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THE PARADOX OF COMMODIFICATION OF THE BODY IN A SOCIETY OF CONSUMPTION AND CYBORGIZATION

ABSTRACT. Klichowski Michał, Marciniak Mateusz, *The Paradox of Commodification of the Body in a Society of Consumption and Cyborgization* [Paradoks utowarowienia ciała w społeczeństwie konsumpcji i cyborgizacji]. *Studia Edukacyjne* nr 29, 2013, Poznań 2013, pp. 153-167. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISBN 978-83-232-2738-0. ISSN 1233-6688

In the article, we make an attempt at discussing what it means that our reality is commodified, what the consequences of this are, how we commodify our bodies and what role in this process is played by cyborgization, as well as what the relation between commodification and disembodiment is. These issues seem to be significant because when the consumptionist and neo-liberal discourse is reconstructed, the aspect of commodification of a human being through cyborgization is omitted or marginalized. Yet such a context of commodification seems to be especially important as it constitutes the idea of radical questioning of a biological body as a commodity of a high market value. Thus, it constitutes the paradox of the commodification of body, i.e. a situation when a body that is the most attractive from the consumer's viewpoint is a body that is disembodied to the maximum.

Key words: cyborgs, cyborgization, body, commodification, consumer society

Paris, 1938. Walter Lippman, Ludwik van Mises, August von Hayek, Wilhelm Ropke and Raymond Aron formulate the doctrine of neoliberalism. Most probably, they do not expect that their main statement assuming that it is necessary to have a steady, legal way of supporting market mechanisms and free competition in all the aspects of human existence, even those considered to be public domain, such as education, health, environmental protection, culture etc.¹, at the beginning of the 21st century will not only take

¹ E.J. Hyslop-Margison, A.M. Sears, *Neo-Liberalism, Globalization and Human Capital Learning. Reclaiming Education for Democratic Citizenship*, Dordrecht 2006, p. 1-24; E. Potulicka,

hold in the legislation of most societies, but also in the leading systems of thinking about human life and ways of perceiving the man. Who would have predicted that the domination of market rationality would make human relations with all the elements of reality reflected on the basis of the relation between the subject and object of consumption. Who would have thought that everything, even the man himself, would be treated as commodity, that his duty would be to make himself a commodity that is attractive in the consumer market. And finally, who would have suspected that this process of commodification would be supported by tools that change men and technology into hybrids, i.e. cyborgization?

What does it mean that our reality is commodified and what are the consequences? In what way does a man change himself into a commodity? What role in the commodification process does cyborgization play? What is the relation between commodification and disembodiment?

In the article, we attempt at answering the above questions. However, we try to discuss these issues rather than solve them. Nevertheless, this initiative seems important because when the consumptionist and neoliberal discourse is reconstructed, the aspect of commodification of men through technology is either omitted or marginalized. And such a context of commodification seems to be especially important, as it constitutes the idea of radical questioning of a biological body as a commodity of high market value. It thus constitutes the paradox of the commodification of body, i.e. a situation when the most attractive (from the consumer's point view) body is a body that is disembodied to the maximum.

In the text we consider the transformations of modern technology in the context of phenomena and mechanisms characteristic of a consumer society and its culture. Our main aim is to depict the commodification of the body that occurs within the rationality of modern technology.

Commodification of reality in a consumer society

Jean Baudrillard² calls modern reality (the era of affluence) the world of objects where the man "does not exist any longer, as he used to, in the environment of other people, but he is surrounded with OBJECTS". In this world, it is objects that are socially most crucial, and not people. The number

J. Rutkowiak, *Neoliberalne uwikłania edukacji*, Warszawa 2010, p. 39-67; C. Czech-Włodarczyk, *Neoliberalizm a edukacja obywatelska. Studium porównawcze na przykładzie publicznych szkół średnich w Polsce i Kanadzie*, Poznań 2012, p. 18-25.

