

TEMPTATION BY IMMORTALITY: COMMODYFING AND RESOURCIFYING A BODY

Vytautas Rubavičius*

Summary

The article deals with the idea of temptation by immortality as promoted by new genetic discoveries and various products of post-modern culture. Postmodernity is considered as a recent stage in the development of the capitalist system marked by a decisive turn to the resources of human body and life processes. Peculiarities of this stage of capitalism are explained with reference to insights of Karl Marx and Martin Heidegger, which are summed up through the concepts of commodification and resourcification designating the main forces of capitalist expansion or genetic colonization. Thus postmodernity is characterized not only by commodification of culture, services, abilities and skills, but especially by the resourcification of genetic and life materials through the powerful instrument of patenting. Genetic discourse is considered to be a new worldview in which other discourses are correlating and supporting the notion of an evolutionary trend from *homo sapiens* to *techno sapiens*. This trend reveals new possibilities to transgress the limit imposed on human beings by the forces of nature – mortality. The author of this article arrives at a conclusion that, firstly, the temptation by immortality can be regarded as a version of modernist ideology of human liberation from various social and heavenly constraints which is supported by scientific genetic discourse, becoming a stimulating factor of postmodern cultural production. Secondly, that all the possibilities stemming from new genetic and biotech discoveries fall under the regulation of property relations thus making ‘immortality’ – temptation and brand – both an exceptional commodity and a commodifying force.

Keywords: bioresources, body, commodification, immortality, patenting, postmodernity, resourcification.

A web of concepts of the body and those related to the body has spread in the field of postmodern thinking, thus delineating essential characteristics of the present condition. The body has been generating visualisations of cultural economy and, simultaneously, it marks a new stage of capitalism: the transition of the globalising, geographical and cultural expansion of capitalism to an informational genetic expansion. Transformable landmarks of the commod-

* Vytautas Rubavičius – PhD., Senior researcher at the Institute of Culture, Philosophy, and Art (Vilnius, Lietuva); rubavytas@hotmail.com.

ifying power are being set in the 'territory' of the body, but the very same relationships transgress any cultural and territorial definitions and point towards the strata of inexhaustible biogenetic resources; to appropriate and expropriate them, the so-called clever machines are called for that are based on information, nano and genetic engineering technologies. As the relationships of private property have penetrated natural biogenetic diversity and, having turned it into a resource, the cognitive subject has reached the goal to secularise the Universe, which he has set for himself: only he as the owner and producer of genes lures people with the eternal shapes of the clones of their genetic information, which will be sustained in any location of the Universe. Commodification and resourcification of human beings are two processes of self-developing capitalism, stimulating and supporting each other, which generally manifest in postmodernity. Temptation by 'immortality,' which will become even stronger when the genetic code is mastered (the theme of code in artistic production should be noted as well), is a postmodern manifestation of the will to power, unavoidably dividing humanity according to the potential of individuals to seek 'immortality' and to acquire it.

I

Immortality is the oldest dream of humanity stimulating people to look for new ways of communication with otherworldly powers in order to wring the 'recipe' or promise of immortality from them. This dream has been encouraging people to master the flows of cosmic energy in the hope to acquire from them an additional vital power to their body. When looking for the elixir or stone of immortality people were exploring nature and their own bodies, thus laying foundations for the disciplines that are called today natural sciences and medicine. The search for immortality as well as alchemy or the practices of mastering the physical form of man is characteristic to all civilisations, despite the traits differentiating them or the instilled diversity. One could name many stories widespread in various regions of the world about the struggle of rulers over the sages who know the secret of immortality, as well as about the unknown, but famous, cities of immortal people that have spurred others to travel thus comprising certain geography of the world. Such stories are evidence to the strength of the ideal of immortality and the power that it grants to those who have been able to use the idea for their own purposes. Mythologies of various regions show that the idea of personal bodily and spiritual immortality has been significant in regulating communal life and establishing the ethical code. Greek gods used to grant immortality to heroes for their deeds. Immortality is characteristic to gods as their essential trait and a 'goodness' that can be passed on in certain circumstances. In monotheist religions immortality is an attribute of God, which manifests in one way or another through the immortal soul. The idea of immortality appears in a wide spectrum of concepts of immortality: the corporeal, spiritual, based on reincarnation and resurrection, ideal (Immanuel Kant) and other

immortalities supported by religious traditions, esoteric and literary texts, artistic imageries and philosophical systems.

