

ART HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE PRODUCT OF A PHILOSOPHIZING CYBORG. LOOKING INSIDE “PHILOSOPHY OF POSTHUMAN ART” BY STEFAN LORENZ SORGNER

Evi D. Sampanikou *

Abstract

The article is an extended review of the recent Stefan Lorenz Sorgner’s book *Philosophy of Posthuman Art* (2022) that explores the content and the aesthetic values introduced by the author as well as his shift to Critical Posthumanism, while he also keeps the philosophical essence of his own approach to Transhumanism, the main ideas of his contribution to Metahumanism and the desire of convergence of Trans- and Posthumanism. Sorgner’s insight to contemporary art surpasses the boundaries usually set by art historians and underlines the artists’ worldview and the philosophical meaning of their works in the context of the several trends of Posthumanism including social and cultural views and politics. Visual arts and music are studied in parallel with the evolution of posthumanist theories and arguments, while the issues of non-dualities, technology, religion, truth, ethics, reason, leisure, the western philosophies of the past and moreover “the need to coin new terms” are the crucial points of Sorgner’s discussion with the readers. The book is more than valuable for its commitment to the notion of the philosophical meaning of contemporary artworks as well as for its opening to a new understanding of Posthumanism.

Keywords

Critical posthumanism, metahumanism, aesthetics, ethics, reason

I still remember how impressed I had been from reading Stefan Sorgner’s text “Adage of Metahumanism” a couple of years ago, opening with the famous Heraclitus’ phrase: “You cannot step into the same river twice” (Sorgner, 2021, pp. 305–308):

* Department of Cultural Technology and Communication, University of the Aegean, Greece.

...λέγει που Ἡράκλειτος ὅτι πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει καὶ ποταμοῦ
ῥοῆ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἄν
ἐμβαιῆς (Plato, Cratylus, 402a, in Diels & Kranz, 1960. Also Kahn.
1979, p. 168)¹

and ending with the same phrase adapted for a different situation: art. “You cannot experience one artwork twice as you cannot step into the same river twice” (Sorgner, 2021, p. 308). From that moment on, I knew I expected a new philosophical step by Sorgner that would surely deal with all forms of contemporary (audio)visual art, performance, and new media. Because art, music on most occasions initially, had always been to him a constant companion in his philosophical development (Sorgner & Fürbeth, 2010), following his commitment to and understanding of Nietzsche, his Transhumanist reflections plus Postmodern echoes (Glass & Nyman, see: Sorgner, 2014) and his Metahuman encounters with either the artist-philosopher and co-author Jaime del Val (Del Val & Sorgner, 2010/2021, pp. 295–297), or the contemporary composer Sven Helbig (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 107–109).

On the other hand, I knew the early admiration of Sorgner for Arthur Danto (Sorgner, 2007, p. 20) and the effectiveness of his thought in analyzing and interpreting Visual Arts in the so-called Postmodern era, exactly at the time this era had already gone. At the same time Sorgner knew that the Frankfurt School’s and especially Adorno’s approach would never again be enough as they had once stepped into a river that was there no more. And, in a sense, publishing during the same period two books that seemed diametrically different (*We Have Always Been Cyborgs* and the reviewed book) was a reflection of a numerous years’ inner dialogue on Trans- Post- and Metahuman values that led to a balance of ethics among Evolutionism and Transhumanist thought (I would call it *the Promethean mode*) and Metahumanism (*the Dionysian mode*) that led him to a safe and widely open ground, Critical Posthumanism (and towards a more *Apollonian mode*). I don’t mean that Sorgner is a Critical Posthumanist. What I understand is that Sorgner, having been into more than three rivers, knows very well that all encounters lead to new things. And his heavy and deep philosophical knowledge is always a firm ground for new acceptances and openings. For me it is a form of clarifying in contemporary terms (because we do need to *coin new terms*), (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 54) a different appreciation of Nature and Culture, not only within all the Post- Meta- and Transhumanist streams of thought but also in the context of the whole of the Humanistic philosophy of the past.

