Icons of Zeitgeist
Thoughts on '... I'm on the Web' by Rosmarie Lukasser

Georg Russegger

When a sociology of the body encounters spaces, locations and borders, a network of technomorphic approaches is involved. The laws of cool (A. Liu) within media reality emerge in their bodily forms. White icons of a man-machine-adaptation show warps that collapse into pixels of deep surfaces (M. Faßler). The materiality of their bodies allows the influence of digitally networked telepresences to be read via interfaces to the individuals' postures associated with it. Work is carried out on a sculptural 'anthropology of the medial', whereby human expressivity as a history of individuality can no longer be located on the margins of an exterior and an interior. Mediality itself is elevated to a higher level in anthropological discourse. The media is and was an integral component of institutional and normative structures of culture. It thus provides the breeding ground for cultural-evolutionary processes (M. Tomasello). Attempts to initiate body-reforming tendencies allow scope for speculative constitutions of a future morphology of the human body.

Day by day we work hard on our bodies, which have become addicted to the dictum of presence and to material obligations. On the way to the bio-adapter (O. Wiener) the dystopian developments can only pass on to the current status of isolation and dependency. While, for example, trading in stocks and shares is already handled 99 % by machines, humans now find themselves at the end of a self-created chain of input commands. Frozen in short-lived yet extremely irritating loops of attention-economies (G. Franck), we retreat awestruck into robust comfort zones using remote-controls. If still 'beside oneself', then the Man-I is captured in a state, nervously excited as a burned-out character of sensomotoric and haptic nakedness, which is best treated with ergotherapy. With gossamer-thin sensitivity the individual acts with winged top-heaviness, turning into an over-dimensional decision-paradigm and an immature underling. A hybrid subject (A. Reckwitz) of modernity that grows into the product of sociocultural technologies of the self (M. Foucault). This precisely why it is today on evolutionary-historical trial in terms of plausibility.

Coupled with the rise of network societies (E. Castells), the direct environment implodes into a panoptic jewel of layers in on- and offline worlds, the significance of which is constituted through the tentacles of planes of action from alternative worlds. In her work, Lukasser makes clear how a rejuvenation of everyday life can look in the post-digital age, after the (r)evolution of computer-based work on the Web. Light is shed in Lukasser's work on the polycontextualising of global-urban living space as a monoculture on the one hand, and the complexity of human existences on the other. Put in allegorical terms: highly delicate, fragile and bloodless

stiffenings in cubic configurations of abstract nesting. Living space becomes tight in urban conurbations and thus develops into the highest asset in cities. Frictional losses are not out of the question here, as for example is lamentably the case with the approximately 100,000 'cage people' in Hongkong.

Is it a fundamental critique of dromological sense-systems of technocracy? Must the artisans of the machine's storm liberate us from the clutches of the Net like Luddism in the 19th century, before we degenerate into warped input zombies in darkened rooms? Inevitably we find ourselves in a transformational spiral of global technopolitics (B. Holmes), whose accelerating hunger for artificial culture is, to date, unique in its complexity and quantity. What remains is a kaleidoscopic spectacle in the ocean of instantaneousness. Frozen, like Lukasser's protagonists, we look at the material elective affinities of our great skill. Boundless-seeming creativity, multifarious inspiration and mixed cultures of art, science, biology and society populate the media landscape of the simulacrum (J. Baudrillard).

In contrast, the simple human being: a sensitive creature with unique abilities, to love, to comprehend, to adapt day by day to the continuously changing environment. Obligation that is expressed in joy and laughter, that can manifest itself in compassion and empathy. Agility structured in milliseconds, which promotes the development of the secular, adapting in a vital manner that welcomes errors, as an opportunity that is open to results. Time and again experimenting anew with the creativity of chance (K. Mainzer), in order to turn everything to the good after all. The social element as a core skill of human self-organisation has migrated to the Net. This is precisely where Lukasser's discussion does not take place, and thus she tackles the theme in a particularly striking way. With the series … *I'm on the Web* she creates a perspective intended to stimulate thought, and even takes it one step further by attempting to address an anthropological marker in the future. A human study that does not baulk at informing fear about paradigmatic changes of the somatic. Perhaps this work will achieve a brief 'sense of identity'.

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