The Modern Times increasingly dissociate themselves from religious, non-scientific, thinking, from religious sensibility and worldview, also from the belief in culture based on symbols: these are regarded as simply relics of the past, which we have to replace by all means. The Modern Times declare and confirm the principle of secularisation of the world lived by people and characterised by scientific rationality. Thus, the idea of immortality is being consigned to the margins of culture. However, to expel an idea is not simply to destroy it because it is impossible to erase former viable and important things from culture completely. Culture preserves traces of all kinds of former social relationships and their symbolical forms, which resuscitate in certain conditions by acquiring most unexpected forms such as capitalist feudalism or socialist slavery. The act of instituting secularisation and scientific rationality expels the idea of immortality from the society's consciousness, yet expels or erases it so that it leaves a viable hack of lack in culture, which can neither disappear nor heal. How could we understand this hack? Secularisation and the scientific worldview expels God together with his essential attribute, immortality; however, in Western civilisation, the fundamental, although denied, relationship with God survives through the power and right granted to people by God: «Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth» (*Genesis*. I, 28). It is impossible to wipe out the empowerment to rule over the earth, to control it and use for one's own purposes (and people inevitably set goals because free will is characteristic to them), yet it can be changed when a human being takes on divine attributes and powers. The secular expulsion of God reinforces the image of man who deciphers the programme of divine creation and grants the power of creation to himself. It is possible to imagine this action in the following way: in Modern Times a human being who has experienced being «in the face of absent God» (Martin Heidegger) takes on the attribute of immortality and power over info-bio-neuro-nano technologies he creates. The development of the capitalist system with an increasingly vital link between technologies and industry turning into a unified process provides an opportunity to master immortality (temptation and ideology). A clear direction has emerged in the process of capitalism: the development of information, genetic modification and biotechnologies. However we interpret the secular expulsion of God from the world inhabited by people, as well as the process of deleting Him from social life and reinforcing the human image instead of the absent God, we would venture stating: now it becomes apparent that the goal of man is to possess and master the divine attribute of immortality.

II

The idea of corporeal, material, immortality and temptation by immortality that it supports, like the principle of regulating social consciousness that becomes increasingly more important, emerges at the moment of the present time that is called postmodernity. It is irrelevant whether it is defined by distinguishing certain characteristics of postmodernity, emphasising their radical difference from modernity, or by denying postmodernity as an ideological construction of relativised consciousness infected with deconstruction, thus underlining the 'incompleteness' of the project of modernity. However we see postmodernity, we unavoidably look for essential characteristics of the present and relate them to the development of capitalism, the changes and stages emerging or envisioned in that development. The concept of modernity and Modern Times as well as the period of industrial capitalism found in modernity with its characteristic formation and commodification of labour no longer instigates discussions. It is possible to distinguish yet another stage of capitalism with the characteristic commodification of environment, human relationships and culture. The latter stage is called consumption and consumer capitalism. Many researchers specialising in numerous areas agree over the significance of the 1970s: they see the premises of the systematic turn of capitalism towards the entrenchment of information and communication technologies, mass media and biotechnologies connected with the spread of analogous images of society: the spectacle, knowledge, network, etc. Without attempting to discuss how well grounded the emphasis on the latter decade is, because it is possible to argue for moving it somewhat back, for my argument, I will use the conclusion of Giovanni Arrighi who has analysed the origins of capitalism and the developments in 20th century capitalism: «Changes since about 1970 in the way capitalism functions locally and globally have been widely noted; though the precise nature of these changes is still a matter of some debate. But that they amount to something fundamental is the common theme of a rapidly growing literature» (1). Two decades of heated discussions of postmodernism have passed, and we must admit that the philosophers who sensed the moment of change in capitalism and tried to define it were right; the same goes for researchers in various areas of social life who tried to explain that Western societies experienced a systematic change in culture, including senses and sensibilities, cultural and social practices as well as scientific and philosophical discourses (2). Concerning the subject of this discussion we could define the present day capitalism as a time when information, human body and genetic material are being commodified. Of course, such a definition is somewhat conditional; however, it is important to highlight the nature of changes in capitalism, the characteristics of the 'spirit' and logic of that change that prompt commodification. It is the new 'areas' of commodification that, we think, confirm the change defined as postmodernism.

