

# Becoming of Being as the Ground to Technology and Its Relationship to Humanity's Subjectification

## Theodore John Rivers

Received: 15 December 2015 Accepted: 5 January 2016 Published: 15 January 2016

## 6 Abstract

7 The becoming of being is affiliated with the concept of change and how the latter exerts an  
8 influence on the world. Although not posited with its results, becoming is made manifest by  
9 means of its engagement, which for modernity infers the presence of things (or objects) that  
10 reify the world. And because technology is associated with things, including its underlying  
11 matrix, it is now technology that dominates the becoming of being. Although humanity  
12 diminishes the importance of its being when it intensifies the being of technology, this  
13 intensification reverts back to humanity whose being then is enhanced. This relationship  
14 indicates that both humanity and technology are bound together in a cycle of dependency,  
15 since both use the same metaphysical means for change that is derivable from being?<sup>7</sup>  
16 becoming. Originally utilized as an aid to well-being, technology has been transformed into  
17 the meaning of being itself.

19 ***Index terms***— becoming, change, technology, subjectification.

## 20 1 Introduction

metaphysics as established by the Presocratics often begins with a discussion of being that does not change, which may be described as a first cause. Since a first cause is considered to be immutable and eternal, it is thought to be permanent or changeless. And the description of changelessness distinguishes a first cause from the ordinary objects of experience that we encounter on a daily basis. Although regarded by many philosophers to be fundamental for understanding reality, some philosophers (notably, Nietzsche, Bergson, Whitehead, and Heidegger) have rejected the concept of changelessness to various degrees; but even these rejections constitute metaphysical statements on the nature of being in their own right. Since one can also speak of a presumed necessary or autonomous being which is another description of a first cause, everything else would be rendered unnecessary and conditioned on this being for its existence. Apart from controversies that relate to a first cause and apart from the Parmenidean position of an eternal being neither coming into being nor perishing, any conditions that relate to an existent, even the most insignificant, would help to verify its existence.

32 Within the context of being resides the notion of being's becoming, which is a metaphysical way of becoming  
33 is more tangible than the notion of being's changelessness, it relates to a reality we can observe and measure.  
34 Becoming is not an abstraction, but a concrete basic to reality, and it is within the description of becoming  
35 where being is important to us. It signifies a coming to being. Therefore, the being all of us might comprehend,  
36 that is, if we allow ourselves to think metaphysically, is the being of everydayness, which is the being that  
37 changes, the being that is subject to our reality profoundly or superficially, we are all capable of this rudimentary  
38 understanding of being because we are all immersed within it.

39 The becoming of being may be understood as a type of process to which being is subject. Although process  
40 has a wide range of applications comprising biology, engineering, statistics, computer science, law, and music, for  
41 our analysis it denotes a series of actions directed to some result, or a method for doing something, both of which  
42 impact the essence of human reality at its most basic level. Derived from the Latin process anticipates either an  
43 end to which something is directed or the means by which it is achieved. Although there might be much discussion  
44 philosophically about change as a consistent process, we are interested in the relationship between change and

### 3 DISCUSSION

---

45 becoming. We should keep in mind that process may be used as a comparison to becoming, but it is not its  
46 equivalent. Becoming is indicative of an action that is dynamic. It signifies more than a series of events, each  
47 superseded by another, laid out from beginning to end. Although processes and events are not equivalent, events  
48 usually refer to individual occurrences, but becoming relates to a metaphysical engagement for the fulfillment  
49 of its being. Becoming may be seen as the motivating mechanism for its fulfillment, that is, it is the means by  
50 which the will of each individual is directed to its intended tasks, regardless of their consequences. Nevertheless,  
51 becoming cannot be undone because it is irreversible, that is, being that is becoming may be changed, and then  
52 changed again, but it cannot be erased from the instance of its presence that it held at one time.

53 It may be true to conclude that becoming includes some type of process for human life itself, but it is not  
54 true to conclude the opposite, which is that process naturally includes becoming. Although we might emphasize  
55 a difference of degree rather than of kind when discussing these terms, the similarity between becoming and  
56 process should be utilized only as a comparison. The use of process in a discussion of becoming is helpful in  
57 so far that change, but not necessarily improvement or advancement, is associated with a procedure or method  
58 characteristic of this type of being. Through the act of becoming, change is akin to the struggles and challenges  
59 affiliated with choice, anxiety, and doubt.