“You cannot experience one artwork twice as you cannot step into the same river twice” (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 11) becomes thus the first phrase of the short Chapter One “Posthuman Aesthetic Intimacies,” (2022a, pp. 11–12) in the new Sorgner’s (2022a) book *Philosophy of Posthuman Art*. The book’s last chapter, the sub-chapter 3 of Chapter Eight (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 130–132) is for once more the “Adage of Metahumanism” (Sorgner, 2021), thus verifying both the artistic *twist* to Metahumanism and the *twist* of

¹ Translation: “Heraclitus says something like this: that all things flow and nothing remains; and comparing the things that are to the flowing of a river, he says that you could not step twice into the same river”. *Loeb Classical Library*: https://www.loebclassics.com/view/early_greek_philosophy_doxography_successions/2016/pb_LCL525.9.xml

homo faber and *homo ludens* to cyborg, creating an empirical passage to his other book of the same period *We Have Always Been Cyborgs* (2022b). The “Adage of Metahumanism” works as the last missing piece of a difficult puzzle. And, as the puzzle cannot be a fulfilled craft without the last piece, this text creates the ultimate link to a series of transformations of Sorgner’s thought that take place through time and are expressed in his writings of 2018-2019 in German—*Schöner neuer Mensch* (2018) and *Übermensch* (2019)—and 2022 *We have always been Cyborgs* (2022b) and *Philosophy of Posthuman Art* (2022a) and also describe the author’s shift to Critical Posthumanism, while he also keeps the philosophical essence of his own approach to Transhumanism—especially in relation to “human performance” (Sorgner, 2016/2020, p. 30) and the main ideas of his contribution to Metahumanism. Besides, he has been working towards a convergence of Trans- and Posthumanism for long (e.g. the topic of the cancelled 2020 BHC—12th *Beyond Humanism Conference* (BHC, 2020).

This book consists of eight chapters, in fact six, as chapter one and two are the previously mentioned short chapter and the authors preface (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 13–14). Chapters Three to Eight are the main body of the book. Chapter Three, under the title: “Philosophy of Posthuman Artworks” (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 15–41) is divided into seven sub-chapters and the Conclusions. This chapter is one of the most interesting for me in the book as Sorgner’s aesthetics are met with matters of technology, biology, beauty, and power. In “Non-Duality, Technology and Posthuman Works of Art” (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 23–28) he deals with Kevin Warwick’s scientific works and projects and focuses on Jaime del Val’s works and philosophy, the meanings of *metaformance* and *metabody* and finally with the *Metahumanist Manifesto* they composed together in 2010 (Del Val & Sorgner, 2010/2017, pp. 9–11) based on the denial of all dualities and other certainties of the western philosophies of the past. In the fourth sub-chapter, *Bioart*, Sorgner (2022a) shares with us critical thoughts on which works of art could probably be categorized as bioart-works:

The most obvious option is that a bioart-work can be defined as an artwork which needs to involve living organisms like “Alba”. If this is the case, then one could still wonder whether formerly living organisms should also be included, e. g., Damien Hirst’s famous shark sculpture entitled “The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living”. In addition, it might also be possible to regard Stelarc’s ear or Orlan’s body modification processes as bioart-works, as they fulfil the above criterion. (p. 33)

In the seventh sub-chapter “Non-Totalitarian Total Works of Art|” Sorgner (2022a) explains why Posthuman artworks “are inclusive without stopping to be innovative” (p. 39) comparing them to the demand of Adorno’s aesthetics for artworks dedicated to an intellectual audience. Posthumanism is thus described by Sorgner (2022a) as another “democratization of the image” equivalent to what Susan Sontag saw in the art of Photography, the first ever *new medium* that has shaped Modernity in an inclusive way: “Plurality and inclusiveness are central concepts within the great variety of posthuman approaches” (p. 40).

