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The Phenomenology of The Digital Experience: The Hybrid Encountering of The World-We-Know and The Digital World

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As the digital world is taking up more and more space in our lives every day, phenomenology needs to rethink the world-we-know. It is widely claimed that we are experiencing a kind of digital transformation that is reshaping our everyday lives. At first glance, it seems that we can develop three responses to the coexistence of the world-we-know and the digital world. First, we can reject the intrusion of the digital world and claim that it is impoverishing our lifeworld. Second, we can fully accept the inevitable cyborg existences and begin to think about new forms of existence. Thirdly, we can neither fully reject nor fully accept what the digital world offers us. In this presentation, we will take the third stance and think about the hybrid encounter between the world-we-know and the digital world. Humans inevitably have a peculiar bodily perception, but at the same time digital technologies are pushing the boundaries of this experience. The new immersive museums expanding human perception is a specific example of this experience, and we will try to understand this in this presentation. While doing so, we will draw on the thoughts of the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty who, earlier in his philosophical journey, claims that the body is the zero-point of orientation and everything we perceive should be in relation to our body in Phenomenology of Perception. In his last work, The Visible and the Invisible, he deepens his thoughts and claims that the flesh is the style of being, which is helpful while thinking about hybrid existence. This presentation will specifically employ his concepts of flesh, chiasm, intertwining and virtuality in understanding the potentials of this hybrid existence.

Keywords: Phenomenology, digitalization, flesh, chiasm, virtuality.

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