

Human—Technology—World

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Abstract

This essay examines Don Ihde's postphenomenological philosophy of technology through the lens of philosophical anthropology, that sub-discipline of philosophy concerned with the nature and place of the human being. While Ihde's philosophical corpus and its reception in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde* indicate rich resources for thinking about human nature, several themes receive too little attention in both, including the nature of the human being, the emergence of the posthuman, and the place of the human being in our contemporary pluriculture.

Keywords: philosophical anthropology, posthuman, pluriculture, human nature

I

In his "Preface" to *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, Evan Selinger notes that this critical assessment of the philosophical corpus of Don Ihde provides an opportunity to "situate, assess, and apply Ihde's philosophy with respect to the primary themes that his *oeuvre* emphasizes" (vii). As neither a phenomenologist nor a philosopher of technology, this opportunity presents challenges for reading (and commenting on) a philosopher of technology for whom a phenomenology of embodiment relations looms so large. And yet that is not quite right, for my passion in philosophy happens to be philosophical anthropology, a discipline perhaps even more marginalized in traditional philosophical circles than philosophy of technology. Even among philosophers of technology, as I have learned from reading several of the essays collected in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, it is rather quaint and perhaps a bit too modern to be concerned with or interested in the human being. More about this shortly.. Philosophical anthropology is that sub-discipline which, as I understand it, is focused on two general questions: "What am I that I am a human being?" and "What is my place in nature (or the cosmos)?" From the starting point of philosophical anthropology, reading *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde* and reflecting on Ihde's work is quite salutary, for a variety of reasons. As a means for structuring my comments, allow me to develop three such reasons, focusing on Ihde's relational trinity human-technology-world. In the following sections, I take this opportunity to situate, assess, and apply Ihde's philosophy by suggesting that the human being has received short shrift in Ihde's postphenomenological philosophy of technology.

II Human

I begin with the human and the suggestion that Ihde's philosophical *oeuvre* would benefit from great contact with the tradition of philosophical anthropology. Simultaneous to reading Ihde and drafting these comments, I was reading the work of Marjorie Grene and preparing an essay on her contribution to philosophical anthropology. Thinking about the title of Ihde's reflective essay in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, "Forty Years in the Wilderness," one gets a rather apt, and to some extent literal, description of Grene's career in philosophy. She is in fact one of two women in the latter half of 20th century Anglo-American philosophy who I think have

made important contributions to philosophical anthropology and yet who have never received much sanctioned attention in official philosophical circles (though in the case of Grene this was somewhat rectified with the 2002 appearance of a volume devoted to her work in the Library of Living Philosophers series). The other is the British philosopher Mary Midgley. But for the purposes of this essay, Grene is the more interesting character because of the many intriguing similarities to Ihde. Grene takes herself to be primarily a historian of philosophy and I recall reading that one of Ihde's planned next projects is a history of philosophy. Grene studied with Heidegger for a short time and, like Ihde, while she had respect for some of his contributions to philosophy, she was certainly no Heideggerian. If anything, she had a real animosity toward Heidegger. She did though have great respect for Merleau-Ponty and her *Philosophical Testament* is imbued with his influence (along with her other mentors Michael Polanyi and J. J. Gibson). Like Ihde, Grene was especially interested in epistemological issues and questions about perception. And like Ihde, she stressed the need to overthrow the Cartesian tradition. Indeed, her interest in philosophical anthropology was driven in particular by her recognition that philosophical anthropologists such as Helmuth Plessner, as well as Merleau-Ponty, offered a post-Cartesian philosophy. Indeed one of her critiques of Heidegger's analysis of *Dasien* was that it didn't sufficiently break with the Cartesian tradition. The Heideggerian human being, she argues, is "as disembodied as any Cartesian mind could be. It isn't sexed, for example. Nor is it anywhere except in its human world; its place is in no living environment, among conspecifics or predators or prey, in heat or cold, drought or downpour" (Grene 1995: 77). Finally, and more substantively, in terms of their views on philosophy, its task and what it can accomplish, I think Ihde and Grene share quite a bit as well. In this regard, I was particularly drawn to a passage from *Technology and the Lifeworld* that Selinger calls our attention to in his contribution to the volume.

The philosopher cannot provide formulaic answers to the questions posed, nor are there in any likelihood such simple answers. There are two things that a philosophy can do: it can provide us with a perspective from which to view the terrain... Secondly, a philosophy can provide a framework or 'paradigm' for understanding. (Ihde 1990: 9).