Chapter Four (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 43–60) focuses on religion and deals with the possibility of a *posthuman religiosity*. As artworks have for centuries been related to religions are they also related to *truth*? “Truth is no longer an end in itself, but it has become a means. (...) Truth is whatever works in this world” (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 44). In the sub-chapters that follow, dedicated on Transhumanism and Critical Posthumanism, Sorgner keeps a critical attitude to both, discussing, apart from ethics, the matter of reason, in a similar way with Goya that had already spoken about the *sleep of reason that breeds monsters*:

If the IIEET survey, which shows that most transhumanists are naturalists, is correct then it follows that transhumanism implies a variant of anti-humanism, which again means that both critical posthumanism as well as transhumanism represent variants of anti-humanist thinking. (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 51)

Sorgner (2022a) argues that:

Transhumanism moves away from Enlightenment by giving it a new twist. (...) A twist is different from the process of overcoming. Overcoming leaves behind and separates itself categorically from the past, whereas a twist develops the past further in an inclusive manner. (p. 52)

In the Fourth sub-chapter, Sorgner (2022a, pp. 56–59) deals with Vattimo’s thinking and the term *kenosis* (κένωσις) that leads to an ethics of autonomy:

In order to make Vattimo’s interpretation of historical progress clearer, reference must be made to the concept of “kenosis”, which plays a decisive role within his conception. Kenosis is, “the condescension of God, the revocation of the ‘natural’ features of the deity. (p. 56)

Chapter Five is the biggest in the book (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 61–89) and, moreover, the most challenging for any art historian or theorist. It consists of a series of paradigms of contemporary artworks that can be characterized as epitomizing the notion of the Posthuman in Visual and Audiovisual Arts nowadays. Works by Picinini, Kac, Del Val, Hirst, Stelarc, Orlan, Koons, Random International, Hajime Sorayama and kawaii culture are studied. Posthuman aesthetic concepts of their chosen artworks are furtherly discussed throughout this chapter. Ten different types of posthuman aesthetics are dealt within this chapter, each type associated with one specific posthuman work of art. However:

Posthuman artworks no longer count as autonomous, but they are seen as relational with respect to all other aspects of the lifeworld. A dialectic understanding of the term autonomous art, as it was prevalent in Adorno’s aesthetics, no longer applies to posthuman artworks. (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 62)

In the context of Critical Posthumanism, the following three types of aesthetics play a particularly important role: the first is the *aesthetics of monsters* in Patricia

Piccinini's, *Graham*, a very provocative representation of the *Other*, the different, depicted as a norm in a post-reality present or future on one hand, or as a dystopic representation of *what makes us human* and what makes the Other difficult to understand if we are only based on an aesthetic approach. Sorgner's (2022a) is rather a humoristic approach:

It has a grotesque, bizarre and seemingly deformed appearance. However, from a different perspective "Graham" could also be conceptualized as a superhuman, as Piccinini designed "Graham" such that it has a high chance of surviving a car crash. (p. 64)

The notion of *monstrosity* is furtherly discussed by Sorgner in this sub-chapter. He explains how the confrontation of the specific sculpture can leave a feeling of disturbance by its "monsterly appearance" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 64), but not in terms of fear. Disturbance is caused by facing a radically different from *us* being (it would be described as *the creature* in 19th century novels) that challenges not only our aesthetic prototypes but also *our common way of conceptualizing the world*.