² J. Baudrillard, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna. Jego mity i struktury*, Warszawa 2006, p. 7.

of objects that surround the man nowadays is much higher than in any previous society, because they are not a result of productive work of the family³. Feeling satisfaction and fulfilment of needs by commodities every day (objects produced in order to be exchanged and available in the market) is thought to be a distinctive feature that differentiates consumer society from earlier types of societies⁴. The level of combining existence with consumer goods makes many analysts underline the importance of consumption in the modern social and cultural context (for example, they write about "consumer society", "magical world of consumption", "consumer culture"). Alan Aldridge⁵ goes even as far as calling consumption the "key category" of the modern world, and Zbyszko Melosik⁶ calls it "the main narration of everyday life".

The key feature of man in the world of abundance of goods is the "consumer attitude" or "consumer mentality", i.e. using goods and services, compulsion and need to own the goods, and the ability of collecting them⁷. It refers both to goods that satisfy (real) basic needs and whims (formed to a large extent under the pressure of culture). In accordance with the rules of capitalistic economy, it is the market that decides about the production of goods on a massive scale, which leads to their excessive amount and waste. The production of more and more goods requires demand, so new (artificial, false) needs have to be created or it should be a desire (naturally impossible to fulfil) that motivates to consume expressed with a wish or whim⁸. In the context of Zygmunt Bauman's analyses, the economic cycle operates in accordance with the following scheme: "buy, enjoy, throw away". It is then not about acquiring and owning objects by consumers; it is about getting rid of them all the time and replacing them with new ones (that provide more sen-

³ R. Sassatelli, *Consumer Culture. History, Theory and Politics*, Los Angeles - London - New Delhi - Singapore 2007, p. 2-5.

⁴ A diverse offer of consumer goods is pointed to by John Brewer as the basic feature of a consumer society next to six other features: the symbolic meaning of goods; shaping of the consumer object in the areas of taste, fashion and lifestyles; domination of free time and consumption (as independent areas of life) over the area of production and services; development of the consumer category; forming of consumer culture and institutionalization of critics of consumerism (F. Bylok, *Konsumpcja w Polsce i jej przemiany w okresie transformacji*, Częstochowa 2005, p. 61-63).

⁵ A. Aldridge, *Konsumpcja*, Warszawa 2006.

⁶ Z. Melosik, *Ponowoczesny świat konsumpcji*, [in:] *Ciało i zdrowie w społeczeństwie konsumpcji*, ed. Z. Melosik, Poznań-Toruń 1999.

⁷ R. Sassatelli, *Consumer Culture*, p. 313-315, J. Baudrillard, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, p. 253-259.

⁸ J. Baudrillard, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, p. 15, 39; Z. Bauman, *Konsumowanie życia*, Kraków 2009, p. 52; A. Aldridge, *Konsumpcja*, p. 43.

sations) when they stop to bring satisfaction⁹. The market "has at its disposal" many mechanisms that entice (force) you to consume new objects and services. A rapid growth of means (places) of consumption, fashion changes, media (commercials) or experts make the multitude and variability of messages and orders on what and how should be consumed one of the most basic features of the post-modern consumer society¹⁰.

Researchers into consumption note that we acquire products together with a meaning – a claim about their usability and with some symbolism assigned ("power" to provide pleasure, make dreams come true, etc.)¹¹. If we treat goods like this, we assume that their meaning has been mediated by someone (various commercialization agendas) so that it becomes possible to "consume" them¹². Assigning meaning to objects is linked to a phenomenon of commodification, which can be defined as transforming objects, goods and services into commodity. In consequence, not only do they gain functional value, but also exchangeable value. The easiest way is to set prices, so that the market and consumers can compare them with one another¹³. As a result of commodification, the market produces new categories of commodities. In the end, apart from obvious things, we also consume "many others that are not so obvious any more (a lecture, a medical service, a day at a baseball stadium)"¹⁴, as well as space, religion or culture.

