

ASPIRATIONAL PHILOSOPHY: THE QUESTION OF TECHNOLOGICALLY INDUCED NIHILISM

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Motto: *Connect everything, mean nothing. Embrace the glitch.*
From the “wisdom” of the internet

Abstract. The theme of technologically induced nihilism (“techno-nihilism”) approaches the consequences of human life with modern and contemporary technology, interpreting technology as something else than a neutral instrument for man: as a re-forming agent for mankind and its world. Aspirational philosophy highlights the educational, value, moral and ethical horizon necessary to consciously embrace life full of meaning, responsibility and value. More specifically, current technology creates a value-less, purpose-less and meaningless world. A world where the lazy and dependent human being becomes a numb “button pusher”. This is theorized mainly by Nolen Gertz using Nietzsche and Heidegger as philosophical sources, to which the author adds a concise discussion about the topical contribution to the opposition to the “tragic forgetfulness of being” of the Romanian philosopher Lucian Blaga, through his ideas on the singularity of man. Then, the article approaches the double facet “Digital Enlightenment” - “New Algorithmic Dark Age” of our contemporary reality, leading to conclusive ethical concerns about the contemporary world dominated by data, which man created, but where is not much need left for man’s action, initiative and output. Ever more, “smart” algorithmic tools are present more than human to human interaction to structure and control our lives, offering the options, the choices and the solutions required. As technology becomes the daily “saviour” and friend, human autonomy is under threat in new and unexpected ways. It is mainly about (the perpetual problem with) education, about cultivating the joy of reasoning and discouraging the attitude of “helplessness” of the users of algorithmic tools.

Keywords: techno-nihilism, Nolen Gertz, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, “New Algorithmic Dark Age”.

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„Aspirational philosophy” and the theme of technologically induced nihilism – a brief overview

„Aspirational philosophy”¹ is a syntagm proposed for the first time by the Romanian philosopher Gheorghe Dănișor triggered by an analysis of the

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„aspirational” – a novel philosophical concept – predicated on the integration of the Aristotelian concept of justice, with a distinct dimension of love, with the concept of „care”, in a relational and phenomenological perspective leading to an all-encompassing vision of the world as relational: man to man, man to nature and man to God.

The theme of technologically induced nihilism is set in this perspective of the dangerous diminishment of the “aspirational” by diminishment of relational quality, of care and of justice.

The theme of technologically induced nihilism or “techno-nihilism”, approaches the consequences of human life with of modern and contemporary technology, interpreting technology as something else than a neutral instrument for man, but as a re-forming agent for mankind and its world. More specifically current technology creates a value-less, purpose-less and meaningless world. A world where the lazy and dependent human being becomes a numb “button pusher”. This is “techno-nihilism”.²

The topical specialist in the theme of technologically induced nihilism is Nolen Gertz, who capitalizes upon the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger to contemporary technology.

The theory dances around the idea of mankind’s addiction to technology, but this is very much the case. Paradoxically, as Gertz argues technology facilitates an escape from the “meaninglessness” of life, leading to a promotion of a passive attitude and a settled, “numbing” acceptance of the contemporary world dominated by data, which man created, but where is not much need for human being’s action, initiative and output since the use of technology keeps her well and content.

Nolen Gertz³ proposed the concept of “techno-nihilism” within a discussion about modern technologies which “appear to function not by helping us to achieve our ends but instead by determining ends for us”.

Starting from his theoretically capitalized concern with the current phenomenon described by “techno-optimism”, which results in an over-simplified view of life that ends in the cancelation of human life envisioned and embraced as a rich and many-facet adventure that should bring us joy, challenge, enthusiasm and opportunities of growth. The “support” provided technologically although it seems salutary it reduces the complexity of life in a manner that transforms life

¹ Gheorghe Dănișor, *Justice. Filosofie aspirațională*, Bucharest, Pro Universitaria, 2024; Gheorghe Dănișor, *Justice. Philosophie aspirationnelle*, French edition, translation by Diana Dănișor, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2024.

² The article is part of the Project Contemporary Democracy under the Assault of Technology which I am coordinating at “Ion I. C. Brătianu” Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations of the Romanian Academy (2026-2027).