The second example of Critical Posthumanist aesthetics is called *the aesthetics of hybridity*, represented here by the well-known work *Edunia* by Eduardo Kac, a semi-scientific project that follows the outcome of a 2016 research from Canada and Israel (see reference to Sender/Fuchs/Milo 2016 in Sorgner, 2022a, p. 66) that successfully proved the enormous quantity of non-human cells like bacteria and microbes in our bodies. Kac has actually coined the term *bioart* and *Edunia* is a genetically engineered hybrid flower containing Kac's DNA, a *plantimal* (plant + animal) an integration of Kac and Petunia (this is where Ed-unia comes from), part of the *Natural History of The Enigma* artwork project (2003/08). The petunia contains Kac's DNA in the *red veins* visible all over its surface. For Sorgner it is a *Chimaera* (Χίμαιρα), a monstrous fire-breathing hybrid creature from Lycia, Asia Minor, composed of different animal parts. "It is usually depicted as a lion, with the head of a goat protruding from its back, and a tail that might end with a snake's head," "an offspring of Typhon and Echidna," and "a sibling of such monsters as Cerberus and the Lernaean Hydra" (Graves, 2017, p. 11). Both Homer and Hesiod refer to the divine origin of this hybrid animal that has numerous times been depicted in ancient art. The hybrid has many and different descriptions in the several scholarly works on Greek mythology. Its contemporary international meaning is mainly related to the notion of creating something from mixing various different parts, while in Greek it has also become a synonym of a vision or a delusional dream or anything unrealistic. I don't know why Sorgner insists on one only version of the word Chimaera, the most ancient: goat. He also falsely relates it etymologically with *hybris* (ὕβρις) (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 66) probably to stress the notion of something insulting Nature only by its mere existence, as on the occasion of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, a major *hybris* for the new technological world that was rising during Shelley's times. Sorgner argues here that *Nature* had it always for us to be hybrids, sharing huge percentages of cells with other beings (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 67–68), concluding that the beauty of Kac's *Edunia* bears significant differences from the dystopic images of other artists, and also significant similarities with the positive aesthetics of kawaii.

A third example in this chapter is discussing the so-called *aesthetics of the amorphous* in Jaime del Val's (postanatomical) *Microdanzas*. To my opinion, no matter if the *Microdanzas* are recorded in video, they should be classified under the *performance* category, as Jaime del Val's philosophical approach hardly deals with the aesthetics of videoart, for the main reason that Del Val has never been a video artist; video is just one of a series of equipments, in other words just a medium used in several ways to record *metaformances* and *proprioception* events. Sorgner is explaining in this sub-chapter how: "(...) humans have tried to make sense of the permanent becoming which has always surrounded them and they associated the concepts they used for the sake of communication with real entities" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 69).

Sorgner is focusing here on the problem of making sense of concepts like identity and equality arguing that empirical data is never a safe guide for tracing these meanings between two or more entities. Instead, the words have to exist in a stable manner in an intellectual realm according to the Platonic tradition, still one of the dominant ones in the Western world. The amorphous, Jaime del Val is introducing is contradicting this tradition. *Microdanzas* involve a perpetual moving, a permanent becoming in unusual perspectives "difficult to decipher on the basis of our commonly used concepts" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 69).

What is *the amorphous*? A system of movements, an expression based on between-in-notion fragmented organic visions so familiar and so unfamiliar at the same time? Sorgner recognizes here *emotive connotations* that can actually arouse an excitement in different ways. For me, Sorgner is attempting to say that this is where a kind of poetic vision enters, however he is still exploring it dialectically under the prism of western philosophical tradition mainly based on logic.

Are there any erotic dimensions in *Microdanzas*? Not in a binary concept but rather in a post-gender view through a different approach to sexuality, in ways, I think, that not even erotic tension can be necessary, as body cells and genitals are not that important from Del Val's point of view. Sorgner is successfully attempting in this sub-chapter a deep understanding and interpretation of Del Val's post-gender and even post-erotic qualities by defining the amorphous as a continuous becoming, an eternal post-evolutional condition based on continuous movements that can never be the same with one another, a situation where "the contingency of naming gets highlighted" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 69).

In the context of Metahumanism, Sorgner highlights four types of aesthetics, each represented by a contemporary artist: First comes *the aesthetics of becoming* in Damien Hirst's *A Thousand Years* (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 70–73), a project that to my opinion could be used as a contradictory antipode to Del Val's notion of continuous becomings in *Microdanzas* as was previously analyzed by Sorgner. To my opinion, Damien Hirst's *A Thousand Years* functions as a vice-versa becoming, a reminder of death, a *memento mori*. According to Sorgner, the work excellently shows the processes of a full circle of becoming, "of living, eating, digesting, reproducing and dying again" while "it also visually demonstrates the relevance of decay of organic entities" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 71). The work consists of:

a deceased cow's bloody head lying on the ground around which we find maggots and flies who nourish themselves from it. Yet, they only stay alive for about a day. In addition, in a second part of the vitrine there was a device which is used in kitchens to eliminate flies, so we also see many dead flies on the ground.