The thought about the commodification of the reality (also social reality) that surrounds us was already phrased almost half a century ago by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle*. Presenting a vision of society where people step away from one another, He noted, among others, that commodi-

⁹ Z. Bauman, *Konsumowanie życia*, p. 106; Z. Bauman, *Spółczesność w stanie oblężenia*, Warszawa 2007, p. 212-214.

¹⁰ K. Romaniszyn, *Rzecz o pracy i konsumpcji. Analiza antropologiczna*, Kraków 2007, p. 117-118; G. Ritzer, *Magiczny świat konsumpcji*, Warszawa 2009, p. 15, 324.

¹¹ J. Baudrillard, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, p. 63-64; M. Featherstone, *Koncepcje kultury konsumpcyjnej*, [in:] *Zachowanie konsumenta. Koncepcje i badania europejskie*, eds M. Lambkin, G. Foxall, F. van Raaij, B. Heilbrunn, Warszawa 2001, p. 309-310, 314.

¹² R. Sassatelli, *Consumer Culture*, p. 4.

¹³ W. Wątroba, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, Wrocław 2009, p. 133-135; R. Petel, *Wartość niczego – jak przekształcić społeczeństwo rynkowe i na nowo zbudować demokrację*, Warszawa 2010; Roberta Sassatelli points our attention to the paradox that results from commodifying objects: "we depend on commodities in our everyday lives, so we think it is necessary to decommodify objects and services if they are to have any meaning for us as human beings" (R. Sassatelli, *Consumer Culture*, p. 5).

¹⁴ G. Ritzer, *Magiczny świat konsumpcji*, p. 15, W. Wątroba, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, p. 109; B. Barber, *Skonsumowani. Jak rynek psuje dzieci, infantylizuje dorosłych i poryka obywateli*, Warszawa 2008, p. 91; E. Grzeszczyk, *Amerykańskie wzory konsumpcyjne*, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, 2004, 4, p. 138-139; G. Mathews, *Supermarket kultury. Kultura globalna a tożsamość jednostki*, Warszawa 2005, p. 7.

ties have taken complete power and total control over social life in it, and even: "Not only is the relation to the commodity visible but it is all one sees: the world one sees is its world"¹⁵. According to Debord, in the society of images, various areas of human activity become commodity (object), including, among others, work, time (history, holidays, entertainment) space, as well as people¹⁶. Among researchers nowadays, a similar vision is presented by Zygmunt Bauman, who claims that the members of the liquid modern society of consumption are overcome by a consumption syndrome¹⁷; their relations with all the elements of reality are a reflection of the same relation with inanimate objects. According to the syndrome, market logics penetrate all areas of life – everything can become a consumer commodity (or should be treated as such)¹⁸. This also refers to ourselves.

Commodification of the body and cyborgization

In line with the views of many researchers, which we have attempted to present in the first part of the text, almost the entire modern world become commodified. All the elements of reality can become a commodity, which also refers to humans. The mechanism of transforming the man into an object of consumption is discussed in detail by Bauman. According to him, the elementary feature of a consumer society is a set of social conditions where people adopt the culture of consumption¹⁹. In such a society, the consumer syndrome (together with the market logics) spreads to the space between individuals. As a result, interpersonal relations are a reflection of "the relations between consumers and objects of consumption"²⁰. Thus, they boil

¹⁵ G. Debord, *Spoleczeństwo spektaklu*, Gdańsk 1998, p. 23.

¹⁶ Ibidem, the author uses expressions such as "work-commodity" (p. 23-25); "time-commodity" (p. 80); and he also writes about people becoming objects due to the fetishization of commodities (p. 35).

¹⁷ Z. Bauman, *Płynne życie*, Kraków 2007, p. 126-182; Z. Bauman, *Konsumenci w społeczeństwie konsumentów*, Łódź 2007.