There are three points this passage makes that are instructive. First, philosophy is fallible, admitting of neither formulaic nor simple answers. It is this fallibility which in part leads Ihde to recognize that prognosis in philosophy of technology is either impossible or highly problematic (279). As a number of contributors to *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde* point out, Ihde is reluctant to draw broad and general conclusions about technology. Grene too characterized herself as a dogmatic fallibilist (1995: 3) and I think there is a virtue in reminding ourselves when talking about either the human being or technology there are no formulaic or simple answers to the complex questions posed. Indeed, we should be wary of simple answers for they invariably oversimplify the complex world we are trying to understand.

This brings me to my second point: both Grene and Ihde call our attention to the cartographic role of philosophy. A large part of what philosophy does is try to give us the lay of the land, offer us some orientation in terms of our place in the cosmos. Grene takes this to be key to an understanding of human beings as living beings seeking, "in our funny, artifactual, language-borne way, to orient ourselves in our environment" (1995: 17). I think an important task for both philosophy of technology and philosophical anthropology is addressing this issue of orientation: how do we find our way in today's world? As I mentioned earlier, this is often identified as one of the key tasks of philosophical anthropology and it strikes me as one of those perennial philosophical questions.

Reminding ourselves of the importance of this question regarding orientation and place goes some ways, I think, towards addressing the problem of symmetry as it comes up in several contributions to *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, where Ihde is chided for remaining overly human-centered and not embracing stronger versions of the symmetry thesis. I think he is right to be wary of embracing full symmetry. The problem of symmetry in relation to humans and technology is perhaps a late variant to the game of symmetry. Our relationship to animals and nature more generally certainly got there first and attests to our long-standing interest in thinking about ourselves in relation to significant or non-significant others. The issue of symmetry is an age-old one about the drawing of borders and has been a perennial philosophical and human issue. One of the things I am concerned with as a human being is my place in the world, and I am not too sure it helps me to be told that I am simply one thing among many things. It is rather interesting to learn, in reading Andrew Pickering's contribution to this volume, that "the brain can take on many more states than a lump of coal, and that is why it is the supreme organ of adaptation" (216), but when I wonder about my place in the cosmos, I am not too sure it helps tremendously to be shown a homeostat. It really seems to me to raise many more questions than it addresses. And this typically is the problem with an "ontological Theory of Everything," as Pickering supposes Ashby's homeostat is. Such theories are notoriously blunt instruments for explaining anything, much less everything. Similarly, when I read proposals for greater symmetry between human beings and technology, I have to wonder about their implications. In his contribution to the volume, Peter-Paul Verbeek suggests a material turn in ethics and considers the example of automatic speed influencing. But we might wonder why we would want to make driving safer. It's not for the sake of the automobiles. When coming across a crash site (despite perhaps the best efforts of J. G. Ballard), we're not at all confused where the victims start and the technology ends and few are likely to rush to the scene to save the automobile. (Nor, interestingly, does Verbeek wonder why it is that human beings drive fast and resist efforts to keep them from doing so (124).) As Kate Soper aptly puts it in her critique of the symmetry thesis, "The disembodied cyborg hardly seems the icon we want to employ in making plain our objections to torture or indeed to any form of assault upon the flesh" (2003: 108). In the context then of thinking about the cartographic role of philosophy, I find Ihde's stance on symmetry to be refreshing.

This brings me then to the third point that arises in this brief quote that I have turned into a rather long disquisition. Ihde points to the necessity of a framework or paradigm for understanding. Here I would like to suggest that Grene's preferred framework, philosophical anthropology, nicely complements Ihde's preferred framework, a phenomenological philosophy of technology, and vice-versa. Both frameworks stress a relational ontology but where Ihde tends to focus on our relation to technology, Grene tends to focus on our relation to nature. As she puts it, "Late in the twentieth century, we still need to think through anew the basic principles of our view of nature and of man and especially of the relation between nature and man" (1974: 346). For Grene, this especially means that the human being has to be understood as a part of nature (as she puts it, as a "real, live, breathing, perceiving, exploring *animal*, destined to seek, and find, its way in a real, existent, challenging, but up to a point manageable environment" (1995: 42)). But while Grene recognizes that as human beings we are destined to become the persons we do become in an artifactual, language-mediated world, she pays little attention to the role of technology in that process. Grene points out that culture is dependent on the use of natural materials and that our efforts to find our way in our human environments (including, she notes, such environments as libraries, laboratories, and space ships) are dependent upon language, instruments, and pictorial representations (144). Her account, though, of those artifacts which make up our culture is rather

thin and this is true of many philosophical anthropologists, who either took a critical stance against technology (as in the work of Martin Buber and Hans Jonas) or ignored it altogether (the rare exception being Arnold Gehlen's *Man in the Age of Technology*). Ihde brings to these reflections a much greater awareness of the role of technology in shaping and constituting the human being and this emphasis on human-technology relations is much needed in philosophical anthropology, especially in this period in which the posthuman exercises such fascination, as I will argue below.