Sorgner relates the title of the project with the artist's notion of how long a work of art can exist. It is not meant to be eternal. The *one thousand years* are a realistic reckoning of how long it should take to completely decay (the cow's head and the continuously dying flies around it). Sorgner underlines the fact that some form of preservation techniques have been used for both the head and the flies (also, sugar for the flies). He also stresses the (shocking) strength of the visual impact of the work. I do not agree however that there are no relational qualities in the work at all—"It is not the amorphous, the monstrous, or the relational which are central here" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 71).

However the most important part of Sorgner's analysis of the work is related with the matter of "permanent pain" caused to the spectator by facing in this work "the challenges of our own existence", and "the finitude of all processes", therefore he thinks it is an example of *mimesis*, in the context of an Aristotelian understanding of the term that has always been related to art (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 72).

Sorgner recognizes in this type of *mimesis* the feeling of the sublime, *the terror of existence, the loss of all certainties*, that can function as part of a *katharsis* (κάθαρσις) that Aristotle has always related to the relevance of tragedy, a process that goes through *pity/aversion* (ἔλεος) and *fear* (φόβος), an intense experience for the spectator. I would argue that death never took place in front of the spectator in ancient tragedy, from the decaying point of view at least. Sorgner is probably seeking for contemporary links with ancient tragedy and from that aspect he does it form a realistic point of view of the spectacle and the function of the image in a posthuman age. Sorgner is in fact describing a *mixed emotional response* of the spectator that causes an adaptation to the permanent becoming, a condition (*conditio humana*) of posthumanity (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 72).

A second type of Metahumanist aesthetics, an aesthetics of *twisting* according to Sorgner is Stelarc's *Second Life* performance (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 74–75). I am more than happy with Sorgner's inclusion of Stelarc to Metahumanism instead of Thanshumanism as it was usually happening during the years (for example: Newton, 2019, p. 488). I feel Sorgner's contribution into better defining Stelarc's projects and meaning of his total work is really huge and is happening from conference to conference through a very open kind of discussions that may in the future lead to Stelarc's parallel inclusion to Critical Posthumanism also.

It is not accidental that Sorgner takes *Second Life* as a characteristic example of Stelarc's work related to Metahumanism as it can be a key paradigm to his notion of *twisting*. The project is about the mind that was traditionally "identified with an immaterial ontology", however in a *Neo-Spinozian unity* the mind and the body should be inseparable. In Stelarc's work "the material and the immaterial come together into a psychophysiological unity" and this is what Sorgner is calling twisting (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 74). Posthumanism should overcome all dualities and *integrate* rather than *overcome*. Achieving gaming-like presences in his *Second Life* performances, Stelarc's

avatar, surrounded—in the environment of the game—by images of his suspensions and directly connected with a *robotic* Stelarc semi-controlled by a computer, discusses biocompatibility between the body and technology in scale and subject and merges the avatar with the (post)human thus creating a new thread a new form of existence deriving from this encounter—see: *Stelarc to Sussex* (Kazyanenko, 2010). As Sorgner masterfully deals with it (2022a, p. 75): “The dualities between the mind and body, between silicon-based and carbon-based entities, and between consciously controlled and randomly-computer-generated acts get twisted into a posthuman yarn of inter-relationality”.

Referring to *the extended mind theory*, our interrelation with technology (e. g. a smartphone) and *the embodied mind theory*, our material -and not immaterial- mind, Sorgner explains how the twist is performed. He stresses the importance of this argument by also mentioning the analysis he makes in “We Have Always Been Cyborgs” (Sorgner, 2022b) supporting the aesthetics of the twist, closely associated with the *aesthetics of relationality* that follows in the next sub-chapter. The aesthetics of relationality argument is based on a different example: Random International’s *Rain Room*. The London-based studio Random International was founded in 2005 by Stuart Wood, Florian Ortkrass and Hannes Koch, aiming at creating *artworks and installations that explore behavior and interaction*. The *Rain Room*, exhibited in The Curve at the Barbican center (2012) is a hundred square meter field of falling water through which it is possible to walk, without getting wet as the ceiling is regulated by 3D-cameras and a complex water management system (VernissageTV, 2012). Upon entering the exhibition, ‘the sound of water and a sensation of moisture fill the air, even before seeing the installation’.

