wort des Anderen*) - yes, he radicalizes this motive of befriending and transfers it from the pedagogical field to the centre of ontological reflection.

(27-29) This is the meaning of the often cited and much ridiculed parlance of the human being as the herder of Being. Utilizing pastoral and idyllic images, Heidegger speaks of the human being’s task, which is its nature, and of the human being’s essence, from which springs its task (*der Aufgabe des Menschen, die sein Wesen ist, und von dem Menschenwesen, aus dem seine Aufgabe entspringt*): namely to guard and correspond to

Being (*das Sein zu hüten und dem Sein zu entsprechen*). Sure enough, human being does not guard Being like a sick and bed-ridden patient but rather like a herder guards his herd on the clearing with the crucial difference that here, instead of cattle, the world is to be let and descried as an open circumstance - what is more, this guarding does not represent a voluntary and self-interested 'looking after', but that Being itself engages human beings as its guardians. The place where this engagement obtains is the clearing or the place where Being occurs as that which is there (*ist die Lichtung oder die Stelle, wo Sein aufgeht als das was da ist*).

What bestows on Heidegger the certainty that he has thought over and gone beyond humanism is the fact that he implies human being, understood as clearing of Being, in a domesticating and befriending that go deeper than any humanistic debestializing, and any educated affection for the text that speaks of love, could ever reach. By appointing human being guardian and neighbour of Being and designating language the house of Being, he commits the human being to a correspondence to Being which imposes on the human being a radical keeping back (*Verhaltenheit*) that limits him - the herder - to the adjacency or periphery of the house; he confers on him the prominent bearing (*er exponiert ihm*) of a consciousness that takes up more capacity to keep quiet and be in bond of quietude (*Stille-Hörigkeit*) than the most comprehensive education ever could. Human being is subjected to an ecstatic keeping back that reaches further than the civilized pausing before the classical word. The Heideggarian self-contained residing in the house of language is meant to be a biding listening to what Being itself emits as that what is to be said. It evokes a harkening into proximity (*ein In-die-Nähe-Horchen*) by which the human being must become more quiet and tamed than the humanist by reading classics.

Heidegger wants a human being that is more obedient than a mere good reader. He wants to bring about a process of befriending in which he himself would be no longer received (*rezipiert*) only as a classic or one author among others; mostly, it would be best perhaps if the audience, which naturally can only consist of an ominous few, acknowledges that, through him, the mentor of the existential question (*Seinsfrage*), Being itself began to speak anew.

With that, Heidegger elevates Being to be the sole author of all essential letters and appoints himself as its current secretary. (29-31) Whoever speaks from such a position, is also allowed to record stammer and publish silence. Moreover, Being sends the decisive letters or, to be more exact, drops quick-witted friends, susceptible neighbours, and collected, silent herders a wink, but as far as we can see, it is impossible to form nations, yes, not even alternative schools, from this circle of fellow herders and friends of Being - last but not least because a public canon of hints from Being (*Seins-Winke*) is not to be had - unless, pending further notice, one confirms Heidegger's *opera omnia* to be the standard and voice of the anonymous superauthor (*Über-Autor*).

In view of these tenebrous communions it is, for the time being, absolutely unclear how a community of neighbours of Being could be composed - before anything more conspicuous can crop up, it might well be understood as an invisible church of scattered individuals, each of which listens to the tremendous and awaits the words which voice what the speaker is assigned to say by language itself.¹³⁶ It is otiose to go into the

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For the rest, it is as well unclear what a community of deconstructionists or pupils of Lévinas, respectively giving precedence to the suffering Other, could look like.

particulars of the cryptocatholic (*kryptokatholisch*) character of Heidegger's meditative figures. Decisive is now only the fact that Heidegger's critique of humanism propagates a change of attitude pointing human being to a contemplative asceticism that aims far beyond all humanistic, educational goals. Solely by virtue of this asceticism could a community of contemplatives beyond the humanistic, literary society be formed; it would be a community of human beings which remove human being from its central position because they would have realized that they can exist only as 'neighbours of Being' - and not as obstinate landlords or as furnished masters in permanent rent (*möblierte Herren in unkündbarer Hauptmiete*). As long as it orients itself towards the model of the strong human being, humanism cannot contribute to such asceticism.

