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TECHNOLOGY, REASON AND POLITICS:

AN ESSAY

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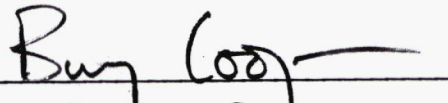
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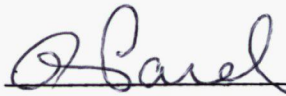
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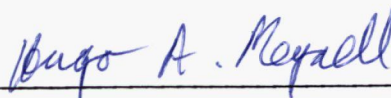
The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Technology, Reason and Politics: an Essay," submitted by Tony Peacock in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with technology and its impact on modern political thought. Its objectives are (1) to show that technology is the environment within which modern men live and (2) to investigate what this novum in human affairs means to modern human being.

The thesis is comprised of three main chapters with a fourth providing a conclusion.

The first chapter examines Jacques Ellul's documentation of the extent of the penetration of technology throughout the modern human condition, primarily the "practical" or sociological implications this penetration has had. The objectives in this first chapter are to illustrate (1) that technology is the environment within which modern men live and (2) what this infiltration has meant primarily to modern human activity. The chapter ends questioning the desirability of technology, is it essentially good or evil?

Chapter Two attempts to resolve this question by examining the dialogue between Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève concerning the specific issue of "tyranny and wisdom." The objective in this chapter is to investigate two traditional interpretations, one ancient, one modern, of what the penetration of technology

throughout the modern human condition has meant primarily to "theory" or to philosophy. Examining the relationship between technology and wisdom, Strauss and Kojève not only indicate a provisional answer to Ellul's penultimate question concerning the desirability of technology. They also exhaust the traditional responses available to this question. Yet the question, in the final analysis, remains unsolved because we do not have the foresight to determine whether technology will ultimately prove to be good or evil. The conclusion to Chapter Two is therefore an impasse.

Chapter Three "completes" the thesis in clarifying this impasse. Aspects of the thinking of Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Hans Jonas are examined in this chapter. The intention here is to establish both the theoretical and practical consequences of the indeterminate future promised by technology. Heidegger and Gadamer address the theoretical or philosophical issues the impasse entails, answering the questions left unsolved primarily by Strauss and Kojève in Chapter Two. Jonas addresses the practical or ethical issues the impasse entails, answering the questions left unsolved primarily by Ellul in Chapter One.

Chapter Four provides a conclusion to the thesis, bringing together the implications the thesis as a whole bears for political theory.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- HD Hans-Georg Gadamer. Hegel's Dialectic. Translated by Christopher P. Smith. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.
- I Hans Jonas. The Imperative of Responsibility: in Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age. Translated by Hans Jonas and David Herr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.
- IH Alexandre Kojève. Introduction to the Reading of Hegel. Translated by James H. Nichols, Jr.. Ed. by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1969.
- K Alexandre Kojève. "Tyranny and Wisdom." In On Tyranny, 143-88. By Leo Strauss. New York: Cornell University Press, 1968.
- N Martin Heidegger. Nietzsche, vol. 4, Nihilism. Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi. Edited by David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper & Row, 1982.
- QT Martin Heidegger. The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. Translated with an introduction by William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row, 1977.
- S Leo Strauss. "Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero." In On Tyranny, 189-226. By Leo Strauss. New York: Cornell University Press, 1968.
- T Jacques Ellul. The Technological System. Translated by Joachim Neugroschel. New York: Continuum, 1980.
- TS Jacques Ellul. The Technological Society. Translated by John Wilkinson. Introduction by Robert K. Merton. New York: Vintage Books, 1964.

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Introduction

And the Humour prevailed so strongly among the People, that there is not a Town of any Consequence in the Kingdom without such an Academy. In these Colleges, the Professors contrive new Rules and Methods of Agriculture and Building, and new Instruments and Tools for all Trades and Manufactures, whereby, as they undertake, one Man shall do the Work of Ten, a Palace may be built in a Week, of Materials so durable as to last for ever without repairing. All the Fruits of the Earth shall come to Maturity at whatever Season we think fit to chuse, and increase an Hundred Fold more than they do at present; with innumerable other happy Proposals. The only Inconvenience is, that none of these Projects are yet brought to Perfection; and in the mean time, the whole Country lies miserably waste, the Houses in Ruins, and the People without Food or Cloaths. By all of which, instead of being discouraged, they are Fifty Times more violently bent upon prosecuting their Schemes, driven equally on by Hope and Despair.

Jonathan Swift

Gulliver's Travels

In all the countries in Europe, and in America, too, there now is something that abuses this name: a very narrow, imprisoned, chained type of spirits who want just about the opposite of what accords with our intentions and instincts --not to speak of the fact that regarding the new philosophers who are coming up they must assuredly be closed windows and bolted doors. They belong, briefly and sadly, among the levelers --these falsely so-called "free spirits" --being eloquently and prolifically scribbling slaves of the democratic taste and its "modern ideas"; they are all human beings without solitude, without their own solitude, clumsy good fellows whom one should not deny either courage or respectable decency --only they are unfree and ridiculously superficial, above all in their basic inclination to find in the forms of the old society as it has existed so far just about the cause of all human misery and failure --which is a way of standing truth happily upon her head! What they would strive for with all their powers is the universal green-pasture happiness of the herd, with security, lack of danger, comfort, and an easier life for everyone; the two songs and doctrines which they repeat most often are "equality of rights" and "sympathy for all that suffers" --and suffering itself they take for something that must be abolished.

Friedrich Nietzsche

Beyond Good and Evil

About two hundred years ago, Hegel wrote a book in which, through a phenomenological dialectic, he arrived at a philosophy of the whole concerning the human condition. Indeed, what was interesting about Hegel's book was that it described the modern condition as a definitively human condition. The germ had been created, Hegel wrote, from which a universal and homogeneous state would eventually arise through the creative activities of human freedom. Human freedom would create the world. Man would set the standard. No longer would the human race be plagued by the exigencies and accidents of nature. Rather, nature would be controlled, human "nature" included. The means had been realized in principle. Henceforth it was just a matter of carrying them out. Hegel's Phenomenology had realized in theory what was to become the practical and political truth of the twentieth century.

About thirty years ago, Jacques Ellul wrote a book on modern technology. Ellul's book was philosophical, in Hegel's sense, in that it was a book about the whole. It dialectically illustrated how technology had become universal in the world. Ellul's book, as Robert K. Merton said by way of introducing the translation to North America, was the contemporary complement to Hegel's Phenomenology. Proving the truth of its own assumptions it proved the truth of Hegel's. What Hegel said about human freedom, Ellul said about technology. Both had become universal in the world because both were the product of the other;

developing dialectically, one fueled the development of the other. To say this today is a platitude.

To see technology as the avenue for the growth of human freedom is to understand freedom as the pursuit of the conquest of nature. Freedom will be fully realized when nature has been completely conquered and science is the truth of the world. A world devoted to freedom is a world devoted to technology and the study of the intricacies of nature with a view to controlling those intricacies. When the vision is perfected, not only is external nature to be controlled, human "nature" too is also to be controlled. Disciplines such as psychology, sociology and economics develop to study the patterns of human behavior in order that these patterns may be manipulated to fit more easily into the artificial environment man creates through his freedom. The control of human "nature" reaches its experimental extreme in the concentration camps of the totalitarian regimes. When technology and the control of nature become totalitarian, we wonder about the wisdom of the primordial vision. The likes of Swift and Nietzsche realized this in an earlier day. To wonder about the wisdom of the primordial vision requires, first, to understand what the vision is and the meaning of the events that led up to and continue to propel it toward an ineffable beyond. This thesis presents an attempt at understanding what that vision is and the meaning of modern events.

As a thematic presentation on the subject of technology and its impact on modern political thought, this thesis is not an examination of any particular author. Rather, it presents a phenomenology of technology. Examining a number of authors, it describes technology as the universal empirical fact that shapes our world, what this fact has meant to traditional political theory, and, finally, what this fact has meant to modern or post-nihilist political theory, theory that attempts to think beyond the traditional, normative language of good and evil or that eschews the concept of ordering events according to some preordained universal logic, an eternal order or historical "law."

Throughout the thesis, the argument presented attempts to link technology to the crisis of our time. That crisis is best evidenced in the vulgar and social fact that our century is the only century where some 100 million human beings have been killed by other human beings. A body count of such high order, in previous centuries, was attributable only to natural or biological catastrophe, not to man. In a century that prides itself on the emancipation of man from such traditional taboos as God and "nature," where to be modern is to realize one's individual autonomy and independence from these traditional restraints, where freedom abounds because we are unrestrained and thus at liberty to create whatever meanings we please through the modes of our technology and its offspring of ideologies, we are

placed in the awkward position of having to explain away the narcissistic, nihilistic, bestial, hollow, tyrannical characteristics of modern regimes. To explain modern events in a way that does not leave us vulnerable to the embarrassment of decadence requires thinking about these events in a way that does not forfeit their meaning by subsuming them under the prejudices of modern political science. Modern political science asserts that knowledge of the whole eludes us because there is no teleology to nature. We can possess only partial knowledge of the parts because our enlightenment has shown that knowledge of the whole is impossible. To avoid the irresolvable dualism between the knowledge of the whole we, as philosophers, seek and the always unsatisfactory and incomplete knowledge of the parts science at most grants, we should then assume the viewpoint of the citizen, as distinguished from the viewpoint of the scientific observer. To do otherwise renders us susceptible to repeating the experience of Gulliver with the nurse in Brobdingnag where Gulliver became entangled in the kind of research projects by which he was amazed in Laputa.(1)

The fatuous glorification of the achievements of science is synonymous with the loss of all standards by which the success or failure, good or evil, of those achievements can be established. The objective in what follows is to attempt to evaluate these

(1) Leo Strauss, What is Political Philosophy (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), 25, 39.

achievements in a context that does not result in the self-righteous exaltation of our civilization independently of any concern for what these achievements might mean within an ontological and metaphysical paradigm that is not ours. Such an objective might seem like madness in a dirempted world where reason is identified with the cold and monological world of systematic science. In this world where what Heidegger called onto-poeticism and "subjectivized" thought are in principle, if not in fact, equivalent to the brutalized and divided experiences of madness, perhaps thought can only begin in the silent world of these stammered, imperfect words, existing without fixed syntax.(2) Perhaps it is only in the estranged world of madness that an understanding of the whole of modern human experience can today take hold. When the current rules of interpretation do not satisfy our questioning unrest, the rules should be broken. We must step outside our world. Such is the perspective from which this thesis begins and ends.

It should also be emphasized that as we will be concerned with enucleating a particular theme, our concern will not be with exegetical precision of the authors examined. Interpretation is always more or less an act of distortion. This thesis is no exception. Our intent forthwith is to render an interpretation of a number of authors in a way that links their thought to the

(2) Cf., Michel Foucault, Madness and Civilization, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), x.

topic of investigation but that, in the process, may twist and distort the content of the original texts in order that they speak to the theme presented. Such an experiment may offend good taste and good erudition and may show a lack of respect for the thinkers examined. However the argument presented is concerned not with the "history of ideas" as contained in the great texts but rather with developing an idea that explains that history and its accompanying decadence. For this reason it has been necessary at times to quote in extenso from the texts we consider.

The study of the history of ideas cannot be a surrogate for thinking about the experiences of our day, explaining them in terms that satisfy our inquiry. Such satisfaction comes only when we are willing to think about these experiences in a language that is our own. Such a language will obviously derive from the experiences that are common to all men, but it will not be the language of those experiences. This thesis presents an attempt at comprehending these experiences through a language that distorts them in the hope of avoiding the language they have created. It is predicated, however, on the fact of technology and so it is with Ellul's phenomenology of technology that we will begin.

CHAPTER ONE

ELLUL AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Technology, said Ellul, is universal in the world. The novelty of Ellul's discourse rests in the extent of his documentation of this universality. Critical of most observers of the modern human condition, Ellul invites us, in beginning, to consider generic terms commonly used to define the modern age: it is here, in language, he suggests, that the ephemeral character of modern social and political thought is ultimately reflected.

Consider, for example, the term "industrial society." It implies the primacy of machine operated production, a division of labor, and linear material growth. Yet, Ellul maintains, "we are no longer a society dominated by the imperative of production ... we are ruled by the transmission, circulation, reception, and integration of multiple information.... The parts are not materially linked" (TS, 92-93). Flexible, decentralized technology, characterized by geometric growth in all areas of the technological system, labour standardized to the point allowing jobholders to switch from one occupation to another with minimal adjustment, and production no longer central, modern society, Ellul contends, cannot be "industrial."

"Post-industrial" is no improvement. It simply means we have advanced beyond the industrial society.

"Advanced capitalist society" and "consumer society" are, similarly, inadequate. If we have advanced beyond capitalism we have advanced, Ellul says, to something distinct from it altogether, something in which capital and the profit motive hold status subordinate to technological growth and the waste of money such growth requires through investment and research into more efficient ways of obtaining objectives. Technological growth requires ambivalence towards capital or at least a subordination of it to efficient operation, the necessary and sufficient condition for the survival of any private conglomerate or governing agency in our day. "Technological progress ... entails concentration [of capital]. But this concentration represents real advantages only in the technical domain." It "does not result in growth of profits" (TS, 155). As for the necessity of organization and planning, according to Ellul, there could be nothing further from the spirit of free enterprise (TS, 200). The term "consumer society" too lacks precision: society is driven as much by work and production as it is by consumption. "What is it," Ellul asks, "that demands greater consumption? Mass production, which is possible only because of technology. What are we given to consume? Technological objects, because they are the things that are produced most. Hence the consumer society, in all its aspects,

is primarily characterized by various technologies" (T, 8). And to this it can be added, just as the consumer society has its foundation in the various technologies that allow us to consume, so the "affluent society" has its foundation in the various technologies and technological products that make us affluent.

Alvin Toffler, perhaps the most widely read author on the topic of modern technology, provides an example of a theorist who, on Ellul's view, errs in his observations about modern society. Ellul agrees with Toffler's contention: "To survive, to avert ... future shock, the individual must become infinitely more adaptable and capable than ever before. He must search out totally new ways to anchor himself." (3) Ellul agrees, the "key to the new human techniques is ... adaptation" (TS, 256).

However, as Toffler writes on the first page of his Future Shock, his book deals "with common, everyday matters --the products we buy and discard, the places we leave behind, the corporations we inhabit, the people who pass at an ever faster clip through our lives.... What joins these," he says, "is the roaring current of change, a current so powerful that it overturns institutions, shifts our values and shrivels our roots." We must examine the process of change "by which the future invades our lives," look at it closely, "not merely from the grand perspectives of history, but also from the vantage

(3) Alvin Toffler, Future Shock (London: Pan Books, 1970), 41.

point of the living, breathing individuals who experience it." (4) Yet if we examine modern society, as Toffler suggests, it is not what defines modern experience but what causes modern experience that must ultimately command our attention. It is not change that "joins common everyday matters," but the cause of change, the generator of the "current so powerful it overturns institutions, shifts our values and shrivels our roots."

According to Ellul, this generative factor is technology. In fact the very idea of change "defining" our experience is, for Ellul, a misnomer. "We can say that once the technological system becomes the structure of our society, we can no longer speak of 'rapid change', but rather of normal, foreseeable, and almost unilinear consequences of the previous mutation. That is why ... it is necessary to reject the concept of 'rapid change', which is a red herring." The idea that our society is typified by ever accelerating change is misleading because it suggests that what occurs everyday in our perpetual transience is something novel and unpredictable. This is not the case.

"Rapid change" concerns the spectacle aspect of our society. It implies that we do not stick to the purely factual event. On the contrary, the essential thing is to focus on the overall mutation resulting from the appearance of the technological system. The instant one actually grasps what that means, the sensational discoveries lose much of their interest (T, 89).

(4) Ibid, 11.

Although Ellul believes that most theorists are incorrect in what they take to define the modern human condition and that these errors are reflected in the misapplied generic terms used to describe that condition, he admits that technology is not the only determinant of modern life. The titles of Ellul's major works on modern civilization, The Technological Society (1954) and The Technological System (1977), are significant: each suggests that the most salient and fundamental characteristic of our contemporary milieu is technology. However there is a difference between what constitutes a "system" and what constitutes a "society":

In reality, we must not confuse the technological system and the technological society. The system exists in all its rigor, but it exists within the society, living in and off of society and grafted upon it. There is a duality here exactly as there is between nature and the machine. The machine works because of natural products, but it does not transform nature into a machine. Society too is a "natural product." At a certain level, culture and nature overlap, forming a society, in a totality that becomes a nature for man. And into this complex comes a foreign body, intrusive and unreplaceable: the technological system. It does not turn society into a machine. It fashions society in terms of its necessities; it uses society as an underpinning; it transforms certain of society's structures. But there is always something unpredictable, incoherent, and irreducible in the social body. A society is made up of multiple systems, multiple types, multiple patterns,

on different levels. Saying that technology is the determining factor of this society does not mean that it is the only factor (T, 18).

The novelty of Ellul's discourse, we said, consists in the extent to which he illustrates the penetration of technology into every area of human being, his socio-logy. We might illustrate Ellul's position by reproducing his documentation. In this chapter, however, we will only consider four topics that emerge from the vast array of detail, presented in Ellul's two seminal works, The Technological Society and The Technological System. The four topics are: (1) an outline of the genealogy or history of modern technology and particularly its evolution over the last two centuries; (2) a brief description of the artificial environment that this evolution has produced; (3) the "rationality" or manner of thinking that has grown along with this evolution and complements it; and (4) the recent, ever developing intercourse and complementary relationship between the state and technique. Since much current literature on the evils of modern society and technology tends to look to the state for relief from modern problems, the implications of this last relationship between the state and technique is that there is no refuge in political activity from the effects of modern technology. We are led to the issue of "tyranny and wisdom," the topic of the second chapter.

The Origins of Modern Technology

The modern phenomenon of technology, on Ellul's reading, marks the culmination of an evolutionary process that began in the seventeenth century and grew most profusely during the nineteenth. The cumulative result, Ellul maintains, was the remodelling of society. "This transformation of civilization can be explained by the conjunction in time of five phenomena: the fruition of a long technical experience; population expansion; the suitability of the economic environment; the plasticity of the social milieu; and the appearance of a clear technical intention" (TS, 47).

Technological development was the result of a continuous evolution. What allowed for its geometric growth into all areas of human being was the penetration of its theoretical arm, science, into every area of its practical apparatus; the repercussions of scientific discoveries permeated every area of technology. What is novel about the nineteenth century "is the formation of a 'technical complex', which ... consists of a series of partial inventions that combine into an ensemble. This unit begins to function when the greatest number of its constituents have been assembled, and its trend is toward continuous self-perfection" (TS, 47). The continuity, previously found only within specific techniques, spread in the nineteenth century to all domains of technology, consolidating what was

previously only a heterogeneous collection of activities. Technology, the physical embodiment of what science had already conceptually derived, depended on scientific development.

What defines the modern era for Ellul, however, was not merely the fusion of technology and science or the dependence of technology upon scientific development but the corresponding dependence of science upon technology.

It is not a question of minimizing the importance of scientific activity, but of recognizing that in fact scientific activity has been superceded to such a degree that we can no longer conceive of science without its technical outcome.... The very fact that techniques advance with great rapidity demands a corresponding scientific advance and sets off general acceleration (TS, 9-10).

The penetration of science by technology was precipitated by a change in perspective toward the phainomena. In antiquity, "Nature," the unblemished, unaltered empirical world, was conceived as the most "objective" reality there was, overwhelmingly present, manifesting its truth or "unhiddenness" through its immanent presence. In contrast, modern science, through resolute employment and pursuit of "pure" method, looks beyond the phenomena in hopes of subduing them through calculation and dissection using instruments. As William Barrett points out:

Modern revolutions may be considered as translations from theory into practice of this concept of method at the heart of modern science. In fact, however, theory and practice already converge within the new science. The knower is the pure beholder of what is; he sets the conditions under which he asks the questions and elicits the answers. The meanings of question and answer themselves become less and less separable from the experimental conditions that the scientist has fabricated. We are mistaken if we think of technology merely as an extraneous and incidental application of science, for technology abides at the very heart of the new science.(5)

Technology is what makes the "new science" new.

Population expansion is the second condition Ellul says contributes to the growth in technology and research, furnishing both the resources and markets requisite for their development. Without these elements technical growth would be devoid of the raw materials, human numbers and geographical scope it needs to flourish.

Third, "if technical progress is to take place, the economic milieu must combine two apparently contradictory traits: it must be at once stable and in flux" (TS, 48). Although the economic environment must be stable enough to allow research full devotion to fixed, clearly defined objects and situations, it must also be flexible enough to allow for the absorption of inventions into the economic fabric. A rigid economy stifles invention and

(5) William Barrett, The Illusion of Technique (New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1978), 352-53.

research. This is perhaps best exemplified today in "underdeveloped" countries that try to improve their technical status while clinging to traditional or a priori "socialist" modes of production and distribution, countries guided by doctrine not productivity. The last two centuries have made it clear, however, who will win this evident conflict: noncapitulation is the hallmark of technology.

The fourth condition for technological growth is a malleable social milieu. Two facts are involved. First, natural social groups have disappeared. Second, social taboos have disintegrated. Ellul maintains that with the French Revolution of 1789 and the years following came the dissolution of longstanding religious and cultural traditions. These traditions were supplanted by new ersatz religions and social taboos. As Barrett again points out:

The French Revolution is the first full outbreak of the modern megalomania. Like all neurotics, it must insist on being absolutely different. It will not resemble those ancient revolts among the Greeks. Its goal will not be limited but total. Far from representing a circulation of ruling groups, it would seek, first, to transform the whole of human life from top to bottom, and second, would thereby mark a decisive turning point in history and the beginning of an altogether new era for mankind.