³ Nolen Gertz, *Nihilism and Technology*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, p. 3.

entirely by diminishing its possibilities and meaning as journey of self-discovery.⁴ This is dangerous and sad, not salutary. This is “techno-utopianism”⁵, he says, although, more precisely, he means “techno-dystopianism”. This is actually the distress signal for a life that seems a lot like immersion in Nozick’s experiential machine⁶ and not a proper, authentic, meaningful human life: we become hopeful to pick and choose our experiences avoiding aging, suffering and all human frailty. Problems solved, by technology. Well, are they? Gertz refers to Babette Babich (2012), who writes about the human attempt to live lives that are contrary to life: “We want to be anything but human To be like our precisely manufactured objects in all their precision, all their durability, all their replaceability. We wish to be objects with exchangeable parts, infinitely upgradable”.⁷

The Philosophical Foundations of the Discourse on Technological Devaluation

Addressing the philosophical foundations of the critical discourse on technological devaluation (“techno-nihilism”) we focus here on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche. M. Heidegger (as Kierkegaard) speaks about the paramount importance of the existential nuisances which are foundational for the human ways of being. These nuisances associated to being human associate to our insights into Being, to a metaphysical horizon proper to man via the unfortunate experiences of anxiety, sickness, death and loss (of youth, of health or of someone dear) instilling and cultivating the very humanness and beingness in every individual along with a sense of morality and ethics forged not only by education and law, but first and foremost via personal suffering.

Gertz interprets Heidegger and Nietzsche to emphasize the illusion and the real danger of the goal of creating a world free of unpleasant experiences via technologies. This danger is creating “a reflection-free world”⁸ and he develops this idea by arguing that Heideggerian existentialism shows that by the attempt to avoid responsibility, we end up with no freedom, and that by attempting to avoid death, we end up not living at all. Nihilism is the result of all human fears “resolved” by technology. The existentialists argued that life is meaningless in stating the beginning of a human responsibility to infuse meaning into life. The technological optimists say that life is too messy and complex, too difficult and

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. ix.

⁵ *Idem*.

⁶ Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, New York, Basic Books, 1974.

⁷ Babette Babich, “Nietzsche’s Post-Human Imperative: On the ‘All-Too-Human’ Dream of Transhumanism,” *The Agonist*, Volume IV, No. II, 2012, p. 34, cited by N. Gertz, *Nihilism and Technology*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, p. 29.

⁸ N. Gertz, *Nihilism and Technology*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, p. ix.

offer ways out that eliminate life from life. They combat the problems of life and end up combating all life and living. In this sense is technology inducing nihilism.

In his interpretation of Heidegger, N. Gertz shows that in the course of human interaction with technology is not exactly our “privacy” that is endangered as the manner in which we understand privacy is changed by the process of receiving “what we want”, but in fact, it obliterates privacy by obliterating Being. As in Heidegger’s thought (in *Die Frage nach der Technik*, 1954) technology is seen not as instrument, but as an important mean to perceive and interpret reality, as a “way of revealing” (*eine Weise des Entbergens*), in this sense. It is meant as a mode of uncovering truth (of *alētheia*, of unconcealment). However, the technological truth is not for the human being, but for the purposes of technology itself. We call the new purpose “buttons pushing”, while Heidegger and Gertz called it “standing-reserve”. The roles are reversed. Humans service technology and are used by it in this sense: phenomena such as “the fear of missing out” that makes the human beings check their phones so frequently emphasize clearly how the roles are reversed and that the human beings are stimulated (or even manipulated) to use their time, their most important and limited resource, along with other energy and finance resources to service technology, most importantly by re-affirming its crucial importance with every button pushed, with every email sent, with every message posted on the varied social networks.

The human beings using technology actually fulfil the technological purpose of transforming those beings displaced from their ground in *ens perfectissimum* (the perfect being), God to be in the service of technology as user, creator or repairing person. Technology becomes the master or the dominator of the human beings in various ways.

The situation challenges the presence of humans or “the being of beings”. For the Presocratic thinkers Being as presencing⁹ was the main feature of being and this is the idea that Heidegger develops; *esse est percipi*. Presencing (*Anwesenung*) of *what is present* (*Anwesende*) holds the key to the main characteristic of Being. Being as presencing means enduring in unconcealment, disclosing, the self-showing that manifests, that appears from out of itself, showing and not concealing itself, in a Heideggerian concept that combines two concepts *phusis* (emerging dominance) and *alētheia* (unconcealment).