Returning to *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, now from the paradigm of Grene's philosophical anthropology, it is worth noting that while Ihde, together with his commentators, reminds us that the human being is one part of a human-technology-world relation, there is very little attention paid to just who or what that human being is that enters into the relation, despite the fact that a number of the questions raised in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde* implicitly or explicitly point to issues about the human being, for instance, Robert Scharff's questions about the relationship between body one and body two in Ihde's phenomenology and Ihde's failure to address issues of gender, race, political and economic power, or spiritual understanding (136). Both of these are points which I think Grene's philosophical anthropology goes some ways toward addressing, as she repeatedly reminds us that perception is always cultural or symbolic and that human beings can only be understood as individuated beings. When Ihde states that "the human with a steel axe is different than the human without one" (1993: 34), he emphasizes the human-technology pairing and goes on to say quite a bit about technology. As right he should. I would like to insist that we ask as much about the human being in that pairing. How is the human being different? What is the range of differences we can comprehend in these technology pairings? What are we as human beings such that we are open to these technological pairings? Are there pairings with technology that risk our being human? Such questions are perhaps called for by Ihde's own insistence on the need for multiple perspectives and the interplay of variations. As he reminds us in *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*, postphenomenology is a "nonfoundational and nontranscendental phenomenology which makes variational theory its most important methodological strategy" (1993: 7). In *Chasing Technoscience*, he suggests, "You need to have a series of multiple perspectives, to recognize the shape, structure, and complexity of the phenomenon you are investigating" (2003: 125). As a variant on Ihde's human-technology pairing, perhaps we should look at the human being-nature pairing or, from an ethological perspective, the human being--non-human animal pairing. Employing these complimentary frameworks may not only disclose to us something about the human being insofar as he or she is an animal, it might also give us some insight into tool use among animals. It may also lead us to temper somewhat Ihde's claim that "technology supplies the dominant basis for an understanding both of the world and of ourselves" (1983: 10). Perhaps it is better to say that it supplies one of the dominant bases, with nature providing another strong basis.

III Technology

My second pathway into the work of Ihde is more closely connected to concerns in philosophy of technology. Further pursuing an examination of Ihde's corpus from the perspective of concerns central to philosophical anthropology, I would like to suggest that Ihde has paid insufficient attention to the figure of the posthuman, though there are rich resources in his philosophical work for addressing this inattention.

I found my way into philosophy of technology through a growing preoccupation with the posthuman and those technologies that at least some people have suggested are ushering us into what we might think of as a new *stability* (as Ihde seems to use this term in his “Forty Years” (274)), that of the posthuman. Avoiding any potential confusion with posthumanism, I would like to focus more squarely on that host of technologies most often implicated in discussions of the posthuman: genetic engineering, various forms of cybernetic technologies, cosmetic surgery, reproductive technologies and embryonic stem cell technologies, A.I., A.L., V.R., the whole alphabet of human enhancement technologies. I do not think you can today responsibly do philosophical anthropology without coming to terms with the posthuman and its attendant technologies. This is in fact one of the mild disappointments in reading Ihde’s work and the commentaries on it collected in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*. While there are many significant resources in Ihde’s philosophy of technology for the philosophical anthropologist thinking about the posthuman, Ihde himself has been relatively quiet on precisely those technologies that have most dominated interest in our current climate. Furthermore, *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde* includes relatively little discussion of these technologies or the controversies surrounding the figure of the posthuman. It is there implicitly in discussions of the symmetry problem, but I would have liked to see it more explicitly addressed. Some of the most important moral issues we will likely face in the early decades of this century come at the intersection of philosophical anthropology and philosophy of technology and we have a responsibility to address them. Doing so in the context of Ihde’s postphenomenological philosophy of technology would also go some ways, I think, toward addressing the lack of a normative dimension in Ihde’s work, a concern voiced by several of the contributors to *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*.