To analyse the structure of commodification, we will refer to insights of Karl Marx and Martin Heidegger generalised by the concepts of commodification and resourcification that mark different, but closely

linked, processes in the self-development of capitalism supporting each other. Those processes define the milestones of existence for cultures and societies that become established in the form of worldviews as the basis of social relationships and originating the values of human self-mastering as well as institutional systems of upbringing and education. After all, understanding one's self as a 'supplier of services' or a speck of 'human resources' is becoming such an obvious thing that this no longer prompts any reflection, particularly, any ripple of self-reflection. This shows that people no longer imagine life and self-expression, which they habitually originate from 'inner world,' in any form but that of commodity. Marx and Heidegger presented, we would say, generalising theoretical images of the development of capitalism or the Modern Times defining certain logic of that development which realises itself by commodifying and resourcifying human life and the world lived and perceived by people, also all forces of spiritual and practical activity, their manifestations and results. We will not try to find out whether and how Marx's ideas affected Heidegger's thinking on the historical nature of Being and the rise and domination of Western metaphysics. We are interested in two levels of understanding and explaining capitalism. In general, we could define those levels in the following way: Marx 'extracted' the logic of the development of capitalism from economical and social relationships which manifest as the power of capital. Through commodification capital subjects all the living world to the goal of endless accumulation of capital thus defining the conditions and milestones of human activity and self-mastery. While thinking on the history of Western philosophy and metaphysics in terms of the meaning of Being, Heidegger discovered the traces of developmental logic, the logic that in Modern Times appears as the unification of science, technology and production in the process of calculating planning, which turns the world lived by people and people themselves into resources and stock.

III

In our discussion of Marx's theoretical insights we shall link them together with regard to commodification and at the same time highlight the prophetic aspect of those insights, which, we think, is confirmed by the rise of consumer capitalism and consumer society. A tradition has formed to emphasise Marx's economism when the life of society and the human condition are explained through production forces and production relationships, while those relationships and forces define the character of social relationships and political institutions. There are also researchers who belong to a different tendency and emphasise the decisive effect of the so-called superstructure and its significance to the base. It is important to mark here the essential duality of the 'object' of research – material production and production of individuals and social relationships – under the conditions of capitalism, very clearly understood by Marx. Material production defines the guidelines for the production of individuals and social relations and originates the modes of the latter production: culture, institutions and values. The essential mediator 'lacing' all levels of material

and individual production, annihilating old controversies and establishing new differences is the form of commodity production. The goal of material production is a product made for consumption, which becomes a product only after having been consumed. Thus, we could define Marx's insight in the following way: the purpose of capitalist production is consumption. The later development of capitalism has completely confirmed this insight: capitalist production unavoidably engenders the consumer society in which consumer relationships prevail. According to Marx, production creates not only the thing consumed, but also the mode of consumption, which means, also the subject of the mode of consumption (3). The capitalist system of production, together with the product, creates the structure of human sensations, and when the mode of production changes, the structure also changes. We could claim that when the capitalist system is developing, human intuitions and sensations are more closely linked to the mode of production, and, more precisely, to the 'whims' of the capital, which are defined by the imperative of self-multiplication and incessant accumulation.

What product is obtained under the conditions of capitalism? A Commodity. Thus, the capitalist mode of production spreads and establishes market relationships, which include also the special product, the consumer. The consumer is produced not only as the subject of commodity relationships, but also as a commodity. Karl Marx explained that conditions established by capitalism as a historical period differ from those of other social formations by the fact that «Products (or activities) are exchanged only as commodities» (*Die Produkte (oder Tätigkeiten) tauschen sich nur als Waren*) (4). In such conditions commodity relationships transfuse the entire human being: his or her needs, abilities, life-style and relationships with the environment. The capitalist system prompts an extraordinary variety of human needs and abilities, yet at the same time subjugates that variety of personal characteristics to the development and intensification of consumption. We call the universal reinforcement of commodity relationships and commodity form the process of commodification prompted by the power of commodification. At the moment we see clearly how that power subjugates increasingly new human activities and abilities: we live in the world of service markets and we are educated to develop skills that would be in demand in existing markets or would help to create new ones. However the main skill defining the criteria of personal self-mastery is the ability to «adapt to the demands of the market» raised by various cultural mechanisms and guaranteeing the system's stability as well as opening new possibilities for development. When the notion of intellectual property is expanded, a tendency emerges to see and discern increasingly smaller segments and elements, inventions and designs of human activity and to establish their ownership as 'authorship' or patented 'invention' (5). The product of capitalist production – the consumer – creates such a system of culture, thus, also of values, which encourages him or her to act consciously as a subject of commodification not only with regard to the environment, but also to the so-called modern world and existential condition.

The subject's reflection acquires a commodifying direction and becomes a property of a commodity consciously offering itself to the market.