The pattern is followed in subsequent revolutions. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, in fact, went further because it felt that it had the real key to achieve the total aspirations of the earlier revolution. The French Revolution, product of the bourgeois

epoch, still thought in terms of the abstractions of political and legal structures. Marxist materialism, however, would go to the root of the matter. To transform social life one had to transform the economic relations that held among men. (6)

At the same time that changes in the public domain took place, correlative changes were occurring in the private domain. The most significant of these was the diminution of the family. New legislation, Ellul says, was proposed to promote its disintegration in the name of "health" and "normality." In addition, the enlightened philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries emphasized the virtues of individualism and the natural inclination humans possessed to emancipate themselves from all restraints, including the family. As knowledge became concerned with "objects" that were clear and distinct, appraised in terms of the categories of difference and of identity, of conflict and of homogeneity, as things were dissected, ordered and measured, so consciousness grew increasingly subjective and privatized. It became, Ellul says, hermetically sealed off from the external world. The novel, the distinct literary form of the modern age, depicted the antagonism between the objective and subjective poles of experience, between reason and madness, life and death. Beginning with simple narration of the comic epic and evolving into the disintegrative analysis of modern psychologism,

(6) Ibid, 350.

it casts the individual against the precarious structures that impede the reification of his elusive dreams. The pervasive theme is individual freedom. The sentiment and appeal of Jane Austen's Emma, for instance, lies in its emancipating flight from the repugnancy of matriarchal matchmaking. It defies puritanical Victorianism. Its sentiment and appeal come from a desire to free oneself from the confinements of the traditional family.

The effects of this disintegration in the public and private domains was twofold, according to Ellul. First, there was the dissolution of traditional sources of meaning, the result of the mutation of the social fabric in the direction favorable to unfettered technological growth. Second, there was the effect this had upon thought. As Richard Rorty has said: "Poets and novelists had taken the place of both preachers and philosophers as the moral teachers of the youth." (7) The change towards technical "means and ends" thinking, which we will consider in detail below, had begun.

The final condition Ellul contends was necessary to consolidate technology was the birth of a well defined technological intention, a manipulation of consciousness in the direction compatible both with technology and with endless change. Hegel, Nietzsche and particularly Marx helped to dissolve the ties of tradition: "Marx rehabilitated technique in

(7) Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1980), 5.

the eyes of the workers. He preached that technique can be liberating. Those who exploited it enslaved the workers, but that was the fault of the masters and not of technique itself" (TS, 54). Marx freed technology in a language comprehensible to all, which cannot be said of Hegel and Nietzsche. He believed that the society to which technology was rivetted, European bourgeois capitalism, debilitated technology's otherwise emancipatory function. The remedy was simple: change the conditions, the superstructure, upon which technology was built.

Marx's theory was predicated upon the notion that human nature could be changed: the revolution would not only bring about a new political superstructure but a new man, a man possessing knowledge of how to manage technology to the benefit of all. This was, Ellul says, the premise of Marx's revolutionary philosophy. Its success depended upon a change in society's thinking. Man had to become aggressive in the face of nature and transform it to meet all of the purposes to which it could serve him in the creation of a euphoric state differentiated from all previous socio-historical configurations by its overcoming or abolition of the realm of necessity. Its eschatological apex was achieved only when labour became a freely chosen activity.

Marx made the conquest of nature the fundamental goal of humanism. This implied, however, an antagonism between human

desire and nature, an antagonism that would not be overcome until the whole of nature had been subdued. The effect of Marx's thought was the subordination of all efforts of humanity to the struggle for universal supremacy over nature. Marxist ideology not only presupposed a homogeneity of desire directed towards this ideal, but a corresponding denial of the viability of all traditional or competing hierophanies: religion was conceived "the opiate of the masses;" the traditional belief in the natural inclination of society towards a political hierarchy was denounced as a facade.

Marx's political thought, according to Ellul, was the perfect eschatology for the technological process. It organized all citizens effectively within the ranks of universal struggle. Everything on the planet was situated within the framework of a technological-scientific plan. In principle, all human beings could be organized and managed as calculable objects. Economics, the most technical social science, would be the fundamental discourse of social reality. Marxism, via this science of efficient technological management, thus injects mankind unfettered into the mainstream of technology. The modern era becomes marked, as Barrett has said, by its "general faith, widespread even when unvoiced, that technique and technical organization are the necessary and sufficient conditions for arriving at truth; that they can encompass all truth ... that they will be sufficient, if not at the moment, then shortly, to

answer the questions that life thrusts upon us." (8) Ellul argues that Marx, along with the accompanying technologically inclined thinkers of the nineteenth century, catapults us into the technological era in anticipation of what will become the definitive traits of the twentieth century. There are two essential characteristics of today's technical phenomenon.

The first of these ... is rationality. In technique, whatever its aspect or the domain in which it is applied, a rational process is present which tends to bring mechanics to bear on all that is spontaneous or irrational. This rationality, best exemplified in systematization, division of labor, creation of standards, production norms, and the like, involves two distinct phases: first, the use of "discourse" in every operation; this excludes spontaneity and personal creativity. Second, there is the reduction of method to its logical dimension alone. Every intervention of technique is, in effect, a reduction of facts, forces, phenomena, means, and instruments to the schema of logic.

The second obvious characteristic of the technical phenomenon is artificiality. Technique is opposed to nature. Art, artifice, artificial: technique as art is the creation of an artificial system.... The means man has at his disposal as a function of technique are artificial means (TS, 78-79).

In summary, the modern development of technology occurred, on Ellul's reading, as a consequence of the conjunction in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of (1) science and

(8) Barrett, op. cit., 10-11.

technology; (2) population growth; (3) the evolution of an economic milieu responsive to technological growth and in fact promoting it; (4) a maleable social milieu in which both public and private life had been radically changed due to the dissolution of natural social groups and social taboos; and (5) the emergence of an ideology that legitimated technology, rendering it the eschatology of the age. The cumulative result of the combination of these five phenomena was the two definitive traits of the twentieth century outlined in the passage above. It is to the second of these traits that we now turn our attention.

The Artificial World of Modern Technology

According to Ellul, modern technology casts men into an artificial, humanly fabricated environment within which the whole of their personal, social and working lives are conducted. Technology constitutes the foundation of interhuman communion (T, 34), linking individuals through artificial but vital means such as television, telephone, radio, automobile, aircraft and ships; through the modern hospital and medical clinics, community and urban agencies, athletic associations, the golf and country club, the bridge club and neighbourhood lounge. Precipitating a revolution in architecture, it has changed the environment within which most people spend most of their lives. Under technology, Ellul points out, the kitchen, for instance,

loses its culinary function and becomes a functional laboratory ... an elision of prime functions for the sake of secondary functions of calculation and relation, an elision of impulses for the sake of culturality ... a passage from a gestural universe of work to a gestural universe of control ... the simplest mechanism elliptically replaces a sum of gestures, it becomes independent of the operator as of the material to be operated upon (T, 126).

Even our dating and sexual habits are conditioned by technology: we are constantly bombarded with advertizing about what to wear and how to smell; we are provided books on sexual techniques in order to ensure things are done just right and that no energy is needlessly wasted in our efforts.

"We shall doubtless see ever more refined and exacting research into musical technique, and the dominant musical structure and rhythm will undoubtedly correspond entirely to the technical environment" (TS, 130). The evolution of music through its electric (Fender), "synthetic" (Moog), and now computerized eras has proven Ellul's forecast true; music too has become increasingly technicized. Ellul emphasizes that the fundamental categories of space and time have also been radically altered. In many respects they are indistinguishable from what they traditionally represented thanks to such creations as the automobile and jet aircraft, the time clock, the modern working day and the variety of diversions available in today's nightlife. The progressivist ethic, fundamental to, and born from, the

technological phenomenon, as well, has facilitated a conception of history that is unilinear, not seasonal or repetitive.

Technology demands the individual's complete devotion to his profession, his separation from the environment, the family, and traditional ethnic or religious groups. Accordingly, it has eliminated traditional ways of life and of work and has supplanted these both with a new proteanism and heterogeneity of desires. The "new necessity is not natural necessity; natural necessity, in fact, no longer exists. It is technique's necessity, which becomes the more constraining the more nature's necessity fades and disappears ... technique causes us to penetrate into the innermost realm of falsehood, showing us all the while the noble face of objectivity of result" (TS, 146). The fruit of specialization, technology today fosters not only a particular vision of the world but a language consistent with that vision. Every profession has its own discursive network within which it operates, molding with it a particular, "specialized" manner of thinking distinct from all other professions but perfectly shaped to fit the overall structure of the technological system and to perpetuate it. The result is the erosion of the bond between persons in their family and working environments, and, according to Ellul, the substitution of technologically necessary for individually voluntary relationships.

Even enemies are perceived differently: "Thanks to technology, man can not only do harder things more easily, he can also act meaninglessly and remain perfectly outside his action. We know this from the difference between killing an enemy face to face with a knife and bombing an area from four miles up" (T, 254). Because of the growth of technology, the increase in artificial needs, the conditioning of the whole of the human neural complex in a manner desiring technology's products, the element of choice, Ellul says, is radically reduced. Consider the evolution of the T.V. It was not enough to own a black-and-white set. Soon everyone wanted colour. And then came the availability of cablevision and access to channels all over the country and the continent. Now there is Bata Max and the home box office. All of this was justified by greater choice for the individual. But was it? Was choice, Ellul asks, not vitiated at its very base? According to him no choice other than the T.V. and its infinite accessories was ever really possible.

Things such as television are indispensable and integral parts of modern technological life. They serve as incentives that drive workers through their days in anticipation of what the night's viewing will have to offer. In serving this function, there are consequences: T.V., for instance, perhaps more than any other recent phenomenon, has transformed the nuclear family. The family's various members,

centered on the television set ... are unaware of one another. If they cannot stand or understand one another, if they have nothing to say, radio and television make this easy to bear by re-establishing external relations and avoiding friction. Thanks to these technical devices, it is no longer necessary for the members of the family to have anything at all to do with one another or even to be conscious of the fact that family relations are impossible (TS, 378).

Modern movies with their profusion of star wars and space odysseys, innumerable adventure epics in the form of westerns, detective stories and love sagas, also provide forms of escape from the rigours of modern technological and family life. So do sports, particularly in North America. "Sport has been conditioned by the organization of the great cities; apart from city life its very invention," Ellul says, "is inconceivable. Country 'sport' is but a pale imitation of city sport and has none of the characteristics of what we know as sport." Examination of the genealogy of sport reveals that its

vocabulary is English; it was introduced to the continent when the continental nations came under the influence of English industrialization. After the industrial center of gravity passed to the United States, American sporting firms prevailed. The Soviet Union began to cultivate sport when it began to industrialize; the only country in central Europe which had organized sport, Czechoslovakia, was the only one which was industrialized.

Sport is tied to industry because it represents a reaction against industrial life. In fact, the best athletes come from working-class environments....

Moreover, sport is linked with the technical world because it itself is a technique... the human being becomes a kind of machine, the individual, by means of the discipline imposed on him by sport, not only plays and finds relaxation from the various compulsions to which he is subjected, but without knowing it trains himself for new compulsions ... real play and enjoyment, contact with air and water, improvisation and spontaneity all disappear. These values are lost to the pursuit of efficiency, records and strict rules. Training in sports makes of the individual an efficient piece of apparatus which is henceforth unaquainted with anything but the harsh joy of exploiting his body and winning.

The most important thing... is not the education of a few specialists, but the extension of the sporting mentality to the masses (TS, 382-83).

Ellul's documentation of the penetration of technology into the inner-most spheres of the modern human fabric is intended not only to illustrate the artificial character of the modern environment but the extent of technology's consolidation. "Technical civilization means that our civilization is constructed by technique (makes a part of civilization only what belongs to technique), for technique (in that everything in this civilization must serve a technical end), and is exclusively technique (in that it excludes whatever is not technique or reduces it to technical form)" (TS, 128). This consolidation implies not only that the technological complex is homogeneous but that the analyst must take the entirety of the complex into account when trying to understand it: we must, Ellul warns,

beware of "the hopes of those who are always prescribing remedies for the sorcerer's apprentice whom they feel free to invoke without discernment ... these claims and hopes are mere words" (TS, 306). If "one focuses on the harmful effects of some aspect of the system, one can easily demonstrate that we can overcome them and redirect the apparatus causing them. But those harmful effects do not exist per se. That is why all the 'solutions' proposed by specialized books are anything but solutions" (T, 107). Partial, specialized "solutions" only reveal that we cannot resolve isolated problems because we live amidst an ensemble produced by the technological system. Wholesale solutions are the only solutions.

Consider, again, the case of television: "T.V. ... exists only in terms of a technological universe, as an indispensable distraction for people living in this universe and as an expression of this universe. It is not 'raw' or 'cultural' per se because it quite simply does not exist in and of itself. It is T.V. plus all the rest of the technological actions" (T, 107). For this reason it cannot simply be done away with. "Man cannot live and work in a technological society unless he receives a certain number of complementary satisfactions allowing him to overcome the drawbacks" (T, 62). T.V. is one of these "complementary satisfactions," a necessary condition for technological life.

Ellul also speaks of the impossibility of substituting "useful" products for "superfluous" products in attempting to modernize underdeveloped, nontechnological parts of the world. The problem concerns more than egotism or lack of generosity:

Beyond a certain degree of technicization, we pass from a society determined by natural factors to a society determined by technological factors ... in the latter society, there are changes in its structure and in human needs and attitudes. It is therefore impossible to argue without taking heed of those changes. Yet people ignore them when they claim to solve the problem of the survival of excess population by drawing on the productive capacity of modern technology. The change is, in reality, impossible. There is no parallel between growth in population and growth in productivity of goods needed for survival. Thus, the problem is raised because of the specific feature of technological growth. It is technology that appears as the determining factor, in respect not only to the two terms considered separately, but also to the problem itself, in its formulation as a problem stemming from a contradiction (T, 65-66).

The various changes that technology has produced, rendering the modern world artificial throughout, indeed the "universal city," also indicates its consolidation. Human being has changed to become an entirely unnatural or artificial "nature" as a result of the infiltration of technology into every area of life. Technology has, correlative with this fact, consolidated society. Although technology produces an infinite variety of objects and

activities, the meaning of these objects and activities remains the same. They facilitate the same outcome.

When we begin to understand that everything that confronts us in the modern world is made or manipulated by man, we begin to understand the significance and meaning of modern technology. Yet technology's penetration of modern human being is not only manifest on the outside, in the artificiality it has produced in material life. Its penetration has also been more subtle.

Technological Rationality

Perhaps the most significant effect technology has had on the modern world is not so much the artificial milieu it has produced but the thinking it has produced along with that artificiality. Technology breeds a kind of thinking that, according to both Ellul and Eric Voegelin, imputes to thought (noesis) a conception of reason that derives from what Voegelin calls the "peripheral" or pragmatic domain, the domain traditionally indigenous to technique. Voegelin distinguishes

between pragmatic and noetic reason, pragmatic reason being understood as all rational action in the sciences of the external world, the development of technology, and the co-ordination of means and ends as they apply to the external world,

whereas noetic reason, includes all rational action in the sciences of man, society, and history, both in the formation of the order of the psyche and of society.(9)

Like Ellul, Voegelin points out that technological rationality "tends to bring mechanics to bear on all that is spontaneous or irrational." The "reduction of method to its logical dimension alone" is intended to apply universally to modern "thinking" as well as to modern "reasoning," to the noetic as well as pragmatic domains of cognition: all "reason," noetic or pragmatic, is conceived as a technical "means and ends" manner of deduction.

In this way noetic reason, which explores the topics of social, political and individual order, is eclipsed and pragmatic reason is directed to attaining a goal or end that has been selected by an agency outside of pragmatic reason. What that agency is conceived to be --will, passion, taste-- is secondary to the consideration that it is non-rational. It is non-rational because noetic reason is ignored and pragmatic reason applies only to the means by which an end is attained, not to the goodness or nobility of the end. Consequently, whether one is engaged in creative thought, "thinking," or mechanical thought, "reasoning," the ends are always techno-logical. "An autonomous technology means that technology ultimately depends only on

(9) Eric Voegelin, "Industrial Society in Search of Reason," in World Technology and Human Destiny, ed. Raymond Aron (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1963), 43.

itself ... maps its own route ... tending toward closure and self-determination: it is an end in itself" (T, 125). An indication of our embeddedness within the province of technology is our "belief that production and consumption coincided with the whole of [traditional] life" (TS, 65). In fact, however, technology, Ellul says, is the determinative factor only for our society, not for all history. The belief that production and consumption have been historically determinative is based upon the assumption in our society that modern civilization is the pinnacle of history or of humanity; an unparalleled consumer's paradise, our society is sustained by an a priori commitment to technological-economic activity.

The crucial area of the pervasive effect of technology on modern rationality lies then, both Ellul and Voegelin suggest, not in its universal ordering of the physical world but rather in its rigid ordering of human thinking, of rational action pertaining to the proper formation of order within the (individual) psyche and (collective) society. Whereas in traditional societies the noetic domain was left relatively unscathed by technology, technique applying only to the physical and material realm, today, having suffered universal penetration by technology's mechanism, the noetic domain is virtually indistinguishable in its generic features from the technological domain: individuals see psychiatrists today and politicians consult economists just as the physically ill consult various

kinds of physicians. This is what the "death of metaphysics" means: the psyche and society are no longer ordered by a transcendent goal, purpose or eschatology of any sort. The eschatology of the day is purely phenomenal; technology is the modern metaphysic.

The consolidation of technology is complete. "Even when technology is abstract, a procedure, an organization, it is far more of a mediation than an instrument.... So long as technologies of traditional societies were sporadic and fragmentary, they represented singular mediations." Today, however, "the overall situation has changed with the multiplication of technologies and the development of the technological phenomenon. Now the character of that mediation is already that of the technological object" (T, 34). Ellul emphasizes:

there is a trend toward a genuine enclosure in [the technological] environment ... this strikes me as particularly important in language.... Language is losing its mystery, its magic, its incomprehensibility. It no longer expresses dreams ... rather, by being technologically deciphered, language becomes a way of bringing dreams, inspirations, aspirations, and ecstasies into the technological environment.... The true aggression is the technicization of language. For at this moment, everything is locked up in the technological environment. When speech is a serf, everything is a serf. Language is the ultimate outlet, the ultimate questioning, even if it is reduced to a shriek (T, 49-50).

As Heidegger has said: "All ways of thinking, more or less perceptibly, lead through language in a manner that is extraordinary" (QT, 3). Language is the avenue of thought. Its manipulation by technique mirrors not only the technicization of thinking but, again Ellul maintains, the consolidation of technology.

Ellul adds to his analysis that the unforeseen results of technological development determine the future problems for society which further technological and scientific development must resolve. The technological phenomenon evolves automatically, advancing through "the application of technologies according to choices that are induced by previous technologies and that can be shunted and diverted only with great difficulty" (T, 232). Technology is self-augmentative: "everything occurs as if the technological system were growing by an internal, intrinsic force, without decisive human intervention" (T, 209). "Self-augmentation occurs only if there can be experimenting" (T, 222). However, "each solution is technological, defining by itself the problem" (T, 273). Therefore "the ends or finalities appear during the very course of the process of technological development" (T, 257). The technological process once initiated will not terminate its activity or growth until it has "completed" itself, until it has exhausted or resolved all the problems that emerge from its initiation and perpetuation. It is in this sense that it tends

toward closure, homogenizing both action and thought.

An example of technology's penetration into the noetic domain is provided in Ed Andrew's Closing the Iron Cage (1981), a study of the scientific management of work and leisure. Andrew's specific concern is with leisure, the final vestige, he suggests, necessary for totalitarianism to conquer in order to secure the total dominion of technology over the nontechnological, spontaneous dimension of human being. Marxists such as Herbert Marcuse, Andrew says, have traditionally conceived of leisure as necessary compensation for the repressive and dominating world of modern work. Marcuse "advocated a variant of a thesis dominant in the sociology of leisure, namely that an expansive enjoyment of leisure will compensate for the cramped and deadening labour alleged to be inherent in an industrial civilization." It is the purpose of Andrew's book "to explore the dimensions and presuppositions of [this] leisure-as-compensation thesis found in ... contemporary literature on leisure." (10)

Andrew argues that the idea that modern leisure can compensate for the repressive nature of labour today is false. This is not only because modern leisure is a crossbreed of various technologies derived from the category of work but because the complex that determines the character of the modern labourer precludes him from enjoying the real benefits leisure

(10) Ed Andrew, Closing the Iron Cage (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1981), 11.

might otherwise provide. The main problem in understanding leisure is understanding the perspective from which it is appraised. The concept of leisure, its "problem" as a nontechnical category, is formulated by modern sociologists within the conceptual framework of scientific management, a technique originally developed by F.W. Taylor to aid in the human engineering required to adapt the pace and mode of work in the early part of the twentieth century to the capacity of the industrial complex of that day. "The connection of scientific management not only with what is observed but also with the mode of observation in the sociology of leisure must be established." (11) Some of the structural similarities to be found between scientific management and the approach adopted by sociologists of leisure include the contrasting of leisure and work, the assumption that the two are mutually exclusive fields of activity. "Leisure ... is conceived to be an activity free from any mixture of obligation and utility, whereas work is thought to be purely instrumental, necessary to obtain income and leisure." (12) The consequence of this assumption is a circumscription about what is to be considered constitutive of "leisure." Andrew points out, just as scientific management is concerned with the efficient utilization of resources and time,

(11) Ibid, 13.

(12) Ibid.

so leisure activity is conceived by leisurists as something to be used and to promote efficiency within the workplace. Leisure activities are defined as noncognitive activities; mental states are not only considered irrelevant to the sociological understanding of leisure, they are not considered leisure activities. Thinking, dreaming and worshipping all fall outside the types of behavior considered "leisurely." Leisure is a time to relax. Thinking requires too much work.

