

## The Technological Fields of Imagination Introduction to *Imagining Technologies / Technologizing Imagination(s)* – Vol. II

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In presenting this second volume of the special issue *Imagining Technology / Technologizing Imagination(s)*, we reaffirm that it stems from a revision of the initial project, which originally envisaged a single volume. This change was prompted by the richness and intellectual depth of the submissions we received. While we leave the final judgment to the reader, from our perspective as editors, we believe that this small gamble has produced the intended outcome, enhancing the original project both in scope and substance.

This second part, titled *The Technological Fields of Imagination*, continues to explore the *philosophical biodiversity* that guided our editorial choices. That is to say, we privileged the “scientific quality” of the contributions in itself over any strict adherence to a predetermined framework; their ability to penetrate and cross-fertilize — in a truly *chiasmatic* fashion — philosophical inquiry into both the question of technology and that of imagination.

The main evidence that emerges from an overview of the various contributions is that the theme of “imagination” has now established itself as a crucial — perhaps even inevitable — terrain for questioning, within the framework of experience, the relationship that unfolds between mechanization and spontaneity, habit and novelty, artificial and natural. As technological developments increasingly permeate our daily lives — culminating in what might be called a *Techno-Lebenswelt* — they progressively reshape the very fabric of experience. One's body, emotions, and even inner imagery are now being moulded — and in some respects disrupted — by the impact of emerging and cutting-edge technologies.

Accordingly, on the one hand, imagination itself is being conditioned and reconfigured by these technological transformations, which compel us to reconsider what imagination is, or could become. On the other hand, it is precisely through images – those we inherit as well as those we invent – that we contribute to shaping the horizon of what is yet to come. Within the framework of the «technosphere», the «technocosm», or even the «technocene», philosophical thought is thus called upon to make an unprecedented effort to fulfil its enduring task: «to comprehend its own time in thoughts» (Hegel).

As in the first volume, the texts are organized into three sections: *scenarios* (Lindberg; Craia & Castro), *cases* (Andreini; Mendoza-Canales), and *authors* (Oliveira; Catania).

The *scenarios* section — and indeed the volume itself — opens with Susanna Lindberg's *Artificial Imagination*, which offers a reflection on the modern status of imagination in light of the new challenges posed by technological developments in AI, more specifically «on the philosophical presuppositions of artworks made with the help of AI». The urgency of interrogating the artificial instrumentality of AI emerges clearly, especially in relation to whether — and how — such technologies might recalibrate the very concept of imagination and, by extension, its possible function in artistic creation. Lindberg argues that imagination is not merely «a free gift of nature, but always already a technics», while works produced through AI should not be regarded as «works of intelligence (aiming at *logos*) but at most as works of imagination (playing with *mimesis*)». On this basis, she proposes an original perspective: a symbiotic approach in which, at best, «imagination can take place in well-constituted assemblies between humans and AIs».

In *The Imagination as a Mode of Technological Being*, Eladio Craia and Caio Castro offer an ontological inquiry into the status of imagination in our epoch. Rather than treating imagination and technology as two pre-established and separate domains, the authors demonstrate how imagination emerges precisely from the tension between *technique* — understood as the ontological matrix of our time — and *technology*, conceived as its material and immanent concretization, the tangible field of our actions. Imagination, therefore, «is produced both in technology and can be thought through technique». In their examination of «the question concerning technology», the authors engage on the one hand with Heidegger, and on the other with Simondon and Deleuze, ultimately aligning themselves with the latter position. In this view, «while technology enforces predictability, its ontological excess enables imagination, shaping our technical understanding of the world».

The *cases* section opens with Giulia Andreini's contribution, *The Oneiric-Technological Chiasm: Merleau-Pontian Insights on Virtual Embodiment*, which challenges the common assumption regarding the «constitutive disembodiment of VR experience». The paper seeks to interpret «the long-standing link between dreams and media» as a chiasm — a structure that accommodates multiple variations, including that introduced by virtual reality. Engaging with the thought of Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, Andreini critiques any reductive conception of the body, instead affirming its immanent plasticity. More specifically, she argues for a more nuanced understanding of the role of corporeality in virtual environments, whether in relation to oneiric experience or to actual immersive VR.