The importance of this theme is suggested by some of the opening remarks of Ihde’s *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*, where in the introduction to the first part, drawing on Michel Foucault, he points to our hyperawareness of invention: “To invent is to socially construct, often with the implication that anything constructed may equivalently be deconstructed” (Ihde 1993: 13). Ihde connects this thought to what might be the opening gambit in the posthuman: Foucault’s now infamous claim that man is a strange rift in the order of things, a recent invention soon to disappear. Referencing a “hyperawareness of our transformability” (Ihde 1993: 13) Ihde asks, “How can we so easily invent, deconstruct, and then reinvent?” We might similarly ask: “How can we so easily be invented, deconstructed, and then reinvented?” But while recognizing that “today we live amidst the posts” (Ihde 1993: 1), the posthuman itself doesn’t warrant extended attention in Ihde’s postphenomenology. Indeed, it’s interesting to note that while Ihde generally seems to strike an optimistic note in his analyses of technology, he does seem rather put off by some of the computer technologies often highlighted by proponents of the posthuman. In *Bodies in Technology*, for instance, he is incredulous about the claim that there are people who desire to be wired to their computers. After reporting that there are *actual* people who desire this, Ihde suggests these “extreme nerds” have either debilitated social skills or disabled-body-related reasons for the desire (2002: xii). Now this seems a rather quick analysis predicated on an uncharitable stereotype of what is a not uncommon “technofantasy” in the posthuman/transhumanist literature. Perhaps recognizing his uncharitable dismissal, Ihde soon adds: “But here I seem to be taking a direction that I do not want to take and that I have not taken in earlier works. Unlike our forefathers in philosophy of technology, I am not a dystopian (nor am I a utopian), so I must move carefully in my thinking about technofantasies” (2002: xiii). I think this is precisely what is called for regarding posthuman technologies, it is just that we do not get enough of it in Ihde or his commentators. There are certainly a number of worthwhile explorations of this subculture that do greater justice to participant interests and concerns: Mark

Dery's *Escape Velocity*, Allucquere Rosanne Stone's *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*, Sherry Turkle's work, and there are more perceptive and charitable analyses of the hacker subculture offered by Steven Levy, Katie Hafner, and Bruce Sterling, among others. Perhaps Ihde's stance towards these technologies parallels his response to video games. As he writes about his adolescent son playing video games: "I watch him play at his request, and with boredom I wonder how he can be so enchanted when the varieties of chase-and-kill are simply those of being a warrior with a sword or, in a new graphic, a soldier with a machine-pistol, or a science-fiction hero with a phaser" (2002: 81). While *Bodies in Technology* is part of the "Electronic Mediations" series, the book focuses relatively little attention on electronic mediations and seems more at home with telescopes and the camera obscura than cyberspace and cyborgs.

Now this is mostly a quibble for, as I suggested, I think there are important resources for thinking about the posthuman in Ihde's work, many of which are apparent in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*. Very briefly, allow me to mention two that I think are directly relevant to debates over the posthuman.

First, as several of the contributors to *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde* note, including Mitcham, Selinger, and Scharff, a key component of Ihde's philosophy of technology is his commitment to the claim that technology is not something alien imposed on our naturalness, as Scharff puts it in his contribution (133). Drawing on a central image from Ihde's *Technology and the Lifeworld*, Mitcham concurs: "Human beings are not able to lead nontechnological lives in some garden state, because on the Earth they are inherently technological organisms" (30). This is an important insight and one that still has to be insisted on today, even in the midst of our exceptionally high-tech lives. This insight is the kernel for many of Ihde's other important recognitions about technology, including its non-neutrality and the need to avoid utopian or dystopian analyses. And it is precisely this insight that helps us see the weaknesses in conservative critics of the posthuman, such as Leon Kass, Francis Fukuyama, and Bill McKibben, who often seem to look to a view of the human free of the negative implications of technology. Kass' critique of biotechnology, for instance, is often founded on heeding the wisdom in the mystery of nature (2002: 157) and recognizing and preserving an unalterable human nature as a standard or norm of what is good (2002: 132). Kass articulates a view premised upon a view of human nature untouched by technology, a view directly at odds with and undermined by Ihde's recognition that we are, as Mitcham puts it above, inherently technological organisms. While I do not have the space to develop it here, it is interesting to note the very different conclusions Ihde (1990) and Kass (2006) take away from a reflection on Genesis and Adam.