Martin Heidegger explained the forming of the Modern Times as an ontological process, as a Being's move, which reveals the image of the world provided by natural sciences and based on the definition and opposition of the object and subject, establishing new conditions of the living world and of human activity. The human being enters into knowledge and knowledge acquisition relationship to the environment and the self was used to analyse the essential particularities of the Being's process. Since we live with the scientific image of the world, first, it is necessary to find out what the characteristics of modern science are and how they have emerged. Heidegger contemplated the essence of modern science and the condition of modern subject in his several well known essays, especially *Die Frage nach der Technik* (6), *Die Zeit des Weltbildes* (7), and *Überwindung der Metaphysik* (8). Here we will describe the course of Heidegger's thought only generally, by simplifying them inescapably. Human cognitive activity that later turned into scientific activity is fundamentally linked to research that draws humans to a certain area of research, opens it to research and 'throws' a plan of intended actions and responses onto it. Such a relationship with the area of research formed only with the concept of the subject of knowledge which subjugated to himself the world of objects of knowledge that had been separated from him. All events become subordinate to the subject's research plan or project, and subordination is guaranteed by the calculating mathematical character of vision. Nature is researched by defining the areas of research and acting there with the help of measurements based on calculation. The experimental nature of knowledge arises from the mathematical character of scientific research, which is the fundamental feature of the subject's cognitive activity; thus, Heidegger generalises, the explorative experimentation of the Modern Times develops in the «frame of a precise project of nature and is subject to this project» (*im Rahmen und im Dienste eines exakten Entwurfs der Natur*) which grants it a definition and criteria (9). Scientific knowledge in the conditions of the opposition of subject and object objectifies more and more of the world by turning the subject of research into the object of research and differentiating more and more areas of research. And researched objects become objects that can be used.

Scientific activity of knowledge acquisition would not acquire such power if it was not linked to practical human activities which have become productive industrial activities in the Modern Times. Production uses science so overwhelmingly that science becomes industrial. The scientific image of the world grants this convergence. One could remember that, in his own time, Karl Marx had already revealed and discussed the essential industrialisation of science and the importance of scientific achievements to the development of industrial capitalism as well as to the formation of markets.

Man's becoming a subject has strengthened the ontological structure of the Modern Times, which defines the characteristics of present time. When man turns into a subject, the world changes: it comes to an age fore-

staged by the subject and available for the subject's use. The subject stages such an image of the world in front of him/her by which the world is objectified so that it is available for attacking and occupying. Scientific industrial activity is an objectifying attack on the world equal to its devastation by establishing scientific industrial relationships in objectified areas. By objectifying the world scientific research withdraw it from concealment, and uses the products-results of this unconcealment for further occupation and devastation of the world. Such a human relationship to nature and to the world, the unconcealment of the latter through the data of industrial science objective to the subject, is an existential, predetermined process that does not depend on the subject's will. Being unconceals itself through objective scientific technical production. And as a result gives scientific truth. The science of the Modern Times produces objective truth with the help of which the subject rules the world and himself as an incessantly objectified special area of reality. We could also say this way: objective truth is a tool and a weapon with which the subject attacks and ravages the world, also himself or herself. The industrial character of science turns the entire explored and surveyed world into raw materials, cognised and available for use and processing.

When scientific production activities gain stranglehold, the area of objecthood and objectivity incorporates also the fore-standing area of subjecthood and subjectivity. This marks the time of the end of metaphysics. Thus, like nature, the subject becomes not only a product, but also a raw material for the needs of scientific technological production. Heidegger describes such a condition of a human being who has turned into a subject with metaphoric concepts conveying the mood of fall and end. Abandoned by Being, the man of the end of metaphysics «no longer hides his nature to be the most important raw material» (*seinen Character, der wichtigste Rohstoff zu sein, nicht mehr länger verbirgt*) (10). This state of affairs is confirmed by the widespread use of the concept of *human resources* and also an ideology based on it. Thus, it is possible to describe the ontological process of the Modern Times that it objectifies the world lived by human beings objectively through the activities of scientific production while resourcifying the world and people. New possibilities of resourcifying people are revealed in postmodernity when capitalist production penetrates the body, genes and life.