This philosophical analysis of Being was intended as an attempt not “objectify” beings (to not reduce them to an object for the thinking subject), but place their *phenomenality* at the foundation of the definition and conceptualization of being through the unmediated experience of presencing, not as a pure or

⁹ “Presencing” which translates in English *die Anwesenung*, similarly to “essencing” for *Wesung*, is a philosophical term that did not enter the current language but which is included in specialized philosophical dictionaries and encyclopaedias in connection to the phenomenology of Martin Heidegger.

unmediated phenomena, but as a presence that might be mediated and varied. As we can discern, in the light of the above concepts, technology is more of a *phusis* (emerging dominance) than *alêtheia* (unconcealment of truth). In our view, and in slight contrast with the perspective of Heidegger, the technological truth is not entirely disclosed: the technological truth as the force cultivating a novel way of life is disclosed behind the technological truth of usefulness.

Although the philosophical input has acknowledged a long while back that technology is a dominating presence that regulates and redefines the whole sphere of existence according to a technological-scientific-industrial characteristic which is “Enframing” (*Ge-stell*) or restrictive; and this is still a lesson to be understood by human society at large.

The novel paideutic efforts should cultivate the autonomy of man in front of the technological-scientific-industrial Procrustean bed type of measuring unit which is so foreign to the human beings. The methods to prepare for the defence of the specificity of man in front of the technological *phusis* are offered by classic philosophy in terms of argumentation technics, logical instruments of thought, Stoic vision of life classic, modern and postmodern educated taste for paradox and, in general, a taste for thinking and for being one’s own person. Important theorists such as Derrida, Foucault and Lyotard have opposed positivism and the technological domination of the world of man, but their ideas and works are still less valued since they bear the label of postmodernists which was badly received precisely out of the lack of capacities and understanding of complex thought even amidst the ranks of valuable philosophers and intellectuals. Otherwise, untrained for complex thought, human beings are defenceless and reduced to “stand-reserve button pushers”, and devalued to extreme, when measured to such technological-scientific-industrial criteria.

In this process of frequent, obsessive and compulsive interaction with nowadays technology arrives *the tragic forgetfulness of being* that explains the core of Heidegger’s concept of “nihilism”. One should not focus on the gadgets or machines to understand technology and the danger that it poses, but on the modalities of diminishment of the human beings and the entire world to “standing-reserve” (*Bestand*), or to the status of resource available for use.

Friedrich Nietzsche¹⁰, another main philosopher too easily dismissed as irrational, postmodern or even as a resource for the intellectual reservoir of Nazi ideology (as Heidegger) represents the other major source of Gertz’s work. We

¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche addresses nihilism, the concept relevant for the categorizations of human attitudes in front of technology mainly in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge University Press, 1996 and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, Cambridge University Press, 1997.

have to consider, as Gertz does, especially the concept that “the highest values devalue themselves”. Here the greatest values are the human beings, creators of culture and technology, who devalue themselves in narrowly and poorly conceived comparisons (according to the narrow minded, that are, actually, the technologically “minded” technological-scientific-industrial criteria mentioned above) concluding aberrantly the superiority of technology to man (e.g., the superiority of AI) and opening the further path of human development as eminently technological and a technologically determined, decided, managed one. Here we unveil the core of the analysis of the technological devaluation of man. The *passive nihilism* of the human beings who do not take responsibility for determining their own value and their own value system are those who accept the technological-scientific-industrial criteria uninterrogated and go along with these “blindly” applying them, unknowingly validating and supporting the process of the *tragic forgetfulness of being*. The passive nihilists do not understand what is the matter and see themselves as factors of advanced progress: people who keep up with their times.

To keep up with your times is a good attitude. However, when it means complacency without interrogation of all the technological-scientific-industrial criteria and blind enrolment into the ways of life imposed by our technological times keeping up with one’s times is a mark of passive nihilism and *tragic forgetfulness of being*.

The passive nihilism should be abandoned for an active nihilism attitude understood as courage to negate, deny and not accept certain aspects taken by the majority for granted, and to embrace such a negating nihilistic attitude with reasonable arguments in appropriate contexts (such as the contemporary context of the criteria imposed to humanistic studies and the devaluation of the humanistic studies and philosophy considered nowadays less important in comparison to the exact sciences which aggravates the devaluation of man by the contribution of the accept of the intellectual elites), doing so out of responsibility, out of the propriety of one’s own person and one’s own system of values. Human beings as human beings have not only the right, but also the duty to their own status of human beings to critically engage with the system of values that is imposed and also to evaluate and criticize the values imposed on them by society.