Sorgner (2022a) deals with this specific work as one that enables participants to experience the aesthetics of relationality as it does not only “(...) confront participants with a representation of the ontology of becoming, but it also imitates a technologically mediated human-nature environment, which is correlated to a bunch of the most challenging applied ethical issues of today” (pp. 76–77).

After the aesthetics of relativity, *the aesthetics of bodily plurality* come up as one more, the fourth Metahuman concept, as represented in Orlan’s *Omniprésence. Sourire de Plaisir* (1993), in which Sorgner traces “a close link between the aesthetic concepts of hybridity, monstrosity and psychophysiological plurality”. In Orlan’s work, plastic surgeries are not identified to promote Classical or Renaissance idea of beauty and perfection, but increase the plurality of forms (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 78).

The last three types of aesthetics in the same chapter are related to Transhumanism. Sorgner deals here with: a. *the aesthetics of superheroines and superheroes* as reflected in Jeff Koons’ artwork *Hulk Elvis*; b. *the aesthetics of smoothness* demonstrated in Hajime Sorayama’s *Sexy Robot(s)*; and c. the aesthetics of *kawaii* derived from the *manga* genre. Common in these types of aesthetic is the obsession with several types of bodily perfection, either in terms of strength and technically generated eroticism, or in terms of *cuteness* after a specific trend of manga culture. The first sub-chapter gives Sorgner the opportunity of writing a beautiful text on the origins of Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Critical Posthumanism and the twist we can feel in popular art, that actually strengthens the posthuman paradigm shift. A hero derived

from Marvel's comics merges with a major idol of popular culture in a rather monstrous way also related with Eastern traditions of protagonists of monstrous appearance, bearers however of "new eternal values" (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 82–84). Sorayama's *Sexy Robots* are minimalistic, shiny, flawless, metallic and smooth, fitting in with contemporary aesthetics of the body and, as on the occasion of Jeff Koons, *shifting away from the political*, following, to my opinion the echo of a specific path of postmodernism. I cannot resist citing the last sentences of the sub-chapter and the unique political irony contained:

The smooth, flawless able-bodied beauty is travelling the world and shares the impressions with their community of followers, who long to live just like this. Any criticism, or anything else which could create political problems has to be left out from the postings to uphold the smooth image of the flawless life of permanently exciting new experiences, and fun, play and entertainment. (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 86)

After so much un-politicizing what is left for us to reflect on the qualities of contemporary art and the specific Transhuman qualities discussed above? The kawaii example of course and the characteristic of cuteness. Sorgner uses the example of the Japanese artist called "Mr." and his solo exhibition under the title "Sweet", who combines kawaii with the *otaku* (the word for fan or devoted to the art of manga) subculture. However, cuteness can very well function as a veil of suffering, no matter if "the kawaii aesthetics represents a profound superficiality of a colourful playfulness" (Sorgner, 2022a, p. 88). However, I couldn't disagree more with the argument that kawaii aesthetics is "the ultimate shift away from an aesthetics of authenticity," "affirming a lightness of becoming".

Visual Arts have very generously been represented in Sorgner's book in Chapter Five. Chapter Six (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 91–100) deals with Music and it is in this chapter that Sven Helbig's music is discussed while Chapter Seven (Sorgner, 2022a, pp. 101–118) deals with *Leisure* and its Posthuman meaning. Leisure that takes nowadays a huge part of human activity and passion becoming more and more un-political.

Sorgner, throughout this wonderful book is attempting a paradigm shift, the twist, in his acceptance of the permanent becoming. His arguments are political and powerful in terms of a philosophical dialogue that openly brings together all Post-Trans and Metahuman streams of thought and knowledge, through some of the most meaningful works of contemporary art and the most eminent of the artists.