IV

The trajectories of capitalism development delineated by Marx and Heidegger, which we generalise with the notions of commodification and resourcification, cross in a human being – a commodity and a resource. It is possible to see postmodernity as a condition in which new forms of commodity – human beings and their lives – emerge and inexhaustible resources within them are discovered: organs, tissues, liquids and, finally, genes. Commodification and resourcification processes marginalise the moods of fall or end in their own way by proposing temptation with immortality. The subject is returned into the body as storage of sensory

perceptions and experiences, also of life-styles, thus obliterating his/her subjective image. The Cartesian conception of the subject, which had laid foundations for science of the Modern Times, marginalised the body by separating it from the subject of rational cognitive power. As capitalism developed, that marginalised body was, first of all, commodified as the labour force. The return of the subject into the body is demonstrated by the fact that the body and concepts as well as words related to it have 'returned' to the philosophical discourse, became the main concepts of postmodern thinking. Therefore, it is possible to say that 'the return of the body' is characteristic to postmodernity. Michel Foucault has remarked on a new attitude towards human body and its significance to philosophy commenting that the body is the surface of recorded events (recorded, marked by language and dissolved by ideas), also a place in which the self declaring illusion of a scattered, yet substantial, unity expresses itself (11). The spiritual depth, also physiological processes (formerly appropriated by culture and turned into art, and lately industrialised, which means commodified) are being brought to the surface of the body, to the domain of a 'direct' material contact with social and other environment, the map of which is being drawn and constantly remapped by the struggle between social and market forces, and more precisely, metamorphoses of the capital. Having lost its spiritual depth, the body acquires a different depth, that of inexhaustible genetic and biological resources, which is characterised by one essential property distinguishing it from the natural world. How could we define that property? Genetic resources and resources derived from them are yielded to the control of private property. We could understand the difference better if we imagined that elements in Mendeleev's periodic table were the same kind of private property as the constituting parts of the genome. The usurpation and exploitation of new bodily resources takes place by developing and establishing a genetic discourse. We would venture to think that appropriation and commodification of these resources is a postmodern manifestation of the commodification of people. Yet the process of commodification evolves through hiding it with the help of the main idea of the 19th and 20th centuries: liberation of humanity because, according to Jean-François Lyotard, «the promise of freedom is for everyone the horizon of progress and its legitimation» (12). And immortality would be the truest and the final liberation of human beings not only from various social and cultural constraints, but also from the 'captivity' of time.

The most recent achievements in biotechnologies, cloning as well as creation of digital human forms introduce the «possibility» of corporeal immortality. Certain characteristics of postmodernity, more precisely, of postmodernisation, have helped to strengthen the power of temptation by immortality as well as to spread varied 'immortal' creatures, which are widely discussed by various scholars and philosophers. Postmodernity is defined by an exceptional burgeoning of popular culture that destroys the fundamental precept of modernity: the differentiation between the high and mass, popular, culture that supported the idea of social and cultural hierarchy. The disappearance of difference between the two cul-

tural domains was determined by the process of commodification: culture is being turned into a field of inexhaustible signs and images, and cultural commodities are being produced for global culture markets. All cultural commodities are produced for consumption; thus, consumption and its extent come to define the quality of commodities. Another important characteristic of postmodernity is the 'resurrection' of diverse cultures, also of identities based on them with regard to the needs of cultural production and cultural markets. Various cultural chimeras are supplied to the markets that get the consumers used to the oddest creatures: monsters, spirits, reborn creatures, immortals, clones, etc. Especially because the discourse of *queer identity* and *techno sapiens* is also gaining ground in philosophy.

Various characteristics of postmodernity are linked through more general information and communication structures, which increasingly replace social structures (13). Technological reflexivity develops in such structures embedded during the process of postmodernisation, which always subjugates theoretical considerations to practical purposes. This is determined by the character of scientific technological production discussed by Heidegger. The genetic explanation of the world is particularly handy for technological reflexivity: the entire world is as if encapsulated into human genes, which become the principle explaining the mystery of life, evolution and the future of humanity, thus rendering power to produce the human form proper and the future of people. In the universal information-communication structure a human being can no longer locate a place of self-consciousness, which would allow him or her to doubt the information that is being broadcasted: a human being simply consumes information since he or she themselves act as an element in the structure, and the very system of transmission guarantees the authenticity of information. The regime in which information is consumed does not create conditions to doubt the purpose of this regime and the criteria it sets for authenticity, reality or validity of information.