One cannot vindicate awareness to the danger of technological devaluation and not endorse active nihilism understood this way, whether one calls it “active nihilism” or not. For instance, we find in Lucian Blaga (1895 – 1961) important ideas in opposing the devaluation of man. We’ve examined the thesis of the “singularity of man” recently in the study titled “On the Singularity of Man in the (Relative) Bio-ontological and Meta-biological Continuity, starting from Lucian Blaga” [“Despre singularitatea omului în continuitatea (relativă) bio-ontologică și meta-biologică, pornind de la Lucian Blaga”] capitalizing upon the philosophy of

Lucian Blaga, worth recalling.¹¹ While Lucian Blaga acknowledges a relative biological and metabiological ontological continuity of life, when it comes to the living things this perspective is useful more as a background against which the ontological singularity of man is emphasized. Contemporary context of viewing the world, especially ecologism and an increased attention for animal rights and for the instances of animal sensible behaviour nourishes a rather unnuanced celebration of animal exceptionality, at times, with an explicit consequence of devaluation of man.¹² Certain documentaries present extensively instances where animals paint, laugh, dance, aid or save human beings, raising openly the question of human superiority as plain hubris. Contrary to this trend, the paper brings also to the fore the more recent position of Raymond Tallis¹³, a neuroscientist

¹¹ Henrieta Anișoara Șerban, "Despre singularitatea omului în continuitatea (relativă) bio-ontologică și meta-biologică, pornind de la Lucian Blaga", *Revista de filosofie*, Bucharest, Volume LXIX, No. 1, 2022, pp. 21-39 (reference to p. 1).

¹² A quote from Huxley seems particularly supportive of this aspect: "Man's opinion about his position in relation to the rest of the animals oscillated between the tendency to attach too much or too little importance to oneself, sometimes setting too great a distance between man and animals, sometimes too much small. Of course, this distance can be increased either towards the man or towards animal. One might, like Descartes, consider animals too mechanical, or, like most unsophisticated people, humanize them too much. Someone can interpret his human species in the sense of dehumanization, as animal species, like many others or to overestimate it considering humans something only slightly inferior to the angels. The primitive and the savage accept kinship with animals and also projects his attributes onto animals. As far as we can tell, he takes little pride in his humanity." A. Huxley în „The Uniqueness of Man”, *Man in the Modern World*, New York, Mentor, 1947, p. 1. Lucian Blaga considered that the singularity of man distinguishes this being both from beasts and angels, through the specificity of the human being always oriented to a horizon of becoming via cultural, artistic and knowledge creations.

¹³ Raymond Tallis, *Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity*, Editura Acumen, 2011. The argument against "aping mankind" is easily translatable into a criticism of the technological misrepresentation of humanity with human beings' devaluating consequences. Our recent research is capitalized in this respect, too. Our invited conference, „Digitalization: the world of assessment vs. the world of becoming”, at the Third International Conference „Philosophy Nowadays. Traditions, Innovations, Education”, Varna, September 9-12, 2021 captured the data-starvation phenomenon analysed in contrast with a more metaphysical and meaningful idea of becoming which is central for any human being. The paper "Beyond Humanism, toward What? Where Are We, and Where Are We Going" presented in the Symposium of Humanism at the Romanian Academy [the Committee for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technique, the Division of Logic, Methodology and Philosophy of Science, CRIFST – DLMPS] organized with Constantin Stoenescu February 23, 2023 showed that more awareness is necessary in evaluating the centrality of human being and the importance of the humanistic studies and the philosophy of humanism. Humanistic philosophy is called to act as a guardian of human values. In the article "Virtualization and being in 'the virtual spheres of embrace'. The world of affirmation vs. the world of becoming", in *Revista de științe Politice și Relații Internaționale*, Vol. XXI, Nr. 2, 2024, pp. 5-14 I argued for the importance of meaning and meaningful data in a world of quantitative evaluations. In the study titled "What People Do vs.

philosopher who plainly calls the contemporary wide spread strong view of bio-ontological continuity of all life “Darwinitis” (Raymond Tallis’s term) and reinstates a more complex interpretation of the human being in its position of singularity first and foremost in terms of responsibilities to mankind, to the living things, to society and to personal life and development, as well as in terms of capabilities.

