

The heroic fury of AI: the ethical-aesthetic imperative of pedagogical Transhumanism.

Maria Sammarro¹, Silvestro Malara²*¹

¹ Università Mediterranea degli Studi di Reggio Calabria; maria.sammarro@unirc.it; silvestro.malara@unirc.it –

* Correspondence: silvestro.malara@unirc.it

Abstract: That Actaeon in the Ovidian mythological tradition represents hubris and, through it, the threshold of the human—challenging the divine and overstepping his own possibilities—is indisputable. Yet in Giordano Bruno’s reflection the hero changes meaning: he becomes the symbol of a new furor that does not die, but, by discovering Diana, rediscovers himself, re-embraced within Nature. The myth becomes deeply contemporary, because it represents the human being who reaches the culmination of the cognitive process and who, in the Anthropocene, needs to rethink himself, to re-imagine his figure and his body, and to reform his position on Earth and in relation to the Other.

It is therefore necessary to reflect pedagogically on the technological enhancement of AI with regard to the need to reconfigure ethicality and the possibility of governing the age of technology, if it is true that the transhuman hybridizes the solicitations of the human—long considered a unique and unified subject—and the instances of the cyborg, as a cybernetic organism (Haraway, 2018).

AI, the latest offshoot of human curiosity, has once again discovered the nakedness of Diana. The new Actaeon can only hybridize with the learning machine, and this calls for new symbolic meanings; it asks us to continue practicing imagination and to define its creative force (Cambi, Pinto Minerva, 2023), which has been defined as an evolutionary competence interconnected with evolutionary learning.



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1. Introduction

The transformations triggered by the accelerated development of technosciences are profoundly reshaping the conditions of learning, sociality, and identity formation. The increasingly tight entanglement between the human and technology delineates a horizon in which the traditional boundaries between the natural and the artificial become progressively

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blurred. Within this context, education is called to question not only how to teach, but also which conception of the human is implicitly promoted by contemporary technological devices and educational models.

The paradigm of inclusivity, attentive to differences and to conditions of access to knowledge, is thus confronted with a shift of an anthropological nature. Human–technology hybridization becomes a key category for understanding emerging forms of subjectivity and for rethinking inclusion beyond compensatory or merely adaptive models. In 1985, Haraway’s text—published in Italy in 2018 under the title *A Cyborg Manifesto: Women, Technologies, and the Biopolitics of the Body*—concludes with the statement “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess,” a formulation that can be read as a reworking of the concept of *furor*. Throughout the history of Western thought, *furor* has been used to describe human–nature–environment hybridization, and, for the purposes of this reflection, human–technology hybridization, in divergent ways: as condemnation, as in Ovid’s mythological narratives, which articulate the necessity for humans to remain human and avoid technological contamination; or as praise, in Giordano Bruno’s philosophical re-elaboration, which views technological interference as a new ethical and aesthetic possibility, and therefore as a pedagogical horizon for humanity in the Anthropocene.

2. Furor

«*Tempus inane peto, requiem spatiumque furori,
dum mea me victam doceat fortuna dolere*» (Virgilio, 29-19 a.C.)

From the dawn of time, from classical mythology to the present day, the concept of *furor*—frequently central to canonical works—has been inextricably linked to that of *amor*, eternally sealing the bond between *eros* and *thanatos* (Sammarro, 2011). According to Greek mythology, madness was generated by Pluto, the god of Wealth, and the nymph Neotete, Youth, and was nurtured by Mete, Intoxication, daughter of Bacchus, and Apedia, Ignorance, daughter of Pan (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1511).

In ancient Greece, individuals afflicted by madness, although often marginalized and stigmatized, were also in certain contexts almost revered, since their behavior—deviating from social norms—was believed to result from contact with the divine. Alongside ordinary madness of pathological origin, there thus existed another form understood as supernatural in nature. In particular, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato distinguishes four types of “divine madness”: prophetic madness inspired by Apollo, telestic madness inspired by Dionysus, poetic madness inspired by the Muses, and erotic madness inspired by Aphrodite and Eros (Dodds, 1951).

