Technology, Hegemony, and Citizenship

by

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Abstract

Political theorists in the tradition of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Ellul describe technology as a systematic, efficient, and autonomous force that is reordering society. This paper considers how such a view of technology impacts our understanding of modern citizenship, as well as two major critiques that seek to preserve the possibility of citizenship in spite of technological progress. My thesis is that when theorists consider technology to have the power to reorder society, they think this reordering will lead to ever greater homogenization. Alexandre Kojève interprets homogenization as a prerequisite to political satisfaction, while Edmund Burke thinks that homogenization will collapse due to its own internal logic. The thinkers who deal with technology and citizenship seek to avoid tyranny, but they cannot do so while accepting homogenization as the probable outcome of technological progress. We are left with the problem of recovering political agency through convention rather than scientific power.

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Introduction

What is the relationship between technology and social homogenization? Does technology create possibilities for political life or cause its dissolution? Political life is lived by human beings, so we are really asking a question about the relationship between technology and the political part of human nature. Human beings can engage in political life because of their capacity to create a shared world of speech and action. The creation of the political world has to be artful and methodical because human freedom introduces unpredictability and contingency into social relationships. Political life is successful when the pattern used to create the shared world is able to harmonize the human beings who live in it and moderate the destructive effects of contingency.

According to a traditional view, political science is the art or method that comprehends the ways in which legislation and rhetoric can be made to create this harmony. Technology[1] enters the orbit of political science because it is thought to provide a method of social creation that can eliminate contingency entirely. Technological social development is thought to be systematic rather than artful as a result of an increased human capacity to control nature and predict outcomes. Since technology is supposed to provide increasingly effective means for creating new social realities, its existence

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[1] In chapter 1 I define technology as an autonomous and progressive force directed toward the efficient systematization of non-human, personal, and social nature. In chapter 2 the functional definition of technology is the same, but Kojève gives it relatively less autonomy than the thinkers in chapter 1. This is because he thinks technology is an expression or facet of humanity's autonomy, while Heidegger thinks that technology and humanity are co-constituting. In chapter 3 Burke denies technology's factual autonomy but he recognizes that the technological project aims at creating an autonomous and efficient system. I use the term technological rationality throughout the paper to refer to this ideological project. In chapter 1 this distinction means that although the philosophers of technology consider technology to be an ideological phenomenon, they also consider whether or to what extent this ideology is aligned with reality.

prompts an investigation of whether these new social realities are likely to be more or less political. The question is no longer whether there is a technique or art that can moderate political contingency. Instead, the question is whether a perpetually increasing power of control and creation can coexist with the personal difference and the personal freedom that give shared speech and action their meaning.

Many political scientists hypothesize that technology creates a real risk of social homogenization. In their view, unconstrained technological development will systematize human life for the sake of maximizing society's creative and controlling potential. This systematization is not likely to lead to political harmony but rather to the elimination of personal freedom and political contestation. Technology will lead to a new way of life where human beings act collectively to perpetuate the technological system into an infinite future rather than for the sake of their present well-being. Technological politics will not really be possible and technological society will be shaped by the desire to control the future. Thus our question about the effect of technology on political life is a question about whether technology necessarily orients human life towards systematizing the future, and whether this orientation necessarily homogenizes society.

In this essay, I suggest that even if a totally future-oriented society is possible, it is only possible when technology is used to submerge rather than harmonize the differences between persons. This kind of hegemony results when all members of a society unreflectively direct their acts towards the infinite perpetuation of technological progress. I also argue, that technological hegemony is really a political project because it cannot remake society unless society ceases to oppose or disrupt technological systematization. Human beings are not yet machines or animals, so producing social

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hegemony requires forcing or persuading formerly differentiated citizens that they must submit to the technological project. Technological thinking allows citizens to act towards this hegemony because it empties their future of any possibility besides that of the increasingly technological society.

Technological thinking claims that human creativity can be turned inward to the person rather than outward to society in order to make individuals fit for technological society. Technology as a political project seeks to destroy common speech and the memory of collective action so that there are no bases for opposing progressive systematization. This systematization is supposed to increase humanity's control over nature and its control over society, but it can only be accomplished by convincing citizens that they have no relevant political differences or collective interests. Thus the basic promise of technological society is also its fatal flaw. We simply do not know whether all citizens everywhere will be willing to empty themselves of action according to difference and speech according to publicness. Nor do we know whether any possible technological future will actually be human, since its coming at the minimum depends on eliminating politics from social life.