The "mindlessness" of mass leisure is a product of the requirements of the sociological method rather than, as is sometimes thought, a direct reflection of the character of modern leisure activities. Just as Taylor insisted that thinking is not to be considered a productive activity and that the method of scientific management required a separation of thinking and doing, thinking is not deemed a wholesome recreation and the method of the sociology of leisure requires a separation between those who think about leisure and those who engage in visible recreations. (13)

This assumption results, however, in the belief that thinking and creativity are activities unnecessary for a "healthy" life both in and away from the work place. Strenuous and technologically unproductive, thinking and creativity are thus considered, by many leisurists, contemptible.

(13) Ibid, 14.

Andrew believes that the subject-object dichotomy fundamental to the distinction between those who think about or manage leisure and "those who engage in visible recreations" is the consequence of the sociological presupposition that workers are incapable of employing their leisure time productively and consequently must have it managed for them by "specialists."

Andrew finds this presupposition disagreeable not because it is necessarily false in its assumption about the worker's character or "mentality" but because it presumes no overlap between the world of work and the world of leisure. "It is not that sociologists of leisure are wrong to think that many workers are incapable of expansive enjoyment off work but that they do not take sufficiently seriously the view that incapacity for leisure is a 'spillover effect' of externally managed work." (14) Leisurists should not expect that individuals who function as technicians during their working day can be creative actors in their free time; that people can be educated to enjoy a form of culture unrelated to their vocations. Yet this is, Andrew maintains, what many sociologists of leisure presume.

The study of leisure, in Andrew's opinion, is not only coloured by a theoretical bias manifest in the parochialism of leisurists. It also has the practical effect of securely integrating leisure and recreational activities into the

(14) Ibid, 136.

technological complex to the detriment of human development. Leisure activities are conceived by leisurists as a function necessary to enhance production and consumption; leisure is pigeonholed into activities consistent with efficient technological development. Ellul agrees: leisure consists of "using technological things, transportation, games, etc. And very swiftly, as leisure becomes a 'mass' thing ... spare-time activities have to be organized." Moreover, "the organization of spare-time activities is mainly a technological task, requiring a high degree of technicity to achieve satisfactory results, i.e., results giving a full impression of leisure and seemingly effacing the technological imperative" (T, 315-16). The result of the technicization of leisure, Ellul and Andrew suggest, is this: the standardization of a previously dynamic and spontaneous frontier of human being, perhaps the last such frontier.

The "iron cage" of Andrew's title was referred to by Max Weber as the structure imposed on humanity by technological rationality, a rationality requiring that the heterogeneity of ends, typical of traditional societies, be replaced by the one end consistent with technological development. This imposition, Weber believed, standardized procedures for the most efficient fulfillment of this rational homogeneous end. The specialization of activities that standardization required would invoke in men the sentiment that they were imprisoned within an iron cage.

With the extension of the procedures of scientific management into the realm of leisure and the managing of leisure by "specialists," closure of the "iron cage," Andrew suggests, is an immanent possibility and no longer a mere phantom. Andrew concludes:

To ensure the perpetuation and growth of leisure time, leisure activities, subject to the educational and organizational skills of the leisurist, become socially productive recreations. Leisure activities, like productive activities, serve to enhance the productive collectivity. Productive and recreational activities are integrated within a system of total management.

The separation of thinking and doing in the planning and execution of wholesome recreations extends the principles of scientific management from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom. The extension of scientific management from the realm of production to the realm of leisure is the closing of Weber's iron cage of technological rationality.(15)

Andrew not only draws a parallel to Ellul by suggesting that technology may, in certain fundamental respects, curtail if not eliminate human freedom. He also agrees that the solution to the problem of leisure cannot be limited or specialized in scope. Andrew notes that as a means to a given end, the application of the principles of scientific management to leisure requires the reduction of "leisure" to a single function or end. This renders

(15) Ibid, 152.

leisure susceptible to the technical means and ends rationality and integrates it with the leisurists' method.

Conversely, preventing the penetration of leisure by technique would require the establishment of a multitude of ends through which methods of achievement could not be integrated. This multitude of ends was in fact both prevalent and the character of pre-modern leisure.

Today, however, this is no longer case. With the reduction of leisure to the category or end of "wholesome recreation," a unitary purpose for leisure, namely, social integration, is created which fits leisure into the overall structure of the technological complex. "Through this reduction of leisure to wholesome recreation, the leisurist can assume his proper place in the 'technostructure.' Leisure activities, 'properly directed,' will bear such a relation to productive activities as to reinforce efficient performance and thus will be integratable into the totally managed collectivity." (16)

It is this "integration into the totally managed collectivity" that Andrew and Ellul tell us poses the great difficulty. Once integrated into the technological complex, leisure becomes essential to the technical infrastructure and necessary for its proper functioning. Changing the "problem of leisure," as Ellul and Andrew conceive it, of disposing of the

(16) Ibid, 151.

technicization of leisure or of the "leisure-as-compensation thesis" that prevails among the sociological sciences today, thus becomes one of changing the whole of the technological complex into which "leisure" has been integrated. The possibilities for altering the status of modern leisure thus become minimized. Andrew writes toward the end of Closing the Iron Cage, "what is thrown into question in this book is whether the alleged incompetence of the 'masses' to enjoy expansive leisure is not the effect of scientific management's assumption that the workers are incapable of organizing their working time productively." (17) Andrew's analysis of modern leisure, like Ellul's phenomenology, attempts to understand, not prescribe. Andrew's is not a manifesto for action. As George Grant has suggested, the dynamo is too enormous in the history of the race to permit one judgement of it or the power to change it. "The main thing... is just to see what it is." (18)

As we have seen, two conditions that define the modern human predicament are its artificiality and technological means-and-ends rationality. The final characteristic Ellul says defines the modern human condition is the conjunction of the state and technique.

(17) Ibid, 181.

(18) Barry Cooper, "Ab Imperio usque ad Imperium: The Political Thought of George Grant," in George Grant in Process, ed. Larry Schmidt (Toronto: Anansi, 1974), 22.

Modern Technology and the State

Ellul writes in the Technological Society:

From the political, social, and human points of view, [the] conjunction of state and technique is by far the most important phenomenon of history.... It is ... astonishing that we still apply ourselves to the study of political theories or parties which no longer possess anything but episodic importance, yet we bypass the technical fact which explains the totality of modern political events, and which indicates the general line our society has taken much more surely than some painful revival of Marx ... or some spiritualistic theory (TS, 233).

The conjunction of the state and technique is the "most important phenomenon of history" for Ellul because it has, on the one hand, altered the status of political doctrine and, on the other hand, altered the status of the state and man's relationship to it.

Doctrinal elements today "coincide exactly with the development of state techniques;" they "express the social situation exactly and are therefore vital" (TS, 280). Political doctrine today facilitates technology. It is not so much the change in content as the change in function that produced the change in content that we should appreciate at the level of doctrine:

The technological system omits from its scope things that used to be of great concern to society.... That is why we have to avoid posing present day problems in classical

moral terms. For instance, to talk of liberty or responsibility in the technological system is meaningless. These are moral terms that are incapable of taking man's actual situation into account (T, 109-10).

Questions today --the important questions-- have moved beyond good and evil:

Political doctrine, since about 1914, works in this way: the state is forced by the operation of its own proper techniques to form its doctrine of government on the basis of technical necessities. These necessities compel action in the same way that techniques permit it. Political theory comes along to explain action in its ideological aspect and in its practical aspect (frequently without indicating its purely technical motives). Finally, political doctrine intervenes to justify action and to show that it corresponds to ideals and to moral principles. The man of the present feels a great need for justification. He needs the conviction that his government is not only efficient but just. Unfortunately, efficiency is a fact and justice a slogan (TS, 282).

It is not that justice or "the good" is intentionally avoided or intentionally violated. It is just that it is no longer a significant political question. It has no political viability. Truth has been welded to power, and thus justice to the state. The civil doctrine of the state has become synonymous with the good. Moreover, political doctrine no longer poses the questions or delimits the answers. It mediates and legitimizes, molding

men to the technological complex, providing a buffer between technology and political ideals. Since the beginning of the First World War it has been technology that has determined political affairs, doctrine included.

Seldom appreciated, Ellul is critical of theorists who still presume a level of choice within political or state affairs that parallel eighteenth or nineteenth century models of society. Ellul criticizes Jurgen Habermas, for instance, spokesman of the current Frankfurt school, for seriously suggesting that science and technology, although enhancing material well-being, have escaped public control and need be brought back into accord with the principles of democracy. Habermas, Ellul remarks,

seems to be ... unaware ... of studies (including Galbraith's or mine) showing the subordination of political decisions to technological imperatives. He winds up with the elementary wish to "get hold of technology again" and "place it under the control of public opinion ... reintegrate it within the consensus of the citizens". The matter is, alas, a ... bit more complicated.... Habermas's discussion of the "pragmatic model" is along the lines of a pious hope, a wish: the process of scientification of politics, such as appears desirable to him, is a "must". But the reality of this technicization of politics actually occurs on a different model.... Habermas poses the problem outside of any reality. When reading [his] text, we need only ask: Who is that "one" who puts technology at the disposal of [any] group? Who exercises this (if you like) supreme "will" (T, 132)?

Contemporary political problems are then no longer "social," involving questions of justice or of rights or of democratic freedom. Such issues are dealt with, according to Ellul, only by a handful of the contemporary juridical community who engage "hard cases" that juridical technique, the modern technology of justice, has yet to corral (TS, 231, 291). "The crux of the economic problem has moved to the extreme point of technical development. The real debate concerns who will be in a position to support, absorb, and integrate technical progress and to furnish optimal conditions for its development" (TS, 198). The serious issues today confronting political thinking are managerial problems. They involve quantitative analyses and the application of political mechanics. Modern politics is devoid of any significant normative content.

The change in function of political doctrine was the consequence, Ellul says, of the change in status of the state, itself the consequence of the change in status of modern technology --of its interrelationship with the state. As mentioned, the development of technology required the segregation of man from the traditional bonds that sustained him in harmony with nature. This created the metaphysical situation permitting man to confront his environment as an agent of transformation. The dissolution of man's traditional bonds to nature was synonymous with the dissolution of traditional sources of meaning, of individual and social reason for being and doing:

the "death of metaphysics" created a void in human life that had to be filled. The state, in the twentieth century, Ellul believes, came to provide the modal content that filled this void, however inadequately.

The source of individual and social meaning, the state not only evolved to provide legitimation for human activity. It legitimated the peculiar form of activity that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. No longer merely a symbolic structure representing such traditional elements as the monarchy, nobility and guilds, the state became a managerial body concerned with efficient economic development, even when that activity led to cultural and religious disintegration. The "Industrial Revolution," technology's bending of the modern social fabric, according to Ellul, brought forth the necessity for a public agency capable of managing problems on a scale of the magnitude modern technology was evolving towards. The result, however, was not only the augmentation of the state but the appropriation by the state of the traditional religious and cultural responsibility for providing meaning to human activity: the state fostered unprecedented techno-logical activity under the auspices of an exclusive concern with the "economy" and the "social problems" economic-technological development produced. Technology, by way of what became the nation-state, had entered the eschatological realm, in and by altering its traditional status: "The sole utopia is a technological one." And," Ellul

adds, "that may be the possibility for making the technological system and the technological society identical" (T, 20). Barrett has also remarked: "Each step [in the evolution of technology] creates an imbalance, and we are compelled to take a further step toward a more comprehensive technology in order to rectify that imbalance. There is thus a drive toward totality inherent in technology itself. We are compelled to aim at utopia --in the sense of completing and perfecting the technical apparatus." (19)

Ellul argues that the effect of technology on nineteenth century industrial society led to the development of social and cultural malleability in the twentieth.

To uproot men from their surroundings, from the rural districts and from family and friends, in order to crowd them into cities still too small for them; to squeeze thousands into unfit lodgings and unhealthy places of work; to create a whole new environment within the framework of a new human condition ... all this was possible only when the individual was completely isolated. It was conceivable only when he literally had no environment, no family, and was not part of a group able to resist economic pressure, when he had almost no way of life left.

Such is the influence of social plasticity. Without it, no technical evolution is possible. For the individual in an atomized society, only the state was left: the state was the highest authority and it became omnipotent as well. The society produced was perfectly malleable and remarkably flexible from both the

(19) Barrett, op. cit., 231.

intellectual and material points of view. The technical phenomenon had its most favorable environment since the beginning of history (TS, 51-52).

The final condition producing the conjunction of state and technique was the ever increasing cost of technology. Initially, Ellul says, there was the movement of individual techniques into the public domain. Education and transportation, certain spiritual techniques, and the communications media, all previously individual techniques, were elevated to the public sphere; "these techniques, because they were applicable to the masses, allowed individual persons to transform their sphere of activity from a private to a public one" (TS, 235). The effects were twofold: "on the one hand, they produced clearer and more distinct results so that they attracted the attention of the state; and on the other, they allowed a considerable extension of the field of activity to which they were applied" (TS, 234). Hence the individual's influence over the public realm increased, requiring intervention by the state, which in turn resulted in the perpetuation of state power and technological development through expansion of the technical market.

All of this early development occurred "even in the absence of the profit motive, after wealth had become incommensurable with the individual and therefore abstract" (TS, 235). The generator of "capitalistic competition" was not profit, but efficiency because "the profit motive compels an unsuitable

finality upon technology from the outside" (T, 271). Ellul emphasizes, "[w]hatever realm we survey, we note that it becomes gradually impossible for personal or familial capital, however concentrated, to answer technical requirements" (TS, 236). Technological growth, through infiltration into the public domain, resulted in the concentration of capital. This "concentration ... gives rise either to an economy of corporations or to a state economy" (TS, 154), allowing thus for the "fundamental aspect of innovation ... trial and error" (T, 214).

Yet even this is insufficient: the costs of technological development escalate beyond the capacity of corporations and all private capital as well. Only the state can provide for certain developments such as national defence, atomic energy research, large petroleum exploration. Corporations that engage ventures such as offshore drilling or high tech research and manufacturing do so usually only with the help of government subsidies.

There are also those problems that not only fall outside the financial capacity of private companies but outside their interests and technical capacity as well. The pollution of water supplies, the immediate environment and the urban atmosphere: "These phenomena, which have assumed such proportions that they threaten the whole of city life, are of purely technical origin. Only rigorous and authoritarian measures of general control can solve these problems if they are to be solved at all. That is to

say, appeal to dictatorial state action is indispensable" (TS, 237).

All of this implies, Ellul says, that the issue concerning government interference in the economy

has nothing to do ... with "nationalization." No more relevant is the allegation that the state frequently applies technique with "less ability" than private enterprise, or that it "wastes money" ... the principle menace to capitalist individualism is not some theory or other, but technical progress.... Technique, once developed to a certain point, poses problems that only the state can resolve, both from the point of view of finance and from that of power (TS, 236-37).

Taking charge of national life, the state attempts to adapt the whole of society to the economic milieu, to the increased volume of trade, productive capacity, and to universal mobilization. Requiring a comprehensive plan and alot of money, this objective cannot be achieved by economics or "the market" alone. Ultimately the result is public infiltration into the individual's privacy, into his personal and financial affairs and their management.

Ellul summarizes the three most salient features of the state in the modern era:

first ... the state seeks to organize national life and to govern its various collectivities, most often because natural communities have disappeared and it is

necessary to create new ones. Second, the state seeks to fashion the "individualist" society (the role the twentieth century has elected to play) and to penetrate into men's private lives on the ground that they are no longer able materially to manage their own affairs. Finally, all kinds of theories, both socialist and nonsocialist, are influential; but, whatever their nature, they appeal to the state to secure a greater degree of justice and equality. In all of these ways the state assumes functions which were formerly the province of private groups (TS, 238).

It is particularly the appeal of all theories, socialist and nonsocialist, to the state for remedy to social and economic ills that Ellul finds dangerous:

Hitherto the state, whatever its form, socialist or not, has been an organism of oppression, of repression, eliminating its opponents, and constituted by a political class that governs for its own benefit..... [I]n the name of whom and of what will the state be any different tomorrow --for the dictatorship of the proletariat is exactly the same thing. The ... state that will run technology and solve the problems is composed of men (Why should they no longer be dominated by the spirit of power?) and structures (which are more and more technological). What those authors [who appeal to the state] are proposing is that we hand over all power (an ineluctable growth, to be sure, but in no wise a remedy) --i.e., to transform an aleatory control into a technological organization.

In reality, not only is there no guarantee that the state will carry out its envisioned role. But ... this state, ruled by the technological imperative and no other, must

unavoidably create a society that will be ... more oppressive.... For a state qualified to dominate technology can only be made up of technicians (T, 134-35).

Regardless of one's disposition, be it "left" or "right," the implications are the same: an evolution towards a consolidated technological aristocracy becomes the omega of all activity; technological problems require technological solutions; "technique shapes an aristocratic society, which in turn implies aristocratic government" (TS, 275). Closure of the technological system is thus likely to be the consequence of further appeal to the state by political discourse. Closure today is prohibited by preventing the "convergence of all technical systems" within the technological complex (TS, 391). On the other hand, Ellul says, it is

decisively facilitated by the appearance of computers ... it is in this context that we must ask about the new technological ensemble, thanks to which the technological system is completing the process of constituting itself. The importance of the computer is ... tied to the fact that the further we advance, the more significant a part of our world information becomes.... We are no longer a society dominated by the imperative of production; now we are ruled by the transmission, circulation, reception and integration of multiple information. And that is exactly how the system is completing its constitution (T, 92-93).

Computers "allow us to organize subsystems by establishing connections and relations among the various parts of [the] whole" (T, 99-100). In reality, Ellul says, "it is the computer that allows the technological system to definitively establish itself as a system" (T, 98). It provides the state the means to utter control.

Ellul concludes the Technological Society:

We have completed our examination of the monolithic technical world that is coming to be. It is vanity to pretend it can be checked or guided. Indeed, the human race is beginning confusedly to understand at last that it is living in a new and unfamiliar universe. The new order was meant to be a buffer between man and nature. Unfortunately it has evolved autonomously in such a way that man has lost all contact with his natural framework and has to do only with the organized technical intermediary which sustains relations both with the world of life and with the world of brute matter. Enclosed within his artificial creation, man finds that there is "no exit"; that he cannot pierce the shell of technology to find again the ancient milieu to which he was adapted for hundreds of thousands of years (TS, 428).

Yet we should question Ellul's conclusion. In particular, it may be doubted that returning to some "ancient milieu" is the solution to the imputed meaninglessness of modern life.(20) It is natural to wonder whether man was ever "adapted" to such a

(20) Cf., Hanna Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), ix.

milieu. Moreover, we might wonder why the modern West strove so energetically to change its environment: if technology is indeed the historical and eschatological apex many today believe it is, we should attempt to know what that means.

This question and the implications technology holds for acting and thinking in the modern age have been addressed by Strauss and Kojève. Their dialogue in On Tyranny (1975) develops Ellul's penultimate question concerning the essence of technology, what the culmination of technology means, this meaning or essence that, as Heidegger has said, is nothing technological. Kojève's and Strauss's dialogue, illumined as must every object of thought, by antinomies, drives us beyond technology and beyond modernity. What will be post-modernity? What do we have to look forward to the day after tomorrow?

Kojève and Strauss examine whether the culmination of technology is good or evil. They accept the fact that technology is the universally pervasive phenomenon of our world. They analyze what the culmination of technology means, and they understand each other: there are no interpretive ambiguities between them. Specifically, they examine what the culmination of technology means for philosophy: will technology extinguish all thought and all action, reify an unabashed slavery?; will it emancipate all thought and all action, reify an unparalleled freedom from necessity? Strauss and Kojève discuss these

features of technology in their dialogue in On Tyranny and to it we now turn.

CHAPTER TWO

TYRANNY AND WISDOM

The dialogue that is the subject of this chapter occurs in the revised and enlarged edition of Leo Strauss's On Tyranny. The two essays to be examined in this chapter are Kojève's "Tyranny and Wisdom" and Strauss's "Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero," both of which are contained at the end of this edition of Strauss's interpretation of Xenophon's "Hiero or Tyrannicus." As Kojève's essay is insufficient to elucidate clearly his position in the dispute between him and Strauss, I have also used Chapter 4, "Philosophy and Wisdom," in his Introduction to the Reading of Hegel (1969), to elaborate the argument of "Tyranny and Wisdom" where necessary. Kojève is a modern Hegelian. I have assumed that Kojève's interpretation of Hegel as described in both "Tyranny and Wisdom" and the Introduction is an adequate interpretation of Hegel. Accordingly, when I refer to Hegel I refer to Hegel-according-to-Kojève, which in effect, is Kojève. My concern in this chapter is not with exegetical precision but with the elucidation of the arguments I believe Kojève and Strauss presented and that offer interpretations of the modern human condition. Dispute about the right and wrong interpretations of texts, in light of other criteria, is not my

concern. My intention in this chapter is only to elucidate two traditional interpretations of what the culmination of the infiltration of technique into modern human being means. It is this question that Ellul's phenomenology ultimately asks and a reply to it is what is attempted in this second chapter.

In the first chapter I attempted to present the empirical or sociological foundations of modern technology. In this chapter I attempt to examine, primarily, the theoretical or philosophical repercussions of the penetration of technology into every facet of modern human being. In the third chapter I will attempt to get beyond this question and speculate on what the future may hold for post-modern acting and thinking, given the argument of Chapter One and Chapter Two.

I should say at the outset that I am in agreement with George Grant when he writes of Kojève and Strauss: "Both men know better than I what words are necessary to make clear what they mean. Modern academic writing is strewn with impertinent precis written by those who think they can say in fewer words what wiser men than they have said in more." (21) Rather than translate Kojève's and Strauss's arguments into words of my own, I have in most places left their arguments intact, which explains the large number of direct quotes taken from their texts in this chapter.