The humanistic friends of the human authors miss the gifted weakness (*begnadete Schwäche*) in which Being reveals itself to the affected and accosted. For Heidegger, no way leads from humanism to this intense ontological exercise of humility; rather, he fancies it (humanism) to be a contribution to the history of subjectivity's accoutrement. Indeed, Heidegger points to Europe's historical world as the theatre of militant humanisms; it is the field where human subjectivity acts out its power seizure over creation with fateful congruity. Seen from this perspective, humanism must show itself to be the natural accomplice of whatever atrocity could be committed in the name of human welfare. (31-32) Also, the tragic mid-century megalomania between Bolshevism, Fascism, and Americanism, was - in Heidegger's view - merely the vis-a-vis of three variants of the same anthropocentric power¹³⁷ and three candidates for a humanistically slanted, global

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Compare Silvio Vietta *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus und der Technik*, Tübingen 1989.

rule - whereby fascism stepped out of line by exhibiting its disdain for the dwarfing values of peace and education more openly than its competition. Fascism is indeed a metaphysic of permissiveness - maybe also a permissive conformation of metaphysic. From Heidegger's standpoint, fascism was the synthesis of humanism and the bestial - that is, the paradoxical coincidence of inhibition and permissiveness.

In the view of such egregious deviations and erring, it lay close to ask anew for the motive underlying the taming and educating of human being, and even if nowadays Heidegger's ontological herdsmen's play - which was already at his time felt to be odd and repugnant - seems to have a completely anachronistic air, it can nevertheless claim the merit of having (its being an embarrassing, awkward curiosity notwithstanding) articulated the question of the epoch: What tames human being when humanism as a school for taming human being fails? What tames human being when so far all efforts of self-taming lead mainly to its (human being) taking over all that is? What tames human being when, after all experiments with educating humankind, it remains unclear who or what the educator educates towards? Or has it not become completely impossible to competently pose the question as to the caring and forming of human being within the framework of mere disciplinal and educational theories?

In the following we will divert from Heidegger's instruction to stop at final forms of contemplative thinking by attempting a more exact, historical characterization of the ecstatic clearing where human being lets itself be addressed by Being. It will become apparent that the human residing in the clearing - Heideggarian: the human standing into (*Hineinstehen*) or being held into (*Hineingehaltensein*) the clearing of Being - is by no

means an original, ontological relation immune to any further questioning. There is a, by Heidegger resolutely ignored, history of human being stepping out onto the clearing - a social history of human beings' touchability by the existential question and a moved historicity in the gap of ontological difference.

(33-35) On the one hand, we must speak here of a natural history of composure (*Gelassenheit* - see p.16) which enabled human being to become the cosmopolitan, world-competent (*weltfähig*) animal, on the other hand, of a social history of domestications by which human beings experience themselves primarily as the creatures which control themselves¹³⁸ to be adequate to the whole. The real story of the clearing - which has to be the starting-point for a humanism-transcending contemplation of human being - is composed of two greater narratives converging into one common perspective, namely the exposure of how sapiens-animal became sapiens-human. The first of these narratives accounts for the adventure of hominization. It tells how, in the long periods of primal, pre-human-humane (*vormenschlich-menschlicher*) history, mammalian *Homo* came to be a species of prematurely born creatures which - if one is allowed to speak so paradoxically - stepped out into their environments with a growing surplus in animalistic inchoateness. Here, the anthropogenetic revolution is fulfilled - the disruption (*Aufsprengung*) of biological birth into an act of coming-into-the-world (*Zur-Welt-Kommen*). In his standoffish mulishness towards all anthropology and his zeal to preserve the originator's pristine ontology in being-there (*Dasein*) and being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) of human being, Heidegger has by far not taken enough notice of this disruption. For that a

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Concerning the motif of '*Sammlung*', compare Manfred Schneider *Kollekten des Geistes* (Neue Rundschau 1999, no.2, p.44).

human being could become that creature that is in the world has species-historical (*gattungsgeschichtlich*) roots that can be foretold by the cryptic notions of premature birth, neoteny, and the chronic, animalistic immaturity of human being. One could go as far as to say that a human being is that creature that has failed in its being and staying an animal. By its failing as an animal, the undetermined creature falls out of its environment and gains the world in an ontological sense. This ecstatic coming-into-the-world (*Zur-Welt-Kommen*) and 'transference' (*Übereignung*) to Being is a species-historical legacy put into the human cradle. If a human being is in-the-world (*in-der-Welt ist*), that is because it belongs to a movement that brings it into and exposes it to the world. It is the product of a hyper-birth (*Hyper-Geburt*) that transforms the suckling into a worldling (*Weltling*).

This exodus would only generate psychotic animals were it not for the simultaneous emergence in the world of an entering in what Heidegger calls the house of Being. The traditional languages of humankind have made the ecstasy of being-in-the-world livable by having shown human beings how the world can experience their being at the same time as a being -by-oneself (*Bei-sich-selbst-Sein*). The clearing is an event at the border between natural and cultural history insofar as the human coming-into-the-world takes on early the traits of a coming-to-a-language (*Zur-Sprache-Kommens*)¹³⁹. (35-37) But the story of the clearing can not only be developed as a narrative of human being entering the houses of languages. For as soon as human beings live together in larger

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I (Sloterdijk) have demonstrated in other places to what extent can be reckoned also and much more so a coming-into-the-picture (*Ins-Bild-Kommen*) of human being: Peter Sloterdijk *Sphären I, Blasen; Sphären II, Globen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1998, 1999.