In addition to the possibility of limitless control over the future, a technological hegemony also creates the possibility of unconstrained violence against the public world. This violence arises because the project to eliminate political life also excludes the legislative and rhetorical arts that are needed for dealing with anti-political action. The technological hegemon must simply kill offenders since it cannot reason with them, but this killing is not legitimated by a political process, so it risks destroying social cohesion entirely. The technological project's final solution is to promote the idea that

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technological progress has taken us so far into the future that opposing action is no longer possible. The End of History is the idea that technological systematization has become so self-sufficient that it no longer requires common social action for its support. Technological society literally becomes divine, and thus leaves the realm of politics behind.

The technological political project requires a subsidiary technology to obscure social difference because citizens must still be made aware of the technological future through speech. A political life oriented toward its own future dissolution is unstable by its very nature. The technological project uses speech to persuade society that technological systematization will inevitably resolve this instability by eliminating politics. Until the technological future actually creates post-political humanity, however, the technological project must also prevent speech about the political harmonization of difference. The myth of total technological control over the future and the myth of The End of History are themselves technologies that seek to predict and systematize social outcomes. They are supposed to be uncontested and universal stories about humanity's power to kill its own political nature and rise again as an infinite creator. This may be true in some future universe, but it is not true now, for otherwise the technological project would not need to use speech to persuade us of its own existence as a hegemony. As long as oppositional politics are still a possibility for human nature, these myths are lies about the power of the god technology.

This paper will attempt to unfold the meaning of technological hegemony as a form of social organization as well as its meaning as an anti-political ideology. The investigation will start with the work of Martin Heidegger, Jacques Ellul, and the thinkers

who follow from them. These are the most obvious starting point because they are the first authors to pose the famous 'question concerning technology' and to propose that we live in a 'technological society.' Heidegger is the critical starting point for this project because of his sustained attempt to establish a future-oriented account of human life. Heidegger did not invent this mode of relating to the world and society but he describes it most comprehensively, and he does so at just the time when modern citizens began to understand themselves in terms of their individual destinies. Destiny is a heavy burden for any woman or man to bear alone, so Heidegger also articulates the problem of social anxiety and the management of this anxiety.

Heidegger thought that modern humanity sought to respond to its development away from un-reflective natural community by asserting individualism. This individualism presented a challenge to political life because the individual could only assert her or his own identity by exerting control over life to the exclusion of social influence. Heidegger showed that the problem of modern anxiety was a problem of how the human will could demonstrate its existence in a way that the human mind could understand. Will is oriented to the future because it is about the intent to act, rather than the act itself. For Heidegger, technology emerges as a solution to anxiety because it presents the human will with an opportunity to act into the future in a knowable and predictable way.

Heidegger, Ellul, and the thinkers who follow from them claim that although collective action is required to make a technological future possible, this action is ordered in a largely automatic way. Technological processes, including the development of the technological society, are self-acting, self-legislating, and self-perpetuating.

Technological rationality is not automatic, however, because it is an intentional way of relating to the world. Anxiety does not afflict the citizen in isolation, but the citizen in society. Citizens are in danger of collectively choosing to create a homogeneous and self-perpetuating society in order to save themselves from the terror of the future, but they may also choose to re-integrate the power of technology into human nature in order to create a future of open-ended possibility. This integration of humanity and technology may still demand homogenization, but it will be freely chosen homogenization for the sake of collective goods rather than as a reaction to individual isolation.

Alexandre Kojève gives us a way of understanding what free citizenship within a technological hegemon might look like. A self-perpetuating state maintains its authority without assistance or assent from its citizens, so technological citizens do not have individual political agency. The technological citizen has, however, overcome her anxiety about the future and her anxiety about being separated from the human community. Kojève claims that individual citizens can recognize the technological hegemon as evidence of their creative power since it is humanity's technological mastery over nature that has allowed it to create the self-sustaining state. Since the technological hegemon is immortal, citizens never have to fear for their status as creators of a meaningful future. Citizens can also recognize their equivalence with one another since the technological hegemon provides them all with the means to perfectly satisfy their needs and desires. Thus technological hegemony is in fact the cure for modern anxiety.

