



TECHNOPOLTICS: WELCOME TO THE NEO-JUNGLE

Posted on February 1, 2023 by Guillermo Mas Arellano



Modernity is based on the assumption that man dominates the world and can dispose of it as he pleases, with its catastrophic consequences for nature and the human community, from the Protestant Reformation onwards. Only the 20th century evolved to allow us to understand that the machine had replaced man in this process. It is the inevitable becoming of technology: "The destiny of the truth of all that is in its totality," as Heidegger said. All this coincides with the critique that Heidegger made in this respect in his 1953 lecture on *The Question Concerning Technology*. Starting from very similar postulates, in certain aspects, to the notion of biopolitics that Foucault would develop decades later, Heidegger discovers that behind every technical project there is a clear political intentionality.

Although all objects created by man are oriented towards a concrete end, to which we give the name of "utility," the essence of those same objects, which is inherent to them and stems from the political conception of those who have constructed the object, goes far beyond the notion of utility, to become imbricated within a broader vision of reality, something like a "technopolitics." Technology is no longer a means to an end realized by man; instead, it has evolved into a model of transformation, consummated through the machines themselves, of imposing their logic on human and affective logic. Consequently, the once-shared notion of the essence of the human is now in grave danger.

Machines have become the subject of history. It is machines that produce machines, and in return men sell this product to men, by means of advertising. In this sense, as Günther Anders sees it, the two world wars are a consequence of the advance of technology. Moreover, their great legacy is neither political nor social, but technical. The development of cybernetics, born out of the embers of Europe after the great European pyre in the form of a conflict between brothers, stands as the most decisive event of the last century. Unleashing a new technopolitical landscape, the Third and Fourth Industrial Revolutions have taken over from the two world wars in history. They have thus generated a "Promethean gap" between what is consumed and what is produced. Consequently, we use what we have at our disposal, as evidenced by the example of Hiroshima. The fact that we have nuclear weapons means, following this machine logic, that at some point we will use them, as indeed we have already done.

It should not be forgotten that industrial logic was behind Auschwitz, for similar reasons: conceiving life according to the principle of utility makes us understand everything living, both nature and the men who are part of it, in a similar way to an exploitable raw material; even when what is produced, as in the case of the Extermination Camp, are corpses, following the highest possible principle of efficiency. At a later, post-industrial stage, we have moved from the military manufacture of pilotless weapons, the

famous drones, to the civilian manufacture of driverless means of transport, the famous automatic cars, ever closer to their everyday implementation.

As Knut Hamsun and D. H. Lawrence, two neo-pagans and neo-Romantics, if there is a separation between the two, readily saw, there is no difference between socialism and liberalism in this sense. Modernity moves, with respect to technique, in an identical sense: favoring statolatry or, failing that, post-industrial advancement in the service of some large private enterprise. The apology of technology takes place in both cases, as evidenced by the so-called Cold War through its two contenders: the USA and the USSR. The result was [ARPANET](#), a military project tested in California, from which the Internet was born. The space race was also a good example of this. However, over the decades, the dematerialization of machines has become evident: the development of the cloud, the implementation of the metaverse, microchips—towards an inorganic fetishism of merchandise. As is increasingly, insistently pointed out, the goal is to transform what is now a physical extension of us, the smartphone, so that it will soon be included in our own organism, so that virtual reality will be confused with the very materiality of the world, at least according to our particular perception of it.

The opposite of any notion of eternity or transcendence is the capitalist logic of programmed obsolescence, where the past transitions from perennality to fluidity. Utility has replaced meaning when it comes to governing our lives: we must do things that are useful, valued from the point of view of quantity rather than quality, instead of actions with meaning. Products are not only replaceable, but they are often replaced, especially if the season is one of sales; destruction and replacement are thus assumed as something natural to favor production and consumption, with its consequent repercussions on the other facets of our life: programmed obsolescence also in the field of affections, courtesy of the simplicity of Tinder and the unbeatable company of Satisfyer. The smarter the machines are, the less intelligent we humans are; the more technically connected we are, the more socially cut off we are.

Cultural Logic Turned into Consumer Logic

Cultural logic has also become, in this sense, the logic of consumption. We use terms related to production to refer to artistic creation and its reception by the public. The spectacle that currently dominates the cultural expressions that capture the attention of the majority of the public has gained presence in our lives, thanks to the shortening of the production processes, which to a large extent adopts and even expands the logic of consumption. Once again, it is fiction that has best anticipated the human consequences of this transcendental historical change. Cyberpunk has captured more

accurately than anyone else the possibilities of resistance to this process. While Theodore Kaczynski failed in his attempt to alert society, using delirious methods, and notions such as Jünger's "living in the bush" ([Waldgänger](#)) are increasingly difficult to apply in this horizon of "total mobilization," it is necessary to "ride the tiger," to use the machine against the machine itself, to reverse the intentionality of current technopolitics and replace it, in exchange, with something else. Something still possible, as Nick Land or Guillaume Faye have pointed out, in a "multipolar" horizon, as Aleksandr Dugin calls it, in which new relevant actors are appearing on the world geopolitical map. An example of this is post-communist China, with its inherent dangers and opportunities.

Insignificant writers of our time such as William Gibson, J. G. Ballard, Bruce Sterling or Neal Stephenson were able to see it before anyone else: hackers and their equivalents are the heroes fighting against the Empire of technology from within. The definitive dematerialization of money, which is underway and may be consummated sooner than we think, with its consequent opposition by the supporters of Bitcoin and other similar currencies, which are difficult to regulate according to the parameters of statolatry and the "siliconization of the world," is yet another battlefield. The world drawn in the 1980s by fiction, such as *Blade Runner* (1982), on a story by Philip K. Dick, has been far surpassed. Dystopia is already here and we can no longer close our eyes to this reality; the struggle for the imaginary is, first and foremost, a struggle for the domination of technopolitics.

The journey from the natural to the artificial ends, with what we have on the table, in nanotechnology—where biology, the domination of nature, and production are confused in a generalized way. Neither theism nor humanism, if the separation exists, are in a position to face this horizon with moralistic arguments. Please, let us be realistic. The conservatism that seeks to stop things at the most convenient moment is typical of an enlightened idealism that is totally harmful to our capacity for action.

Surveillance capitalism, with its techniques of repression in the political, social and affective spheres, as Land points out, moves in the same sphere of illusory control: "The fusion of the military and the entertainments industry consummates a long engagement: convergent TV, telecoms, and computers sliding mass software consumption into neojungle and total war. The way games work begins to matter completely, and cyberspace makes a superlative torture chamber. Try not to let the security-types take you to the stims" ([Meltdown](#)).

The flaws in the system, which thinks it has everything under control, are evident. The state of

exception and controlled (and/or stimulated) dissidence make up a minefield of unpredictable consequences. Sooner rather than later, the collapse will come, according to the accelerationist predictions that guarantee tribal battles and the tinsel of a post-apocalyptic festival. Welcome to the digital jungle.

Guillermo Mas Arellano studies at Complutense University of Madrid.