But who are the subjects enjoying these artworks with all their mind and senses? Us, the posthumans, the Cyborgs, according to Sorgner. *We Have Always Been Cyborgs* (2022b) after all, every moment in human history we enhanced our natural capabilities or mechanically protected ourselves. And this always applied to *Art*, no matter if it was Michelangelo's *David* or the *Brillo Box* by Warhol and the context Arthur Danto gave it through his own interpretation (Danto, 1998).

All critiques need an epilogue. Mine will be a more personal response, related for once more with the river you cannot step in twice. Having grown up during my childhood and teenage years next to a river that through the years underwent several

transformations, I have a first-hand experience of its continuous change, aligned with my own changes too. It's never the same. At the same time, having also been an art historian for several years, my work and teaching follows exactly the same changes that make art a river for me. A river flowing in the ocean of philosophy, making the above-mentioned twist a valuable journey towards the integration of humanist and posthumanist thought.

References

- BHC. 12th Beyond Humanism Conference. (2020, 1-4 July). *Critical Posthumanism and Transhumanism Antagonism or Convergence?*. Mytilini, Lesvos. <http://beyondhumanism.org/12th-beyond-humanism-conference/?ckattempt=1> (Conference canceled).
- Danto, A. C. (1998). *Beyond the Brillo Box: The visual Arts in post-historical perspective*. University of California Press.
- Del Val, J. & Sorgner, S. L. (2017). A Metahuman Manifesto. In: E. D. Sampanikou (Ed.), *Audiovisual Posthumanism* (pp. 9–11). Cambridge Scholars Publishing. (Original work published 2010).
- Del Val, J. & Sorgner, S. L. (2021). A metahuman manifesto. In: Sampanikou, E. & Stasienko, J. (Eds.), *Posthuman Studies reader. Core readings on Meta-, Post- and Transhumanism* (pp. 295–297). Schwabe. (Original work published 2010).
- Diels, H. & Kranz, W. (Eds.). (1960). *Die fragmente der vorsokratiker*. Weidmann, A6.
- Graves, R. (2017). *The Greek myths—The complete and definitive edition*. Penguin Books.
- Kac, E. (2003/08) “Natural History Of The Enigma” artwork project (2003/08). The Artist’s Official Webpage. <https://www.ekac.org/nat.hist.enig.html>
- Kahn, C. (1979). *The art and thought of Heraclitus. An edition of the fragments with translation and commentary*. Cambridge University Press.
- Kazyanenko, P. (2010, June 30). *Stelarc to Sussex*. [Video file]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysW-9Yt76Dg>
- Loeb Classical Library. (n.d.). *Early Greek philosophy: Doxography and successions*. https://www.loebclassics.com/view/early_greek_philosophy_doxography_successions/2016/pb_LCL525.9.xml
- Newton, L. (2019). Cyborgs and cybernetic art. In: L. Newton (Ed.). *The transhumanism handbook* (pp. 477–490). Springer.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2007). *Metaphysics without truth*. Marquette Studies in Philosophy.
- Sorgner, S. L. & Fürbeth, O. (Eds.) (2010). *Music in German philosophy. An introduction*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2014). Music. In R. Ranisch & S. L. Sorgner (Eds.), *Post- and Transhumanism: An introduction* (pp. 299–310). Peter Lang.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2018). *Schöner neuer Mensch*. Nicolai Publishing.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2019). *Übermensch: Plädoyer für einen Nietzscheanischen transhumanismus*. Schwabe Verlag.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2020). *On Transhumanism: The most dangerous idea in the world?!* (S. Hawkins, Trans). Pennsylvania State University Press. (Original work published 2016).

- Sorgner, S. L. (2021). Adage of Metahumanism. In Sampanikou, E. & Stasienko, J. (Eds.), *Posthuman Studies reader. Core readings on Meta-, Post- and Transhumanism* (pp. 305–308). Schwabe Verlag.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2022a). *Philosophy of Posthuman Art*. Schwabe Verlag.
- Sorgner, S. L. (2022b). *We have always been cyborgs: Digital Data, Gene Technologies, and an Ethics of Transhumanism*. Bristol University Press.
- VernissageTV. (2012, November 9). *Random International: Rain Room at Barbican Centre, London*. [Video file]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOARXy-f_GY