groups and tie themselves not only to the houses of language but also to built houses, they get into the force field of settled modes of being. Now they no longer let themselves only be salvaged by their languages but also be domesticated by their dwellings. On the clearing arise - as its most conspicuous marks - the houses of human beings (along with the temples of their gods and the palaces of their masters). Historians of culture made clear that, with settling down, the overall relation between human and animal got under new omen. Simultaneously with the domestication of human beings by the house began the epos of domesticated animals. Their tie to the houses of human beings is however not only a matter of taming but also one of training and breeding. Human being and domestic animals - the story of this prodigious cohabitation has not been presented yet in an appropriate manner, and, to this day, the philosophers especially, don't want to admit what they themselves have to do in the midst of this story.¹⁴⁰ Only in a few places is the veil of the philosophers' silence wrenched over the bio-political complex of the house, human being, and the animal and what could be heard then were giddiness-causing references to problems which are, for the time being, too difficult for human beings. The least of this is the profound coherency between domesticity and theory-making - for one could go so far as to designate theory to be a variety of domestic work, or rather, a variety of domestic leisure; for theory, according to its old definitions, resembled a serene look from the window - it was primarily a matter of contemplation, whereas in modern times -

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Some of the few exceptions include the philosopher Elizabeth de Fontenay with her book *Le silence des bêtes. La philosophie face à l'épreuve de l'animalité* as well as the philosopher and critique of civilizations Thomas Macho and his article 'Tier', in: Christopher Wulf (publisher), *Handbuch Historische Anthropologie*, Weinheim and Basel 1997, pp. 62-85 and *Der Aufstand der Haustiere*, in: Marina Fischer-Kowalski a/o *Gesellschaftlicher Stoffwechsel und Kolonisierung von Natur. Ein Versuch in Sozialer Ökologie*, Amsterdam 1997, pp. 177-200.

since knowledge is supposed to be power - it definitely assumed a laborious character. In this sense, the windows would be the clearings of the walls behind which human beings became creatures capable of theory. Also cerebrotional walks which combine motion with contemplation are derivatives of domesticity. Still, Heidegger's infamous contemplative roamings on tracks across the field (*Feldwege*) and wrong tracks (*Holzwege*) are typical exercises of someone who is backed by a house.¹⁴¹ (37-38) But such deducing the clearing from its secured domesticity pertains only to the rather harmless aspects of becoming human in houses. The clearing is at the same time a battlefield and a place of decision and selection. Regarding this, changing the philosophical pastorate accounts for nothing. Where houses stand, there must be decided what should become of the humans who inhabit them; which sorts of house constructors predominate is decided in, and by, the deed. In the clearing is shown over which are the stakes over which human beings fight once they emerge as city-building and empire-erecting creatures. In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, under the heading *Von der verkleinernden Tugend* ('Of the debasing virtue'),

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'Noch Heideggers berüchtigte Denkwanderungen über Feld- und Holzwege sind typische Bewegungen von einem, der ein Haus im Rücken hat' - here, 'Feldwege' means the cognitive orientation towards the simple - the keeper of the mystery of the lasting and great - which is helpful to those who, in youthful clumsiness, attempt in vain to decipher the riddles impressed by great thinkers: '...wenn die Rätsel aufgegeben bei großen Denkern drängten und die eine junge Unbeholfenheit zu entziffern versucht und kein Ausweg sich bot, half der Feldweg. Das Einfache verwahrt das Rätsel des Bleibenden und des Großen' (Heidegger, Martin *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1983, pp.87-9); 'Holzwege' means the destined attempt at reflecting on the nature and history of occidental metaphysics necessary in order to carry out the transition to a planetary human existence and to establish this universal history as attainable: 'Dem künftigen Menschen steht die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Wesen und der Geschichte der Abendländischen Metaphysik bevor. Erst in dieser Besinnung wird der Übergang in das planetarisch bestimmte Dasein des Menschen vollziehbar und dieses welt-geschichtliche Dasein als gegründetes erreichbar. Holzwege sind Versuche dieser Besinnung' (ibid, p.91).

Nietzsche, the master of dangerous thinking, has circumscribed in apprehensive inklings what is seriously at stake here:

“For he (Zarathustra) wished to know what had happened with human beings in the meantime: whether they had become grander or lower. Once he saw a row of new houses and wondering he said: What do these houses mean? Verily, no great soul arranged them to be its like!...those rooms and chambers: can MEN go in and out there?

And Zarathustra paused and pondered. Finally he said unhappily: ‘ALL has become lower!’

I see low gates¹⁴² everywhere: who is of my kind may well pass - but he has to bend down!

...I walk among these people and observe: they became lower and become lower still: - their teaching of felicity and virtue does this.

...Some of these want, but the majority is only wanted...