For Kojève, however, technological hegemony does not preserve the individuality of the individual citizen. Rather, the autonomous technological hegemon becomes the great individual representing the whole of human freedom. At the End of History,

humanity has reaches the final stage of its development toward mastery and satisfaction when it creates the technological hegemon. There are thus no further goods to be pursued by political action. Political life now describes the ways in which the state enables the satisfaction of its citizens, both by existing as the supreme individual and by using its technological resources to equalize the members of society. Citizenship becomes symbolic rather than active, since Kojève calls individuals to recognize that political struggle ended in principle when the technological hegemon fulfilled humanity's progress towards collective immortality.

Edmund Burke provides a topical perspective on the relationship between the technological project and modern citizenship. At the time of the French Revolution Burke was confronted with a rationalizing project that sought to remake the basis of political life. Although Burke writes before the idea of technological hegemony gained currency, he was very familiar with the idea of a political project that sought to legitimate itself through its own internal logic. Burke also develops a theory of representation that speaks directly to the question of whether political individuality is a necessary part of citizenship. Burke's position on both of these issues is a useful counterpoint to the more contemporary works considered in this paper because of his strident opposition to social and political hegemony.

Burke thinks that radical, rationalizing political projects are likely to fail because of their disregard for constitutional tradition. Society is held together by convention because there is no single rational system that can accommodate the historical particularities of its members. Burke recognizes that citizens are anxious about the future of their individual identities, but he maintains that stable social structures are the only

means to satisfy the desire for individual self-recognition. Conventional society allows citizens to work for themselves and pass their achievements on to their descendants in spite of inevitable social inequalities. Burke thinks that when rationalizing projects such as the technological one seek to destroy the past in order to create a homogeneous future, they liquidate the conventional glue that allows citizens to recognize themselves as members of a society. Rationalizing projects may be supported by irresistible force, but this force can never be used to create a self-sustaining state. The citizens who were previously welded together by convention are now atomized free agents who must be forced to comply with the rationalizing project. Thus radical, future-oriented political projects are likely to end in tyranny rather than hegemony.

Burke also thinks that if social homogenization were to succeed, it would destroy the human goods that are the objects of political life. In contrast to Heidegger or Kojève, Burke maintains that the freedom to express particular historical identity is a crucial part of free citizenship. Any hegemony would destroy this freedom because it would prevent the representation of citizen diversity both in and to the state. Hegemony also destroys the citizen's consciousness of willingly participating in the collective maintenance of the community, both because the hegemon is self-sustaining and because it restricts freedom of action to the state as the single great individual.

If Burke's arguments are correct, both Heidegger's vision of a technological humanity and Kojève's exposition of the technological hegemon would be ideological statements rather than descriptions of real historical possibilities. Free citizens cannot be subsumed by rational abstractions such as the technological project, regardless of the force with which these projects are advanced. This would mean that the End of History is

a willed activity in which citizens are actively trying to destroy their past for the sake of an unrealizable future. From a Burkean perspective, the successful use of political technology to destroy convention and homogenize citizens' attitude toward themselves, the state, and the future is bound to destroy the polity. This is ironic because the destruction of the polity would also destroy the political technology that was supposed to produce the self-sufficient state.

Burke teaches us that a truly future-oriented society may actually be impossible, which would mean that Heidegger's anxious individual will find no place in the world. This helps us understand why Kojève's myth of the End of History is so persuasive, since it relieves the modern citizen of the burden of trying to integrate herself with a technological future that will never come. Technological rationality cannot truly replace political life with progressive homogeneity, but if technological ideology does succeed in destroying convention then it will rapidly lead to social chaos. Thus although technological rationality presents a real challenge to modern, anxious political life, neither open-ended technological progress nor technological hegemony provide adequate solutions.

1 Chapter: The Technological Condition

1.1 Introduction

This chapter considers a contemporary account of technology founded in the work of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Ellul.[2] I argue that this account ends with the homogenization of human society because it understands technology to be a progressive and autonomous force. According to this view, although technology emerges within history it subsequently gains the power to shape history. Although technological history is not necessarily inhuman, human history is destined to be technological (Heidegger, Question 1977, 24). This means that technological history reveals fundamental truth about human nature, so we must understand technology if we want to understand ourselves.[3] The claim that technology is progressive and autonomous implies that there are no natural essences that cannot be changed and reordered. Rather, the historical emergence of technology reveals that nature is a realm of changing forms. Technology exists as a being whose essence is becoming, and it reveals human nature in terms of becoming.[4] When philosophy grasps the essence of technology, it also grasps

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[2] Ellul himself is not particularly philosophical in his approach to technological phenomena. He is however, cited without fail by philosophers who write about technology, while reference to Heidegger is more occasional. The existential critique of technology may perhaps begin with Friederich Jünger's book *The Failure of Technology* but establishing this requires further research.