Second, I would like to point to the usefulness of Ihde's thoughts on the role of amplification and reduction in assessing technologies. This is a theme that Paul Thompson touches on in his contribution to the volume: "Amplification and reduction indicate the way that using a particular technology creates an implicit focus, a form of selective attention. Although the applicability of these ideas to problems in technological ethics should be obvious, few have utilized Ihde's theoretical apparatus for the purpose of ethical analysis" (116). Ihde reminds us that "with every amplification, there is a simultaneous and necessary reduction. And...the amplification tends to stand out, to be dramatic, while the reduction tends to be overlooked" (1979: 21). This is no where more true than in the technologies of the posthuman. Whether focused on the extreme claims of the Extropians and the transhumanists, or the somewhat milder claims of the cosmetic surgery industry, we hear a lot about how technology is going to help us reach our full potential, amplify our best traits, help us become all we want to be. Our focus is directed on all the positive,

amplifying powers of the technology and it is this selective attention that the most insightful critics of posthuman technologies address. Indeed, I think Thompson overstates his point when he suggests that few have utilized Ihde's theoretical apparatus. Explicitly this may be the case, but I think if we take a volume such as Eric Parens' *Enhancing Human Traits*, we can see Ihde's insight very much at work. Margaret Little's essay, for instance, on "Cosmetic Surgery, Suspect Norms, and the Ethics of Complicity," does a terrific job bringing out the complexity of the situation faced by the surgeon who wants to address a patient's pain but is also aware of being complicit in enforcing suspect norms of appearance. Little recognizes that requests for cosmetic surgery are often motivated by deep and genuine suffering in which surgery is pursued from a desire to end a distressing sense of alienation from some body part or to escape teasing. But her analysis brings out how this distress is parasitic on some value or aesthetic norm the surgery is complicit in upholding. Her analysis, together with essays by Carol Freedman, Ronald Cole Turner, and Carl Elliot, among others, exemplify Ihde's observations about the amplifying and reducing powers of technology and serve to undermine the simplistic claims made by proponents of the posthuman such as Gregory Stock, Nicholas Agar, Nick Bostrom, and others.

Ihde's work, then, provides important resources for engaging with the issue of the posthuman, resources that I think do have some real normative bite, at least insofar as they indicate paths we ought to be wary of. There remains, though, one troubling sticking point, to which I turn in the final section of this essay.

IV World

While Ihde's postphenomenology provides important resources for critically approaching the posthuman, it also in one important respect seems to be closely aligned to it. In this section, I briefly examine Ihde's account of the pluriculture and its attendant form of subjectivity and suggest that it raises serious questions for the human being living in the contemporary world.

One commonly noted feature of the posthuman is the focus on decentered or fragmented subjectivity, a feature often derived from drawing close parallels between distributed processing in A.I. and the workings of the brain and from noting the manner in which the world we 21st century human beings live in is a media saturated environment characterized by multiple, fragmented perspectives. The impact of technology on subjectivity has in fact received a great deal of attention, at least since the time of Marshall McLuhan and his compatriots in the so-called Toronto school (including Ong and Havelock). More recently, in the work of communication theorists such as Mark Poster and social psychologists such as Kenneth Gergen (see especially his *The Saturated Self* for a close parallel to Ihde's account of the pluriculture), in Turkle's and Stone's analysis of the internet culture, in Katherine Hayles' account of distributed subjectivity in *How We Became Posthuman*, we're witnessing a celebration of the multiple, fragmented, distributed self and the role of technology in shaping that subjectivity. We see a parallel in Ihde's account of the pluriculture, a topic that while it received too little attention in *Postphenomenology: A Critical Companion to Ihde*, was explicitly addressed in Selinger's contribution. Like these other theorists I have mentioned, Ihde foregrounds the way in which image technologies are reshaping culture, creating a postmodern pluricultural compound vision which has an acidic effect on more foundational and romantic visions of culture. "Compound vision is multiple vision. One scans the multiple screens, focusing here, then there and, out of the mélange, forming new directions and possibilities" (1993: 29). Like Gergen, Turkle, Poster, and others, Ihde seems genuinely optimistic about this postmodern pluriculture and seems to celebrate

this multiple or compound vision. The world as remade by image technologies is one to embrace. Here I think we should be more hesitant. Are we meant for a world made up of the bits and pieces and flotsam and jetsam from the Others of whom we are now aware (1993: 28)? Can we human beings long survive in an acidic environment? There are a number of reasons to be wary of Ihde's claims regarding image technologies and the pluriculture. First, I think these accounts are overly indebted to technological metaphors and place too much emphasis on technology as the engine driving subjectivity. Ihde's account of image technologies and epistemological engines seems to place the technology in the driver's seat, suggesting an overly deterministic metaphor. Secondly, it is easier said than done when moving from centered to decentered subjectivity. Consider Ihde's common analogy for thinking about compound vision, the multiple display screens found in newsrooms.