¹⁸ More about Bauman's concept of the consumer syndrome and its verification in: M. Marciniak, *Orientacje konsumpcyjne młodzieży akademickiej. Perspektywa Baumanowska*, Kraków 2011. Publication based on a PhD dissertation (supervised by Maria Dudzikowa), carried out on the basis of the results of a panel survey among 2005 high school graduates, students at AMU (*Doświadczenia szkolne pierwszego rocznika reformy edukacji*, eds M. Dudzikowa, R. Wawrzyniak-Beszterda, Kraków 2010; M. Dudzikowa et al., *Kapitał społeczny w szkołach różnego szczebla. Diagnoza i uwarunkowania*, Kraków 2011; M. Dudzikowa et al., *Oblicza kapitału społecznego uniwersytetu. Diagnoza – interpretacje – konteksty*, Kraków 2013).

¹⁹ Z. Bauman, *Konsumowanie życia*, p. 61.

²⁰ Z. Bauman, *Szanse etyki w zglobalizowanym świecie*, Kraków 2007, p. 147.

down to the above-mentioned scheme of "buy, enjoy, throw away". Bauman discusses the relations between a consumer and another man (as an object of consumption) on many occasions, most often referring himself to the relations with the nearest and dearest²¹. In the liquid modernity era, the commodification of man is thus characteristic of the consumer society: "upgrading the status of consumers to the level of the marketable commodities"²². They are an object of desire for other consumers and are assessed based on the possibility of providing satisfaction and increasing the price in the consumer market.

In the light of Bauman's analyses, each member of a consumer society is part of the market, so a condition for accessing consumptionist life is an individual duty to "make oneself a market commodity"²³. It is the driving force behind the activity of a consumer who has to stand out from a plethora of identical objects in some way. The consumer market offers the individual all "tools and instruments" for "self-production", even before the individual is to use them. By choosing these tools, consumers have to create themselves to prove their usefulness, a functional value. An ideal commodity is one that attracts the attention of as many potential "buyers" as possible – it stands out from many identical objects. In order to achieve such an ideal (to commodify oneself) adequate shaping of one's body is used above all²⁴.

In the consumer society (according to Bauman), the body is thought of as a transmitter of pleasurable sensations and simultaneously as the final criterion of usefulness and appeal for other consumers²⁵. The consumer becomes obsessed with caring about it. However, this care is carried out rationally justified by the assumption that achieving the top level of physical fitness or beauty is an aim that is impossible to reach²⁶. Each body can be yet fitter, fashion trends (that determine what and how should be consumed) and

²¹ Ibidem, p. 39-48; Z. Bauman, *Życie na przemiał*, Kraków 2004, p. 190-204.

²² Z. Bauman, *Konsumowanie życia*, p. 65; Z. Bauman, *Szanse etyki*, p. 140.

²³ Z. Bauman, *Szanse etyki*, p. 140-150, Z. Bauman, *Płynne życie*, p. 20; Z. Bauman, *Tożsamość: Rozmowy z Benedetto Vecchim*, Gdańsk 2005, p. 85.

²⁴ In the further analysis of the phenomenon of commodification, we entirely omit the issue of the relation between the human body and identity, and we realise that this is a simplification. Analyses that refer to the human body are significant in modern social sciences, which is visible among others due to the emergence of subdisciplines of science such as anthropology and body sociology. As Bauman notices (*Ciało i przemoc w obliczu ponowoczesności*, Toruń 1995, p. 70), human body is nowadays treated not only as a product of biology, but also as a social product – exposed to the influence of the society that leaves its trace on it. The strength of this effect (e.g. assigning meanings) is discussed by the classic studies by Pierre Bourdieu or Michel Foucault, among others.

²⁵ Z. Bauman, *Spółczesność w stanie obłąkania*, p. 143.