(21) George Grant, Technology and Empire (Toronto: Anansi, 1969), 82.

The dialogue between Kojève and Strauss centred on the issue of cosmogeny. Kojève began from a philosophical-scientific model of interpretation, Strauss from a philosophical-theological model of interpretation. Both presented "world views" concerned with, among other things, three distinct but inter-related issues: (1) the disparity between objectivity and subjectivity in philosophy; (2) the problem of lunacy in mythical or theological interpretations of individual and political order, and of history; and (3) the problem of Time as a natural and analytic barrier to systematic and complete accounts of reality.

The problem Kojève and Strauss addressed was simplified into pairs of antinomies. To begin with, it concerned the issue of tyranny and wisdom, which in the context of modern technology, involves the relationship between tyranny and science or science and mysticism or theology. Kojève is an adherent of science. Strauss is an adherent of theology. Their dialogue involves the debate between ancients and moderns, between hermeneutic truth and scientific method, addressing the predominant schools of thought in the modern age: science, on the one hand, and everything that falls outside of science's discursive and behavioral network, on the other.

What follows is an examination of the issues addressed by Kojève and Strauss in their dialogue and the implication the exhaustion of these issues holds for future thought and action. As my concern in this chapter is primarily with presenting the

"theoretical" or "analytic" component of Strauss's and Kojève's dialogue, that is, the reasoning each provides for his position, not the empirical or historical corroboration each provides, I have concentrated on analyzing Kojève's critique of Strauss's "theology," addressing thus the specifically philosophic component of the dialogue, the predicates of Kojève's and Strauss's interpretive methodologies.

The analysis to follow consists of five parts: (1) Kojève's critique of Strauss and his position defined in light of that critique; (2) the dispute between Kojève and Strauss concerning the motivation of philosophy or of philosophers; (3) philosophy and the problem of Time; (4) the empirical or historical foundations Kojève provides that (a) legitimates his position and (b) supports the emancipatory role he argues modern technology serves philosophy as well as material well-being; and (5) the nihilistic implications Kojève's argument engenders for thought and action, a subject discussed further in Chapter Three.

Kojève's Science

Kojève's cosmology, that is, the order he imputes to the world or cosmos, involves an interpretive methodology or hermeneutic of reduction that fits all historical phenomena into Hegelian logical categories. It provides history with a meaning through illustrating the unilinear progression of human development to the present, history's "end" begun with the secure foundation of

the Napoleonic Empire following the battle of Jena in 1806. Strauss's cosmology, on the other hand, involves an interpretive methodology or hermeneutic of reminiscence that attempts to fit modernity, as a fragment of antiquity, into the conceptual schema of classical social science.

Strauss, Kojève believes, fails in his efforts because he inverts the causal sequence that not only reveals modernity to be the comprehensive completion of history, but antiquity to be a fragment of modernity; Strauss commits the discursive error of attempting to tunnel modernity into the categorical framework of a social science too primitive and narrow to accomodate the novel features of our world. Strauss thus inverts the reality, in Kojève's opinion, of human historical development. He cannot verify his position as historically determinate but only as subjectively "evident." Kojève argues, however, that "the subjective 'evidentness' that an 'isolated' thinker might sense is invalidated as a criterion for Truth by the sole fact of the existence of madness or lunacy, which as correct deduction from subjectively 'evident' first principles, can be 'systematic' or 'logical'" (K, 162). Kojève's critique of Strauss thus takes the form that Strauss's position is in principle indistinguishable from madness; the dicta of classical social science, predicated upon subjectively certain observations and analytic continuity, is in principle no different from lunacy, which requires the same criteria for "truth."

The disagreement between Kojève and Strauss stems in one sense from an epistemological conflict. Wisdom, on Kojève's view, requires not only that one know himself to be Wise but that he be capable of illustrating his Wisdom through production of a complete and systematic speech that accounts for the entirety of "History" without omitting any experience or historical configuration. Wisdom therefore covers the whole of human being and of non-human being as well insofar as it appears to human being and is meaningful. About non-human being that does not appear to human being, nothing can be said, not even that it does not appear. Wisdom, therefore covers the whole of being with an account of itself. Strauss, Kojève believes, cannot satisfy this epistemological criterion.

The demand of Truth for both noncontradiction and objectivity, Kojève says, is met in the realm of practice where all but the one empirically accurate account of reality that competes with all of the others is eliminated. "'In theory' all sorts of subtle distinctions are possible, but 'in practice' there is no way of eliminating one of these elements while retaining the others" (K, 169). Hence "ideologies" in their various guises can be eliminated and the practice prescribed by the one true phenomenology can be implemented with perfect justification through the verificational procedure that submits all propositions claiming truth to the realm of practice. Accepting this verificational procedure --accepting Hegel's

method of historical verification, Kojève delimits a specific concept of "reason," one promoting the tenet that victory achieved in a purely verbal "discussion" is never a sufficient criterion for truth: discursive "dialectic" can never in any decisive sense solve any problem. "This is for the simple reason that if one is content to talk one will never be able definitively to 'eliminate' either the contradictor or, consequently, the contradiction itself, for to refute someone is not necessarily to convince him." Kojève's position engenders a strenuous practice. The idea that one prove the viability of his statements in the realm of practice or on the battlefield of history implies that one not merely "convince" his contradictor discursively but "negate" him physically:

"Contradiction" or "controversy" (between Man and Nature on the one hand, between men, or rather between a man and his historical milieu, on the other) can be "dialectically done away with" (that is, done away with insofar as they are "false," but preserved insofar as they are "true," and raised to a higher level of "discussion") only to the extent that they are played out on the historical terrain of active social life where one argues by acts of Labor (against Nature) and Struggle (against men).... Truth emerges from this active "dialogue," this historical dialectic, only at the moment the latter is completed, that is to say, at the moment when history comes to its final conclusion in and by the universal and homogeneous state which, implying the "satisfaction" of the citizens, excludes all

possibility of any negating action and hence of all negation in general and, consequently, of any new "discussion" of what has already been established (K, 178).

And what of those who, like Strauss, persist in asking the "eternal" questions, questions it is said will remain irresolvable and of prime importance for time indefinite despite the Hegelian thesis that all epistemological issues have been resolved with the coming to be of the universal and homogeneous State? What of those who simply persist in pursuing problems that are now obsolete or, in the words of Hegel, historically and philosophically "dead"?

Even without wishing to assume with the author of the Phenomenology of Mind that history is today virtually "over," one can say that if the solution to a problem has in fact been historically or socially "valid" for the whole duration of time up to the present, one has the right, until (historical) proof to the contrary, to consider it philosophically "valid," in spite of the philosophers' continuance of the "discussion." In doing so, it can be assumed that history, at the opportune moment, will take it upon itself to put an end to the indefinite continuation of the "philosophical discussion" of a problem it has already virtually resolved (K, 178-79).

Barry Cooper has said regarding Kojève's argument, "so far as the discourse that accounts for modernity is concerned, the continued existence of pre-modern remnants or avatars presents no theoretical difficulties: their self-understanding can be

incorporated into the System of Science as one of its constituent elements. In terms of non-discursive practice, matters are more complex." (22) Indeed, Kojève goes so far at one point as to confess that to those who do not even contest the truth of Hegel's phenomenology but who are content to remain silent or unconsciously "Wise," one can "refute [them] only as one 'refutes' a fact, a thing, or a beast: by physically destroying [them]" (IH, 84).

Acknowledging the tenability of realizing Wisdom in the modern age --history having culminated in 1806, with the germ of the universal and homogeneous state kindled in the Napoleonic wars, and articulated in Hegel-- Kojève penetrates traditional philosophy, action and thought traditionally conceived. Kojève's novel epistemological postulate demands the philosopher abandon his traditional status as "lover of Wisdom" to actually become Wise, to deny the traditional conflict between the philosopher's love of Wisdom and his desire to act, which Kojève says, "is, according to Hegel, the only authentic tragedy that is played in the Christian or bourgeois world" (K, 177).

Kojève's position has implications not only for action. "By definition, the philosopher," he says, "does not possess Wisdom ... but ... is further advanced on the road which leads to

(22) Barry Cooper, "What is Post-Modernity?," in Canadian Journal of Social and Political Thought (Forthcoming, 1985), manuscript, 21.

Wisdom than any nonphilosopher, and 'noninitiate'" (K, 156). The philosopher, by definition, remains dissatisfied as philosopher until he has attained Wisdom, the goal or object of his desire; the source of his dissatisfaction is "negated" only at that moment he satisfies, in total, his desire to become Wise, ceasing to be a philosopher, having become a Wise Man. This is the "only authentic tragedy" according to Hegel: the philosopher, as philosopher, is condemned to be dissatisfied and never to enjoy the perfect satisfaction the Wise man enjoys. Kojève and Hegel, therefore, subordinate philosophy to the object of its exercise; one should seek to be a Wise Man, not a Philosopher. The Philosopher "reveals his existence only in order to show that one must not be like him, to show that man wants to be not Philosopher, but Wise Man" (IH, 87). Kojève invites us to deny the tragedy of History, of Christianity, to reject the traditional belief in the untenability of Wisdom and to seek the perfect satisfaction, Perfection, available in and by Wisdom; Philosophy is simply the way to this historical achievement. At bottom, for Kojève "philosophy" is just about posing questions without ever attaining Knowledge or Wisdom and, as a consequence, without ever gaining Satisfaction.

Strauss disagrees:

The decisive premise of Kojève's argument is that philosophy "implies necessarily 'subjective certainties' which are not 'objective truths' or, in other words, which

are prejudices." But philosophy in the original meaning of the term is nothing but knowledge of one's ignorance. The "subjective certainty" that one does not know coincides with the "objective truth" of that certainty. But one cannot know that one does not know without knowing what one does not know. What Pascal said with antiphilosophic intent about the impotence of both dogmatism and scepticism, is the only possible justification of philosophy which as such is neither dogmatic nor skeptic, and still less "decisionist," but zetetic (or skeptic in the original sense of the term). Philosophy as such is nothing but genuine awareness of the problems. i.e., of the fundamental and comprehensive problems (S, 209-10).

In a commentary on the dialogue between Kojève and Strauss, George Grant has said:

For the Hegelian, political philosophy does not stand or fall by its ability to transcend history, but rather by its ability to comprehend all history. Strauss knows that the difference between Hegel and the classics about the place of "history" in the whole depends upon and illustrates a profound difference between them about the object, method and standpoint of the study of philosophy in a more than political sense. (23)

Grant's intimation is correct: Kojève and Strauss are in agreement about only one issue fundamental to their controversy, that is, that philosophy, whether Hegelian or classical in its approach, seeks wisdom. What the precise character the object of

(23) Grant, op. cit., 91.

this pursuit is, whether it is attainable, how it is to be approached and from where one will approach it, are all disputed topics. Yet there remains the fundamental agreement: the philosopher's intention forever remains the same, regardless of his disposition concerning the question of "history." Strauss's acceptance of this premise is the basis of Kojève's criticism of his subjectivism, itself the basis of Strauss's rebuttal inviting the question concerning what the true role of philosophy is or should be, whether there is anything truly philosophical left to be said or worth being said. The disagreement between Strauss and Kojève turns on the question concerning the philosopher's true motive, what is it that drives him in his quest for Wisdom?

What Motivates Philosophy?

Accepting the premise that the philosopher is a seeker of Wisdom, two questions immediately confront us: (1) why does the philosopher pursue what he does; and (2) is this pursuit meaningful or reasonable, justifiable in its quest? Kojève argues that "philosophy is meaningful and has a reason for existing only in the event that it presents itself as the road leading to Wisdom, or at least to the extent that it is guided by the ideal of the Wise Man" (IH, 88). Analytically this proposition is correct: without Wisdom being tenable, an ideal within the grasp of the temporality of human being, the philosopher's quest is meaningless because futile, without reason

for being or doing. On the other hand, accepting Wisdom as a determinate possibility, within human apprehension, appears, *prima facie*, surreal. The lacunae between these antinomies captures the difference between Strauss's and Kojève's positions.

Kojève argues that the philosopher is driven in his quest for Wisdom either by love for it or by a combination of love for it and desire for recognition, that is, desire for the personal and intersubjective admiration accrued one who possesses knowledge. Strauss, on the other hand, argues only for the former possibility: the philosopher, by definition, can be driven only by love for the eternal order.

Insofar as the philosopher, owing to the weakness of the flesh, becomes concerned with being recognized by others, he ceases to be a philosopher. According to the strict view of the classics he turns into a sophist.... Concern with recognition necessarily detracts from the singleness of purpose which is characteristic of the philosopher. It blurs his vision (S, 218).

To the extent that Kojève's "philosopher" seeks recognition other than what might fall under the category of "self-recognition" (the self-admiration that accompanies one's awareness of his progress towards Wisdom), he is, on Strauss's account, a nonphilosopher or, as the case may be, a "sophist."

Kojève maintains one makes a gratuitous assumption in contending that the philosopher is or should be motivated by a

pure or untarnished love for wisdom. He invites us to consider the case of "Socrates":

Certainly it would be quite wrong to suppose that "Socrates" seeks knowledge ... solely for the sake of the recognition of others. For experience shows that science may be pursued out of pure love even on a desert isle with no hope of return.... But nothing prevents us from asserting that, when, "Socrates" communicates with others ... he does so not only for the purpose of testing himself but also (and perhaps even above all) for the sake of outward "recognition." By what right can we say that he does not seek this "recognition," since in fact he necessarily finds it (K, 171)?

It would seem that the case remains unsolved. We might agree with Strauss that the philosopher is or should be motivated in his quest for wisdom solely by love for it and by the self-admiration he receives pursuing this object of high regard. Yet, at bottom, we must agree with Kojève: although the question

could be solved in several possible ways, none ... is truly certain. It is impossible to know whether the philosopher (wise man) seeks knowledge and practices virtue "for themselves" (or "out of duty") or whether he does it for the sake of the "pleasure" (joy) he derives from doing so, or --finally-- whether he acts in this way in order to feel admiration for himself (conditioned or not by admiration on the part of others). This question obviously cannot be settled from "outside," and thus there is no way of verifying the "subjective certainty" given by introspection; nor will there be any way of deciding between these "certainties" if they are discordant (K, 171-72).

The problem remains the inability to establish the peculiar workings of the psyche. The particular desire(s) stimulating the philosopher in his quest for wisdom cannot ultimately be established. At best we are confronted with a tautology: the philosopher seeks wisdom because he desires to be wise. The inherent "virtue" the unabashed love of wisdom marks in its total disregard for perishable, human things (S, 213-14), is then extraneous to the central issue at hand (K, 171), as are all "subjective certainties" derived from introspection.

Kojève's argument proceeds:

With respect to the definition of the Wise Man and the Philosopher, Plato, who marks the beginning of classical philosophy, agrees with Hegel, who marks its end. About the Wise Man, the only possible divergence is that which exists between Hegel and Plato --i.e., while accepting the ideal of the Wise Man and the Platonic-Hegelian definition of him, one can either assert or deny the possibility of realizing Wisdom, of actually becoming a Wise Man after being a Philosopher.

Let us now see what this divergence means. Certainly one can, like Plato, deny the possibility of realizing Wisdom. But then, one of two things: either the ideal of the Wise Man is never realized anywhere; and then the Philosopher is simply a madman, who claims or wants to be what one cannot be and (what is worse) what he knows to be impossible. Or else he is not a madman; and then his ideal of Wisdom is or will be realized, and his definition of the Wise Man is or will be a truth. But since it cannot, by definition, be realized by man in time, it is or will be realized by a being other than man, outside of time. We all know that such

a being is called God. Therefore, if with Plato one denies the possibility of the human Wise Man, one must either deny philosophy, or assert the existence of God (IH, 88-89).

Strauss does not deny philosophy. However he does deny the possibility of the human Wise Man, which on Kojève's reading requires that he presuppose the existence of a god if philosophy is to be justifiable on his terms.

Strauss would reject any suggestion that his position requires belief or faith in a god in order for philosophy to be justifiable on his terms and not the occupation of a madman. He might grant that the term "god" is simply a misnomer and that his position does require a certain "belief" or "faith," albeit justifiable in that this "belief" or "faith" takes the form of a love for knowledge of the eternal order, a love justified not because it knows the eternal order in its entirety, which is Wisdom, but because it has "glimpsed" the eternal order (S, 217) or an image of it, acquired piecemeal knowledge of its character through astute observation. Strauss however emphasizes that the idea that one could be Wise, and possess knowledge of everything there is to know, is unrealistic. He goes so far at one point as to explicitly attack those who "boast" of having attained knowledge when in fact they have not (S, 215-16). Elsewhere he intimates that individuals, such as Kojève, who claim to possess Wisdom, although indeed philosophers, themselves, ironically, suffer from a certain pathology (S, 198).

The conflict between Strauss and Kojève, turning on the motive that drives the philosopher in his quest for Wisdom, leads to the question concerning the possibility of achieving Wisdom, which in turn invites the question concerning how Kojève's Science satisfies the conditions of Wisdom. Strauss's contention that the philosopher pursues Wisdom out of pure love for it, and not out of desire for intersubjective recognition, cannot be verified: we can say that the philosopher pursues Wisdom but we cannot say precisely why he does so. The question reduces itself to whether the philosopher has reason for doing what he does or whether he can justify his quest, regardless of his motivation for doing so.

Strauss and Kojève disagree about what justifies the philosopher's quest. They also disagree on what Wisdom is, which is to say, they disagree on what truth is, the source of their disagreement on what justifies the philosopher's quest. Kojève equates truth with what is practically demonstrable, with objectivity. He contends, with Hegel, that Wisdom, as absolute knowledge, is viable in the modern age.

Philosophy and Time

Kojève writes in the Introduction:

[T]here is a double criterion for the realization of Wisdom: on the one hand, the universality and homogeneity of the State in which the Wise Man lives; and on the other

hand, the circularity of his Knowledge. On the one hand, IN the Phenomenology, Hegel has described the perfect State.... On the other hand, BY the Phenomenology, Hegel has shown that his knowledge is circular (IH, 96).

Kojève's criticism of Strauss not only questions Strauss's interpretation of history or of human action. It questions the analytic tenability of his position. Strauss's philosophic method, Kojève says, requires belief or faith in the existence of an eternal order to be systematic. Attempting to supersede Time, Strauss denies not only the possibility of comprehending history, he denies as well the need to do so. "The philosopher," he writes, "is as unconcerned as possible with individual and perishable human things ... as well as with the sum total of all individual human beings and their 'historical' procession" (S, 212). Strauss adds:

If the philosopher addresses himself ... to a small minority, he is not acting on the basis of an a priori judgement. He is following the constant experience of all times and countries.... The philosopher will certainly not be compelled, either by need to remedy the deficiency of "subjective certainty" or by ambition, to strive for universal recognition. His friends alone suffice to remedy that deficiency, and no shortcomings in his friends can be remedied by having recourse to utterly incompetent people ... as for ambition, as a philosopher, he is free from it (S, 217-18).

Strauss denies not only the necessity for demonstrating the truth of one's thought or of being universally recognized as wise man or philosopher in order to be a philosopher, he also rejects the idea that one need comprehend history in its totality, possess knowledge that is "complete," in order to be wise. In fact he denies the possibility of complete knowledge.

Kojève criticizes Strauss, therefore, not only for being content with "subjective certainty" but with denying the possibility of wisdom and with assuming that the philosopher can be content, as philosopher, with less than complete knowledge, with an incomplete account of the whole. As a philosopher, one cannot be satisfied, Kojève says, with mere "knowledge of the problems" or of the "fundamental and comprehensive problems."

First, if Wisdom is the art of answering all questions that can be asked concerning human existence, Philosophy is the art of asking them; the Philosopher is the man who always ends up asking a question that he can no longer answer (and that he can answer, when he wants to answer it at all costs, only by ceasing to be a Philosopher, without thereby becoming a Wise Man: that is, by answering either with something that is in contradiction with the rest of his discourse, or with an appeal to an incomprehensible and ineffable "unconscious").

Second: if the Wise Man is the man who is satisfied by what he is --i.e., by that of which he becomes conscious in himself, the Philosopher becomes conscious of his state of nonsatisfaction; the Philosopher is essentially a discontented man (which does not necessarily mean an unhappy man); and he is discontented, as Philosopher, by the sole fact of not knowing that he is satisfied ...

the simple fact of not understanding his well-being, his pleasure, his joy, or his happiness, or even his "ecstasy," would suffice to make him discontented, unsatisfied (IH, 86).

On the one hand, Kojève criticizes Strauss for not thinking through the philosopher's desire, that is, as a desire to be Wise and as a desire that will not be satisfied until Wisdom is achieved; on the other hand, he criticizes Strauss for believing that the philosopher can be content with an incomplete account of reality, with a corpus of knowledge that permits a "gap" in his ability to respond to all possible questions that could be asked concerning human existence.