Lucian Blaga approaches the singularity of man, via the aspirational concept of “the height” of human being’s consciousness and thought, which reflects the metaphysical vision of man’s unique position living for mystery and revelation and not solely for survival and security, or tending to immediate needs (for instance, these of the lower levels in Maslow’s pyramid). Thus, man is in Lucian Blaga above animals and angels, as presented both in works such as “The Genesis of Metaphor and the Meaning of Culture”¹⁴, (included in *The Trilogy of Culture*), and in *Horizons and Stages (Zări și etape)*. In Lucian Blaga man is no enhanced animal, no deformed angel, but a being in becoming, with an entirely different and particular status existing for revealing mysteries via knowledge, culture and artistic creations. In *The Trilogy of Knowledge* L. Blaga developed the idea via the concept of a “type II knowledge” (first, poetically and rather confusingly termed “Luciferian knowledge” with input in the complex thought that works with the unknown even when it is maintained, radicalized, or when it becomes permanent. Also, the uniqueness of man is further analysed in the section devoted to the structure of the unconscious, “personance” (the unique and symbolically-stylistically governed unconscious-consciousness connection essential for human view of the world and human creativity) and the “existence in mystery and for revelation” in the *Trilogy of Culture*.

In what concerns the singularity of man, Lucian Blaga argues that man cannot be understood only as an evolved animal (biological view) nor as a pure spirit/angel (theological/romantic view). He has his own ontological status, being the only being who creates culture and lives in tension between the mystery of the world and the need for revelation.

What People Should Do. A Discussion Concerning Sophia, the Android Citizen”, *Annals- Series in Philosophy, Psychology and Theology*, Volume XII, No. 1-2, 2024, pp. 52-69 I set in perspective the hasty and dangerous aspects of technological progress contrasting personalism and the value of person with the “fate” of Sophia, the android citizen which was so visible, so important, which opinion was valued and sought for, based on nothing else than the supposed intelligence and which was shut down over night, rather in secrecy, with no regard for the meaning and consequences of promoting an android as citizen, respectively, for the consequences of shutting down a citizen, be it artificial. My studies, taken together form a corresponding concept for the R. Tallis’s “Darwinitis”, as well misrepresenting (and diminishing) humanity and man, the concept of “AI-nitis” (an “illness” of information technology positivism and of IT-optimism).

¹⁴ See, in English Angela Botez, R.T. Allen and Henrieta Anișoara Șerban (co-eds.), *Lucian Blaga: Selected Philosophical Extracts*, Vernon Press, 2018, passim.

Man is distinguished from animals by the ability to live by “revealing metaphors”, in the sense that man lives and prospers as well spiritually, by expected and unexpected discoveries, by cultural creation, by art and a specific sensitivity to symbolical, mythical and, in general, to deeper meanings, which are otherwise than common sense, positivistic or utilitarian. Man, paradoxically, is and is not bound and not so much bound only by biological needs. The human being relates in various ways to her material condition, but this relation is mostly trans-figurative, transformational at spiritual levels, too.

All these ideas clarify further the tragic dimension of the forgetfulness of (human) being and of the technological devaluation of man. In this perspective the active nihilism investigated above is just a part of the complex manifestations of the singularity of man.

*The New Technological Enlightenment*¹⁵ can be appreciated as true-Enlightenment in the perspective of the accomplishments of the restless inquisitive and interrogative creative human being, in the new possibilities for knowledge and the development of the human species, but not as a source of criteria for the devaluation of man. In this respect, we should mention the Age of GenAI that induces a technological revolution acting as a cognitive multiplier,