²⁶ Z. Bauman, *Płynne życie*, p. 146; Z. Bauman, *Płynna nowoczesność*, p. 103, 119-121.

beauty ideals change quickly. Thus, a consumer's main concern becomes struggling with body imperfections²⁷. This aim can be carried out using the substances available in the market – various goods (e.g. cosmetics) and specialist services (e.g. make-up artists') that make it possible to shape one's body to be a desirable commodity. The strategies of body commodification require interfering with its integrity to different extents; they are also different cost-wise – because of the amount of time and effort necessary to introduce them, and the price. The least radical ones include those that do not require a permanent change, e.g. clothes, accessories (e.g. choosing garments that are in fashion, using cosmetics, non-permanent dyes etc.). The extreme end will include actions that require permanent changes to the body, e.g. tattoos or piercing. Strategies that require a lot of time and effort (such as physical exercise, diet, etc.) will be less desirable among consumers than the ones that provide immediate results. One of the best examples of "commodifying" oneself is the "consumption of medical services" that allows to create oneself exactly as one desires through a surgery²⁸.

It seems, however, that in the recent years the process of body commodification starts to apply a different rationality. Modern technology offers a vision of life where it will be possible not only to achieve the top level of beauty and fitness, but even exceeding it – achieving a maximized level that exceeds human conception of the body ideal. In this rationality, commodification does not happen on the level of fighting with body imperfections, but fighting the body itself. In the perspective of the technological offer, even the most perfect biological body is not the most attractive in market terms. Transbiological body, or partly human, partly technological body, i.e. a cyborg's body can soon turn out to be the most desirable on the "consumer market", because it is maximally effective (and perhaps also beautiful?).

The idea of a transbiological body originated in the transhumanistic philosophy. Transhumanism assumes that human biology has to be gradually countered so that in the future it is possible to free the man fully from being a slave to his ineffective body²⁹. Transhumanism calls for replacing ineffective organs with artificial, synthetic elements or extending them through adequate superstructures of technology, and so cyborgizing the man³⁰. Cyborgization is linked to activity such as: substituting biological limbs with

²⁷ Z. Bauman, *Phynna nowoczesność*, p. 103, 119-121, 155.

²⁸ Z. Bauman, C. Rovirosa-Madrado, *Żyjąc w czasie pożyczonym. Rozmowy z Citlali Rovirosa-Madrado*, Kraków 2010, p. 249-251.

²⁹ A. Bergsma, *Transhumanism and the Wisdom of Old Genes is Neurotechnology as Source of Future Happiness?* *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 2000, 1, 3, p. 403-404.

³⁰ M. Klichowski, M. Przybyła, *Cyborgizacja edukacji – próba konceptualizacji*, *Studia Edukacyjne*, 2013, 24, p. 144-147.

bionic replacements of considerably greater strength and resistance³¹; encasing limbs with skeletons that increase their effectiveness³²; inserting implants that make the man capable of directly receiving data from the Internet or directly communicating with the computer³³; inserting various devices, including nanorobots, in the body, to increase psychophysical effectiveness³⁴. These ideas already are (or will be soon) possible to implement – although expensive and in most cases in an experimental chase, and not for common use. Viewing them from the perspective of market logics of a consumer society, it can be noticed that they are (or will be soon) new tools for creating competitive edge and attractiveness for consumer. It is also worth mentioning that these forms of cyborgization are but a prelude. Transhumanists have been working on creating a technology that will make it possible to upload a mind to a robot that satisfies all the market standards (so-called *mind uploading*)³⁵, or, in other words, a technology that serves to eliminate the biological body and replace it with the technological body. Thus, the transbiological body is to be finally transformed into a perfect postbiological body.

The concept of postbiology was created by Raymond Kurzweil. This thinker assumes that the mind and body are completely independent. According to him, the body (its biological processes) is only necessary for the mind until the so-called technological singularity³⁶ moment comes; it is

³¹ D.K. Cullen, D.H. Smith, *Bioniczne łączy*, Scientific American, 2013, 2, p. 48-53.

³² J. Vlahos, *First Steps of a Cyborg*, Popular Science, 2011, 279, p. 56-69, 88-89.