Prophetic madness under the patronage of Apollo was reserved for a select few who, through knowledge of the future and of hidden realities, were able to mediate between the divine and ordinary mortals. Among those endowed with Apollonian mediation were the Pythia and the Sibyl, to whom Apollo revealed himself not through visions but through *enthousiasmos*; through a codified ritual, the priestesses of Apollonian oracles thus became *entheoi, plena deo*.

With regard to telestic madness, the divinity invoked is Dionysus, the god of the people and of joy, whose pleasures were accessible to all. As is evident in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, Dionysus is also *Lysios*, the “liberator,” the deity who, by the simplest means, “for a brief time places each individual in a condition of no longer being himself, and in this way sets him free” (Dodds, 1951). Dionysian rituals culminated in ecstasy, producing a profound alteration of personality. Their function was cathartic, insofar as, through music and orgiastic dances, individuals were purified by releasing repressed impulses. However, alongside a more controlled form of hysteria, Dionysus also presided over a far more frenzied and dangerous manifestation—*bacchism*—practiced in Euripides’ tragedy by the Maenads, who, having

abandoned their everyday activities, run to the shadowed mountains where, clad in animal skins, girdled with serpents, crowned with ivy garlands, they abandon themselves to a wild dance, often accompanied by musical rhythms played on the tympanum:

The women, therefore, have left our homes, feigning Bacchic possession, and run off into the shadowed mountains, where they honor with their dances this newly arrived god, Dionysus. [...] I have also heard that brimming jars stand upright in the midst of their thiasoi, while they themselves withdraw to solitary places, [...] claiming that their motive is to serve as officiating Maenads. (Euripides, 403 BCE).

The third type of *furor* is determined by the influence of the Muses, who are invoked by poets during the act of poetic creation not only in ancient Greece but also in later historical periods, although in these cases no explicitly ecstatic attitude on the part of the author is observed. It was not until the fifth century BCE that poetic ecstasy came to be explicitly theorized; indeed, Democritus “held that the finest poems were those composed [...] ‘through inspiration and sacred afflatus,’ and denied that one could be a great poet *sine furore*” (Dodds, 1951).

In myth and Greek tragedy, madness is so pervasive that its force overwhelms even the figure of the hero, who is traditionally meant to embody the ideal of perfection *par excellence*. Thus Ajax, son of Telamon, is driven mad “by shame and humiliation, or rather, by Athena’s vengeance against him” (Biondi, 1998), after losing the contest with Odysseus for the awarding of Achilles’ arms, offered as the most coveted of trophies following the death of the son of Peleus:

Athena: I clouded his eyes with deceptive and deadly visions; I drove him against the captured herds, though they were still undivided, and against their keepers. There he fell upon them, whirling his sword in every direction, and made a slaughter of the horned cattle. At times he believed he was cutting down both Atreidae with his own hands, at times one of the leaders, at times another. As he was thus possessed by madness, I kept urging him on, driving him into destructive snares; and when he had completed his work, all the surviving cattle he bound, driving the entire herd into the tent, as though his prey were men and not beasts. And now within the tent he has bound them fast in nooses and inflicts torment upon them. I wish to show you his madness clearly (Sophocles, 450–442 BCE).

Heracles, too, is driven into frenzy in Euripides’ tragedy that bears his name, possessed by Lyssa, the *daimōn* of madness, who, at the behest of Hera—ever consumed by hatred and jealousy toward her stepson, born of Zeus’ union with Alcmene—leads the hero of the twelve labors, afflicted by terrifying hallucinations, to commit a horrific crime: the murder of his wife Megara and their children. Likewise seized by a vengeful fury are the Erinyes (literally, “the Furious Ones”), daughters of Night, who persecute Orestes, son of Agamemnon, stained by the crime of matricide, chanting against him a magical song capable of unleashing madness:

*For the consecrated victim, this song
-stupefaction, a delirium that overturns the soul-
the hymn of the Erinyes, which enchains the mind,
without the sound of the lyre, and withers mortal life.
This task the all-pervading Moira spun for us,
that it might remain unaltered:
those among mortals upon whom fall*

*the murderous madness of kin-slaying
we must pursue [...] (Aeschylus, 458 BCE).*

When the theme of madness becomes intertwined with that of passion and overwhelming love, the individual who loves in an obsessive and totalizing manner is driven to perform extreme and tragic acts in order to preserve—even in death—that exclusive bond with the beloved. The *Iliad*, for instance, opens precisely with a betrayal and an amorous triangle—Menelaus, Helen, and Paris—which serves as the triggering cause of the Trojan War narrated by Homer. In the *Odyssey*, moreover, the bard Demodocus sings of the adultery of Aphrodite, guilty of betraying her husband Hephaestus, ugly and lame, with the young and vigorous Ares, the god of war. Likewise *furens* is Medea—who, seized by unrestrained jealousy and a desire for vengeance, kills her own children to punish Jason—and so too is Dido, who, first deceived and then abandoned by Aeneas, oscillates between moments of lucidity and madness until *furor* ultimately prevails over reason and the Carthaginian queen finds her only solace in suicide.

Lucretius likewise describes, in *De rerum natura*, the devastating and harmful effects of *eros* through the expression *dira libido*, a monstrous craving that drives human beings toward delirium, obsession, and the exclusive love of a single person. The Lucretian text is permeated with terms such as madness, ardor, fury, anxiety, anguish, wound, and injury—forceful words that convey the violent and painful character of erotic passion while also delineating the illusion and deception to which lovers are exposed (Sammarro, 2011).

Over the centuries, the very conception of madness undergoes significant transformation. In the Middle Ages, the madman is a ridiculous figure, mocked and derided by all; in the Renaissance, however, madness comes to be understood as synonymous with wisdom and truth. In line with the so-called culture of contradiction—which “with an exceptional critical spirit [...] brings to light the ambivalent character of every form of behavior, revealing the limits of any unitary and absolute vision of humanity and reality” (Ferroni, 1996)—madness is no longer regarded as a disease to be isolated or an object of ridicule but paradoxically becomes a source of sound and truthful judgment, as exemplified in Erasmus of Rotterdam’s celebrated *Encomium Moriae (Praise of Folly)*. Indeed, it is precisely within madness that true wisdom is concealed, for while the wise person hesitates in the face of difficulty, the fool is capable of daring and venturing beyond established limits.

The wise person takes refuge in the books of the ancients and draws from them nothing but verbal subtleties. The fool, by contrast, confronts situations directly, along with the risks they entail, and thus acquires wisdom—if I am not mistaken. [...] For there are two principal obstacles to the knowledge of things: shame, which clouds the mind, and fear, which, at the sight of danger, diverts one from action. Folly frees us from both. To feel no shame and to dare everything—few know what an abundant harvest of advantages may spring from this (Erasmus of Rotterdam, 1511).

With Giordano Bruno (2011), *furor* becomes “heroic,” fully consistent with the framework outlined thus far. In *The Heroic Frenzies*, the Nolan philosopher specifies that the *furor* to which he refers pertains exclusively to a rational impulse and has nothing to do with bestial affections or irrational behavior (Ordine, 2003): “those frenzies of which we reason and which we see enacted in these propositions are not forgetfulness but memory; they are not neglect of the self but loves and desires for the beautiful and the good, through which one strives to become perfect by transforming oneself and becoming like that which one loves” (Bruno, 2011).