[3] "Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *alētheia*, truth, happens" (Heidegger, Question 1977, 13).

[4] "The way in which technology essences lets itself be seen only from out of that permanent enduring in which Enframing comes to pass as a destining of revealing. . . . *Only what is granted endures. That which endures primally out of the earliest beginning is what grants*" (Heidegger, Question 1977, 31).

technology's power to order human becoming, and thus the whole world (Heidegger, Question 1977, 30).

The account of technology stemming from Heidegger and Ellul tends towards social homogenization because of the autonomy it ascribes to technological progress. The thinkers in this tradition are not primarily concerned with particular technological changes to the material world, but with the effect that limitless power over nature has on the human world. Because technology is thought to be at least partially autonomous, these thinkers are concerned with whether there is room for human freedom and political agency once history has been fully revealed as technological. Their conclusion is that human freedom is one of the potentials of technological history, but that it can only be achieved if human beings realize that they themselves are beings of becoming (Heidegger, Question 1977, 25-26).

These philosophers of technology hold that if we grasp that all of nature and society is potentially becoming, we can seize the power of technology and integrate it with our own natures for our own ends. The price of this view is that since it reveals the instability of human nature generally, it also reveals individual natures are as unstable. Thus the merging of technological history with human history jeopardizes the distinctions that allow social ordering and articulation. Even the coming of anthropic technology necessarily causes and reveals the potential hegemony of human life.

Within the body of literature that considers Heidegger and Ellul there is broad agreement that the coming of technological hegemony challenges humanity's self-revelation within history. Whether technology reveals itself or whether it is revealed through human activity, its progressive reordering of nature introduces critical levels of

uncertainty into social and political life. Ernest Cassirer writes that Heidegger's

awareness of history as technological and his view of humanity as historical led him to

express the modern despair at finding meaning in a permanently fluid stream of

experience:

> [Heidegger] spoke of the *Geworfenheit* of man (the being-thrown). To
> be thrown into the stream of time is a fundamental and inalterable
> feature of our human situation. We cannot emerge from this stream and
> we cannot change its course. . . . A philosophy of history that consists
> in somber predictions of the decline and the inevitable destruction of
> our civilization and a theory that sees in the Geworfenheit of man one
> of his principal characters have given up all hopes of an active share in
> the construction and reconstruction of man's cultural life (Cassirer
> 1946, 293).

The authors discussed in this chapter agree that social philosophers must account

for humanity's experience of being thrown into modern time. For them, thrownness is

revealed and perhaps caused by technology, but they also think that thrownness is now an

essential part of human nature. The problem of technology is the problem of whether

there is a way to work through the anxiety of technological history and discover true

human nature by the light of technological revealing. If philosophy fails to do so, then

humanity will be trapped within a historical process that has superseded it, that is to say,

within a fundamentally inhuman world. If philosophy succeeds in finding a technological

account of human nature, then humanity can reintegrate itself within technological

history and participate in revealing itself and creating the future. The structure of the

problem does not leave room for the saving of a stable social order, however, so we can

say that for the thinkers of this tradition technology has revealed the end of politics and citizenship as we know them.

This chapter will begin its examination of the Heideggerian/Ellulian account of technology by proposing a working definition common to the authors considered. It will then explore the claims this account makes about how technology conditions and reveals social and political possibility in terms of five themes. These are anxiety (or thrownness), the past (or time and memory), anthropology, citizenship, and hegemony. The chapter will show that Heideggerean and Ellulian thinkers diagnose the modern experience as one of progress, specifically ever-more efficient technological progress without the conscious consent of citizens. It will then show that for these thinkers, the path to reintegrating this experience into human fullness lies beyond our current understanding of political life.