The characteristics of postmodernity we have distinguished here create a cultural and intellectual matrix as well as a worldview favourable for the constructs and presentiments of immortality in which the aforementioned genetic discourse spreads quickly as well as the guidelines for explaining human beings and their world defined by it. The genetic worldview replaces previous atomic and cybernetic worldviews in human consciousness, and the latter are subjugated to the genetic one. Why does the genetic discourse overshadow other discourses in interpreting the world so easily? Because it addresses directly the most important issues of human body, and people are most concerned about: health and longevity. Human abilities, identity and behaviour are explained through genetic particularities, and biotechnologies lure us with scientific methods and means to improve people genetically. The imagery and the dominant technological thinking of postmodern popular culture have helped genetics to develop from science into a mode of thinking about and cognition of the world: «Genetics has moved from being a science to a way of thinking and knowing the world; genes are positioned as the root of identity, behaviour and health across a wide range of public media» (14). The most recent tendencies

in philosophy (artificial intellect and artificial living environment, queer identities, prosthesis, cyborgs and bioethics), cultural and media creation (human clones and info-forms in cinema, literature and computer games) and politics (patenting genes, the human genome project, public health, spread of genetically modified products and protection from them, legitimation of new methods of conception) become linked in the genetic discourse. The symbolic and wonderfully effective nucleus of that discourse could be the scientific and philosophical considerations related to the mystery of genetic code and to deciphering that code. Talks, especially rumours in the form of scientific papers, about new victories that will help to reveal the genetic code gain wide attention and try to convince the audience, indirectly, that the code is the mystery of life, and having guessed it people will be able to control all live world by themselves. In other words, people will be able to create it themselves according to their imagination and needs. The mystery cast on the subject of code related to the mysterious nature of genetic code and its discovery has become the special 'gene' of culture, which 'infects' all areas of culture. In this sense, a perfect example is *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown translated into many languages and its various aspects analysed at international forums with the film based on it, which was screened in all cinemas of the world. The book and the film have encouraged a huge flow of culture using their images and media production, also a wave of academic papers analysing that production. In such a cultural environment the 'gene of code' spreads as if by itself the advancement in genetics in the form of cultural production and installs genetic explanations into the phenomena of the lived world and also social structures. It is easy to notice that the code is the basis of information technologies; hence the topic of code creates a cultural basis for the meeting of information and bio technologies.

The power of commodification is characteristic to the genetic discourse: the latter should be treated as a manifestation of capitalist commodification and resorcification directed to the body and life-force. Under certain conditions it is possible to discern two 'tendencies' in commodification of human body: patenting of genetic discoveries and biotechnologies as well as creation of markets for human organs and biological materials obtained from the body. Many researchers observe that lately the markets for human organs and biological materials grow really fast; thus it seems to be plausible that in bio-commerce profit made from human tissue fragments has to «dispel any lingering beliefs» that human body can be demarcated in one way or another from business relationships or that it can be imagined as a certain unquantifiable value (15). Yet the most important 'tendency' in commodification and resoursification of human body is the patenting of genetic discoveries-inventions. Having no possibility to analyse comprehensively the features of this 'tendency' we will discuss only several aspects of controlling genetic resources, which, we think, confirm the general understanding of capitalist commodification and resorcification, which we have defined by relating the insights of Marx and Heidegger.

It is possible to give a key date in the process of commodification and resourcification of the body that has become global immediately, which marks the time when this process moved to a new regime. In 1987 the United States Patent and Trade-mark Office changed the principle not to patent discoveries of natural sciences and decided that components of living creatures – genes, chromosomes, cells and tissues – may be patented and turned into intellectual property by researchers or companies that were the first to define certain characteristics of those components, described their functions and indicated the areas and ways they can be used. We can remember that as far back as 1928 this Office rejected the request to patent wolfram with the explanation that materials present in nature could not be considered as inventions, in other words, discoveries were not treated as inventions. The new principle of patenting allows patenting animals and plants in which the changed genes are present. In the agriculture so-called life-science corporations try to replace natural agriculture and get hold of all resources of seeds by slightly modifying their genes and thus establishing property rights. Consequently, corporations become suppliers of seeds, and farmers, users of seeds who have no property rights to the harvest because they do not buy the patented plant. The aim of such corporations is to control the resources of seeds of alimentary plants in our planet, thus turning all inhabitants into consumers of the flora they supply, and all flora and fauna, into biological resources controlled by the proprietary rights of those companies (16). Supporters of natural agriculture are pressed through court cases in various countries concerning the defence and protection of intellectual property. Legal practice increasingly reinforces the idea that farmers themselves have to look after their fields in order to protect them from patented plants, and having noticed them, to inform the company that would remove them. Having not noticed ‘novelties’ (and a farmer has no possibilities to analyse the new plants) one can be charged with «patent infringement litigation» and dragged through an expensive lawsuit for many years (17).