For Bruno, therefore, there does not exist a single type of *furor*: there are bestial frenzies, marked by blindness and irrational impulse and tending toward *feritas*, and there are

positive frenzies that tend toward the divine (Ordine, 2003). Naturally, the energy that drives this quête is love, and the more the pursuit is practiced, the more one becomes inflamed by it. Love for wisdom is also love for the divine, a conception articulated through the myth of Actaeon, who symbolizes the human intellect engaged in the hunt for divine wisdom. As Ordine (2003) explains, it is precisely in his encounter with Diana that Actaeon comes to understand that what he had been seeking lies within himself, that the divinity so ardently desired is not external to the seeker. This is why, upon finally reaching the presence of the goddess, he is transformed into what he was seeking: the ordinary, common human being becomes heroic, for it is precisely through the loss of life that the birth of a new life is configured.

*The pursuit and the hunt are our true purpose;
we have no excuse if we conduct them poorly and without due care.
To fail at the very moment of the capture is another matter.
The fact is that we are born to seek the truth;
to possess it belongs to a far greater power (Montaigne, 2003).*

3. The Anthropocene and Human Machinations

The philosophy of technology (Heidegger, 2017) has shown that technological artifacts are not neutral entities but constitutive elements of the processes of human individuation. From this perspective, technology actively participates in shaping forms of life, affecting perception, corporeality, language, and social relations. Technology has not merely modified the human being; rather, technics and technology provoke nature itself, forcing the environment to be reduced to a standing reserve (*Bestand*), a resource ready for use that produces no original or creative act, and from which the human being becomes alienated as a merely mechanical and productive user. From the philosopher's standpoint (Volpi, 2002), human–technology hybridization is therefore not an exceptional event but a structural dynamic that characterizes the evolution of *Homo sapiens* and redefines its ethical and aesthetic possibilities.

Reflections on the posthuman have further highlighted how contemporary humanity is configured as a relational and situated entity within complex socio-technical networks (Haraway, 1991; Braidotti, 2013). These networks redefine notions of agency, responsibility, and autonomy, calling into question anthropocentric and normative models. In the educational domain, this entails the need to rethink formative paradigms by recognizing the plurality of forms of existence and learning.

From the standpoint of the pedagogy of complexity (Morin, 2001), hybridization represents an epistemological challenge that requires overcoming reductionism and simplification. To understand technology means to enter into its internal logic, grasp its ambivalences, and develop critical tools capable of orienting its educational and social impact (Morin, 2015). We thus inhabit a new era that demands new pedagogies, new parameters, and new orientations. *Anthropocene* (Crutzen, 2007) is only one of the names given to this epoch, in which humanity must recompose its position in the world: a new cyborg humanism that has permeated even the environment itself, no longer an immediate resource but a *technosphere* (Haff, 2014) a system of technological interconnections comprising not only objects understood as devices and infrastructures, but also communication networks, financial systems, and human beings themselves as active components. Contrary to the idea of humanity as the master of

technology or of the environment through technology, Haff argues that we have become dependent parts of a system we no longer fully control. Not far from Heidegger's position, it becomes evident that the notion of *machination* (*Machenschaft*), which once designated a new metaphysics of technology, has today generated the great illusion of the Anthropocene: the false belief that human action remains the primary driving force of the world.

If the human being is no longer *homo habilis*, if humanity has lost dominion over the world, one conceivable trajectory is the mutation of the Anthropocene devoid of ethics (Floridi, 2022) into a catastrophic *Thanatocene* (Bonnieuil & Fressoz, 2013), in which humanity, creator of a disembodied intelligence outside the body and author of the very term *Artificial Intelligence*, has definitively lost the struggle against the overpowering force of technology.

Alongside the most prominent labels, new terms continue to emerge: some with optimistic orientations, such as *Koinocene*, which reflects on the possibility of responding to an age of change and crisis through the reconfiguration of coexistence between humans and non-humans within an anthropological-ecological framework (Aime, Favole, & Remotti, 2020); others that reaffirm an apocalyptic vision already outlined by Haff, including reflections on the irrelevance of human choice vis-à-vis nature in *The Stack*, the new identity of the world that drinks the earth's resources and expels technology (Bratton, 2015), as well as the techno-utopian critique developed by Kohei Saito (2024), who reflects on the fiction and harmful allure of a Green New Deal.