Analytically and temporally incomplete in never superceding Time, Strauss's position, Kojève believes, colours the philosophic life with a certain tragedy, a perpetual discontent that is inherent in the philosophical tradition. The tradition required faith in an eternal order that the philosopher could never completely know but only glimpse. Strauss identifies philosophy with pursuit of the intemporal and eternal. Kojève identifies it with pursuit of the temporal and finite, seeking meaning to human life in the immanent, in "our world." Strauss, as did the classics, seeks meaning to human life in the beyond. Strauss fails thus, in Kojève's opinion, to provide the philosopher an objective that, as human being, is within his means or apprehension. Kojève believes he can. He claims to

have reconciliated the intemporal or eternal by comprehending natural cosmic Time, which, as Wisdom, understands History, or the totality of all there is to know. This achievement is "Perfection." Kojève promises Satisfaction in the provision of his agnostic vow:

If one holds, with Hegel, (and anyone who would like to be able to hold, as he does, that there is a meaning and direction to history, and that there is such a thing as historical progress, ought to have agreed with him on this point), that history can be completed in and by itself, and that "absolute knowledge" (=wisdom or discursive truth) results from the "comprehension" or "explanation" of history as integral) or integrated in and by this very knowledge) by a "coherent discourse" (Logos) which is "circular" or "uni-total" in the sense that it exhausts all the possibilities (assumed to be finite) of "rational" thought (that is, thought which is not in itself contradictory) --if one grants all this, I say, one can equate history (completed and integrated in and by "absolute" discursive knowledge) and eternity, understanding by this word the totality of time (historical time, that is to say human time, that is to say time which can contain a "discussion" of some sort, active or verbal) beyond which no particular man could pass, nor could Man as such (K, 179-80).

Promising the possibility of comprehending Time, Kojève then, with Hegel, promises Wisdom to anyone serious enough and of capacity to achieve it.

Kojève also claims his knowledge is circular. Whether in fact it is we will not consider here. We will however present

the first condition --the universality and homogeneity of the state in which the Wise Man lives. This condition invites an obvious question: how does modernity conform to this first condition and why is the universality and homogeneity of the state in which the Wise Man lives a condition for Wisdom?

We have briefly examined why possession of circular, which is to say complete, knowledge is necessary for Wisdom: it must supersede Time. The first condition allows for this possibility. How it does is the subject of the next section and will complete our analysis of Kojève's Science.

The Logic of History

The premise of Kojève's second condition of Wisdom is technology. Cooper has remarked: "If the System of Science is not, as Hegel said of Schelling, a dogmatic announcement 'shot from a gun,' it must have an introduction, as was indicated by the sub-title of Hegel's Phenomenology." (24) The "introduction" of human being is, Kojève says, the proto-human terror of privation and death, the source of the original "Labor (against Nature) and Struggle (against men)" engaged by humans, generator of the technical development and master-slave dialectic that, Kojève adds, "moves" history and that is described in its entirety in Hegel's Phenomenology. Labour as the source of technology, struggle as

(24) Cooper, "What is Post-Modernity?," 12.

the source of inter-human conflict, history ends, Kojève says, where all Desire on earth that, on the one hand, drives labour, and, on the other hand, seeks struggle, ceases. It ends where labour and struggle are negated in their entirety, no longer being historically determinative or historically transformative because no longer being. History ends when technology is universal and Science is the truth of the world. It ends when the world is under the same material and social conditions qua technology, which is universal and breeds homogeneity through the isomorphic modifications it effects universally not only upon matter but upon thought and upon action.

Technology is the practical complement to the theoretical component of Hegel's dialectic: it cements the universal, which is to say, "'circular' or 'uni-total'," and homogeneous, which is to say, coherent or "systematic," character of Hegel's Science. Technology objectively proves the truth of Hegel's Wisdom, rendering the practical conditions necessary for it. Wisdom became possible during the French Revolution and the battles of 1806 that saw Napoleon attempt to effect, via administrative and military technologies, a universal and homogeneous state that was not only not predicated upon a distinction in race but was also not predicated upon a distinction in class.

The Napoleonic Wars overcame the deficiency of Alexander, Napoleon's "historical" predecessor. Alexander was historically differentiated from his predecessors and contemporaries by the

idea of empire that directed his political activity: "his state would have no limits (geographic, ethnic, or otherwise) given a priori, nor any pre-established 'capital,' that is, a geographically and ethnically fixed nucleus destined to dominate politically its periphery" (K, 181). All in his empire would share a common essence: they would possess what is today commonly called "culture" or "civility," independent of their "racial" or "national" background.(25) Yet Alexander's idea of universality, derived from the philosopher Aristotle's biology, would prove anthropologically insufficient in holding fast to the distinction between masters and slaves, an aristocratic and Aristotelean prejudice. It would not be until St. Paul that this erroneous belief would be unmasked:

For Alexander ... the Hellene and the barbarian have the same title to political citizenship in the Empire, to the extent that they have the same human (moreover, rational, logical, discursive) "nature" (= essence, idea, form, etc.) or are "essentially" identified with each other as the result of a direct (= "immediate") "mixture" of their innate qualities (realized by means of biological union). For St. Paul there is no "essential" (irreducible) difference between the Greek and the Jew because both can BECOME Christians, and this not by "mixing" their Greek and Jewish "qualities" but by negating them both and "synthesizing" them in and by this very negation into a homogeneous unity not innate or given, but (freely) created by "conversion." Because of the negating character of the Christian "synthesis," there

(25) Cf., Grant, op. cit., 87.

are no longer any incompatible "qualities" or "contradictory" (= mutually exclusive) "qualities." For Alexander, a Greek philosopher, there was no possible "mixture" of Masters and Slaves, for they were "opposites." Thus his universal state, which did away with race, could not be homogeneous in the sense that it would equally do away with "class." For St. Paul, on the contrary, the negation (active to the extent that "faith" is an act, being "dead" without "acts") of the opposition between pagan mastery and servitude could engender an "essentially" new Christian unity (which is, moreover, active or acting, or "emotional," and not purely rational or discursive, that is "logical") which could serve as the basis not only for political universality but also for the social homogeneity of the state (K, 183-84).

Hegel used this idea of homogeneity. He transformed it however from a religious to a secularized concept: the universal and homogeneous state could not be realized as an aspect of Christianity. "That religion," Grant points out,

did not suppose such a state to be fully realisable in the world, but only in the beyond, in the kingdom of heaven. Homogeneity based on faith in a transcendent God could only lead to the conception of the universal and homogeneous Church, not to a universal and homogeneous state. For the universal and homogeneous state to be a realisable political end, Christian theism had first to be negated. (26)

(26) Ibid, 88.

And that negation would occur with the completion of all possible historical experiences, articulated in Hegel and exhausted in 1806.

This evolution from a transcendental to a secular concept of homogeneity was the later effect, Kojève says, of an evolution from history's inception to the present that witnessed a complementary or "dialectical" relationship evolve between human thought and action, or between philosophy, on the one hand, and labour and struggle, on the other. Philosophy, on the one hand, and technology and historically revolutionary activity, on the other, evolve, on Hegel's reading, synchronically: the one is precipitated by the other.

Hegel might have described this "historical" process in summary as follows. Technology originates as the effect of servile labour's first manipulation of nature, engaged under the auspices or "domination" or "exploitation" by fear-inspiring masters, a "domination" or "exploitation" necessary, Kojève says, to "move" labor, to create the desire necessary to develop and to augment technology. The slave recognizes in technology his manipulation of nature, the incarnation of his individuality. However, in technology the slave also sees the happiness of the master who is free from the (natural) necessity of labour and who enjoys the products of the labourer's creation. The slave comes not only to recognize what Marx called his "humanization of

nature" in technology, he also comes to recognize his subordination to others.

Technology is then the lens through which the slave comes to see the pleasure the master derives from his products. Consequently, it is by way of technology that the slave acquires the desire to overcome or to negate the master in order that he, the slave, might be recognized as equal to the master and gain capacity to enjoy the products of his own creation. The result is a struggle between master and slave and the ensuing production of an historically novel, historically more advanced or "progressive" epoch. In this new epoch, technology also becomes more advanced owing to the technically more sophisticated and differentiated desire of the new "class" of masters that has evolved. This desire is more sophisticated and differentiated than historically antecedent desire because it wants more, because it is accustomed to, and is bored by, what went before. Historical struggle and technological development thus complement one another, on Hegel's reading, in providing the antecedents for one another's development.

Yet this process would be impossible, Kojève says, without the original awakening of self-consciousness on the part of the slave, an awakening articulated or "mediated" through discourse, through philosophy: "If philosophers gave no political advice at all to statesmen ... there would be no historical progress, and hence no history in the proper sense of the word." Yet this

progress is conditional upon the reality from which the philosopher draws, the technology or "material conditions" of the age and the actions of the individuals, the masters, tyrants or statesmen, who control these conditions. "[I]f the statesmen did not by daily political action, at some time actualize [the] 'advice,' grounded in philosophy, there would be no philosophical progress (toward Wisdom or Truth) and hence no philosophy in the precise sense of the term" (K, 186). We can say then,

history appears as a continuous succession of political events guided more or less directly by the evolution of philosophy.

Therefore, from the Hegelian point of view, based on the understanding of history, the relations between tyranny and Wisdom may be described as follows.

As long as man has not, by discursive philosophical reflection, become completely conscious of a given political situation at some moment in history, he has no "distance" on that situation. He cannot "take a position," he cannot consciously and freely come to any decision for or against. He simply "submits" to the political world, like an animal submits to the natural world in which it lives. But, once having come to philosophical consciousness, man can distinguish between the given political reality and the idea he has of it "in his head"; this idea can then serve as an "ideal." All the same, if man is satisfied with philosophically understanding (= explaining or justifying) the given political reality, he will never be able to go beyond either this reality itself or the philosophical idea which corresponds to it. In order that there be "going beyond" or philosophical progress toward Wisdom (=Truth), the political given (which can be negated) must be actually negated by action (Struggle and Labor), so that a new

historical or political (that is to say human) reality may, in the first place, be created in and by this same active negation of the already existing and philosophically comprehended real, and, afterward, comprehended within the framework of a new philosophy. This new philosophy will preserve only that part of the old which has survived the test of the creative political negation of the historical reality which corresponded to it; and it will transform or "sublimate" the part preserved, synthesizing it (in and by a coherent discourse) with its own revelation of the new historical reality. It is only by proceeding in this way that philosophy will make its way toward absolute knowledge or Wisdom: which it will be able to attain only when it has accomplished all possible active (political) negations....

... [W]herever it has been a matter of actively negating a given political reality in its very "essence," we have in the course of history always seen the appearance of political tyrants. One can say then that if the appearance of the reforming tyrant is inconceivable without the prior existence of the philosopher, the coming of the wise man must necessarily be preceded by the revolutionary political action of the tyrant (who will realize the universal and homogeneous State) (K, 185-86).

If we consider the case of St. Paul, it was necessary for there to occur the requisite negating political activity that would transform the historical conditions originally precipitating and later harbouring his transcendental concept of political homogeneity if Hegel was "philosophically [to] comprehend" and to develop the "Idea" of the universal and homogeneous state. These conditions were realized by the tyrant Napoleon and put into words in Hegel's Phenomenology. Yet the

foundations of this historical culmination in Hegel were technological: beyond the initial, primordial labor and struggle that initiated history, all material conditions that were philosophically determinative and historically differentiated from previous epochs, were man made, the result of technology.

Cooper has summarized this evolution from transcendental to secularized political consciousness in "What is Post-Modernity?" Labour, he says, throughout history, has expressed the contradiction between itself and its master

in a series of incomplete religious and philosophical discourses that, in one form or another, postulated a transcendent reconciliation or supersession of [its] experienced contradiction. Insofar as that transcendent reconciliation was believed to take place in the Beyond, Human consciousness, even if unhappy, would know what is to be done, namely to actualize the "ideal," which is to say, to overcome the contradiction of Master and Slave.(27)

The pinnacle of this contradiction in 1806 marks the end of history:

The final historical act corresponded to the initial primordial fight, and consisted in Terror, the Terror of the French Revolution, which introduced into history the absolute plenitude of nothingness. "Terror," said Kojève, "renders particular consciousness disposed to admit of a State where they can be realized in a partial and limited way, but

(27) Cooper, "What is Post-Modernity?," 14.

where they will be truly and really free."
 The Terror of the Revolution was the complete
 revelation of nothingness without any
 ideological, religious or philosophical
 compensation promised in a Beyond for
 injustices suffered here below.(28)

The end of history occurs thus where the "final" contradiction between Master and Slave has begun and the reconciliation between these antinomies is universally engaged here on earth, if not, in actuality, at least in principle in Hegel's Phenomenology, and this, Kojève says, "even if not a single individual has noticed it yet" (K, 180). The end of history is the end of progress and of thought: the modern age is marked by ceaseless "revolutions," procured and epitomized in the French Revolution, given to the realization of universal equality, liberty and fraternity, and thus to the negation of all Desire that moves history, to the negation of history per se, embodied in the figures of Alexander and Napoleon, for "these two fundamentally exhaust the great political themes of history" (K, 185).

Kojève is precise in his intimation: all there is left to do in the modern age is act, realize what there is left to realize of the universal and homogeneous State. The "death of metaphysics" marks the birth of the "age of reason," which is to say the birth of the age of Wisdom, of Science, of immanentized

(28) Ibid, p.19

thinking or of thinking in which techno-logy has become metaphysical. Hegel's logic of history, describing the evolution and exhaustion of the (existential) conditions that would permit further historically differentiated and determinative thought, completes, Kojève says, the modern philosophical project that began in Plato and ended in Hegel.

Kojève says that an essential feature of this drama is that technology or the manipulated conditions of nature, and their control by the various tyrants who have acted throughout history, have historically conditioned philosophy. The global penetration of technology has also been necessary to secure the universal homogeneity of the world. It has secured the objective, which is to say "uni-total," and "systematic," truth of Hegel's Wisdom or of the Logic he says is definitive of History.

In Chapter One we examined the phenomenological account Ellul provided illustrating the homogenizing effects technology has had on modern human action and thought. At this point in Chapter Two we have arrived at that account Kojève provides legitimating this homogenizing process as philosophically necessary. Universal political homogeneity is necessary for the realization of Wisdom in the modern age, for the supersession of Time or totality of history. The apprehension and transcendence of history can satisfy, Kojève says, the philosopher's desire to be wise, the only desire, as we have seen, that can be scientifically or objectively established to explain the

philosopher's quest and the satisfaction of which must be a possibility within the grasp of human being if philosophy is not to be the activity of madmen. Technologically produced homogeneity is necessary for the completion of Science, as Science is necessary for the completion of Technology.

Nihilism and Modernity

Heidegger titled an essay in which he described the character of modernity, "The Age of the World Picture." A telling label for twentieth century thought, the implications of Heidegger's title depict modernity as securing being and truth through the intrinsic clarity of its technocratic vision:(29) the world is sculpted as a series of objects to be arrayed as in a picture; to be cut up, placed in proportion, manipulated and stored in "standing reserve" for future utilization. In its desire for apodictic certainty, modern civilization sculpts the world to its desired image and bends what resists with its dominating and indominable hand. The modern desire to remove chance from the human condition, Heidegger suggests, culminates theoretically in a desire to shape the world, its being and its truth, in accord with a humanly contrived vision. In this respect Kojève might be called an artist, perhaps, the culmination of this modern

(29) Cf., David E. Linge, "Editor's Introduction," in Philosophical Hermeneutics, by Hans-Georg Gadamer, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1977), xlix-1.

sentiment of artistry because he seeks to place the whole of human being within one, "comprehensive" and "uni-total" picture; he molds a world picture, attributing a "logic" to History, after this totality of events has occurred. Kojève's Logic derives from, and accords with, the canons of Systematic Science. It is absolute, removing all elements of doubt from what the world is. Kojève succeeds where Strauss fails. His philosophy is systematic because it reconciles the eternal with natural cosmic Time through comprehension of the totality of human, historical events. It is capable of providing an account of the whole that is absolute because complete, thus permitting of a Truth that is complete and that does not, as such, reduce to relativism which, as Kojève points out, "ruins the very idea of Truth" (K, 161).

Yet as Grant has said: "The fundamental assumption of Hegelian logic (that being creates itself throughout the course of history and that eternity is the totality of all historical epochs) is only taken seriously at the level of politics in the recognition of the dependence of philosophers upon the activity of tyrants." (30) Kojève leaves us with this question: is his or Hegel's discourse exhaustive or is science an appropriate or sufficient perspective from which to appraise the human condition? Strictly speaking, Kojève's discourse is beyond all question of good and evil. Kojève does not, as Grant contends,

(30) Grant, op cit., 90.

"affirm that the universal and homogeneous state is the best social order." (31) He does speak of the universal and homogeneous State as "the realization of the supreme political ideal of mankind" (K, 155), but it is "supreme" only because it represents the end to which all human, historical activity, consciously or unconsciously moves. Kojève's Science is devoid of morality. As Strauss contests:

For someone who is trying to form his taste or his mind by studying Xenophon, it is almost shocking to be suddenly confronted by the more than Machiavellian bluntness with which Kojève speaks of such terrible things as atheism and tyranny and takes them for granted. At least on one occasion he goes so far as to call "unpopular" certain measures which the very tyrant Hiero had declared to be criminal. He does not hesitate to proclaim that present-day dictators are tyrants without regarding this in the least as an objection to their rule. As for reverence for legitimacy, he has none (S, 198).

Kojève's Science is amoral or "value neutral," and it is for this reason that we might feel reserve towards his thought. Can we really take seriously the idea that historical acts or "moral" acts are justified, in retrospect, by their success in "history" or by their ability to endure objectively and to perpetuate history? Similarly, are the practical consequences of Kojève's

(31) Ibid, 86.

thought not a telling indicator of the truth of his philosophy? The "end of history," Strauss writes,

would be most exhilarating but for the fact that, according to Kojève, it is the participation in bloody political struggles as well as in real work or, generally expressed, the negating action, which raises man above the brutes. The state through which man is said to become reasonably satisfied is, then, the state in which the basis of man's humanity withers away, or in which man loses his humanity.... [Indeed] is this not a hideous prospect: a state in which the last refuge of man's humanity is political assassination in the particularly sordid form of the palace revolution (S, 223-24)?

The question Strauss brings to the fore is indigenous to the conflict between ancients and moderns. It questions the adequacy of an insensitive, mechanistic "science" as a perspective from which to evaluate the human condition. As Ellul pointed out earlier, modernity is generically defined by its faith in science, by its commitment to the ability of science to resolve not only technical problems but definitively human problems, problems traditionally conceived to be beyond the scope of technical or "means-ends" rationality. This faith, as Ellul illustrated in Chapter One, has brought about a new human predicament: means-ends rationality has today infiltrated the noetic or originally nontechnical domain of human cognition, the ordering of the psyche and of society; the ends of individual and

of political action are today given. The culmination of this technical means-ends rationality within the entirety of modern human being manifests in the modern state, the final vestige of modern technology Ellul says is necessary to effect closure of the technological system, what Weber referred to as the "iron cage" of technological rationality. Yet the deficiency of this rationality is borne out in its insensitivity towards and inability to satisfy human need, or in the case of the philosopher, the inability to satisfy human inquiry. Are we ready to accept, Strauss asks, that Kojève's Science exhausts all there is to say about human being? Is there not perhaps something more to say, something that reveals itself in nonscientific discourse, in, say, poetry? Is science not devoid of onto-poetic content?

Perhaps, Strauss suggests, this is why science and its two most common guises in modernity, historicism and positivism, are philosophically and humanly hollow: they obfuscate the difference between matter and animacy, perpetuating a humanity that is not only in need of what Hans Jonas has called "an ethics for the technological age," but is incapacitated from acquiring the sensitivity necessary to produce and to appreciate such an "ethics."

Edward Said wrote on the last page of his study, Covering Islam: "[U]nderlying every interpretation ... is the choice facing the individual scholar or intellectual: whether to put

intellect at the service of power or at the service of criticism, community, and moral sense. This choice," Said maintained, "must be the first act of interpretation today, and it must result in a decision, not simply a postponement." (32) However, Strauss questions whether there is an even more primordial question than this to be asked: whether modern intellectuals or scholars are of a capacity to make such a choice, whether they are of a capacity to recognize such a choice, to act upon it when and if it should arise.

All efforts at creative thought or at criticism are premised upon the ability to do so. Yet it is doubtful, Strauss contends, whether such an ability can flourish in the modern age, wherein technical thought dominates. The problem concerns human instinct, and in this regard we might remember Nietzsche:

What a philosopher is, that is hard to learn because it cannot be taught: one must "know" it, from experience --or one should have the pride not to know it. But nowadays all the world talks of things of which it cannot have any experience, and this is most true, and in the worst way, concerning philosophers and philosophical states: exceedingly few know them, may know them, and all popular opinions about them are false. (33)

(32) Edward Said, Covering Islam (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 164.

(33) Friedrich Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), 139.

The modern question concerns, however, not only stupidity and the silence it induces. Although citizens in the universal and homogeneous state are educated monologically in the discipline of Science and are thus not, for a significant moment, likely to question its canonical orthodoxy, this fact of "homogeneity" is complemented by the further fact of geographic "universality." The universal and homogeneous state is universal as well as homogeneous, and it is in this sense that Strauss's reserve towards Kojève is most serious.

We might agree with Kojève that Hegel envisioned, "with his mind's eye," the dominant political ideal of generations to come, an ideal supreme "not only among those who," as Grant points out, "have recognized their debt to Hegel but among many who would scorn Hegel's philosophy." (34) Indeed, as Cooper points out, "[i]t is inconceivable ... that a serious modern political organization (including a conspiratorial secret one) would or could support a public order that denied liberté as the supreme good, that denied égalité in order to uphold a pretended aristocracy of blood, culture, gender, or even intellect, that denied that all humanity was one great fraternité." (35) However, the coming to be of the universal and homogeneous state is not yet determinate, as many skeptics of the modern age have

(34) Grant, op. cit., 88.

(35) Cooper, "What is Post-Modernity?," 17.

energetically pointed out. The fears of pessimism might still bear themselves and we are forced to consider the impending "silence," both of speaking and of acting, the completion of the technological omega, that began in antiquity, offers.