...Round, righteous and kind are they with each another, as grains of sand, round, righteous and kind, are with grains of sand.

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Sloterdijk, p.38: ‘Überall sehe ich niedrige Thore:...’ - I consider ‘Thore’ to be a misprint and translate as ‘Tore’ (gates; also: doors).

To humbly embrace a smaller fortune - that's what they call 'devotion'¹⁴³!...

Basically, they fatuously want One thing the most: that Nobody hurt them...

To them, virtue is what makes humble and tame: with it, they turned the wolf into a dog and the human being itself into human being's finest domestic animal."(KSA, vol.4, pp. 211-14)

(39-41)No doubt, hidden in this rhapsodic talk is a theoretical discourse on human being as a domesticating and breeding force. From Zarathustra's perspective, present human beings are above all successful breeders who have managed to turn the wild human into the human of late. It goes without saying that this could not have been done with the humanistic means of taming, disciplining, and educating alone. With the thesis of human being as the breeder of human being, the humanistic horizon becomes shattered insofar as humanism can never go beyond the question of taming and educating: human being is given to the humanist who then applies to it his means of taming, disciplining, educating - convinced as he is of the necessary connection between reading, sitting, and calming.

Whereas Nietzsche - who read Darwin and Paulus with like attention - fancies he sees a second, darker horizon behind the serene horizon of human being's scholastic domestication. He senses a space where battles over the direction of human breeding will inevitably begin - and it is in this space that the other, veiled face of the clearing shows itself. When Zarathustra walks through the city in which all has become lower, he

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The word here is 'Ergebung', which can be translated either as 'surrender' or 'devotion' - I have chosen the latter because it corresponds best with the, in my opinion, intended characterization of an attitude that forsakes greater fortune in favour of a small one only in order to circumvent the challenge of struggle.

perceives the result of a hitherto successful and undisputed breeding politic: it appears to him as if human beings, with the help of a clever combination of ethics and genetics, have succeeded in breeding themselves low. They subjected themselves to domestication, initiating for themselves the breeding of a domesticated animal's affability. From this assumption springs Zarathustra's peculiar critique of humanism as a rejection of the air of false harmlessness with which the modern, good human being surrounds itself. It really wouldn't be harmless if human beings bred human beings to be harmless. Nietzsche's suspicion regarding all humanistic culture urges the disclosure of humanity's domesticating secret. He wants to call the present holders of breeding monopolies - the priests and teachers who present themselves as philanthropists - by their name and reticent function and launch a worldwide, historically novel wrangle between the various breeders and breeding programs.

This is the fundamental conflict of all future postulated by Nietzsche: the battle between the breeders of human being that breed commonalty (*Kleinzüchter*) and those that breed grandness (*Großzüchter*) - one could also say between humanists and superhumanists, philanthropists and friends of superhumans. In Nietzsche's considerations, the emblem 'superhuman' does not stand for the dream of a quick unbridling or a taking refuge with the bestial (*Evasion ins Bestialische*) - as the booted, deleterious Nietzsche readers of the 30's had imagined. (41-43) Also, the term does not stand for the idea of a revertive breeding of human being back to the *status* before the time as domestic and church animal. When Nietzsche speaks of the superhuman, his thinking

transcends the present by a world age (*Weltalter*).¹⁴⁴ As a measure, he takes the past millenarian processes during which, heretofore and due to the intimate blending of breeding, domesticating, and educating the making of human being was practised¹⁴⁵ - of course in an enterprise that knew how to make itself largely invisible and, in its disguise as academy, had the domestication project as subject-matter.

With these adumbrations - and more than adumbrating is neither possible nor permissible in this field - Nietzsche delimits a gigantic premise on which the fate of future human being will have to be fulfilled, whether falling back upon the concept of the superhuman plays a role or not. It may well be that Zarathustra was the masked voice of a philosophizing hysteria whose infectious effects have today, and maybe forever, vanished. But the discourse on the difference and blending of domesticating and breeding, yes, pointing at all to the dawn of a consciousness of the making of human being and, more generally speaking, about anthropotechnologies - these are avowals which present thinking cannot ignore except if it wants to dedicate itself anew to a belittling. Perhaps Nietzsche went too far in propagating the suggestion that the domestication of human being has been the premeditated work of a pastoral breeder's association, which means a project of the clerical, Pauline instinct that senses all that could become humanly mulish and egomaniacal and opposes suchlike instantly with its expunging and maiming techniques. This was

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The fascist readers of Nietzsche obstinately mistook that in regard to them and the present it was generally only about the difference between the all-to-human and humane.