4. The Ethical Possibilities of the Chthulucene

Another name is Chthulucene (Haraway, 2025), a further interpretive category that proposes a worldview grounded in the radical interdependence among humans, non-humans, technologies, and environments, placing relations, sympoiesis, and shared responsibility at its center. The Chthulucene undermines the modern conception of the subject as autonomous, rational, and separate from the world, replacing it with a relational and situated understanding of the human. Human beings emerge as nodes within complex biological, technological, and symbolic networks, in which identity is always co-constructed. From a pedagogical perspective, this entails overcoming educational models centered on cognitive individualism in favor of formative practices that value cooperation, co-responsibility, and learning as a collective and interspecies process.

Haraway's proposal introduces a non-anthropocentric ethics grounded in care and responsibility toward the totality of living forms. This ethics does not limit itself to normative prescriptions but takes shape as an embodied, situated, and narrative practice. It calls for a pedagogy capable of educating toward ecological, technological, and social responsibility, recognizing that every educational action produces effects that extend beyond the strictly human domain. Education thus becomes a space for ethical exercise, where one learns to stay with the trouble.

Although it may seem paradoxical to imagine an ethics that remains within uncertainty, complexity, and hybridity, this appears to be the only viable path for reapprehending the creative force of the human and for embracing a renewed image of humanity one that remains human even when it is prosthetically completed by an external creation of its own body, namely artificial intelligence. Indeed, artificial intelligence, with both its vertigo and its virtues as the most intelligent of human creations, invites humanity to conceive itself as renewed and, once the sterile critique that views AI as the mortal instant of humanity is overcome, as enhanced. With ethical emergence arises an aesthetic necessity. The enhanced human must semiotically regenerate its being-in-the-world, semiologically reconstruct a renewed horizon of meanings, and ontologically rethink the world itself. Artificial intelligence strips humanity of its dominative certainties and generates a reality in which human beings must reclaim their capacity to interpret events and phenomena. In this emergency, it becomes necessary to return to the body as the constitutive entity of identity: a new and enhanced body, originally more

powerful because it is connected and interconnected both with other bodies and with its own Umwelt.

This growing hybridization between the human body and technology directly challenges pedagogy, which is called to interrogate the conditions of possibility of education when corporeality can no longer be traced back to a natural, unified, and self-sufficient model. From this standpoint, the technologically mediated body - the cyborg body - cannot be read as an exception or deviation from the human, but as one of its historical, situated, and relational configurations, making visible what has always characterized the human condition: its constitutive dependence on symbolic, cultural, and technical mediations (Simondon, 1958/2017). This is the direction taken by pedagogical reflection that understands technology not as an external addition to the human, but as a structuring dimension of formative processes, capable of affecting identity, corporeality, and possibilities of self-determination (Cambi & Pinto Minerva, 2023). The educational problem does not lie in hybridization itself, but in its uncritical management, when it is assumed as an inevitable destiny or a totalizing solution removed from ethical and pedagogical interrogation.

Within this framework, the figure of the cyborg developed by Donna Haraway assumes particular theoretical relevance for education, as it enables the deconstruction of deeply rooted dualisms—natural/artificial, body/machine, normal/abnormal—and allows identity to be rethought as a hybrid, situated, and non-essentializable process (Haraway, 1991). Far from being a dystopian figure, the cyborg body becomes a critical metaphor that renders visible the material, technological, and relational conditions of existence and opens onto a non-deficit-oriented reading of bodily differences, including those related to disability and the use of assistive technologies. This implies recognizing that the hybridized body is fully educable, capable of learning, meaning-making, and participation in formative processes, provided that educational contexts are not oriented toward normalization but toward the valorization of plural forms of existence.