Strauss concludes the "Restatement" warning that it is reasonable to assume only a few citizens of the universal and homogeneous state, if any, will be wise. The consequence is that the "final tyrant" of this final, totalitarian state, will be an unwise man. Yet to secure his power, this last tyrant will be forced to "prove" the truth of the new science that has become universal. He will be forced to present "himself as a philosopher, as the highest possible philosophic authority, as the supreme exegete of the only true philosophy," and to claim that "he persecutes not philosophy but false philosophies." In their turn, the philosophers will be forced to defend the cause of philosophy and to avoid the tyrant's persecutions and purges. As Strauss suggests, "[e]verything seems to be a re-enactment of the age old drama. But this time the cause of philosophy is lost from the start." The perfectly efficient organizations of power possess "unlimited means for ferretting out, and for extinguishing, the most modest efforts in the direction of thought." Nature has been conquered and so with it has arisen "the completely unabashed substitution of suspicion and terror for law." Philosophy will be dead in a very literal sense. Kojève, Strauss says, would "seem to be right although for the

wrong reason: the coming of the universal and homogeneous state will be the end of philosophy on earth" (S, 225-26).

In conclusion, we can say that the problem of "tyranny and wisdom" is inconclusive, inviting speculation on the prospects both for future thinking and for future acting. Because it is inconclusive, the problem invites a further question: what does this inconclusiveness itself mean for future thinking and acting? Strauss and Kojève provide traditional replies to the question of what the penetration of technology throughout modern human being means. Strauss maintains it is essentially evil. Kojève maintains it is essentially "good" or at least necessary. Yet Strauss's and Kojève's conclusions remain inconclusive: they cannot know what the future will ultimately bear and they cannot therefore know whether technology will ultimately be "good" or evil. We must ask then what this inconclusiveness itself means for modernity and a posterity that will have to live into this future. Kojève's and Strauss's answers to the question are inadequate. Ultimately, they do not know enough to claim what they claim to know. Nor could they. The wisdom they claim to possess is impossible because it is speculative.

This impossibility means something to modern men, to modern thinking and to modern acting. The investigation of the next chapter will try to bring this meaning to light.

CHAPTER THREE

NIHILISM AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the first chapter of this thesis we examined Ellul's documentation of the extent of the penetration of modern human life by technology and primarily the sociological or "practical" implications this penetration has had. In the second chapter we examined two traditional interpretations of what this penetration has meant primarily to philosophy or to "theory" in light of the question: is it good or evil? In this chapter we examine some of the theoretical and practical consequences entailed by the indeterminate future of modern technology. This chapter clarifies the problem encountered at the ends of Chapters One and Two. In Chapter One we arrived at an impasse concerning primarily how men today should act (if it is possible for them to act any differently than they presently do), given the presence of a technology that has as many evil as good consequences. In Chapter Two we arrived at an impasse concerning thought about, or interpretation of, technology. The unanswerable question is: what does technology ultimately mean or, what is the account of it that correctly evaluates its manipulations of modern thinking and acting? Chapters One and Two culminated in the enucleation of a theoretical and a practical impasse.

In the first section of this chapter we discuss the theoretical or philosophical meaning of this impasse by an examination of some of the writings of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer.(36) Two questions are raised: (1) what does the indeterminate future that technology has produced imply for philosophy in particular and for modern thinking in general and (2) what does the definition of modernity that results from this analysis imply for modern ethical theory? That is, what does it suggest ethics will have to do to be taken seriously again and to find a new theoretical ground within the modern technological system? In attempting to answer these two questions I have drawn upon both Heidegger and Gadamer. I believe that in reply to these questions, the positions of Heidegger and Gadamer are consistent. Any conflicts or differences that Heidegger and Gadamer exhibit in other respects is not my concern here.

In the second section of this chapter, I outline Hans Jonas's ethical theory, illustrating how it has been developed upon the theoretical predicates provided by Heidegger and Gadamer in the first section.(37) Jonas's ethics outlines basic, minimal

(36) The primary texts I use in this first section are Heidegger's The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays (1977) and Nietzsche, vol. 4, Nihilism (1982), and Gadamer's Hegel's Dialectic. (For full references, see the table of abbreviations.)

(37) Jonas's ethics is contained primarily in his Imperative of Responsibility: in Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age (1984). (For full reference, see the table of abbreviations.) It is from this book that his ethical

criteria that he believes should guide future action and action-oriented thought. In this sense his ethics is not complete. It merely provides, as the subtitle of the Imperative indicates, an outline of the foundations upon which he thinks future ethical theory should build. Jonas's ethics, which is based upon, and complements, Heidegger and Gadamer, completes our analysis of technology in providing a provisional but practical or prudential "solution" to both the theoretical impasse involved with thinking about modern technology and to the practical or ethical impasse it fosters.

Heidegger and Gadamer address the problem of the impasse encountered at the end of Chapters One and Two by addressing their implied consequence, the question of silence or of nihilism, of what more there is possibly left to be said about the modern day, a final question posed by Strauss and Kojève. There are limits to Kojève's and Strauss's interpretation of modern technology. Technology may mean more to the human condition and in particular to philosophy. Jonas reveals what more technology means to ethics. Heidegger, Gadamer and Jonas, in combination, take us beyond the normative language of good and evil, rank and order, beyond the discourse and practice of modernity. Following them, we shall make an attempt at "overcoming," which, Heidegger says, "signifies: to bring

theory will be drawn in this section.

something under oneself, and at the same time to put what is thus placed under oneself as something that will henceforth have no determining power" (N, 223). The animating intention of this thesis has been to examine the impact of technology on modern human being. The reason for pursuing this objective has been to speculate on what might produce the requisite "turn," as Heidegger calls it, away from what Gadamer has termed "reason in the age of science." Accordingly, this chapter attempts to think beyond modern technology.

The Problem of the Way: Nihilism

What does it mean to attempt to think beyond technology to post-modernity? How is this to be achieved? What might wait at this as yet unknown and silent venue?

These are questions that must be answered if we are to understand technology. They are the seminal questions that I believe underlie and guide the thought of Heidegger and Gadamer. They invite speculation not only on the way beyond technology but, first, on the beginning of that way. Where do we begin to understand technology, to overcome its thinking and acting? What is this premise?

Heidegger replies that we begin here, with what is before us. And what stands at the door? Heidegger replies again: it is nihilism, and its author is the whole of history that has preceded us and that has been brought to light in the thought of

Friedrich Nietzsche. Modernity is nihilism. The first step to understanding modernity is to understand what nihilism is, to understand it, Heidegger says, as Nietzsche conceived it.

"Nihilism," Heidegger writes,

is the process of the devaluation of the uppermost values hitherto. If these uppermost values, which grant all beings their value, are devalued, then all beings grounded in them become valueless. A feeling of futility, of the nullity of everything arises. Hence nihilism, as the decline of cosmological values, is at the same time the emergence of nihilism as a feeling of utter valuelessness, as a "psychological state." Under what circumstances does the state arise? Nihilism "must enter on the scene," first, "when we have sought a 'meaning' in all events that is not in them." Thus a precondition for nihilism is that we seek a "meaning" in "all events"; that is, in beings as a whole. What does Nietzsche intend by "meaning"?...

By "meaning," Nietzsche understands "purpose" (N, 30-31).

"Meaning," for Nietzsche according to Heidegger, involves the imputation of a reason for everything, a purpose for every event or for every "being." Meaning, for Nietzsche, Heidegger declares, acquires the character of value. From the meaning established of something, derives its value or valuelessness. Meaning for Nietzsche, as purpose, is the psychological process in which sense is made out of the chaos of events, the imputation of reason to life, and the derivation therefore not only of the meaning of what is, of purpose or of purposes, but of value or of

values, of what something or a group of things are worth. Nihilism obtains then, first, where we seek "a 'meaning' in all events that is not in them," where we incorrectly impute reason or order to events or where events fail to correspond to the particular meanings or values we attach to them. "Nihilism as a psychological state, as a 'feeling' of the valuelessness of beings as a whole, 'arises secondly when one has posited a totality, a systematization, indeed any organization in all occurrences,' which is never realized" (N, 32). Nihilism obtains, second, when the whole or the totality of what is posited as the meaning of events--taken as a whole, constituting "life" or "world," collapses. Nihilism occurs where we fail to believe in any natural or religious order or when this ubiquitous order fails to correspond to reality, to "explain" the totality of events that confront us in the sense of making the "reason" or "purpose" of this totality it renders believable.

Nihilism, as Heidegger interprets Nietzsche, is what obtains not only when the purpose or aim of events is thought to be meaningless or when this aim or purpose appears to be nothing. It obtains also when on account of this meaninglessness or nothingness men lose faith in all purpose to life or when all devotion to such purpose appears to be naive or unrealistic. Nihilism, as failed "belief in a unity that pervades reality" (N, 33), begets homelessness, a lack of orientation or rootedness in the world.

Nihilism occurs, as Stanley Rosen has said, where "everything is permitted." "If everything is permitted, then it makes no difference what we do, and so nothing is worth anything.... [T]here is in such a case no justification for choosing either the value originally posited or its negation, and the speech of 'justification' is indistinguishable from silence." (38) Reason, in such a case, becomes indistinguishable from unreason and so the meaning or sense of speech becomes identical to non-sense. Faith in traditional religious or cosmological values dies, at the same time reason loses its sense, reflecting the emotional or "psychological" effects this an-nihilation of thought engenders. The consequence is a void of indeterminacy, a world devoid of responsibility or a world where responsibility, like "thinking," possesses no rational grounds. This is the theme of Heidegger's "The Word of Nietzsche: 'God is Dead'." Man becomes uncertain of himself, of his own value and of the value he has imputed to the world. His life becomes separated from what is necessary for its pleasant operation. Man becomes, as Nietzsche's Zarathustra once quipped, "a rope tied between beast and overman --a rope over an abyss. A dangerous across, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking back, a dangerous shuddering and stopping." (39)

(38) Stanley Rosen, Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), xiii.

(39) Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," in The

If to understand the essence of technology is, first, on Heidegger's terms, to understand nihilism, then we begin to understand technology's essence when we begin to appreciate the current absence of any transcendent source of human meaning or of purpose and what this means for modern human being. "The pronouncement 'God is dead' contains the confirmation that Nothing is spreading out. 'Nothing' means here: absence of a suprasensory, obligatory world" (QT, 61-62). Nihilism means men drift indeterminately without guidance in what they do. "The organizations of social life, rearmament in moral matters, the grease paint of the culture enterprise --none of them any longer reach what is."(40) Nor could they. For the foundations upon which such things as modern demands for cultural development and moral refurbishing build, Heidegger says, have been destroyed: the death of all transcendent sources of human meaning or of purpose engenders the death of all sources of human meaning or of purpose per se. This is what the "death of God" or "end of metaphysics" means for Heidegger. "It means the historical movement in which the essential possibilities of metaphysics are exhausted" (N, 148). Metaphysics as well as all philosophy takes on the character, under these circumstances, of utter

Portable Nietzsche, trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 126.

(40) Martin Heidegger, What is Called Thinking, trans. John Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 61-62.

subjectivity, delivering opinions that, as opinions, can ultimately be accepted or rejected by an act of arbitrary personal preference or will. Philosophy and morality, under such conditions, possess no necessary or objective ground, and nothing further seems available to be said about the meaning or purpose of human life except that one must function usefully within society and partake in the world historical movement of "progress" or of technological "becoming," a banal and unsatisfactory reply, Heidegger suggests, to individual and social questioning concerning the value of human life, of humanity's desire for "self-assertion" or for meaningful "will to power." Moreover, no reason can be given as to why men must behave this way. Morality in the modern age has become vacuous and philosophy cannot be taken seriously, even though it is a time most crucial that philosophy be taken seriously. Modernity is a time when tragedy and suffering dominate.

The question concerning the essence of technology invites, Heidegger argues, speculation on the essence of nihilism. Speculation on the essence of nihilism speaks to the "inessentiality" of modernity or that there is nothing essential to modernity except that it possesses nothing essential, nothing definitive that perseveres through time and that might serve as a source or "home" from which thinking might build, belief might develop. The question concerning technology, what modernity or modern being is, is essentially related to change. Change is

temporally defined: it occurs and receives its definition, is perceived, through time. To say that modernity possesses nothing essential is then to equate the essence of modernity to time. Being is time. The relationship between what modernity is and time is thus one of identity: modernity is, or being is, whatever character we perceive it to be within a particular time-frame, at some moment frozen within Time. From this premise that Being and Time are synonymous we must attempt to define the essence of technology.

When Heidegger says that "the essence of technology is nothing technological" (QT, 35), what he means is that the essence of technology is not only nothing technological, it is simply nothing, or its essence is inessentiality, change. This is why in the complete sentence from which the passage just cited was taken, Heidegger remarks: "Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it." The character we attribute to "technology" at some moment in time is never enough. For we no sooner define "technology" than that definition is rendered obsolete.

Truth concerning the essence of technology is, Heidegger suggests, heterogeneous. It is synonymous with identity and difference, attribute and nonattribute, essence and nonessence.

Technology and modernity, or being, in our day, possess this historically and philosophically novel trait: the manifestation or "unconcealment" of a truth that is perpetually in "movement." "In our comportment, we merely stand on the side of opposites: Being is for us the emptiest, most universal, most intelligible, most used, most reliable, most forgotten, most said. We scarcely even heed it, and therefore do not know it as an opposition to something else" (N, 194). Everything that is is opposed to what it is not, actuality to potentiality. Baboon's hearts and pieces of plastic and metal are potentially human hearts, as all that is is potentially what it is not.

As everything actual is still something that is potential or potentially something else, something to be changed, we grasp the essence of technology when we perceive its being or what it devolves as endless "standing-reserve."

Heidegger maintains that the "anthropological definition of technology" is not enough (QT, 5). "Technology is ... no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing" (QT, 12).

The revealing that rules throughout modern technology has the character of a setting-upon, in the sense of a challenging-forth. That challenging happens in that the energy concealed in nature is unlocked, what is unlocked is transformed, what is transformed is stored up, what is stored up is, in turn, distributed, and what is distributed is switched about ever anew.

Unlocking, transforming, storing, distributing, and switching about are ways of revealing. But the revealing never simply comes to an end (QT, 16).

It forever remains open. It remains open as the "challenging-forth," as the incitation to attempt, continuously, to understand anew. Today,

[e]verywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve. The word expresses here something more essential, than mere "stock." The name "standing-reserve" assumes the rank of an inclusive rubric. It designates nothing less than the way in which everything presences that is wrought upon by the challenging revealing. Whatever stands by in the sense of standing reserve no longer stands over against us as object (QT, 17).

Rather, it is indigenous to our way of living and of thinking. The standing-reserve constitutes both subject and object in being the content or modality of our essence. To understand ourselves, to achieve self-awareness, Heidegger says, requires then appreciation of the standing-reserve, the technological "becoming," predominant in our day. "We ... name that challenging claim which gathers man thither to order the self-revealing as standing reserve" (emphasis added) (QT, 19). Elsewhere, Heidegger asks: "Is not any interpretation of man and therefore of the history of human being always only the essential

consequence of the respective 'essences' of truth and of Being itself" (N, 139)?

Organization of everything, including humans, is the hallmark of technology. Technology organizes everything to stand by to be used. Standing by to be used, everything stands by on reserve because how nature's energy will be unlocked is undecided. What human and non-human resources are used for remains unknown because, as we saw in Chapter One, the problems technology presents to us always change and therefore, so too, the way in which resources are used for its purposes. Although we can know what these resources will be presently used for, both the manner and therefore meaning of their use evolve. The final consequence of even the most primordial act is still unknown.

As everything is organized, or as technological ordering is total yet undecided, human life in its entirety is meaningless. Man is forced to define the meaning of his activity within the context of change. He must build philosophical constructions that interpret the world and that house meaning, providing human activity a purpose for what it does, within this incompleting context. But, philosophical constructions become eclipsed by, because unable to explain, new events. Always only temporary, they are replaced by ersatz constructions: the "interpretation of man" or of his "history" is always only the "respective essences of truth." Truth is anthropological because man, the interpreter, sets its standard. Interpretation as an ongoing

reacquisition of tradition that proceeds into infinity, man is moved to the "challenge" to expand the language that reflects his condition. Wed to the past as the product of generations, language is wed to the past also as the mode of explanation that links past to present events and foretells of an ineffable future. Reason looks back to establish the ratio of what would otherwise be a chaos of experience. Logic is anamnestic. It cannot ascertain the future but only predict it. There can be no comprehension of History in, for instance, Kojève's sense. All comprehensive explanations, on Heidegger's reading, are frauds. The "end of history" is one of the multitude of philosophical constructions or houses of being that sate the will to dominate the world by an Idea. Fitting the world to the Idea, such constructions speak truth rather than let truth speak. Kojève, on Heidegger's reading, is as much a theologian as Strauss.

Truth in Heidegger's sense can never be complete. Meaning is transitory and never finally meaningful. At best, all we can do, as Rosen has suggested, is live into "an unknown and unknowable yet hoped-for future." (41) Interpretation never stops, as Kojève argued it did, even if the ongoing revelation of events reveals nothing new. Kojève proclaims philosophy in an ideological guise. He would prevent us from standing by to

(41) Rosen, op. cit., 140.

receive the new meaning that is always potential as long as all men are not yet dead and can still act.

Turning to our question concerning the essence of technology, we may conclude that the essence of technology, on Heidegger's reading, is nothing technological or essential, is captured in the concepts of "change" or "standing-reserve" or in the potential to become something other than what it presently is or in the identity between Being and Time. All of these phrases are, according to Heidegger, equivalent.

The concept of truth, like the essence of technology, is rendered mutable, on Heidegger's reading. It too is equivalent to Time. Gadamer, in a way similar to Heidegger, echoes: "That of the similar which is dissimilar, the changing, is the truth" (HD, 46). The "true world ... is both the truth projected as an ideal and its own perversion" (HD, 49). "We must ... grasp that the 'inverted world' is in fact the real world ... [that] abstract universality of the law and its pure instances are not present in it. That means that there is life in [this world] which maintains itself in infinite change, in the continuing differentiation of itself from itself" (HD, 53).

Recalling the argument of Chapter One, our definition there of modernity as "technological" meant that technology is the underlying generic and determinative feature of modern human being: technology is the constant factor within the modern human condition that precipitates the infinite change that renders

endless personal and social disorder, continuously altering man's personal and social environment. Modern problems are technological problems that require technological solutions.

At the level of theory or "psychology," this infiltration of technology produces two effects: (1) a mutable concept of "truth," and (2) the end of the positing of "self-certainty" or of "value," the end of thinking, Heidegger and Gadamer suggest, in its traditional mode, in the "lawgiving" or "human" ordering of all "reality." The ability of technology to change all that is to what it currently is not, only realized in its implications through the modern practical revelation of it, Heidegger says, has the theoretical repercussions of unveiling the "subjectivism" of all philosophy to the present.

This means that truth not only has become mutable in modern times or simply what we make of it, but that it has been such throughout all history and that, as Nietzsche has said, this imposition of "will to power is, the ... 'eternal fooling' ... the eternal recurrence of the same, which posits no indestructible aims, but merely 'skims goals on its way'" (N, 236-37). Philosophy, up to the present, which Nietzsche in the first paragraph of Beyond Good and Evil called "dogmatic," is an ongoing tradition of delusion, an eternal fooling that has taken shape as an endless but fruitless attempt to build immutable systems of thought, securing human meaning or value through imposing a humanly contrived vision of the world.

upon all that is external. Philosophy till now has been anthropocentric, and to speak colloquially, "all too human."

The inadequacy of all such attempts at "humanization" is revealed, Heidegger says, in the perpetuity of philosophy, the continual evolution of new systems of thought that secure and have secured human meaning within the world. The infinite curiosity about all that unfolds before us is never completely satisfied and "the mode of subjectivity" in which "man searches high and low in the midst of beings, seeking means of securing his certainty, in all cases merely testifies that in the history of its default Being keeps to itself with its unconcealment" (N, 238). Gadamer and Heidegger agree: all systematic constructions unable to accommodate the anomalies the passage of time renders or that impose an order upon the world that fails in its "universalizing law" to account for the unaccounted and unaccountable, merely testify to the dearth not only of all previous or "historical" philosophical constructions but to the insufficiency of applying "logic" or unity or law to all that is.

Logic, Heidegger says, "is an imperative, not to knowledge of the true, but to the positing and tidying up of a world which we shall then call true." Logic has been "conceived as command and a form of command; that is, as an 'instrument' of will to power." And, in agreement with Nietzsche, Heidegger maintains, "'[l]ogic does not stem from the will to truth'" (N, 132), but

from (subjective) desire to impose a personally, which is to say, limited or "humanly," contrived vision upon the world. Logic stems, in other words, from will to power. "Every interpretation of the world, be it naive or calculated, is a positing of values and thus a forming and shaping of the world according to the image of man.... [T]hat valuation which acts on the basis of insight into the origin of human values and so completes nihilism must explicitly understand and will man as lawgiver" (N, 83). Nietzsche, Heidegger believes, explicitly understood and willed man as lawgiver. It was the role of the overman to overcome the tradition's objectionable practice of ordering the chaos of events according to a universal law or logical pattern. If it is to escape the fraud of "tidying up a world which we shall then call true," a philosophy for the future will have to leave the chaos of events intact. It must attempt to explain the world without ordering it. Ordering the world simply satisfies the desire to make sense of an otherwise senseless world. Such philosophical acts of ordering are useful but they are not truthful. Impositions of the will upon the world, they are episodes of power. To be a modern philosopher, one must not order the world in explaining it. One must dig deep and not merely "skim" the contradictions that manifest upon the application of a theory to the world of events. One must, Heidegger tells us, be an archaeologist. The difficulty of realizing such a challenge is obvious.