Developments in genetic engineering and bio-technological industries, as well as opportunities opened by this development, have stimulated a gold-fever noted by various researchers. The new «gold rush» directs scientific forces and investments to the territory of the body, and the commodification of the latter, «illicit though it may be in terms of traditional jurisprudence, is outrunning us» (18), in other words, becomes uncontrollable, thus showing the fundamental power of capital and the capitalist system to transgress any boundaries preventing the self-multiplication of capital. The body turns into a formation of various territories in which science and business corporations as well as state agencies overcome by gold-fever try to legitimise and appropriate their ‘plots’. The images of gold rush and gold-fever are related to the characteristic of scientific production of the Modern Times indicated by Heidegger: to seize and ravage the area of investigation. This gold-fever should be called the body-and-genes-fever. It lures us with untold profits as well as new ways and technologies

of supervising and controlling the society, technologies that tempt with the vision of longevity, and after that has been solved, immortality. The image of gold rush highlights, in a way, the continuity of the capitalist system, its colonial character and at the same time the transformation of colonialism: geographic expansion during the 'era' of globalisation starts manifesting itself in the form of commodification of the body or exploitation of resources. Capitalism that has established its rule on the geographical level, colonial and industrial capitalism, and has become a global village, discovers a new area of expansion: life and human body. It should be noted that researchers analysing philosophical, social, cultural, ethical and other issues raised by genetics and biotechnological research, most often without mentioning either Marx or Heidegger, define this process of colonisation in terms of expanding ownership and commodification by referring to the tradition of critical analysis of capitalist system that formed on the basis of Marx's insights. 'Materials' of human body and elements of live mater, genes and proteins, also processes of their interactions, turn into a property of various corporations, scientific enterprises and state agencies, which are supplied to the market as various commodities.

Creations of biotechnologies – chimeras, clones, trans-genic animals, post-human hybrids (more about genetic technologies and their application see (19)) – as well as the scientific discourse of bio- and info-technologies, linking to images that have spread in postmodern culture, conveys extraordinary effectiveness to the genetic worldview in which the tempting idea of immortality shines. The future of humanity is related to the mixed forms of life, trans-genetic or otherwise genetically modified organisms that will help to postpone, and later to conquer, death. The creation of chimeras and trans-genic animals, not speaking of clones, is already widespread now. Chimeras are being created from several embryos: cells and embryos interact directly in a certain artificial environment in which they merge into a new embryo, and trans-genic animals are 'obtained' by infusing additional genes into the embryo (more about genetically modified animals see (20)). Most researchers agree that whatever barriers were erected, it would be impossible to avoid cloning of people because too many forces of scientists compete who will be the first to reach the goal. Therefore, all kinds of monsters spreading in popular culture can also find scientific explanations. In 2007 in Great Britain it was permitted to create chimeras, however, only for a short while, for the period of three weeks. As a real step towards immortality is considered the separation of the lines of immortal cells in cancer research. Already in January 2000 the BBC scientific programme *Life and Death in the 21st Century: Living Forever* announced the possibility that «Immortality would be written into the genes of the human race», and John Harris who discusses the ethical issues of this possibility comes to a conclusion that, although immortality divides humanity into those who can and cannot strive for it, yet it is not reasonable to refuse such goodness, even if it is impossible to distribute it to everybody (Harris 2004, 529). In this case, the coexistence of immortals and mortals becomes the fundamental ethical issue, according to Harris.

Philosophers and researchers reflecting on the impact of computers and communication technologies propose a different version of immortality. Ray Kurzweil is confident that already at the end of the 1020s people will communicate to intelligent machines in a natural way through neuron implants, and later the number of people with neuron implants will increase. There is a belief that neurochips will be able to accumulate memories, all data about human life, character, feelings, experiences and form a 'document' of personal identity possible to preserve and move into another being (22). Foundations for such a vision of human evolution were laid by Donna Haraway who published *A Cyborg Manifesto* in 1985. She pointed out the increasingly speeding and varied technologisation of the human world and made a simple conclusion: the technological feature is already characteristic to contemporary man. Such a conclusion can also be made from the conception of contemporary industrial technological science and the image of the world explicated by Heidegger. Referring to the technological nature of contemporary people Haraway started to deconstruct all supposedly ontological differences and distinctions of man and animal, organism and machine as well as mechanism, physical and non-physical worlds, man and woman, by demonstrating how a machine 'penetrates' an organism and a human being, especially because a machine is a produce of people seeking to improve their lives and to take over the good qualities of man: «Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert» (23). Lately, considerations of a possibility of technical creatures have been prompted by advances in nanotechnologies: already now opens the possibility to create various tiny devices and infusing them into the human body for repairing damaged cells and parts of organs. It is interesting that also according to some thinkers with religious tendencies, one should perceive the technological improvement of human beings as their evolution towards the *techno sapiens* and consider such a development as an advancement towards the Kingdom of God (24). The technologisation of human beings is imagined in terms of their divination. Yet in this case the character of contemporary science secularising God and obliterating the perception of divinity is overlooked.