60 There is an additional distinction that needs to be emphasized when discussing becoming, especially when  
61 referring to means and ends, but process contains a stronger anticipation of ends when compared with means than  
62 does becoming. The process of a chemical reaction, or the growth of a plant, or the accumulation of wealth are all  
63 directed to some end: they are respectively, the transformation that results from a chemical reaction, the maturity  
64 of a plant, or the enjoyment of wealth. On the contrary, becoming emphasizes means over ends. Becoming is  
65 posited not so much with results, but with engagement because it concerns actions that elicit manifestations of  
66 being as a way by which it presents itself. This is to say that becoming is a way or manner in which being is  
67 revealed, since becoming as the means is directed to being as the end.

68 But becoming should not be confused with either development or evolution, both terms of which are more  
69 general than the more specific term: becoming. Although similar to some extent, becoming does not develop or  
70 evolve from one stage to another. The difference between becoming and development and/or evolution concerns  
71 the difference between a totality and the potential phases of it. Becoming denotes an entity that already has a  
72 presence, but not in reference to the completion of choices taken or the amount of time it may need. It is affected  
73 less by choice and time, and more as a consequence of them. Becoming does not develop or evolve because it  
74 already contains a potency or inherent capacity for improvement definable as its purpose that is different from  
75 the external factors that may or may not lead to development and/or evolution, culturally or biologically derived.  
76 It emphasizes potentiality on the way to actuality. Regardless of the type of change associated with becoming,  
77 it always relates to and is directed toward the innate quality of its being. Its principal concern is action, and  
78 through action, it attains an essence.

79 It should be apparent that the most significant feature of becoming concerns the concept of change that  
80 challenges the ancient Greek notion of changelessness. Since the becoming of being must change, it cannot be  
81 explained by a constant. Change entails a transformation that does not so much influence the essence or basis  
82 of what changes, but the way in which it is played out in the world. It may add or subtract to an essence, but it  
83 does not remove the ground of its being. As it has been said many times before, if the nature of being were not  
84 innate to itself, then each of us would be a different person from the one we acquired at birth. If this phenomenon  
85 were not true, then none of us would be responsible for anything, since we could come up with the argument that  
86 since some of the cells of our bodies have been replaced with new ones over time, we are different from whom we  
87 were the day before. The becoming of being does not pertain to the passing of time from one day to the next,  
88 nor to any variant of time at all, but with a transformation internal within the nature of being. It profits from  
89 the awareness of each person being present within one's own presence.

90 Although we believe in our own continuity, we also know that our materiality is constantly changing through  
91 growth, disease, or decay. Apart from a denial of self-transcendence, there must be something innate within our  
92 being that forms the basis of it. The transformation that we undergo by means of change does not replace the  
93 nature of our being, but influences how our being is manifested in the world. Even when cajoled, induced, or  
94 compelled, we are the agents of this transformation. As already noted, the becoming of being is not posited  
95 with its results, but with the engagement of them that reveals the way or manner by which it is presented to the  
96 world.

## 97 2 II.

### 98 3 Discussion

99 As we said above, the becoming of being is a metaphysical description of the idea of change. And because of  
100 change, the becoming of being signifies an underlying imperfection that is evident not only within the world, of  
101 which we are its creators, but also within ourselves. As a characteristic of becoming, change relates to everything  
102 we do. In fact, history may be described as a record of change created by factors predominantly motivated  
103 by human choice that indicates how human behavior is a reflection of its being. It indicates that change is  
104 connected to choice just as choice is connected to change. Inclusively, change is a widely ranging concept that  
105 entails certainty and doubt, maturity and decay, hope and despair, achievement and failure, love and hate, that is,

---

106 conflicting circumstances that define human existence which itself is always in the act of becoming. And existence  
107 as illustrated by history is encased in its own imperfections that are denuded of structure unless we make it,  
108 devoid of purpose unless we provide it, and absent of logic unless we use reason with it. It is characterized by an  
109 openness, not only within ourselves, human existence and the reality based on it are built on the meaning we give  
110 it. Before the being of any one of us can be, there first must be becoming. For us at least, Despite the influence  
111 that history has on the present (often misconstrued as an equivalent of the past, rather than its interpretation),  
112 we should be aware that the world is not only characterized by becoming by way of emotions, but also by things,  
113 which enable us to reify In many ways, things predominate over emotions. We feel closer to them because they  
114 confer an affinity to what we really hold dear. And because we perceive that the world is largely made up of  
115 things, usually equated with objects and the apparatus that accompanies them, we easily assimilate our being  
116 with them. If our being seems to be consumed by things that threaten a practical or logical assessment of reality,  
117 then the material world becomes the reality we wish to pursue. More than Platonism and its distortion of reality,  
118 the world of things is capable of creating a greater misrepresentation.