In distinction from Heidegger, Gadamer, like Kojève, credits Hegel, not Nietzsche, with bringing traditional thought to an end. "Hegel brought to its completion the development of traditional logic into a transcendental 'logic of objectivity' --a development which began with Fichte's 'Doctrine of Science'" (HD, 99). Hegel immanentized traditional thought, attributing a logic to history and thus bringing the meaning or reason of what is to this world. Hegel denied the possibility of finding meaning in a transcendent order. Exhausting the possible methods of applying logic to our world, Hegel completed, Gadamer contends, the tradition of thought, dating back before Greek antiquity, that conceived truth as homogeneous; with Hegel arrives the culmination of that thinking that conceived truth to be consonant with the law of noncontradiction. It is in Hegel's dialectic that the question concerning the conflict between truth and method, disorder and order, reason and madness, finally unfolds.

According to Gadamer, Hegel immanentized traditional logic, providing a meaning to history or to the apparent chaos of historical events. He also changed the concept of truth: truth evolved through time as the agglomeration of mediations between historical and philosophical contradictions, between contradictions in activity and contradictions in thought. The "objectivity" of Hegel's logic, as Kojève remarked in Chapter Two, posited truth as what concretely revealed itself within

history and perservered through time. Yet unlike Kojève, Gadamer maintains that the implications of Hegel's dialectic unveils the necessity both to overcome it, to reject the closure of thought it imposes under the auspices of Science or Objectivity, and, at the same time, to retain Hegel's "evolutionary" concept of truth.

Hegel's logic indirectly points beyond itself, since Hegel's turn of speech, 'the logical' ... indicates that the essential impossibility of completing the concept is acknowledged by him. 'The logical' is not the quintessence or totality of all determinations of thought but the dimension which underlies all posited determinations of thought (HD, 95).

"The logical" is simply man making sense of, or rendering coherent, the disorder that confronts him every day in living. Yet, as Heidegger says, this rendering coherent, or application of logic, simply "tidies up a world which we then call true;" it homogenizes the heterogeneity of events that is, Heidegger and Gadamer suggest, the real world or true being. We recognize this fact --this "fooling," in the realization, Gadamer says, that despite all efforts at systematizing or rendering coherent everything that is, there always remains something more to be found, something always left unsaid.

This, what Heidegger and Gadamer refer to as the eternal "forgetfulness" or "unconcealment" of Being, is both the challenge to, and tragedy of, modern thinking. The infinite

openness, which begets indeterminacy and insecurity, has not only become recognized as a banal epistemological fact, but the feeling that there is nothing left to be said because everything said always leaves something unsaid, is always something inadequate, has resulted in an almost complete oblivion toward the meaning of modern affairs by a dismembered and disoriented public. "[E]ach projection of universal history has a validity that does not last much longer than the appearance of a flash momentarily cutting across the darkness of the future as well as of the past as it gets lost in the ensuing twilight. That is," Gadamer says, "the proposition of hermeneutical philosophy that I dared to defend against Hegel." (42) Gadamer suggests that all accounts of universal history or accounts that attempt to be "comprehensive" or "uni-total," to exhaust everything that can be said about the human predicament, are vain because are eventually revealed anachronistic or incomplete; "there is essentially no limit to the experience of being." (43)

Like Heidegger, Gadamer believes man stands on, and as, the line between past and future and cannot know everything. As part of an unfinished continuum he can acquire only piecemeal

(42) Hans-Georg Gadamer, Reason in the Age of Science, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1983), 61.

(43) Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1977), 238.

knowledge, knowledge that as piecemeal cannot be systematic. In the absence of systematic knowledge, any logic to history or to events cannot be known. Our explanations, if we are honest, can never have a conclusion. There exists no necessary connection between the elements of the kaleidoscope of events because we cannot know all events. Gadamer's invitation to do hermeneutics is like Heidegger's invitation to stand by. It is a proposition to attempt to understand each event as the product of a chaotic, unrelated series of occurrences the logic or relatedness of which could only be conclusively known when history no longer existed, when all men had died, and there was no longer any possible action left because no one would ever act again. With no conclusions, there are no final meanings to the world. Logic may be imputed to nature, the ecumene or to history but it never satisfies human inquiry. When man, and that includes his intellect, stops moving he is, as Hobbes has said, dead. Truth is necessarily heterogeneous because the meaning of events, never settled, contradict one another. All meanings are equal litigants on the battlefield of discourse. At best we may recognize a progression to events but not their completion. Systematic knowledge is impossible and philosophy, as the quest for wisdom, is tragic.

This seems like nihilism, where speech is equivalent to silence and the acts of devils are indistinguishable from the acts of gods. Compensation, however, is found in the singular

fact Heidegger and Gadamer agree upon: the fact of time. We can speak intelligently about time because this is the one fact that joins the links of history: philosophy, as Hegel said, is tied to events (even if only to the primordial event of thinking); we are just never certain how it is so tied because all men have not yet died. There is no structure or order to the phenomenal and noumenal. All there is, so Gadamer and Heidegger tell us, is time.

Foresaking order, doubting it, all rank and order, Gadamer and Heidegger tell us, have been annihilated by the seamless web of interrelationships between things and persons that move and change as they proceed into an ongoing horizon of transformation. Order is denied because eventually it must deform the real world of events to make them fit into the imaginative or philosophical construction that explains them.

Alternatively, if the philosophical construction does not conform to the world of events, the world of events can be made to conform to the philosophical construction. This is known as ideology or where ideas make the world. Technology provides the philosopher's epigones the means to make the world conform to the philosopher's imaginative constructions. Technology provides something new because for the first time in history man possesses the power to make truth.

This danger was the practical concern or definitive political element of the dialogue between Strauss and Kojève in

Chapter Two. Strauss cautioned there of the possibility inherent in Kojève's science to become socially or publically "complete" under the auspices of a totalitarian regime bent on eclipsing present reality, replacing it by the sublimated, yet unrealized, reality of Hegelian science. We know of the millions of deaths inflicted by men upon other men that is the signature of the twentieth century and that have been, as they still are, borne under the duplicities of liberty, fraternity and equality. We are also familiar with the gulags, the concentration camps, and the various other activities of the East intended to eliminate the false philosophies of those who think pre-historically; we are familiar also with the more subtle forms of manipulation in the West by which nonconformist individuals are integrated into the system of science Kojève described. The political movement Strauss spoke of has been under way for some time. Whether it will culminate in the apogee he prophesized with its elimination of thought and spontaneous action we need not here consider. What he wants us to recognize is that there exists a danger, one not yet completely realized.

Heidegger and Gadamer suggest that in the absence of a technological order that is finally determinate, there is still room to think. Thinking must occur as despair and boredom mark the philosophic project that married technique to reason. The practical effects of this project we examined in the first chapter. Why such a marriage was philosophically and politically

necessary Kojève argued in Chapter Two. However, we found Strauss to remind us at the end of Chapter Two that we can judge a philosophic project not only by its analytic coherence but by its political consequences. The truth of Kojève's words are also to be found in the ensuing deeds that are justifiable within the technological system. Some of these deeds may be none too palatable to our tastes, to say nothing of our convictions. When we realize what the wedding of Kojève's knowledge to the elements of power may produce, we are less than enthusiastic about the magical resolution to the problem of philosophy and wisdom his science provides. The emancipation of philosophy, achieved through the reconciliation of eternity by comprehension of natural cosmic Time, which produces Wisdom, may provide an apology for the abominations of the twentieth century, but this consolation is coeval with the superordination of a mechanistic, insensitive, inanimate projection upon the world that dirempts man from his humanity, mortifying him through the science of cybernetics.

The offensive and unnatural character of Kojève's science, which Strauss documented, provided us a hint, in Chapter Two, of the direction our analysis in Chapter Three should take. What more could technology mean to the modern condition than Kojève and Strauss provided and where could refuge be found, if anywhere, from its imaginative and sociological-political impositions? As shocked as we were by Kojève, we could not find

refuge in Strauss. As moderns we have eclipsed the philosophy of nature and the ecumenic aspirations of Christian theology. Kojève and Strauss, providing meanings for modern technology, could only be surrogates that temporarily quelled our questioning unrest.

Our questioning led to the problem of nihilism. Heidegger and Gadamer told us that modernity is nihilism, where there is no meaning to events because there is no transcendent or historical order to the world. The significance of the world is not so much how the world looks to man but how man makes the world look. Men in their freedom are free to transform the world to any projected image. Recognizing no limits and no rules that would be a constraint to their action, all ensuing order that results from these projections is merely anxiety and alienation extending itself. The original wonder and inquisition that was indigenous to exploring the secrets of nature and history, have been lost by the insurrection of technology. The experience of reality, participated in and explored by the likes of Strauss, his predecessors and epigones, has been transformed into a relentless assertion which seeks to control this participation and exploring by eliminating it. This is what Kojève and his epigones do. They do not turn back to a time bygone and irretrievable. In the ensuing chaos and disorder that results from the denial of "nature" and the ecumene, man, as in the case of Kojève, creates an order and imposes it. Of course, Kojève himself does not

impose the order. He merely describes, so he tells us, the processes of historical necessity. This description, however, does not experience the world but loses touch with it. In the commitment to its assertion of its own self image, it shields itself from all possible meanings and all possible questions that may be reasonably asked but that do not fit into the scientific plan. Kojève sought philosophy in order to close it off by eliminating the desire that generates it. Boredom necessarily follows the extinction of desire, and we cannot take seriously the idea that there is no more meaning to modern or post-modern events. Hence the impasse we arrived at at the end of Chapter Two.

In the present chapter, Gadamer and Heidegger added to our analysis that there is no transcendent or historical order to the world, as revealed in the conquest of nature and the ongoing process of change. We recognize all surrogate orders as the impositions or consequences of will. Meaning is simply what we make of it. All meanings are equally meaningful as the product of men, which is synonymous with equating meaning to non-meaning, or sense to non-sense. With no meanings that can be determinate, philosophy per se is abandoned. The dominant sentiment today is resignation. We know this as nihilism. Led to Heidegger's and Gadamer's conclusion, to take up philosophy again, we must doubt all orders in our efforts to find a new ground for thinking that is not a fraud or "fooling" and that will not succumb to the fact

of change. The problem here is that we cannot erect a new order. Such a consequence would merely represent another episode in the denial of the world, which as the panoply of incongruous events, reduces to a rank and order only when we get tired of thinking.

Most people think like Kojève and believe contemporary society to be the apogee of thought and fullest expression of man's humanity and freedom. Heidegger and Gadamer do not provide us much help in our distaste for Kojève's science because their interpretation of modernity is reduced to the unsatisfying identification of being with time. If the logic of events is not rhythmical or a completed, unilinear continuum, where can thinking begin to search for a new ground? Does not the denial of wisdom or of the possibility of complete speech reduce to the equally unsatisfactory consequence of an infinity of fragmented discourses or, as Rosen has said, endless speech or chatter? The emancipation of man from the restrictions of medieval life and its symbolic representations, which culminates in the totalitarianism of the system of science, would seem to invite the question: do the traditional answers Strauss and Kojève provide us to the question concerning the meaning of modern political life exhaust all possible answers that can be given about political life per se?

The fact of time that Gadamer and Heidegger assert, that is that Truth has yet to unfold and History has yet to end, should be understood as a psychological proposition. The desire to

think, as the desire to speak, is perpetual. The attempt to eliminate it, as Kojève does, is synonymous with attempting to eliminate the highest attribute or definitive element of man. It offends our good taste. Moreover, if the questioning unrest that generates philosophy constitutes the search for, and symbolization or articulation of, experiences common to men, then the infinite openness or incompleteness of the process of questioning, which Heidegger says is the piety of thought, is coeval with what it is to be human and to live in the world. Kojève's absolute Science would make people dead. Eliminating desire, closing off knowledge by completing it, Kojève seeks to put an end to the exhaustive process of living and asking questions. In the confusion and anxiety that obtain in modern life, the reconciliation of the disorder, suffering and boredom of the present with the knowledge, satisfaction and elimination of desire Kojève promises, can only be a temporary palliative that allows us to overcome, by understanding, the liberal and conservative, East and West, projects of imagination that are incorporated within the System of Science and that would have us otherwise live under their necessities. Kojève's System of Science, which completes the ethos of "progress," compels us to look forward to an ineffable beyond.

Such a looking-forward requires some direction. In order to arrive at the sought-for answers one must know what kind of

questions should be asked. When one stands at the precipice one does not leap before trying to build a bridge.

The bridge Heidegger and Gadamer construct for us is the recognition that in the plurality of meanings that unfold to reveal the common experiences of men through time, the meanings become meaningless or mean nothing. Modernity is marked by the absence of belief in anything, as the manifold of incongruous events do not seem to be reducible to any logic and no compensation can be found in any traditional hierophanies as all of these have been eclipsed. People are confused. Older people are shocked by the taboos younger people are willing to violate without reservation. Younger people are bored but distracted by videogames, alcohol and the activities of the night, and thinking is quelled. The prospects of monotony and anonymity that those who do think experience at the thought of participating as a jobholder in the technological order moves them to seek refuge outside the order. Led to doubt it, the new ontological ground that is sought, as Heidegger and Gadamer said, cannot be found. There obtain no grounds for responsibility because there are no grounds. Individuals are helpless to alter the course of their society and so action in the public realm is foresaken for animating play in the private realm. "Philosophy and religion," as Grant has said, "can be allowed to be perfectly free because

their conclusions are perfectly private."(44) The question unfolds: where might we find a ground for thinking and acting that does not lead us back into the entropy of technological life or recognizes what this entropy means and does not try to re-order it but eschews it, finding a ground within it that might lead us without?

The Imperative of Responsibility

For Jonas, an answer to the foregoing question lies in the implications of Heidegger's and Gadamer's thought. The fact of time means that any interpretation of the world that asserts the existence of a hierarchy of good or of any order to events, historical or otherwise, cannot be believed or acted upon by a modern technological public. The prophetic eschatons of "nature" and "history," with their imputations of logic to the chaotic, seamless web of acts, are dead in the public eye. The nemesis of "natural" and religious faith can serve only as the forgotten public base for the moral affirmations of justice. The dialectics of history have become identified with the anachronisms of method and the banal assertion of will with its offspring of atrocities in the East and South.

The annihilation of the traditional grounds for thinking and acting mean that the appeals of Ellul and Strauss for a return to

(44) George Grant, English-Speaking Justice (Toronto: Anansi, 1985), 37.

a "natural" state of life are vain. This is true at least insofar as their appeals are not confined to the academic gardens of philosophy and political science. The concept of the good may make sense to a limited number of people capable of imaginatively experiencing what it means or meant and who read Greek. To a dazed and disoriented public that forgets its past under the onslaught of the seeming intensity of events, appeals to some ancient notion of the good appear as reactionary nostalgia. Remembering the immediate and the personal, modern people forget the experiences of their fathers and grandfathers. The attempt to make them conform to some preordained faith or natural order that would leave them idle in recognition of eternal verities cannot be successful.

The traditional account of the good cannot help people understand the way things are. The older outlook of philosophy and religion held that justice is something that we do not measure and define through the way that we choose in freedom and with fate in our hands. Rather it was something by which we were measured and defined. The content of modern justice is rendered with a contradiction. Its foundations, provided by the Bible and classical philosophy, cannot be reconciled with an interpretation of the world increasingly wrought in terms of modern technological science. Today, the "theoretical differences in 'world views'," Grant has said, "are turned over to the domain of 'objective' scholarship, and this scholarship is carried out in

protected private provinces anaesthetised from any touch with what is happening to the content of justice in the heat of the world." (45) The content is twisted and distorted to meet the exigencies of technological life and in the process is lost to convenience.

The fact of time, on Jonas's reading, means that the orders of nature and of religion become shadows in the present that may disappear altogether. So too, the orders of history must fade in the minds of a public that forgets its past.

Jonas, in his latest work, The Imperative of Responsibility (1984), is concerned primarily with ethics and with the practical implications of modern thought. In construing an ethics for the technological age, Jonas argues, we must heed that consequence of Heidegger's and Gadamer's thought that speaks to the novel historical trait of political modes without order or social structures predicated upon the possibility of incessant new order. Predicated on the horizon of time, ethics today must look across, in temporality, to the future. It must, Jonas says, be stood on its side.

The inability to believe in transcendent orders, as we saw earlier, was coeval with the growth of the unintelligible multitude of meanings that technology and science harboured. Foresaken for the apocalyptic possibilities inherent in

(45) Ibid, 74.

technology with its variety of artificial promises, the abandonment of "nature," the ecumene and history, that is, the abandonment of all human ordering by some universal logic which rendered philosophy and religion matters of private, personal opinion, meant that ethics and philosophy became concerned with what Jonas calls a "horizontal," not a "vertical," horizon. Traditional thought was based upon unchanging "being." Ethics was "largely 'typical' ... conforming to precedent. In contrast with this, the cumulative self-propagation of the technological change of the world constantly overtakes the conditions of its contributing acts and moves through none but unprecedented situations, for which the lessons of experience are powerless" (I, 7). And this applies to the experiences of history as well as to the experiences of nature and revelation. The artificial world of technology is the product of an ever-changing realization or "becoming" of the imaginative projections of freedom acting within, but also into the world. This process requires, as we saw in Chapter One, the antecedent condition of a man emancipated from traditional rituals and taboos. The consequence is nihilism or the rejection of the possibility of thought reasoning with, and about, itself; all meanings are equal and the public do not, as a public, believe in anything. Opinions are consigned to the realm of privacy and justice is increasingly forced to capitulate to the demands of technology.

What this means at the level of ethics is that the notion of "becoming" or of technological destiny cannot be finally closed off by any system, such as Kojève's, that claims to have conclusively resolved the meaning of modern activity and thought. Such an approach would be dangerous. Technology, Jonas writes, not only "renders obsolete the tacit standpoint of all earlier ethics that, given the impossibility of long-term calculation, one should consider what is close at hand only, and let the distant future take care of itself" (I, 34). The "changed scale and content of human action have put the whole human enterprise at [technology's] mercy" (I, 118). Faced with the "quasi-eschatological potentials of our technological processes, ignorance of the ultimate implications becomes itself a reason for responsible restraint --as the second best to the possession of wisdom itself" (I, 22). Wisdom cannot be known, as Heidegger and Gadamer told us, because the ultimate meaning of the ongoing process of modern events is still only a contingency. The modern faith in science is predicated upon a pre-scientific wager that no novel developments will arise that cannot be incorporated into the system of science or that might jeopardize it. However, the very "quasi-eschatological potentials" of technology speak to such a possibility. There exists the danger that in our infatuated glorification of the potential of technology, we might overlook the possibility of a significant change of events that will be caused by technology but will not be explained or

resolved by it. The product of an unforeseen and inexplicable series of occurrences, the possibility of such a development foretells of the ontological ground of the required new ethics Jonas seeks to enuciate.

Jonas's "imperative of responsibility" is generated from the singular fact of nihilism and the disorder of the modern psyche. In the midst of such disorder and the impenetrability of the modern mind to any structure that would hold it rigid in respect of some external order, all that can be hoped is that the species be preserved. This is the singular ontological ground that obtains where there exists no order to events or where we seek to found a new mode without order. Jonas's ontological ground is the imperative of responsibility because the ontic paradigm that allows us to bridge the alleged chasm between the "is" and the "ought," between the plain facts of the world and what we ought to do as actors in the presence of those facts, is the preservation of the ability to act. Ontologically, this is all that can be established where all hierophonic orders have been eclipsed. Pragmatically, this is all an anomic, estranged, brutalized, classless mass could possibly recognize as necessary to the preservation of its fatuous life.

Jonas emphasizes, "only that has a claim that makes claims --for which it must first of all exist" (I, 38). Activity, not to mention ethical activity, or any assignment of obligation, is predicated upon the fact of existence: one must be alive to act

and to receive assignments of obligations. Ethics only makes sense to a humanity that exists. The yet-to-be-born and the dead cannot be held responsible for anything.

The annihilation of order is the definitive element of the modern age. It is coeval with the only premise that does not have to be hypothetically granted amidst the disorder and denial of a society that shuns the validity of any metaphysical fiats, such as faith in an eternal order. "Put epigrammatically: the possibility of there being any responsibility in the world, which is bound to the existence of men, is of all objects of responsibility the first" (I, 99). In a world that we cannot order, the only ontological ground that can hold analytically, if not in substance, is the mere possibility of an ontological ground, namely life. What is needed

is an ontic paradigm in which the plain factual "is" evidently coincides with an "ought" --which does not, therefore, admit for itself the concept of a "mere is" at all. Is there such a paradigm? Yes, we answer: that which was the beginning of each of us, when we could not know it yet, but ever again offers itself to the eye when we can look and know. For when asked for a single instance (once is enough to break the ontological dogma) where that coincidence of "is" and "ought" occurs, we can point at the most familiar sight: the newborn, whose mere breathing uncontradictably addresses an ought to the world around, namely, to take care of him (I, 130-31).

The premise of Jonas's ethics is then the imperative of responsibility, to look after the future, not only the future of the newborn but of the collectivity. It "is the future with which responsibility for a life, be it individual or communal is concerned beyond its immediate present" (I, 106).

Why? Because technology commutes human obligation or duty from a nontemporal to a temporal horizon. "The new imperative invokes a different consistency: not that of the act with itself, but that of its eventual effects with the continuance of the human agency in times to come ... [O]ur imperative extrapolates into a predictable real future as the open ended dimension of our responsibility" (I, 12). The imperative of responsibility derives from the fact of technological power. What used to be tentative, enlightening plays of speculative reason, have been transformed today into competing blueprints for projects that extend long into the future and that change the very nature and scope of human activity. Ethics today must look beyond the immediate consequences of human intercourse, and attempt to consider the undetermined causal effects of technological projections. Responsibility moves to the centre of the ethical stage because its very object, humanity, is jeopardized by the remote effects of technical manipulations. We can no longer assume the succession of generations, the preservation of the environment, the survival of the race. Technology has changed all of this. As we continue to act into

the world in realization of our freedom, responsibility increasingly becomes a correlate of power. As a correlate of power, responsibility demands foresight. "We thus need a science of hypothetical prediction, a 'comparative futurology'" (I, 26). This is the practical requirement in a world dominated by the danger of self-annihilation.