Immortality should liberate people from subordination to nature, in other words, to grant them omnipotence over life, space and time. Human beings start to control their evolution themselves. Therefore, the conviction of Russian thinker Nikolai Fyodorov no longer seems odd: that humanity transforming and sanctifying nature, moving from exploitation of nature to its regulation, having to raise a goal to revive all people who have ever lived on the earth, who, lacking space, could colonise other planets. In this conviction of his it is possible to see certain postmodernism: in a postmodern culture there is a mechanism of 'rising' and commodifying old cultures, religious and ethnic identities and esoteric practices that supports the scientific idea to 'resurrect' human beings by genetically reconstructing them. The idea of reviving and housing on other planets is related to Jean-François Lyotard's conception of the future of civilisation, which is determined by the survival instinct of humanity: humanity creates its info-neuro-genetic shape, which will avoid the end that will unavoid-

ably befall the Solar system scattering throughout the Universe. In this sense, the idea of immortality is understood as the 'axis' and purpose of civilisation and human evolution which will determine the development of present technologies.

VI

However we understand 'immortality,' argue over its 'reality' or 'un-reality,' we can make one conclusion: all possibilities to prolong human life granted by genetics, informatics and other advances in science, which support the tempting idea of immortality, have already been 'occupied' by commodity relationships; therefore, immortality itself is available only as a commodity. Thus, we could imagine a temptation by immortality as a kind of an ideology of liberation that hides a new area of commodifying and resourcifying: the body and life. A particularity of the ideologeme of immortality is the fact that it seems to liberate from commodity relationships: after all, the immortal, having acquired the divine attribute, leaves commodity relationships to the reality of mortals. Thus, this ideologeme may become an effective means to administer and control people: people themselves will do anything in order to acquire an opportunity to seek immortality (exactly like they seek new goods to consume), the 'authenticity' of which is guaranteed by science, culture and education.

References

1. Arrighi G. *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times*, London and New York: Verso, 1996. P. 1.
2. Huysens A. *Mapping the Post-modern // New German Critique*. 33 (1984). P. 5–52.
3. Marx K. *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie (Rohentwurf)*, 1857–1858, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974. S. 13.
4. *Ibid.* S. 61.
5. Amani B., Coombe R. J. *The Human Genome Diversity Project: The Politics of Patents at the Intersection of Race, Religion, and Research Ethics // Law and Policy*. 27/1 (2005). P. 153.
6. Heidegger M. *Vorträge and Aufsätze*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1954. S. 15–44.
7. Heidegger M. *Holzwege*. Frankfurt am Main: Klosterman, 1972. S. 69–104.
8. Heidegger M. *Vorträge and Aufsätze...* S. 71–99.
9. Heidegger M. *Holzwege...* S. 76.
10. Heidegger M. *Vorträge and Aufsätze...* S. 92.
11. Foucault M. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1977. P. 148.
12. Lyotard J.-F. *Postmodern Explained: Correspondence 1962–1985*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. P. 82.
13. Lash S. *Critique of Information*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2002. P. 46.
14. Silva V. T. *In the Beginning Was the Gene: The Hegemony of Genetic Thinking in Contemporary Culture // Communication Theory*. 13/1 (2005). P. 101.
15. Waldby C., Mitchell R. *Tissue Economics: Blood, Organs and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

16. Rifkin J. *The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hypercapitalism, Where All of Life is Paid-for Experience*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher and Putnam, 2000. P. 65–69.
17. Garforth K. *When Worlds Collide: Biotechnology Meets Organic farming in Hoffman v Monsanto* // *Journal of Environmental Law*. 18/3 (2006). P. 457–477.
18. Dickenson D. *Consent, Commodification and Benefit-sharing in Genetic Research* // *Developing World Bioethics*. 4/2 (2004). P. 123.
19. Baylis F., Robert J. S. *The Inevitability of Genetic Enhancement Technologies* // *Bioethics*. 18/1 (2004). P. 1–26.
20. Dewar E. *The Second Tree: Stem Cells, Clones, Chimeras, and Quests for Immortality*. New York: Carrol and Graf Publishers, 2004.
21. Harris J. *Immortal Ethics* // *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*. 2004. 1019. P. 529.
22. Kurzweil R. *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence*. New York: Viking, 1999.
23. Haraway D. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books, 1991. P. 153.
24. Jackelén A. *The Image of God as Techno Sapiens* // *Zygon*. 37/2 (2002). P. 293.