119 And what is now associated with things, in addition to the underlying organizations and methods affiliated  
120 with their use, is technology, which is the manner how things are made and used, augmented by a culture  
121 dominated by a technological artifice. If it is true to say that technology has the potential to oppress humanity,  
122 then it is also true to say that it has become the means for humanity's obsessive subjectification. The issue is  
123 not whether humans have been completely objectified, but rather how things have become the only reality, or  
124 at least the only reality worth pursuing that facilitates how humanity reveals its being. Since reality means the  
125 totality of being, it is composed not only of the inner domain of the mind as well as the body and the behavior  
126 associated with it (a person), but also of everything else, including other people's minds and bodies. It is upon  
127 all of the above that the presence of technology is revealed, reaching out to individuals, societies, and nature.  
128 And this observation is true even apart from a dualistic interpretation that infers that mental states are caused  
129 by physical states or events. Although people may be considered to be material objects made up of flesh and  
130 blood with or without any marginalization by technology, it is more important to consider how the process of  
131 objectification, both as a mode and manifestation of its being, has an influence on humanity's subjectification.  
132 And the latter would have little or no meaning if technology was either weakened or absent.

133 Since we are free within the perimeters of the choices we make, we determine what the world will be, and by  
134 the world we mean the social context applicable within a cultural structure fashioned by free choice. The world  
135 is a general description for the social and cultural conditions humanity creates, even if the world is shaped by  
136 contradictions molded by beliefs that are constantly changing. Although some people reject the world when it  
137 presents itself, most people accept the world they confront, despite its shortcomings and prejudices. And the  
138 world we are now most comfortable with is dominated by artificialities, which like culture itself are configurations  
139 of reality. An honest assessment of the world reveals much artificiality, and perhaps the greatest artificiality is  
140 society itself because it is the effect of a method that organizes the structure of interpersonal relationships. Since  
141 all methods are technologies, we should acknowledge that any technology is an imposition upon reality.

142 As we said above, the dominant motivator of the world today is technology, which through its embodiment of  
143 objectivity promotes an obsessive subjectivity. Although originally used as an aid to wellbeing, technology has  
144 been transformed into the meaning of being itself. Technology has become the greatest aid to human existence  
145 because it is the basis of our understanding of the world. Now so commonplace, we need to emphasize that  
146 the being of humanity is equated with the being of technology, and the way in which this transformation takes  
147 place is through being's becoming. It is not solely because we find objects everywhere from tools to machines,  
148 that is, technical artifacts of all descriptions in the world, but also because these things collectively, when joined  
149 with the methods and procedures associated with them, represent our understanding of being. Becoming is  
150 now objectified through things. Since we project our being externally, the becoming of being may be attributed  
151 to external causes because we have externalized the integral parts of our being, that is, we tend to project  
152 the subject into the object. Or another way to express this relationship is to say that the object becomes the  
153 subject projected. Our being becomes sublimated to and through objectified things, and then re-emerges as the  
154 embodiment of them. So much so we may conclude that self-awareness has intensified the more we pursue an  
155 overwhelmingly technological existence. And apart from any threat posed by technology as enumerated by its  
156 various critics, humanity's objectification is the means to its subjectification. More than an agent to action,  
157 objectification is the mirror in which we see ourselves. Even in our investigation of nature, we have eliminated  
158 the desire to study it in itself unless we can somehow connect its meaning to ourselves. esse in potentia must  
159 preexist esse in actio. When expressed practically, we may say that we strive to become the change we wish to  
160 be, since we contain within ourselves the being we wish to become. As a result, change is determined by an  
161 understanding of who we were because the success or failure that we experience reinforces the necessity of change  
162 that then projects itself into more becoming. 6 7 the world. In the true sense of the word, a subject is not a thing,  
163 but a dynamic entity of openness (or nothingness) that constantly changes by influencing and being influenced  
164 by other entities. nd reacts with everything else. And it is because we assimilate ourselves with things and their  
165 technological apparatus that we may become estranged from other people, that is, things may foster the means  
166 for selfestrangement, and ultimately, self-alienation.