*The Bubble: The Dark Side of Technical Imaginations* by Ricardo Mendoza-Canales explores the sociological and affective articulations of the imagination-technology nexus in contemporary contexts. Drawing on cultural references from the 1950s onward, the paper develops the concept of «the Bubble», exposing the mechanisms that sustain the cultural homogenization enabled and reinforced by technological evolution — namely, through a critical examination of «the role of technical reproducibility in the (mis)formation of memory». According to Mendoza-Canales, technical objects possess the capacity to encapsulate experience and enable its regulated distribution. Both *individual and collective memory* are shaped by the neoliberal ideology underpinning global capitalism, resulting in what Stiegler terms «*symbolic misery*» and what Deleuze describes as the «*modulation of*

*affects*». Insofar as «the bubble of contemporaneity» emerges not only as a cultural phenomenon but also «as an instrument of control and standardization», the focus of critique becomes the capitalistic and neoliberal apparatus through which such control is exerted.

The final section, *authors*, opens with Jelson Oliveira's essay *Hans Jonas: Image, Imagination, and Technology*. Focusing on the philosophy of Jonas, the author places the image of the human being at the centre of his analysis – an image placed at risk by the relentless advance of technological power, more specifically that of biotechnology, whose *hybris* characterizes our age as one of «metaphysical neutralization». In contrast to Ernst Bloch's *principle of hope*, Jonas's *ethics of responsibility* is taken up and reaffirmed to argue for the safeguarding of the human image against processes of rationalization and computational abstraction. Beyond the seductions of «meliorist projects», Jonas assigns to philosophical thought the fundamental task of preserving the image of the human being «as a being of freedom and, above all, of responsibility».

The volume concludes with *A Technical Genealogy of Imagination: Some Reflections Alongside Leroi-Gourhan* by Marco Catania, which engages with the work of André Leroi-Gourhan and, more specifically, with the role of imagination within his theory of technical objects. Through a reading of the major works of the French paleoanthropologist, the author seeks to revisit his reflections on technics, offering an interpretation in which imagination is not peripheral but structurally co-constitutive. Any serious engagement with the question of technics, he argues, must account for the imaginal dimension of its processes. Techniques – understood as modes of concretizing the human relation to its environment – are thus imaginatively charged from their very inception. While *Homo sapiens* «achieved morphological stability around 300,000 years ago, their imaginative-technical superstructure continues to evolve». This ongoing process of exteriorization «continuously reconfigures the imaginative horizon of the human species».

As this brief overview demonstrates, this second volume likewise reflects the inherent variety and richness of the contemporary debate on the imagination-technology chiasm. As editors, our aim has been to affirm what we consider the distinctive value of any collective endeavour: namely, to reflect the complexity of a given field of research through the exemplary juxtaposition of perspectives that may be complementary, divergent, or even apparently irreconcilable. Once again, it is a matter of philosophical biodiversity.

As in the first volume, references to the history of philosophy have proven not only inevitable but also fruitful, playing a crucial role in the development of the arguments presented. One among several examples is Susanna Lindberg's discussion of Kant's notion of imagination as a «hidden art of the soul», and her engagement with Schelling's idea of imagination as a cosmic power – a formative and technical force capable of giving shape to ideas in art. The same could be said of Jelson Oliveira's engagement with Jonas's thought; of Eladio Craia and Caio Castro's reading of Heidegger's, Simondon's and Deleuze's interpretation of technology; of Marco Catania's dialogue with Leroi-Gourhan's anthropotechnical paradigm; or, again, of Giulia Andreini's phenomenological framework, rooted in Husserl's distinction between *Leib* and *Körper*.

Without falling into self-celebration, we feel it is our duty – in terms of a full assumption of responsibility with respect to our role – to express our satisfaction with the way in which this journey began, developed and came to an end. Along the way, new connections have been established (starting with our own, as editors), and some have already begun to bear fruit. The path has not always been smooth, but like all meaningful ones, it has enabled us to develop a more nuanced understanding of the themes we set out to explore.

We close this introduction to the second volume of *Imagining Technology / Technologizing Imagination(s)* with the hope that we have fulfilled our role as good hosts, and that the work assembled here may serve, over time, as a useful tool – a witness to a

constellation and a moment within the dense technical and technological web through which our philosophical and existential imaginaries take shape.

Finally, we would like to extend our warmest thanks to all the contributors and reviewers for their invaluable efforts. A special word of gratitude goes, once again, to the editorial board of *I Castelli di Yale*, and to all those who made this project possible through their dedication and commitment.

And now, as it should be, we leave the final word — and judgment — to the readers, to whom we wish an engaging and thought-provoking experience.