

## Introduction: Biographical and Philosophical Considerations

As *Flusser Studies* 15 and 16, this issue contains a chapter from an English translation that is going to be published this fall by the editor Univocal in Minneapolis. We thank Univocal for the permission to publish chapter 7 of *The History of the Devil*. The excerpt is accompanied by a commentary of the translator. *Flusser Studies* 18 will feature a chapter from *On Doubt*.

In August 1991, Michael Bielicky recorded a series of intimate conversations with Vilém Flusser in Robion that were published in 1994 as *Vilém Flussers Fluß. Eine Dokumentation*. These video recordings are among the last made with Flusser before he died in a car accident at the German-Czech border. Bielicky videotaped formal interviews and filmed Flusser giving an anthropological sightseeing tour of the area around his home as well as a chess game. Flusser talked about some of the central topics of his work: technical images, telematic society, writing and historical consciousness the meaning of photography, film and computer-generated images. Steffi Winkler and Baruch Gottlieb have finally made these important interviews available to a broader audience. Winkler has transcribed and annotated the original German text and Gottlieb has translated it into English and commented some of its aspects. Of particular interest is Flusser's English narration of the history of mankind as a television drama. Flusser's essay *Menschheitsgeschichte als Fernbedarma*, a short unpublished video extract and a series of 17 video-stills highlighting Flusser's gestural way of expression complete the first section.

The second section consists of four essays written by Brazilian scholars. Paulo Valadares' contribution focuses on Romy Fink (1912-1972), one of the dialogical partners from Flusser's autobiography *Bodenlos*. Fink was a lawyer, an art dealer and English mystic. Flusser took his life to represent the moral and existential values of Judaism. Clemens van Loyen's *The positivity of negation: Flusser's exile in Brazil* aims at a historiographic and philosophic contextualization of Vilém Flusser's exile in Brazil during the turbulent period of the 1960s. The text focuses on Flusser's network discussing the intellectual constellations of his philosophical thoughts by examining his earlier writings, such as the *History of the Devil*, the *Phenomenology of the Brazilian*, his essays published in newspapers and his personal correspondence. Thiago Reis' *Is it possible to "back" existence?* is an attempt to apply some Flusserian concepts to an investigation of the figure of the hacker as a someone that will replace the traditional revolutionary (as a historical agent). Hacking must be understood as a *modus vivendi*, a model of a daily practice that can help to avoid being fully subsumed by the dynamics of

the new context of post-historical relations. In *A dialogue between Flusser and Heidegger: the being in the universe of technical images*, finally, Gabriela Freitas starts out from Flusser's notion of technical image proposing a philosophical dialog between Heidegger and Flusser about 'being' in the universe of technical images.

Rainer Guldin (Editor-in-Chief), Lugano (Switzerland), May 2014