³³ A. Saniotis, *Future Brains. An Exploration of Human Evolution in the 21 st Century and Beyond*, World Future Review, 2009, 3, p. 5-11; S. Mushiaki, *Neuroscience and nanotechnologies in Japan – beyond the hope and hype of converging technologies*, International Journal of Bioethics, 2011, 22, p. 91-98; E. Palese, *Robots and cyborgs: to be or to have a body? Poiesis and Praxis*, 2012, 8, p. 191-196; K.R. Fleischmann, *Sociotechnical Interaction and Cyborg-Cyborg. Interaction: Transforming the Scale and Convergence of HCI*, The Information Society, 2009, 25, p. 227-235.

³⁴ R. Kurzweil, *How to Make a Mind*, Futurist, 2013, 47, 2, p. 14-17.

³⁵ C. Toumey, *Atom and Eve*, Nature Nanotechnology, 2008, 3, 1, p. 2; D. Gelles, *Immortality 2.0*, Futurist, 2009, 43, 1, p. 35.

³⁶ In this context, the notion of singularity was first used in 1993 by an IT specialist, mathematician and science-fiction writer, Vernor S. Vinge, during a conference organised by NASA. He claimed that in 30 years technological possibilities would exist for the creation of superhuman intelligence. He also stated: "Shortly after, the human era will be ended". He called "singularity" the moment when superhuman intelligence will be created and the human world will start to end. The singularity term was inspired by mathematicians and physicists, A. Farman, *Re-Enchantment Cosmologies: Mastery and Obsolescence in an Intelligent Universe*, Anthropological Quarterly, 2012, 85, 4, p. 1073. In mathematics, singularity stands for a value that exceeds all boundaries, i.e. infinity. In physics, singularity is a theoretical point located inside the black hole. In this point, gravity becomes infinite, S.K. Sen, *Numerical computation in thorny regions*, Nonlinear Studies, 2011, 18, 4, p. 685-715. When talking about changes in technology, V.S. Vinge did not think about unfinished issues, but about a point where technology will be

a moment when technology will be developing so fast that it will overtake human biology³⁷. Technological singularity will fully liberate the mind from biology, or in other words will eliminate the body³⁸. As Kurzweil claims, the postbiological mind will be "installed" in some robots, just like we install software in our computers now³⁹. In his extrapolations, Kurzweil describes that by a good stimulation of the processes of cyborgization, humanity could bring about technological singularity as early as in 2045⁴⁰. According to him, cyborgization is nothing else but a transition from biological evolution to techno-evolution, i.e. to a stage that is fully controlled with people's techno-products⁴¹. Both the biological evolution and the techno-evolution are naturally intertwined processes within one chain of evolutionary transformations. Kurzweil claims that man evolution can be divided into six periods, out of which three are biological, and three others – technical, and whose boundaries are marked with a change of the carrier of information:

1. Era of physics and chemistry: creation of atoms (physics), and then their relatively solid structures (chemistry) – information about atoms.
2. Era of biology and DNA: creation of life – information in DNA.
3. Era of the brain: creation of mechanisms for detecting, processing and storing information – information in neural patterns.
4. Era of technology: creation of technology – information in the patterns of hardware and software.
5. Era of combining technology and intelligence: creation of methods for techno-reinforcement of intelligence and arrival of technological singularity – information in neurotechnical hybrids.
6. Era of the universe: spreading of neurotechnical hybrids beyond the Earth – era of technological post-singularity⁴².

Kurzweil states that in the fifth era of human evolution technological singularity shall arrive, which will bring about radical transformations in the functioning of the man and consequently the arrival of the sixth and last era

developing so fast that it will overtake human biology. Because of this it was assumed that such singularity should be called *technological singularity*, G. Dvorsky, *Better Living through Transhumanism*, Journal of Evolution and Technology, 2008, 19, 1, p. 2.

³⁷ G. Dvorsky, *Better Living*, p. 2.

³⁸ R.M. Geraci, *The Popular Appeal of Apocalyptic AI*, Journal of Religion and Science, 2010, 45, 4, p. 1006.