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Sloterdijk, p.41: '*Er nimmt Maß an den zurückliegenden tausendjährigen Prozessen, in denen bisher dank intimer Verschränkungen von Züchtung, Zähmung und Erziehung Menschenproduktion betrieben wurde...*'. I translated '*Verschränkungen*' with 'blending' because I take it to be a reference to the functional combination of breeding, domesticating, and educating in forming human beings.

certainly a hybrid thought - partially because it conceives the breeding process in much too short a term - as if a few generations of priestly reign would be sufficient to turn wolves into dogs and prehistoric humans into professors of Basel¹⁴⁶; but it is much more so a hybrid because it implies a contriving perpetrator where, rather, a breeding without a breeder, that is, a non-subjective, bio-cultural drift, would have to be reckoned with. Yet also after discounting the overdrawn and suspicious and anti-clerical moments, there remains a core of Nietzsche's idea sound enough to provoke a later pondering of humanity beyond humanistic harmlessness. (43-44) To see that the domestication of human being is the great unthought-of, ignored by humanism from antiquity till today, is enough to get into deep waters. Where we can't stand anymore, the evidence outgrows us that the educational domestication and befriending of human being by means of letters alone couldn't suffice at any time. Sure enough, reading was a great power formative of human being - and, in more modest dimensions, it still is; yet, selection - however it might have been performed - was always the acting power behind the power (of reading). Lessons and selections have more in common than any historian of culture was willing and able to consider, and if, for the time being, it seems impossible for us to adequately and precisely reconstruct the correlation between reading and selecting, it is still more than a noncommittal foreboding that the correlation as such is real.

Until the recently enforced, general alphabetization, literary culture itself has brought about sharply selective effects; it has fissured its host societies and separated literate human beings from illiterate ones by a furrow so unbridgeable that it almost

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On the genesis of the dog, neoteny, etc., compare Dany-Robert Dufour *Lettres sur la nature humaine à l'usage des survivants* Paris 1999.

became severe enough to differentiate the species. (44-46) If one, in spite Heidegger's dissuasiveness, would want to talk once more anthropologically, historical human beings could be defined as those animals some of which could read and write and others not. From here, it is only one further, albeit demanding, step to the thesis that human beings are animals some of which breed their like while others are the bred - a thought which belongs to the Europeans' pastoral folklore since Plato's reflections on breeding and state. Some of it resonates in Nietzsche's phrase cited above: that of the humans in small houses only few want and most are wanted. To be only wanted means to exist only as a selected object and not as a selecting subject.

It is the signature of the techno- and anthropotechnological era that human beings, without wilfully urging for the selector's role, get more and more onto the active or subjective side of selection. One may find: there is a discomfort in the power of choice - soon it will be an option for innocence when persons explicitly refuse their factually gained power to selection.¹⁴⁷ But as soon as powers of knowledge are developed positively in one field, human beings cut a sorry figure when they want - as in prior times of their incapacity - to let a superior force, be it God or chance or the others, act in their place. Because mere refusal or disregard habitually fail through their sterility, it is likely that, in the future, it will be decisive to take up the game actively and to formulate a codex of anthropotechnology. Such a codex would retroactively also change the meaning of classical humanism - for, with it (the codex), it would be revealed and noted down that *humanitas* does not only imply human friendship; it also always implies - and with growing

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Compare: P. Sloterdijk *Eurotaoismus: Zur Kritik der politischen Kinetik* Frankfurt a. M. 1989
(*Ausführungen über Ethiken des Unterlassungshandelns und 'Bremsen' als progressive Funktion*).

explicitness - that a human being represents a superior force to human being.

Nietzsche was conscious of something of this when he dared, in view of his remote impacts (*Fernwirkungen*), to nominate himself *force majeure*. Since it is many centuries, if not millennia, too early to judge such pretensions, one can put to rest the scandal this utterance created in the world. Who has enough breath (*Wer hat Atem genug...*) to imagine an era in which Nietzsche is as historical as Plato was for Nietzsche? It suffices to make clear to oneself that, to humanity, the next long while will be a period of species-political decision. (46-48) It remains to be seen whether in these periods humanity, or its chief cultural factions, succeeds once more in getting at least effective procedures of self-domestication under way. The battle of titans between domesticating and bestializing impulses and their respective media is also performed in contemporary culture. Yet, greater successes in domesticating would be surprising in the face of a civilizing process characterized by an unprecedented and apparently unstoppable wave of permissiveness.¹⁴⁸ But whether this long-ranging development will as well lead to a genetic reform of the species' properties - whether a future anthropotechnology advances to an explicit planning of traits; whether humanity will be able to perform a reorientation from birth fatalism (*Geburtenfatalismus*) to birth optimization and prenatal selection¹⁴⁹ - these are questions in which, however blurry and fishy, the evolutionary horizon begins to clear up before us.

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I (Sloterdijk) point here to the wave of violence that presently invades the schools of the entire Western world, especially in the USA, where teachers begin to build protective systems against students. As the book lost in antiquity against the theatres, so could today's academic institutions loose their battle against the indirectly educational forces, television, violent cinema, and other permissive media should not a new violence-quenching cultivating structure arise.