The role of education is thus to govern the space of possibility of being, as the domain in which the subject can construct a reflective relationship with the technical mediations that traverse it, recognizing both their emancipatory potential and their risks of expropriation and control (Cambi & Pinto Minerva, 2023). Educating, in this sense, does not mean restoring an abstract idea of the natural body, but accompanying subjects in the critical understanding of their embodied condition, even when it is profoundly marked by technological hybridization. The cyborg body also foregrounds a fundamental dimension for inclusive pedagogy: vulnerability. Far from being an omnipotent body, the technologically mediated body is exposed, dependent, and relational, making evident the interdependence among humans, technology, and environment. Such vulnerability, rather than being a limitation to be eliminated, becomes the foundation of a new ethics of care understood as shared and situated responsibility (Haraway, 2016). Education is therefore called to create conditions in which the hybridized body may exist without being reduced to a problem to be solved, and instead be recognized as a site of experience, learning, and transformation (Panciroli & Rivoltella, 2023). What emerges is a conception of pedagogy as a critical and relational practice, oriented toward safeguarding the meaning of the human precisely where it appears most fragile and transformed, and toward making it possible to be subjects even when identity is distributed across biological bodies, technological supports, and complex socio-technical networks. Within this horizon, the cyborg body does not signal the end of education, but rather reactivates its deepest function: sustaining the possibility of being human—in a plural, situated, and open sense—within the hybrid conditions of the present (Braidotti, 2013).

5. Aesthetic Fascination

In continuity with the pedagogical reflection on the hybridized body, a brief yet significant aesthetic opening can be identified in the practices of body art and contemporary performance, which have taken the body as a privileged site of experimentation, knowledge, and

the questioning of the limits of the human. Since the 1960s and 1970s, numerous artists have used their own bodies as both material and language, exposing them to stress, transformation, and technical mediation in order to explore their expressive, perceptual, and symbolic potentials, thereby making visible the body's vulnerable, relational, and historically situated nature.

In particular, Stelarc's practices exemplify how the body is not a closed entity but an open and "obsolete" system, destined to be extended, enhanced, and reconfigured through technology, thus destabilizing the notion of a stable and self-sufficient bodily identity (Stelarc, 2010). Similarly, ORLAN's performances, which intertwine the body, surgery, and artistic languages, interrogate the cultural and normative dispositifs that define the "natural" body, opening onto a conception of identity as a hybrid, negotiated, and transformable construction (ORLAN, 2012). Marina Abramović's work, though less directly technological, also contributes to this perspective by presenting the body as a threshold of relation, resistance, and knowledge, capable of rendering the limit experientially meaningful rather than a mere lack (Abramović, 2016).

From a pedagogical standpoint, these aesthetic practices may be interpreted as genuine epistemic devices that anticipate and render visible what theoretical reflection on human–technology hybridization seeks to articulate: the body is not merely a support of identity but a process in becoming, traversed by technical, cultural, and ethical mediations. In this sense, body art offers a productive pathway for imagining a new image of the human—one not grounded in ideals of integrity or perfection, but in the capacity to expose oneself, to transform, and to learn through embodied experience, even when such experience is technologically mediated. This perspective resonates deeply with the pedagogy of hybridization, as it suggests that education should not aim to preserve a given model of corporeality, but rather to accompany subjects in the critical understanding of their transformations, recognizing the body—hybridized, performed, or extended—as a locus of knowledge, expression, and the possibility of being (Haraway, 1991; Cambi & Pinto Minerva, 2023).

6. Conclusion

In light of the reflections developed here, human–technology hybridization emerges not as a rupture with the Western cultural tradition, but as part of a long symbolic genealogy that, beginning with myth, has interrogated the relationship between limit, transformation, and identity. The figures of *furor* - from Platonic divine madness to Brunian heroic frenzy - demonstrate how the crossing of the boundary of the human has historically been conceived not only as a risk of loss, but also as a possibility for knowledge and regeneration. In continuity with this horizon, inclusive education today is called to govern human–technology hybridization as a formative space, recognizing the hybridized body as an educable condition capable of generating meaning. Rethinking the human in relational and situated terms makes it possible to overcome normative and exclusionary models, promoting a pedagogy of care, responsibility, and participation capable of supporting hybrid and evolving subjectivities within contemporary contexts.

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