## 167 4 Volume XVI Issue I Version I

168 Comparatively, Heidegger has said that the object disappears into objectlessness, but this description is incorrect  
169 since it fails to define its meaning clearly either because it ignores the importance of the subject, or sublimates  
170 it. Heidegger's interpretation also makes no mention of the becoming of being. Although his description of  
171 standingreserve ( in German) is presumed to be dominant within being, and is his equivalent for anything that  
172 is ready to be used, whether a river, a mountain range, or a person, it would be more accurate to say that  
173 standing-reserve is simply a description for potentiality, either natural or artificial.

174 in which everything comes into a presence can overwhelm humans even though humanity controls technology.  
175 We may conclude that objects do not disappear into objectlessness, but have an appearance because of  
176 "subjectness."

177 Potentiality is always evident within technology when its being becomes, even when its being is transformed  
178 through objects as a means for our being. Since the becoming of being is not posited with results, but with  
179 the engagement of them, the result would be obvious because everything sooner or later would be swept up by  
180 the great wave of change brought about by means of an advancing technology. We can always offer the defense,  
181 although questionable, that if something goes wrong with our use of technology, it could not possibly be our fault  
182 because we followed it to the letter.

183 In this discussion, we need to be emphatic when we say that humanity and technology use the same  
184 metaphysical means for change that are derivable from the becoming of being, since both of them are tied  
185 together in what seems to be an inexorable cycle of dependency. Since the becoming of being emphasizes means  
186 over ends, the pursuit of technology may be an attempt at perfection, but it is performed at our expense. As  
187 a result, we diminish our own being when promoting the being of technology that then in turn is projected  
188 as the way in which we promote our being. This cycle of dependency characterizes the world we know. We  
189 reduce our subjectivity in order to promote technology's objectivity that then is played back upon humanity  
190 to augment its subjectivity. Because this cycle is repeated endlessly, it seems to be primordial. It may have  
191 originated on a rudimentary level with our hominid predecessors, evolved to Homo sapiens, and intensified with  
192 the Neolithic, scientific, and industrial revolutions, but how hard should we push this idea? It is commonly  
193 said that technology objectifies us, but how often is it said that this objectification is the means to humanity's  
194 subjectification? Regardless of any alleged marginalization of subjectivity as discussed by Foucault, the subject  
195 must in some way remain predominant; otherwise, technology, society, and the world would not exist. Even when  
196 manipulated, we remain in control because without technology, humans would not exist. Nevertheless, the social  
197 order nestled within technology's artifice is based on a belief in human reason that is methodical, predictable,  
198 and manageable, and this belief is pursued apart from the denials of the In reference to technology, we should  
199 acknowledge the premise that we are dependent upon an entity of our own creation.

200 The notion of imperfection that we mentioned above that is derivable from being's becoming may not prohibit  
201 the introduction of unreality, since we are powerless to prevent the cultivation of illusion. Because imperfection  
202 may lead to the falsification of being, it may result in economic manipulation, or political radicalism, or mystical  
203 subjectivism, all of which deny a meaningful understanding of the world. Indeed, when looking into the digital  
204 mirror that we hold in our hand, we may fool ourselves in regard to the much larger picture of reality because  
205 we can easily get lost in a flood of pixels. Even when resident within the context of a technological artifice,  
206 imperfection, or in philosophy we may speak of the necessity of errors, may impact conflicting circumstances  
207 as described above that define human existence. Although we often settle for what we think is good for  
208 ourselves, we rarely settle for what is best. Nevertheless, we all have the ability to improve and can even  
209 attempt some semblance of perfection, but this perfection does not apply to technology because it does not and  
210 cannot mature. and technology, which use the same metaphysical means for change, are distinguishable from  
211 each other. Hutchinson, 1958, p. 24. 14. The word "subject" has been variously interpreted, from the materialist  
212 Hobbes and the idealist Rousseau who concluded that the subject is innately free and precedes civil society,  
213 and therefore contains political and cultural attributes on the one hand, to Marxists and postmodernists who  
214 inverted this conclusion on the other. Despite these conflicting views, we should agree that a subject remains  
215 indeterminate because it possesses unfulfilled and unrecognized possibilities. For our purposes, a subject may  
216 simply be equated with an individual, a self, or a person, although of these three equivalents, self may be less  
217 encumbered. Since a person becomes a self by being knowledgeable about whom he or she is, a self can be  
218 described as an object of self-knowledge. Such an understanding takes us back to Socrates and his expression  
219 "Know thyself," but the object of selfknowledge in this sense is useful only as a means for expressing the dynamic  
220 importance of a self. So we have gone full circle back to the definition of a person becoming a self by being  
221 knowledgeable about him or herself, and this knowledge is