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 1005.

⁴⁰ R. Latham, *From Outer to Inner Space: New Wave Science Fiction and the Singularity*, Science Fiction Studies, 2012, 39, 1, p. 31.

⁴¹ R. Kurzweil, *Nadchodzi osobliwość: kiedy człowiek przekroczy granice biologii*, Warszawa 2013, p. 379.

⁴² F. Baumann, *Humanism and Transhumanism*, Journal of Technology and Society, 2010, 29, p. 1077-1078.

of human progress (era of technological post-singularity)⁴³. He underlines that technological singularity will change the world unlike anything ever before. Indeed, it will turn human evolution upside down, offering cyborgs an absolutely incredible construction of being – postbiological life⁴⁴. However, underlined by Kurzweil many times, the direction of these extreme transformations should not be worrying, because they are fully controlled; they are a result of conscious construction of cyborgization tools, a process of intentional creation of the cyborg, are in accordance with the laws of nature and market⁴⁵.

Thus, it seems that the new contexts of commodifying the body are paradoxically accompanied by the process of disembodiment. The man that submits himself to cyborgization starts to act towards liberating himself from the pressure of biology, which results in gradual liberation from the body. From the perspective of technology, the commodification of the body means the process of systematic elimination of the biological body. It can be assumed that the paradox of commodifying the body in the society of consumption and cyborgization is based on the fact that the most attractive body-commodity in the market is one with the "no body" label.

Conclusions

In the article, we have presented a thesis that in the society of consumption, as a result of using modern technology that makes the man a cyborg, the clue of the process of commodification of the human body changes gradually. The consumer gains new tools that allow them to increase their value in the consumer "interpersonal" market; in other words, to become a commodity that others crave. However, these tools i.e. technologies that make the man a cyborg raise the attractiveness of the body in a totally paradoxical way. Indeed, the body is made more and more attractive through a gradual elimination of its flaws that arise from biological imperfections. As a consequence, cyborgization tools are directed at combating human biology, disembodiment of the man, thus making the body more and more attractive through planned annihilation. Biological body is thus transformed into a transbiological body, or a body that fights biology, which will be formatted to a postbiological state of a "body without the body" in the future.

⁴³ Ibidem.

⁴⁴ J. Blodgett, *Making the Difference: Finding Wise Choices at the Cusp of a Singularity*, World Future Review, 2012, 4, 2, p. 6.

⁴⁵ R. Kurzweil, *Nadchodzi osobliwość*, p. 368.

The title paradox of commodifying the body in the society of consumption and cyborgization refers to a state where market orientation towards making the body more attractive leads to the concept of "body disembodiment". In other words, the paradox of body commodification is a situation when by commodifying oneself, the consumer leads their own body to a form which is so ideal that it is disembodied.

Additionally, in compliance with market laws, technologies that commodify the man become new consumptionist objects/services. They can be purchased from the available offer that will be gradually expanded. In the consumer society, the existence of many objects does not mean diversity. Consumption is still popularized; we are offered different (constantly modernized) versions of the same products⁴⁶. Only the most affluent consumers have access to specialised goods, others consume those produced on a massive scale. Despite the abundance of goods, access to them is thus a function of social inequality⁴⁷. New rare products are created and access to them is limited. Cyborgization tools are among them, too⁴⁸.

In their classic concepts, T. Veblen and P. Bourdieu underline the role of consumption in the creation of social reality. According to their deliberations, apart from functional value all objects also have a distinctive value, and the structure of consumption is set by class status that depends on material and employment conditions. More contemporary researchers into culture still underline that consumption makes it possible to classify individuals – its patterns are ascribed to social categories⁴⁹. However, in these concepts consumption is not a result of belonging to a social class, but it is the consumption (and not social classes) that determines the lifestyle⁵⁰. In accordance with J. Baudrillard's observation, "we always operate and manipulate with objects as differentiating signs" that include (exclude) us in (from) our group of reference⁵¹. Cyborgization tools have this sign value. As a result, they make it possible to preserve social inequalities – access to cyborgization tools establishes social domination and the lack of access – social