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More generally spoken: for the manipulation of biological risks; a supplementary formulation.

It belongs to the signature of *humanitas* that human beings are faced with problems which are too weighty for them while they cannot forego tackling the issues on account of their gravity. This provocation of human being by the inevitable that, at the same time, is the unmanageable (*das Nichtbewältigbare*), has already left an unforgettable trace at the beginning of European philosophy - yes, maybe philosophy itself is, in a broader sense, this trace. Having said this, it is no longer all too surprising that this trace shows itself to be specifically a discourse on the guarding and breeding of human beings. In his dialogue *Politikos* - one likes to translate: *The Statesman* -, Plato has propounded the Magna Charta of a European pastoral politic (*Pastoralpolitologie*). This text is not only of significance because in it features more clearly than anywhere else what antiquity really understood by thinking - winning the truth through carefully dividing or dissecting quantities of ideas and objects (*Einteilung oder Zerschneidung von Begriffs- und Sachmengen*); rather, its incommensurable place in the history of thought lies in its running like a discussion about work amongst breeders - not accidentally attended to by a, for Plato, untypical person - a stranger and a younger Socrates, as if, for the time being, ordinary Athenians are not to be permitted to conversations of this sort - and how could it be so if the issue at stake is to select a statesman unprecedented in Athens and to breed a state's citizenry hitherto not found in any existing city. This stranger and his opponent, Socrates junior, dedicate themselves to the captious attempt at placing the future politic, or art of the state-herdsman, under transparent, rational rules.

(48–49) With this project, Plato witnessed to an intellectual ruckus that could never again be placated. Since *Politikos* and *Politeia*, there are discourses in the world that speak of human society as of a zoological park that is simultaneously a theme park; the

keeping of human beings in parks or cities appears from here on as a zoo-political task.

What presents itself as pondering politics is really a rudimentary reflecting on regulations for the operation of human parks. If there is a human dignity that deserves to be voiced in philosophical thought, then it is primarily because human beings are not only kept in political theme parks but they also keep themselves in them. Human beings are self-fostering, self-tending creatures which - wherever they live - create a park around themselves. In city parks, national parks, cantonal parks, eco parks - everywhere human beings have to form an opinion about regulating their self-maintenance.

Now, concerning the Platonic zoo and its new organization, it is most important for the world to learn whether there exists a mere gradual or a specific differentiation between population and direction. Assuming the former, the distance between the guardians of human beings and their protégées is only an accidental and pragmatic one - in this case, one could grant the herd the capacity to rotationally elect its new herder. But if a specific difference dominates, the directors and inhabitants of the zoo would be so fundamentally different from each other that an elected direction would be not advisable but only a direction based on insight. Solely the false zoo directors, the pseudo statesmen, and political sophists would then tout themselves with the argument that, after all, they are of the same kind as the herd, while the true breeder puts emphasis on difference and discreetly relates that, because he acts from insight, he is closer to the gods than to the confused creatures he attends to.

Plato's precarious sense for risky themes hits the blind spot of all highly cultured pedagogies and politics - the actual inequality of human beings before the power-

bestowing knowledge. (50-51) In the form of a grotesque exercise of definition, the dialogue of the politician develops the preambles of a political anthropotechnique; its point being not only the domesticating guidance of the already tame herd but also a systematic new breeding of prototypical, human exemplars. The exercise begins so funnily that the, still not so funny, end could easily go unnoticed in the laughter. What is more grotesque than defining the art of the state as a discipline that deals with the pedate of those creatures living in herds? - for leaders of humanity practice certainly not the breeding of aquatic but, rather, land animals. Of the land animals, one must separate the winged ones from those without wings if one is driving at the human populations of which it is well known that they lack feathers and wings. The stranger in Plato's dialogue adds now that just the pedate among the tame are in turn divided by their nature into two noticeable subsets - namely 'that some of their kind are not horned while others are'. This mustn't be repeated to an acute interlocutor. The two sets are again matched by two arts of herding, namely herders for horned herds and herders for herds without horns - it may be obvious that one finds the true leaders of the human group only if one eliminates the herders of the horned kind. For if one would let the herders of the horned cattle guard human beings - what could one expect other than encroachments of the unqualified and the seemingly qualified. The good kings or *basileis*, the stranger says, graze amongst a herd trimmed off its horns - (265d). But this is not all; further, they have the task to guard purebred (*unvermischtbegattete*) creatures - that means creatures that don't copulate extra-specifically (*außerspezifisch*) as maintained by horses and donkeys - and must also watch over endogamy and try to avoid bastardizations. If the mark of bipedality - more modernly: upright walk - is added to the wing- and hornless that mate only with their kind,

the art of guarding, referring to wingless, hornless, purebred bipedalism, would be well chosen as the true art dismissive of pseudo-competences. This preventative art of guarding must now itself be again divided into violent-tyrannic or voluntary. If the tyrannic form is, in turn, eliminated as untrue and illusory, the proper art of state remains: it is defined as 'the voluntary attendance to...voluntary live creatures' (276e).¹⁵⁰

