*Does a philosophy of technology exist?*

Does a philosophy of technology exist? This question may sound odd, especially if it constitutes the *leitmotiv* of the first issue of a journal which aims to evaluate the statutes, the trajectories and the theoretical ranges that a philosophy of technology is able to evoke and provoke.

We cannot hide that, upon closer inspection, it is an extremely ambiguous question, which could be read and interpreted in many different ways; is a philosophy of technology possible? Is reflection upon technology an authentically philosophical exercise? Is question of technology a mere sectorial and specialised issue or does it concern all sufficiently mature and structured philosophical standpoints? Moreover: are we dealing with a homogenous/unitary speculative scope, which distinct traditions have approached with their own diverse methods and theoretical approaches, or are the various approaches so discordant in subject and purpose that speaking without distinction of a "philosophy of technology" is completely pointless?

We simply want to affirm our belief that philosophy of technology has been present in all philosophies, at least stemming from Plato's theory of ideas, simply due to the fact that human thinking in relation to the world, which later became philosophy, is fundamentally that of an animal – mankind – entirely conditioned by his technological assets: from perception of language, imagination, memory, ethos and even to nature, there is nothing in a human being, that hasn't developed (and continues to develop) as a result of the tortuous ways of his countless machinations, through which he continues to shape the world and in doing so, himself.

"Philosophy *and* the anthropology of technology" is not just a conjunction, but almost a hendiadys and perhaps even a tautology – which we openly assert well aware of it blatantly contravening with the "Heideggerian veto" against any contamination between ontology, question of technology and philosophical anthropology. Which does not mean, on the other hand, to cede *sic et simpliciter* to Heidegger's "anthropological-instrumental prejudice": namely the assumption that technology is not just a mere tool available for an intelligent animal, but it is rather a specific primal form and, at the same time, a matrix of its own intelligence is one of first assumptions of an anthropology of technology, which aims to remain historical and genealogical insofar it considers hominisation as a process, subject to systematic breakage, permanently open and *in fieri*.

At the same time, we know that technology, the characteristic action through which mankind modifies and organises the world, has now changed speed, vis-

ible from new complex technological innovations such as A.I., ICT and Big Data. This ongoing transformation is radical, and involves every dimension of human existence: from psychology to politics; from economics to forms of coexistence and socialisation, to our understanding of the management of power and even the scientific method is involved along the lines of this epochal change, that presages the crossing of a critical threshold in the direction of new vital conditions for the humanity, both in a qualitative and a quantitative perspective.

In some ways, it has long been this way – and within certain limits and above all along extended temporal scales it has been always this way – however, the present situation seems characterised by two specific elements: the increasingly accelerating rate of transformations, which makes it hard to prefigure their developments and outcomes even in the short run, but also a growing and widespread awareness of the historical significance of new technologies. Historical significance is best defined quoting Luciano Floridi, as "hyperstorical", describing that which is harbinger of an epochal change, comparable to the passage from prehistory to history.

Facing this new scenario in which technology is encompassing greater and greater sections of our existence like never before – which is now able to convey and satisfy even our own desires – it therefore appears the right time to suggest an inversion in trend; proposing an effort to focus on a philosophy of technology through the same conceptual apparatus that technology itself provides, instead necessarily thinking of it with other speculative tools, therefore handling it like an object among others.

The technological takes over technology – provoking and structuring even our desires – and huge sections of our life, as never before in history, urge a step change: i.e. the effort of thinking a philosophy of technology through the same conceptual apparatus that technology itself provides, instead of thinking it with other speculative tools, degrading it to an object among others. Beyond every logic of fundament, philosophy of technology should itself be able to, via its own principles, set the conceptual axes which define its own statute; axes which should appear at any moment potentially revocable, and for this very reason, at the same time concrete like all completed matters.

Undoubtedly clear is the fall of Gehlen's idea of the end of history as the outcome of the undisputed dominion of the "super-machine", the *post-histoire* as "time without events" in which now merely the planet's techno-scientific and industrial management of resources unfolds. It is a hypothesis and an outcome, marked by a trace of determinism, that only after two world wars might have seemed even comforting, but that in reality do not seem to correspond to the everyday scenario, maybe even more disturbing than the one prefigured by Gehlen, but surely more unpredictable and lively.

Even for this reason, efforts are needed from a philosophical point of view in order not to get lost in the dry and shallow aporias of the German philosophical anthropology, in our opinion still capable of great teachings, especially on a methodological perspective. The systematic discussion with positive sciences, in every pertinent direction, from paleontology to linguistics, neurology to ethology,

remains an essential prerequisite for a new (historical) anthropology of technology. *Mechane* will interpret this need, welcoming not only philosophical, but also scientific contributions, virtually from every tradition worldwide. Despite the debate at times being fierce, it is not impossible and ultimately reveals itself as highly indispensable. It certainly is for the first Italian journal explicitly dedicated to the philosophy of technology, for many diverse reasons, for which it is not until 2020 that such a journal could become reality, unlike other countries where such questions have been commonly debated for a long time.

Nonetheless, Italy has contributed considerably with original inputs and ideas, at least starting from the debate sparked by Heidegger's question of technology. But those have been mainly individual contributions, which were not followed by the creation of specific research centers and journals. This probably happened because every time a reflection of technology took place, it inevitably remained stuck into hegemonically theoretical approaches that relegated the same into peripheral appendixes; Idealism, Marxism, Historicism, Hermeneutics. By contrast, Heidegger's radicalism by which he put at the center of his philosophical speculation "the question of technology" has perhaps represented paradoxically a new obstacle, both for his assayers and detractors.

So, all in all, the different and variegated positions, which have characterised the Italian debate in the latest decades, still constitute only to some extent to restrictions; in fact, they are also precious resources, from which it is definitely possible to inaugurate an original path, that, as such, does not aim to have a privileged interlocutor, but to be an interlocutor itself.

Sign of this is the choice to make *Mechane,* establishment of The Laboratory of Philosophy of Technology of the DSU of Federico II of Naples, a multilingual journal: a catalyst for a community which neither speak solely one language nor just two.

This is, briefly, our answer to the question on the existence of a philosophy of technology, and on what such philosophy is and aims to be. But naturally there will be plenty more questions and answers around the subject.