⁴⁶ F. van Raaij, *Konsumpcja postmodernistyczna*, [in:] *Zachowanie konsumenta. Koncepcje i badania europejskie*, eds M. Lambkin, G. Foxall, F. van Raaij, B. Heilbrunn, Warszawa 2001, p. 309-310, 334, K. Romaniszyn, *Rzecz o pracy i konsumpcji. Analiza antropologiczna*, Kraków 2007, p. 122.

⁴⁷ J. Baudrillard, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, p. 39, 54-55.

⁴⁸ J. Wilson, *Transhumanism and Moral Equality*, *Bioethics*, 2007, 21, 8, p. 419-425; M.J. McNamee, S.D. Edwards, *Transhumanism, medical technology and slippery slopes*, *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2006, 32, 9, p. 514-515.

⁴⁹ M. Featherstone, *Koncepcje kultury konsumenckiej* [in:] *Zachowanie konsumenta*, p. 309-310.

⁵⁰ A. Aldridge, *Konsumpcja*, p. 113.

⁵¹ J. Baudrillard, *Spółczesność konsumpcyjna*, p. 153.

exclusion⁵². Inequalities in the access to cyborgization ossify the structure of societies nowadays, and create a severe form of exclusion and an effective form of social promotion⁵³. In a sense, cyborgization revives the conflict between middle classes and the proletariat⁵⁴. The Marxist economic determinism, however, is nowadays transformed into technical determinism, and the society becomes polarized into conflicted groups, one of which is called digitariat and has access to the latest technological goods, and others are called technological proletariat and are deprived of this access⁵⁵. In this way, a new social hierarchy is formed that is dominated by artificially selected elites of cyborgized people, the caste of cyborgs⁵⁶. Such a hierarchy is based on the idea of maximum differentiation directed at permanently increasing the chasm between the top and bottom of the social cross section⁵⁷. Cyborgization will thus establish the appearance of technological ghettos and technological subhumans (that are in fact common people), as well as technological masters and technological overhuman (cyborgs). Cyborgization (the fact of subduing to it) can turn out to be not only the reason for the creation or consolidation of social inequalities, but a factor that determines a precise position in the society that aims at class dualism. Cyborgization and its effect, i.e. being a cyborg, will thus be a condition for belonging to the caste of masters, whereas being a non-cyborg will force one to exist in the caste of underpeople.

To sum up, it can be stated that when analysing the dynamics of the world of consumption, the context of the commodification of the body through technology cannot be omitted. While researching consumer reality one has to pay attention to the process of cyborgization of the man. As we have tried to show it in this text, it is thus not only important but also intriguing both within the theoretical context and from the perspective of social practice.

⁵² T. Drabowicz, *Nierówności cyfrowe – nowy wymiar zróżnicowania społecznego*, [in:] *Fenomen nierówności społecznych. Nierówności społeczne w refleksji humanistycznej*, ed. J. Klebaniuk, Warszawa 2007, p. 238-243.

⁵³ J. Jastrzębski, *Prawo do informacji a dostęp do mediów*, [in:] *Fenomen nierówności społecznych*, p. 233.

⁵⁴ S. Freeman, *Capitalism in The Classical and High Liberal Traditions*, *Social Philosophy and Policy*, 2011, 28, 2, p. 22-23.

⁵⁵ M. Klichowski, *Między linearnością a klikaniem. O społecznych konstrukcjach podejść do uczenia się*, Kraków 2012, p. 90.

⁵⁶ D. Porter, *Darwinian Disease Archaeology: Genomic Variants and the Eugenic Debate*, *History of Science*, 2012, 50, 4, p. 432.

⁵⁷ F. Fukuyama, *Koniec człowieka. Konsekwencje rewolucji biotechnologicznej*, Kraków 2005, p. 207.

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