¹⁵ *The New Technological Enlightenment* is approached in M. Gabriel et al., *Towards a New Enlightenment*, The New Institute, 2022 (about a "New Enlightenment" that is future-oriented, characterized by humanity's coexistence with technology, artificial intelligence, and digital tools); Bhabani Shankar Nayak, et al., *Dialectic of Digital Enlightenment*, published on ResearchGate, 2023 a volume of several studies approaching ethical, Kantian perspectives on AI and digital capitalism, with post-Marxism stances on algorithmic governance. Paul Cairney and Kathryn Oliver (European Commission) in P. Cairney, K. Oliver et al., *Enlightenment 2.0: Report by the Public Policy, Administration and Sociology group*. European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), 2018 scrutinize the integration of scientific results in policy-making of a cutting-edge, technological, well-managed and ethical algorithmic society. An intriguing concept, “N-Enlightenment”, conceived in the IT specialized discussions the convergence of nanotechnology, AI, and information technology and is still very actual after a couple of decades. See Michael Buerger, “From the Enlightenment to N-Enlightenment”, May 8, 2006, <https://www.thekurzweillibrary.com/from-the-enlightenment-to-n-enlightenment>, accessed March 24, 2026: “What do I make of this nanotechnology thing? I suspect it will be very much like its predecessors, a potentially transformative technology that will be bound on the bed of Procrustes of the older social and economic systems that midwived it. Because of that, it has considerable potential to be more Pandora’s Box than Holy Grail in the early going. Assuming that its byproducts do not poison the groundwater or become an airborne grey goo, it will almost have to achieve an outlaw status (or its more egalitarian potential championed by those who will be deemed outlaws) before it reaches a socially transformative cusp. In the near term, whether I buy it in a store or make it with my nanofactory, I will still have to pay for toilet paper.” [Ray Kurzweil is an American inventor, futurist, and author known for his accurate predictions on technological advancements and AI, a director of engineering at Google focusing on machine intelligence, a pioneer in [OCR technology](#), text-to-speech, and musical synthesizers, famous for predicting the “(technological) singularity”, namely the merging of AI and human intelligence.]

increasing productivity and creating new opportunities for progress in medicine, science, and creativity. A “New Industrialism” couples with a genuine phenomenon of technological Enlightenment that involves revitalizing industrial production through AI-based open-source tools, smart manufacturing, and placing higher value on maintenance and repair work, as highlighted by new studies of “Lunar Societies”¹⁶.

However, this same revolution imposes the vindication of personal digital selves. It emphasizes that Digital Positivism understood as the uncritical belief that digital data and algorithms can solve all problems is ridiculously utopian and counterproductive. Algorithms should be controlled and the autonomy should be reserved only to the human beings who have to be educated, trained and prepared better for the new times. The accumulation of data for AI models should definitely not override traditional humanist ideals of rationality and autonomy, or personal privacy or human rights. Humanity should follow and cultivate plural avenues of progress which should not be captured by the algorithmic and AI one. The “Digital Enlightenment” has a serious potential as a “New Dark Age” and we already experience this duality of our contemporary reality, facing the forgetfulness of being, the technologically induced devaluation of man and the “organized immaturity” associated to the technologically cultivated phenomenon of “the fear of missing out”.

Aspirational philosophy against the glitch of techno-nihilism.

Conclusive remarks

Nihilism is a very controversial and misunderstood philosophical concept. Aspirational philosophy counters passive nihilism, the nihilism of those who do not see the purpose of care anymore and overly optimistic (and mistakenly) trust technology to take care of everything. At the same time, aspirational philosophy highlights the educational, value, moral and ethical horizon necessary to consciously embrace life full of meaning, responsibility and value. This potentially novel branch of philosophy – aspirational philosophy – develops under various (metaphysical, ontological, phenomenological, pedagogical and ethical) aspects a conscious effort to place humans, rather than just technology, at the

¹⁶ The Lunar Society (c. 1765–1813) was an influential, informal club of prominent industrialists, natural philosophers, and intellectuals in Birmingham, England, who met on the Monday closest to the full moon to travel home safely after discussions. These scholars sought to apply science to industry, promoting key advances of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. See D. A. Mindell, *The New Lunar Society: An Enlightenment Guide to the Next Industrial Revolution*, IEEE, 2026 interprets the new industrial revolution, deemed comparable with the original Enlightenment in its objective leap in knowledge and technological development, as well as in using technology for collective and individual improvement.

centre of development, ensuring the new tools work for a sustainable and equitable *human* future.

What we may call the “humanistic glitch” is described by the loss of humanistic meaning that places distinctive value on the human being, amplified by a diminished empathy and care, *mutatis mutandis*, tending to dangerously shrink the idea and the concreteness of the human community to just a selection of individuals “meaning starved, data-driven, so, optimized”, as a saying goes among the critics of the “New Dark Age”. As in the *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Albert Camus) aspirational philosophers should insist on the cultivation of complex meaning suitable to all human dimensions, inclusively to the spiritual one and not exclusively to the logical-algorithmic one, fighting daily the technological impoverishment of meaning and being.

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