Before these compound eyes sits a group of viewers coordinating the separate visions into the mix that will be either the evening news or the rocket launch. Ultimately, a pattern and selection occurs, but it is formed out of the multiplicity of individual screens. Risking what I know is bound to be criticized, the compound eye has the advantages of those same eyes in insects; it gives a panorama beyond the boundaries of even the binocular. (1990: 174)

But are insect eyes appropriate for human beings? As Grene notes in her *Philosophical Testament*: "Insects find themselves in a visual world structured on principles wholly different from ours. And what they do with their visual information, given the difference in their nervous apparatus, has got to be different, too" (1995: 155). Biology may play a constitutive role in shaping our perception that calls into question the advantages of the compound eye. And let us not forget that in the typical newsroom, there is usually a newsroom director who is finally responsible for the mix that gets broadcast on the nightly news. Ihde suggests that "we are all in the process of 'editing' or constructing our lives as in the newsroom image" (1993: 64) and that "one scans the multiple screens, focusing here, then there..." (1993: 29). Who is this one, this we that is doing the editing and selecting the focus? Third, continuing with this newsroom metaphor, we might recall that recently while Bush was attending the G-8 summit in Germany, the news was dominated by that other great story of the day, the Paris Hilton affair: will she go to jail or not? Ihde is optimistic that the pluriculture will lead to the questioning of Eurocentrism and the flowering of tolerance (1993: 55). Is this optimism warranted? After all, the pluriculture could just as likely lead to all Paris, all the time and I'm not sure we're given any reason to think we'll get the better part of the deal. Indeed, the Pew Research Center recently reported that despite living in the information age, Americans are no better informed today than they were twenty years ago. Ihde's own reticence regarding predictions and prognosis further militate against his optimism regarding the pluriculture and compound vision. Furthermore, any number of analyses of the future of the media and online communities emphasize the narrowcasting of information and the construction of self-selected, homogenous online populations. None of this bodes well for optimism regarding the pluriculture. Fourth, while Ihde recognizes that a kind of bricolage relativism is implicit in pluriculture ("one may pick and choose culture fragments, multiple choices, and in the process reflectively find one's own standards provincial or arbitrary" (qtd. by Selinger, 102)), I am lead to recall Robert Jay Lifton's reflections in *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* on the psychological process of doubling in which Nazi doctors could be both healers and perpetrators of genocide. What is to determine the outcome of multiple, compound vision? While Ihde suggests that tolerance and a greater willingness to question our Eurocentrism will result from the pluriculture and compound vision, Lifton's account suggests a more troubling and ethically questionable outcome.

Finally, coming full circle, we might return to philosophical anthropology. I began by pointing out the need to think together philosophy of technology and philosophical anthropology. Returning one last time to Marjorie Grene, in the final chapter of her philosophical testament, she raises the question: “As natural beings made what, or who, we are by the givens of a culture, how does each of us, as a responsible person, cope with the world around us, including, of course, our peers of the human world?” (1995: 174). She argues that we do so by acting out of a center: “To be a person, in the sense in which we human beings consider ourselves persons, is to be the center of actions, in such a way that we are accountable for what we do” (1995: 176). Being a center of action is in fact I think important for many life forms and operating under something like an ordering principle is probably essential to our human way of being. It is certainly essential I think to the process of raising children and anyone who has observed either human beings or animals laboring under the burden of fragmentation, it is not a comfortable sight. As Jane Flax observes, “Those who celebrate or call for a ‘decentered’ self seem self-deceptively naïve and unaware of the basic cohesion within themselves that makes the fragmentation of experiences something other than a terrifying slide into psychosis” (1990: 218-19). As we consider this world, then, of which we human beings and our technologies are a part, let us keep in mind that the world in which we must live must be a human world. In thinking about human-technology-world relations, let us give equal time to each element in this relational triangle.

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