(52-53) Until this point, Plato has understood to make his teaching of the statesman's art fit entirely the images of herders and herds - and, out of dozens of phantasms about this art, chosen the sole true image, the valid idea of the matter in question. But now that the definition appears complete, the dialogue suddenly jumps to a different metaphor - but, as we will see, this happens not in order to relinquish the achieved but to take up, from a shifted perspective and more energetically, the most demanding aspect of the art of guarding humans, the supervision of reproductive breeding. Here is the place for Weber's famous parable of the statesman. The real and true reason of the kingly art is, according to Plato, not to be found in the vote of fellow citizens which grant to or withdraw from the politician their trust at will; it also doesn't lie with inherited privileges or novel presumptions. The Platonic master finds the reason for his mastership in a regal knowledge of breeding alone, an expertise of the rarest and most considerate sort. Here appears the phantom of an experts' kingdom whose legal basis is the understanding how humans - without ever impairing their voluntariness - would be best sorted and joined. The kingly anthropotechnique requires namely from the statesman that he knows how to most effectively intertwine the most salutary qualities of voluntarily guidable human beings for the commonwealth so that the human park attains under his hand an optimal

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Plato interpreters, such as Popper, like to read over this twice-occurring 'voluntary'.

homeostasis. This happens when the two relative optima of human nature, the warlike bravery on the one hand, the philosophical-humane level-headedness on the other, have an equally strong impact on the communal fabric.

Because both virtues can, in their oneness, bring about specific degenerations - the first the militaristic bellicosity along with its devastating consequences for the home countries, the second the privacy of the country's ingenious and quiet who can become so tepid and distant from the state that they can get into thralldom without noticing it -, the statesman must sort out the unsuitable natures before he attempts to weave the state with the qualified ones. With the remaining noble and voluntary natures alone will the good state be created - whereby the brave serve as the more coarse, chainlike threads (Kettfäden), the considered ones as the 'fatter, softer, weft-like interlacing' - as it is called in Schleiermacher words -, somewhat anachronistically, one may say that the considered come into the service of culture.

(53-55)'We wish to say, then, that this may be perfecting the weave of the state's executive proclamation, that the brave and considered human minds may be zeroed-in and intertwined when the kingly art, through agreement and friendship of both existents, unites them communally, constituting the most magnificent and excellent of all webbings, comprising and holding together by this netting all of the states' free and servants...'(311b, c).

The modern reader - who looks back at the humanistic grammar schools of the civil age and fascistic eugenics while, at the same time, looking ahead to the biotechnological era - cannot possibly misjudge the explosiveness of these deliberations.

What Plato has carried forward through the mouth of his stranger is the program of a humanistic society embodied in one single, accomplished humanist (*Voll-Humanist*), the master of the kingly art of herding. The task of this super-humanist (*Über-Humanist*) would be none other than the character-planning of an elite which must be specially bred for the sake of the whole.

One complication remains to be considered: the Platonic herdsman can be a credible guardian of human beings only because he represents the worldly image of the sole and primordially true herdsman - the god, who, in a dim and distant past and under the reign of Kronos, tended directly to human beings. One must also not forget that, with Plato, only the god can be considered the primordial guardian and breeder of human beings. (55-56) But now, after the great revolution (metabolic)¹⁵¹ where, under the reign of Zeus, the gods withdrew and abandoned human beings to care for their own guarding, there remains, as the most dignified guardian and breeder, the wise in whom the memory of the finest Elysian visions is most vivid. Without the model of the wise, the caring for human beings by human beings is a futile passion.

It seems that, two and a half thousand years after Plato's florescence, not only the gods but also the wise have withdrawn to leave us all alone with our foolishness and half-knowledge. What has remained in place of the wise are their scripts with their rough splendour and growing obscurity; they are still available in more or less accessible editions, they can still be read if one would only know why one should read them still. Sent by authors of whom we no longer know whether they can still be our friends, it is, like letters

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Sloterdijk writes: '*...nach der großen Umwälzung (metabole)....*'.

called for but never to be fetched, their fate to stand on quiet shelves - images or delusions of a wisdom impossible for a contemporary to believe in.

Letters that can no longer be delivered cease to be transmissions to possible friends - they transmute into archived objects. Also this, that the once authoritative books ceased to be letters to friends and that they no longer lie on the tables and bedside tables but have sunken into the timelessness of archives - also this took most of the humanistic movement's former verve. The archivists descend increasingly rarely to the texts of antiquity to look up earlier comments on modern cues. Maybe now and then it happens that during such enquiries into the dead cellars of culture the long ignored papers begin to flicker as if distant lightning flashes over them. Can the archive cellar also become a clearing? All indicates that archivists and archives have succeeded the humanists. For the few who still look about in archives, the view imposes itself that our life is the confused answer to questions concerning which we have forgotten where they have been posed.