## 222 5 Volume XVI Issue I Version I

223 <sup>1</sup>



Figure 1:

an individual occurrence, an empirical investigation would be necessary to assess if it involves change, a position discussed in Kathleen Gill, "On the Metaphysical Distinction Between Processes and Events," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 23 (1993), It is a being that acts a 365-384, esp. 379, rpt. in *Events*, eds. Roberto Casati and Achille C. Varzi, Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1996, pp. 477-496, esp. p. 491.

Nevertheless, events that initiate change may or may not relate to physical objects, which is an interpretation denied by Lawrence Brian Lombard, *Events: A metaphysical study*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 178.

3. A similar conclusion is also evident in Harry G. Frankfurt, *The importance of what we care about: Philosophical essays*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 83.

Bestand 4. Inherent within the theory of evolution is the possibility of a potential result, while lacking an intended purpose.

*Metaphysics of Evolution*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 72.

5. D.J.B. Hawkins, *Being and Becoming: An Essay Bestand Towards a Critical Metaphysic*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1954, pp. 98-99.

6. Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling, Repetition*, ed. and trans. with Introduction and Notes by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, pp. 379-380, n. 14.

7. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp. 95-96.

8. The world of objects cannot guarantee that reality will always be affirmed because it could also apply to imaginary (or ideological) conceptions that deny reality itself. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Psychology of Imagination*, trans. Bernard Frechtman, New York: Philosophical Library, 1948; rpt. Secaucus: Citadel Press, 1972, p. 164. To which we should add that the becoming of being includes both being real and

See 1

being unreal. Therefore, becoming does not exclude fantasy where anything is possible, and where self-identity and the awareness of reality are jeopardized.

9. Arnold Gehlen, *Patricia Lipscomb*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, pp. 75-84. 10. Subjectification, not accurately describes the concepts and processes that relate to subjectivity.

subjectivisation,

However,

---

224 [Wieck and Hinsdale ()] *And this interpretation is valid despite Jünger's view that humanity is lost when*  
225 *confounded by technology*, Friedrich Georg Jünger ; F D Wieck , Hinsdale . 1949. Henry Regnery Co. p.  
226 124. (The Failure of Technology: Perfection without Purpose, trans)

227 [Because an event refers to accessible in reference to the world. We should conclude that we are significant, or find significance, w  
228 *Because an event refers to accessible in reference to the world. We should conclude that we are significant,*  
229 *or find significance, when we are affiliated with some type of world, that is, (If every existent is an event,*  
230 *then event loses its meaning, since it is a term applicable to everything, everywhere, every time. it is when*  
231 *we are important to something or someone else that we acquire meaning)*

232 [Hamilton Cairns ()] 'Becoming does not mean coming into being as much as it means change, a conclusion that  
233 Plato made in his 27d3-28a2. See The Collected Dialogues of Plato, including the Letters'. *Oxford Studies in*  
234 *Ancient Philosophy, supplementary volume*, Edith Hamilton, & Huntington Cairns (ed.) (Princeton; Oxford)  
235 1961. 1988. Clarendon Press. p. . (with Introduction and Prefatory Notes)

236 [Notably et al. ()] 'In general, see Robert Nola, Rescuing Reason: A Critique of Anti-Rationalist Views of Science  
237 and Knowledge'. Marx Notably , Wittgenstein Nietzsche , Foucault . *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of*  
238 *Science* 2003. Kluwer Academic Publishers. 230.

239 [Foucault (ed.) ()] *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France*, Michel Foucault . Frédéric  
240 Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (ed.) 1981-82. 2005. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p. .

241 [Heidegger ()] *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. and with an Introduction by  
242 William Lovitt, Martin Heidegger . 1977. New York: Harper & Row. p. 19.

243 [Thomson ()] 'Understanding Technology Ontotheologically, or: The Danger and the Promise of Heidegger, an  
244 American Perspective'. Iain Thomson . *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen (ed.)  
245 (Basingstoke) 2009. Palgrave Macmillan. p. .