To return to our discussion about traditional conceptions of ethics, we can say that the metaphysical lacunae that persist in religious and natural concepts of order, their varieties of eternity requiring faith to be believed in, Jonas overcomes by a secularized metaphysics of doom. The imperative of preserving the mere possibility of life on earth is the obvious and axiomatic ground for any thinking and for any acting. It is also the only ontic paradigm that can be developed in the presence of the disorderly, romantic irrationalism of contemporary society. In its ideological rage, contemporary society is impervious to any discussion about anything except perhaps the threat to its own existence.

The acclamations of systematic science are also overcome by Jonas's postulate of responsibility. The pre-rational stratum of desire, which is, essentially the desire to master nature, and is indigenous to the various notions of historical progress, Hegelian, Marxist and the like, cannot serve as an appropriate foundation from which to develop the needed "comparative futurology." The circumscription of a world pre-defined, where

reason is conceived as a human project or as the instrument of a human project, does not permit of any considerations that might significantly deny technological development. Threatened "by catastrophe from the very progress of history itself, we surely can no longer trust in an immanent 'reason in history' ... to speak of a self-realizing 'meaning' of the drift of events would be sheer frivolty" (I, 128). Also, historicism can provide no good grounds for moral activity. For "[i]nvocation of historical necessity alone will not get anyone to raise a finger" (I, 116). The quixotic aspirations of socialist, liberal and capitalist ideologies should therefore be denied.

It is particularly upon the classical notion of morality that Jonas focuses his attention. He emphasizes that "the political wisdom of the ancients does not lend itself to imitation or assimilation" (I, 124). Ethics, as was said, has been commuted from what Jonas calls a "vertical" to a "horizontal" horizon. If the human condition is conceived as remaining static, essentially unchanged and unchanging, and if the accidents of becoming, in which the unchanged and unchanging are immersed, are conceived to be essentially irrational or uncreative, purposeless, or otherwise a nontranscending process, then man should, if he is rational, pursue the "vertical," which is to say, the eternal or unchanging, not the "horizontal," that is, the changing or temporal. This is, Jonas says, how traditional thinking and activity was conceived. It sought to

emulate what was good and immutable. The transient was imperfect. The intransient was not. Perfection, directed by eros, sought eternity, the "substance" of the good-in-itself, not of this world or of the world of becoming and time. The world of becoming and time was to be transcended in a search that looked upward. The temporal, imperfect, did not contain what was essential. The intemporal did. "The Platonic eros, directed at eternity, at the nontemporal, is not responsible for its object. For this 'is' and never 'becomes'" (I, 125). Consequently, there is no responsibility to the future. The essential is contained in the immediate and intransient and this is what is cared for. The good man is the perfect man, the virtuous and the beautiful man.

In distinction from the classical notion, modernity finds the essential in time itself. To use a spatial metaphor, direction of the ethical quest is not upward, but forward, toward becoming, not into being. The ontological ground is not an unchanging eternity, but an ever-changing time. Immutability today is no longer a measure of perfection. Quite the opposite. We seek the essential in transience itself. It is in this sense that responsibility becomes dominant in morality. The eternal, unaffected by time, waits for beings to participate in it by way of an emulation that loves it and seeks its and that could not care less for the consequences of change. It is only for the perishable and changing that one can be responsible, for the

mortal in their mortality, threatened by corruption. As Jonas argues:

The Platonic position was clear: he wanted not that the eternal turn temporal, but that by means of the eros the temporal turn eternal ("as far as is possible for it"). This thirst for eternity is ultimately the meaning of eros, much as it is aroused by temporal images. Our concern about the preservation of the species, to the contrary, is thirst for temporality in its ever-new, always unprecedented productions, which no knowledge of essence can predict. Such a thirst imposes its own novel duties; the striving for ultimate perfection, for the intrinsically definitive, is not among them (I, 126).

As all that is ontologically left today is the fact of time, which denies all possibility of any natural essence to man or to the world, which denies that there is anything definitive of the modern age, asserting nihilism in its fullest; as our power over nature is enormous, the implications for morality are immeasurable and unclear, and this, Jonas says, is what occupies us. We are no longer concerned with pursuit of the eternal, the good or the unchanging. The best exemplar of this position was Plato, who still, Jonas argues, is "the mightiest countervoice to the ontology and ethic of modernity," because of the strength of his thought and "because his 'eros,' as the emotional incentive toward the good, is of all its competitors the one most determined by the object and least making a virtue of itself."

It therefore serves, Jonas says, as a model for conjuring recognition of the future as "a good and duty" among present agents (I, 125).

Why recognition of the future as a good and duty among present agents is necessary is linked to the fact of technological power. It is in transience itself that the essential today must be sought, the essential that perserveres as well as the essential that preserves. Why this perpetual and perpetuating element is responsibility is due to the magnanimity of technology. "Responsibility is a correlate of power.... When power and its constant exercise grow to certain dimensions, then not only the magnitude but also the qualitative nature of responsibility changes." The result is that "the deeds of power generate the contents of the 'ought'.... This reverses the usual relationship between 'ought' and 'can'.... [T]he ideal to be obeyed emerges in the process. Kant said: You can because you ought. Today we must say: You ought because you act --which you do because you can; your exorbitant capacity is already at work" (I, 128). Responsibility is the new moral imperative, in Jonas's view, not only because it is indigenous to the "natural" order of things, witnessed, say, in the "natural" disposition of individuals toward the caring for their young as well as in the general "tendency to be, ceaselessly at work in each of [nature's] creations" (I, 74). It is the new moral imperative also because of the power the actions of today have to foreclose

tommorrow. In our infatuated drive to reach the apex of human freedom, with its eclipse of necessity and accident, we must beware of the potentially ruinous consequences of our acts.

Jonas complements the ontic paradigm of responsibility with a pragmatically oriented "heuristics of fear." The theory of responsibility is predicated upon it being a correlate of power, demanding the exercise of foresight. The exercise of foresight, though, is an inadequate base for practice: the future cannot rely on the predictive abilities of humanity alone. In lieu of this, Jonas proposes the concept of a heuristics of fear where "the prophecy of doom is to be given more heed than the prophecy of bliss" (I, 31). The utopian dynamics of technological progress and the excessive magnitude of responsibility require reverence for, and knowledge of, the value of human life and the necessity for looking after a posterity that will have to bear the burden of any contemporary lack of prescience. Technology "needs no advocates in the Western world of the twentieth century: intoxication has taken its place.... In the headlong rush, the perils of excess become uppermost" (I, 203). Living

now constantly in the shadow of unwanted, built-in, automatic utopianism, we are constantly confronted with issues whose positive choice requires supreme wisdom --an impossible situation for man in general, because he does not possess that wisdom, and in particular for contemporary man, because

he denies the very existence of its object, namely, objective value and truth. We need wisdom most when we believe in it least (I, 21).

The central problem confronting a future-oriented ethics is kindling any moral interest: the crux of the current moral dilemma is not one of validation, for it is evident that, having stripped worldly "purpose" or worldly "power" from nature, the onus of responsible and purposive action must fall upon man; the crux of modern ethics is finding the way to render the new "purpose" purposive to a public that has lost all sense of purpose. Homo faber still harbours sentiment. The practical issue is a matter of transforming this sentiment into purposive moral interest. The current moral vacuum, and the melancholia it enshrines in the hearts of today's agents, is the vexing practical hurdle.

The catch is this: "On the one hand, we know more of the future than our pre-modern ancestors; on the other hand, we know less. More because our causal-analytic knowledge with its methodical application to the given is much greater; less, because we must deal with what is constitutionally a state of change" (I, 119). The dynamism of modern technology poses the twofold difficulty. On the one hand, there exists the necessity for responsible restraint in our activities, but on the other, we have annihilated virtually every possible ground from which discourse in favour of responsible restraint might derive its persuasiveness or validity. We are confronted with a strategic

impasse because "the very same movement which put us in possession of the powers that have now to be regulated by norms --the movement of modern knowledge called science-- has by a necessary complementarity eroded the foundations from which norms could be derived; it has destroyed the very idea of a norm as such" (I, 22). What "is in jeopardy raises its voice" (I, 139). Yet this voice remains essentially unheard.

In a milieu permeated by such wholesale normative destruction, an appeal would have to be made to a public constituency independently of that constituency's will: the initiative necessary to change modern attitudes en masse will, as Ellul pointed out in Chapter One, have to come from without, from a consolidated elite, disinterested with respect to the immediate exigencies that concern current political power, looking forward in confrontation with those who look only at what is present. To generate the required heuristics of fear would entail a violation of the principles of liberal society. The prospects are dim.

One ... aspect of the required new ethics of responsibility for and to a distant future is ... the doubt it casts on the capacity of representative government operating by its normal principles and procedures, to meet the new demands. For according to those principles and procedures, only present interests make themselves heard and felt and enforce their consideration. It is to them that public agencies are accountable, and this is the way in which concretely the respecting of rights comes about (as distinct from their abstract acknowledgement). But the future is not represented, it is not a

force that can throw its weight into the scales. The nonexistent has no lobby, and the unborn are powerless. Thus accountability to them has no political reality behind it in present decision-making, and when they can make their complaint, then we, the culprits, will no longer be there (I, 22).

Quasi-dictatorial or extra-democratic action is necessary. The threatening cataclysm, Jonas says, speaks to the "governmental advantages of any tyranny, which in our context one must hope to be a well-intentioned, well-informed tyranny possessed of the right insights." Ultimately the question is one of mechanics: "if, as we believe, only an elite can assume, ethically and intellectually, the kind of responsibility for the future which we have postulated --how is such an elite generated and recruited, and how is it invested with the power for its exercise" (I, 147)? As we found in Chapter One, a technocratic elite is beginning to consolidate within the modern technological system. Molding such a body with the temperament necessary to invoke the measures Jonas says are required to preserve and promote a healthy posterity is exasperated by the current existence of a technocracy that is little concerned with speculation and universally opposed to any policy restraining development.

In a word, there does not seem to be any solution to promoting a change in contemporary society at the most fundamental level of mind. Perhaps Heidegger's famous prophecy

is correct: only a god could save us. Jonas's minimal dictum of morality would seem overwhelmed by the eschatological potentials of a technology that promises to bear a euphoric state and which in its vow conceals the danger of its modes. The prophecy of bliss is the dominant ideology due to necessity: technology could not persist without it and the promises of the age have been partially fulfilled, fueling further hope that it will quell our dreams in realization of what it has fortuitously pledged. Indeed, it would be dishonest to deny the benefits technology has provided. Grant has asked: "Has it not been in the age of progress that disease and overwork, hunger and poverty, have been drastically reduced? Those who criticize our age must at the same time contemplate pain, infant mortality, crop failures in isolated areas, and the sixteen hour day." (46)

However, to the question asked: "Have we not overemphasized the threat of technology and underplayed its promise," Jonas replies, "no" (I, 203). Intoxication has taken its place. Amidst the exigencies of the dynamo, caution holds a superior rank to hope. The utopian ideal speaks to the limits of the tolerance of nature, to the conflict between utopia and physics. If there is little hope of a voluntary renunciation of technology, such a fate may force itself upon society from without. Tempering the modern will to dynamism may occur through

(46) George Grant, Lament for a Nation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 94.

a harsh reality. In the final analysis, the question to be asked is not how much man is still able to do but how much of his activity nature can stand.

Although overcoming the parochial focus of homo faber seems required at a time homo faber seems irrevocably parochial, the possibility of all impossibility to become possibility, Heidegger and Gadamer told us, is the hallmark of modernity. The unliklihood of swaying the modern mind in a direction sympathetic toward a prophetic eschaton of doom and predictive caution becomes acute liklihood in light of the unarticulated enmity toward this source of modern problems that Jonas says has been felt but till now displaced. What is new is the entropy now in motion and that may well bear a new outlook, if by no other way, on account of necessity. Although technology will not be abandoned altogether, both for reason of want and for reason of expediency, the impossibility of swaying modern thinking away from technology is, Jonas says, ultimately only a delicate contingency.

CHAPTER FOUR

TECHNOLOGY, REASON, MADNESS-DEATH

Had Pyrrus not fallen by a beldam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death? They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? Weave, weaver of the wind.

James Joyce

Ulysses

The philosophical vision that today hems the seam of hope and despair has, we have seen, done much to obscure the significance of scientific discovery and technological invention. The acceleration of technological accomplishments has focused attention on the future and the past has been forgotten. Man has become the source of the creation of good. Reflection has been sundered into the antinomies of aesthetic revery and scientific reason. Our awakening houses the hollow identification of a faculty of knowledge restricted in its operations to the phenomenal world of "history" and of biological nature. The proud and pendulous mood of the nineteenth century has shifted to

a mood of progressive anxiety and nausea of spirit. Moderns blink at decadence and wonder at the effects of global convulsions. We are led to suspicion of the simplicity and innocence of our vision.

Nietzsche preferred poetry to philosophy and so novelty to truth. The most important figure to transform historical decadence into the doctrine of human artistry, we find in his thought the modern identification of freedom with creativity. The identification of freedom with creativity is synonymous with the identification of the body as the locus of power. The instincts are always sincere. The authenticity of our sentiments is guaranteed in our sensations. Philosophy changes and becomes concerned with "material comforts" and elegance and bestiality are elevated. The new city of sows sees itself as the highest form of civilization as it is not only the product of human creation but its centurion.

What Nietzsche described with unparalleled force is the crisis of our time. In a world of man-made creations, where creativity sets the standard but where there exists no standard by which to distinguish between base and noble creations, the advocacy of freedom and creativity is itself debased. Nietzsche, like ourselves, was a victim of this reduction. Nature is identified with history, and so every instance of creation is both unique and eternally determined. The worthlessness of the ground of creation negates every creation of value. The poetic

world of technological development becomes exhausted by its poems and so with its own poetic activity.(47) The creators are tired and the identification of nature's glory with bodily pleasure, the development of man and his body as an historical poem, the egalitarian democracy where all sensations are as equally sincere as every other, where the plurality of opinions and plurality of interests battle on in futility because none in their equality can ever achieve victory, overcomes us. We retreat to privacy and to silence. Just as the mythical phoenix rises from the ashes of its own destruction, so too the great creators may be, as Nietzsche says, the great arsonists who burn the cities of decadence so that from their ashes may rise the supermen. The search continues for a mesiah that evaporated with the extinction of the light of God and the birth of the fox and the lion. Where now do we turn?

We began this thesis examining Ellul's account of technology. No longer are we natural creatures, we found, and no longer are such traditional categories of political analysis as political parties, the choice between a market or state economy, or even choices between alternative forms of state politically relevant. Rather, the global penetration and consolidation of technology implies a single, homogeneous end. Spontaneous human action is increasingly eliminated. Choice has been foregone.

(47) Cf., Rosen, op. cit., 198-99.

Political alternatives and the idea of political agents choosing freely between significant political "options" make little sense except to those too at home in the modern tradition to think.

As we found in Chapter Two, tyranny becomes the decisive political conclusion where we possess the power to overcome the necessities and accidents of nature. Human desire is no longer determined by nature but by marketing agents, and the technological complex that animates and sustains it. The danger exists of engineering the elimination of thinking and acting. We possess the means to do so, and where there are no rules to be obeyed and no limits to be revered, there is nothing to prevent us from implementing those means, no matter what. When reason is conceived as the instrument of a human project, we have no rational way of understanding the point of our success. We are unable to distinguish between the success or failure or the good or evil of our acts.(48) To assert the conclusion that techniques "work," that they palliate the pre-given ends of technological civilization where jobholders drum on in their piecemeal engineering of the system, is to say nothing of whether such work is reasonable or unreasonable, good or bad. In fact, we have lost any standard by which to make such a judgement.

We are led to doubt the ethic of progress. As Strauss intimated, considering the sequence of the logic of historical

(48) Cf., *ibid*, 56-57.

events, why is not the succession of the order of events only a matter of fortune and not necessity? George Grant has said: "The fact that events happen does not imply they are good. We understand this in the small events of personal life. We only forget it in the large events when we worship the future." (49) Such concepts as Kojève's "end of history" --in fact all such concepts of "progress," cannot be conceived independently of a pre-scientific vision that commits itself to its conclusion prior to the exhaustion of all events or all possible historical configurations that can be decided forever only when all history or all men have become corpses.

In Chapter Three, Heidegger and Gadamer established that the narcotic belief in progress is coeval with the definition of knowledge as power. Culminating in Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power, the sovereignty of reason becomes a species of poetry where all reason is identified with an imaginative projection of will. All thought is "value-laden" or the product of human subjectivity. The result is the equality of all speech or of all discursive systems. The various imputed meanings of the world, religious and secular, are all equally viable interpretations of it because there is no one standard by which to evaluate the truth or falseness of any one of the interpretations. The product of this, we discovered, is nihilism or the affirmative

(49) Grant, Lament for a Nation, 38.

belief in everything, which is equivalent to nothing. When no one believes in anything or when anything can be believed because beliefs are consigned to the realm of private, personal opinion, the only ontic paradigm that can guide action and thought is the mere possibility of there being an ontic paradigm. Life itself becomes the focal point, as Jonas said, where no transcendent or secular order can endure the metamorphic conditions of modern life. Yet, as we saw, the practical conditions of living within the dynamo make recognition of even this difficult. It is doubtful that within the eschaton of a panmechanistic drive, vitality and the preservation of generations can take precedence to progress. Risk is permitted because it lies at the heart of the modern vision and is necessary to its further perfection.

Before the era of imperialism, "there was," Hanna Arendt has said, "no such thing as world politics, and without it, the totalitarian claim to global rule would not have made sense." (50) We have, in this thesis, examined some of the conditions that have given rise to the possibility of a novel totalitarianism. It seems that to attempt to think outside the assumptions of the age is synonymous with madness, understanding by "madness" all speech that is not scientific or objective in its presuppositions. To deny science, the division between objectivity and subjectivity, between useful knowledge and the

(50) Arendt, op. cit., xxi.

private reveries of beauty and good, requires stepping outside the permanently established realm of truth. It is to condemn one's speech to the realm of silence. To think non-scientifically is, in principle, equivalent to insanity or mysticism. We are driven to the conclusion that to think, one must deny the division between reason and non-reason and search anew for a foundation that can corral a world that is yet without image. In the disjunction of experiences, where what is heard is only what the conspiratorial language of science permits to be heard, where the resonance of the differentiated, the distance set between the obsequies of sovereign reason and the silenced regions of its other side, obtains, the fugitives of experience with their imperfect words seek to be fixed in syntax. To bridge the nexus of experience with sense on the one side and the amorphous collection of unarticulated and incoherent (but nonetheless existent) experiences on the other, a new language is required. Such a language will have to be found outside science, in the realm of the other. The rapid extinction of the possibility of enucleating this required new language is correlative with the increasing growth of science and its monologue of reason. Totalitarianism, as the pursuit of global control, opposes philosophy as the search for the hidden amidst the opinions that today seek to be universal. Science, and its practical offspring of political imperialism, conflicts with philosophy. In the new world where the totalitarian claim to

global rule now makes sense and forces us to think in an unprecedentedly clear way about the conditions within which we live, and to think about the implications or prospects of those conditions, the philosophers must attempt to resolve the ambiguities that science determines.

The conclusion of technology speaks then to an interminable question, to the breach that inextricably links reason with madness, comprehension with confusion, life with incomprehensible death. The limitations of our growing scientific insight into the genesis, development, and betterment of life, with its concentration on enhancing the cosy pleasures, cannot obviate the need for thinking beyond our world. Perhaps it is only in the phenomenon of madness as well as in the phenomenon of death that we can find the way beyond the procrustean self-affirmation of our technology and liberalism. Death, in its immensity, can never be comprehended by human imagination or reason, but even so persists in compelling a response to its imponderability. It demands from us the same effort required to think beyond the division in mind that inflated the useful and forgot the noble, that elevated reason, identified with utility and power, and ushered to anonymity revery for the beautiful and the good. Today, the highest things are beyond reason. In our studies of coming-to-be and passing-away, of the course of natural and historical process, of the "order of nature" or of "history" --the laws and theories of motion, our prejudice invites

speculation. In the twilight of God and shadow of the beast, it seems we have lost all possibility of rooting our thought in any foundation that cannot be washed away by the sentiment that today denies all rank and order but that which we have reified. In a world where the reasons we are provided for what we do pale under the questions we ask, we still search for a turn away from that mode of thought that has established our derangement. Thinking through the silence of the divisions in our life, clouded by the reversible meanings we find, the sought for unity begins. If salvation is not to be found in what is heard, perhaps then it is in the subjugated mute institutions of our Western culture that thinking can again begin. Perhaps it is only in madness and in death that refuge from modern technology ultimately can be found. To use a traditional language, we can recall with Socrates that philosophy is the practice of death, and with the Psalmist that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The difficulty is to think both meanings together.

We arrive, then, at a conclusion that is inconclusive, that provides no solution to the problem of nihilism. There can be no solution. The interpretations of traditional, modern and post-nihilist political theory exhaust what is possible to say about the meaning of modern technology. We search for a language that will capture the meaning of technology we have yet to find and that cannot be expressed in current language. Our interests are pointed in the direction of the source where such a language

will derive. It will be the product of previous language, but if it is to satisfy our inquiry, it will contain a novel element that will justify us in breaking our silence. We can hint at what such a language will be, and have followed Heidegger, Gadamer and Jonas in trying to do so. If we have, in this thesis, not reached a final conclusion about what technology ultimately means to the modern human condition, we have at least reached the point where we know what more that meaning will have to express, and with this we must be partially satisfied.

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