Epilogue

(57-60)The text, here presented as an autonomous publication, enjoyed in the German public during the months of September and October 1999 the precarious privilege of serving as the starting point for an incensed and controversial debate. In recognition of the circumstances, that in this case public interest outweighs the author's rights and that an unfinished essay became a document which, under the given conditions, it wouldn't be sensible to touch, I have renounced my interest in developing and rounding the text and preserved, some ancillary stylistic corrections exempted, the literal likeness it had when surprised by the alarm. In this situation, I am sympathetic to the objections of those who protested against certain ellipses and short cuts in my speech, urging for greater detail. Likewise, I can comprehend the upbraiding of those who charge me with neglecting the possibility of being misunderstood. It is a well known weakness of writers to not orient themselves towards the habitual and commercial misunderstanders while writing. Some serious media of the federal republic have nevertheless furnished the proof that in the face of explicitly inflammatory journalism, de-emotionalizing forms of argumentation can also be defended.

Yet, the great importance of symptoms to the contrary cannot be concealed. The boulevard's invasion into the feuilleton - arranged by the usual unsuspected - is the phenomenon of a crisis that betrays an overwhelming trend to reorient the media away from the production of information towards that of excitement. Instead of stimulating differentiation, this fraction of the press sees its chance in triggering mass psychoses of simplification through provocative journalism.

This excess comes as no surprise: what constituted the theme of my speech - the perilous end of literary humanism as a utopia of forming human beings by means of scripture and lecture that makes patient and educates towards withholding judgement and listening - has, on the occasion of this lecture, exemplarily manifested itself, see *Die Zeit* from September 23, 1999.

The reader should know that, in the context of a literary matinee before a large audience, this speech was first given on June 15, 1997 in Basel as a contribution to a cycle of lectures on the actuality of humanism. These circumstances explain both the mood of the speech and also the selectivity of accents in that - after twelve preceding lectures (among others by Joachim Gauck, Vittorio Hösle, Elisabeth Bronfen, Vittorio Lampugnani, Wolfgang Rihm, and Annemarie Schimmel) - I could presume the audience's general idea of the theme and distinctive sense for the diversity of possibilities to access it. Both are, for the now forced, context-free reception of my piece, no longer valid. When I repeated this speech, somewhat modified, and in the presence of theologians and philosophers from Israel, France, the USA, Argentine, and Germany, at the Elmau conference on Heidegger and Lévinas, I could proceed from the assumption that this group would understand the two technically interesting aspects of the lecture, the mediological-grammatological (*mediologisch-grammatologisch*) accentuated deduction of *humanitas* and the historical-anthropological revision of Heidegger's motif (the partial reversion of the relationship between ontic and ontological), as a stimulation in the professional context. In regard to the experts, this expectation was no mistake, but arguably in respect of some journalists, present perchance, which didn't note anything of the contribution's logic, but recognized in its vocabulary a chance for a denouncing

coverage.¹⁵² The rest of the story renders the so-called Sloterdijk debate (or, as it is called in France, the Sloterdijk-Habermas scandal) - to which I won't contribute further except for the remark that it demonstrates the explosiveness of de-contextualizing.

I wish only to draw attention to one shameless strategy used by those who are misreading: I have, at a strongly descried spot (p.46), pointed to some problems which could pose themselves through the emergence of the new biotechnological possibilities to intervene in the species' future process. There I ask whether, at long sight, something like an explicit planning of traits on the species' level is at all possible and whether the optimal birth (with its downside: the prenatal selection) could become a species-wide, new procreative habit (the word 'species-wide' should not be read over here because medically indicated, prenatal selection as a right to abortion belongs, in Europe and the USA and in spite of Catholic resistance, already to the juridically clarified, cultural standard) - and at the very same place I add that in uneasy questions of this sort, the evolutionary horizon looms before us. Some publicists have turned these questions into prescriptions.

My speech at Basel-Elmau was, after it had been made available under diverse Internet addresses, published in French in the newspaper *Le Monde des Débats* (October 1999). Between mid-September and the 1st of October, the Internet address, which, apart from the speech's text, offered some qualifying, additional documents, was requested more than 60,000 times. From mid-October 1999 on, the same address

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I translated Sloterdijk's "*Bericht'erstattung*" (p.59) with 'coverage', which does not bring out the explicit critique intended by him. By apostrophizing '*Bericht*' (report), he is, in my opinion, highlighting its very dubious character, for the journalists obviously didn't understand and, misled by mere linguistics, misinterpreted his lecture.

(www.rightleft.net) will also make available an information service concerning the scandal's chronology.