1.2   Defining Technology

Let us begin at the point of agreement about the definition of technology. Donald Verene provides us with a generally applicable description of what technology means:

> The English word 'technology,' which is derived from Greek *technologia* (systematic treatment), connotes first of all the science of the application of knowledge to practical purposes. In its expanded sense it is the totality of means [used] by its agents to provide the objects of material culture for their own fulfillment. . . . More generally, it is the method, way, or manner of doing something (2016, 20).

Verene's definition points us to one of the three aspects of technology that constitute it as an object of study for the philosophers of technology. For them, technology is concerned with the systematic production of effects through the application of scientific method.

Considered purely as a method, technology is informed by knowledge of a desired aim. Human beings can create apparatuses to help them control the technical details of a practical task because they have a plan for the end result (Heidegger, Question 1977, 8). Technology as a phenomenon, however, is a 'totality of means' that produces certain material objects (Heidegger, Question 1977, 4-5). Means take their justification from an object that may not actually serve a human purpose. We have technology as long as the means are effective in acting upon the material world according to systematic procedures (Heidegger, Question 1977, 6). For example, a robotic factory that produces and stockpiles M16 rifles is technological regardless of whether the rifles are needed or wanted. Technology as an idea means that the systematic treatment is contained within the procedure rather than the mind of an agent.

A little later on Verene takes up this theme of technology's autonomy. This autonomy or automatism is the second aspect of the definition of technology:

> Technique always recapitulates itself. It answers to nothing beyond itself. Unhesitatingly and without pause, technique sets its own terms for its own all-encompassing activity. . . . Desire does not shape technique, technique shapes desire with each technical success producing new desires. Desire is simply the urge to keep technique moving, to perform. No product produced in technical activity is an end. It is only a place marker for further technical performance and an increased level of desire. (2016, 21).

For the philosophers of technology, technology's autonomous character means that we cannot think of it as a thing but that we must think of it as a process. Because the robots in the M16 factory are programmable, it can regulate its own production. Not only so, but the robots can be reprogrammed to make better guns, or even better robots (Juenger 1949,

30-31). For these thinkers, technology supersedes itself because it is an autonomous principle and not an artefact.[5] As Verene points out, this also means that a human desire for the effects produced by technology may itself be superseded through the technological process. In other words, technology's autonomy means autonomy from human nature.[6] Technology itself has some kind of nature that philosophy has to deal with independently of the question of how useful it is for achieving human aims.

George Grant articulates the way in which these authors think technology has made itself known as part of human experience: "the mobilisation of the objective arts and sciences at their apogee comes more and more to be unified around the planning and control of human activity. . . . 'technology' is the pervasive mode of being in our political and social lives" (1986, 17). Grant considers technology to be an ordering principle with human affairs as its object, rather than as a tool that simply enables one kind of human activity. Grant claims that we should not understand technology simply in terms of mechanical apparatuses but as every self-determining system organized for the production of effects in the human world: "The word 'instrument' is not confined simply to external objects such as machines or drugs or hydro power, but includes such

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[5] "It is automatism by which our technology achieves its growing perfection. Its signature is the independent and unchanging repetitious operation of its apparatus" (Juenger 1949, 31).

[6] "A whole new kind of spontaneous action is taking place here, and we know neither its laws not its ends. In this sense it is possible to speak of the 'reality' of technique—with its own substance, its own particular mode of being, and a life independent of our power of decision" (Ellul 1967, 93).

development of systems of organisation and communication as bureaucracies and factories" (1986, 19).

For the philosophers of technology, technology's autonomy means that it is not governed but is itself a governor (Ellul 1967, 80). These thinkers claim that since we are now aware of technology, our understanding of human life is now shaped by our public experience of technology's systematic self-ordering. From a historical perspective, this means an experience of government as bureaucracy and of politics as a realm of linguistic fluidity rather than structured argument.[7] Cassirer helps us understand that modern political life, conceptualized technologically, is about the systematic production of legitimacy as an automatic effect. He treats the organizing myths of modern nation-states as self-supporting systems of meaning that elicit consent without reflection or resistance. These systems are constituted out of language that he frankly refers to as magical:

> If we study our modern political myths and the use that has been made of them we find in them, to our great surprise, not only a transvaluation of all our ethical values but also a transformation of human speech. The magic word takes precedence of the semantic word. . . . This change of meaning depends upon the fact that those words which formerly were used in a descriptive, logical, or semantic sense, are now used as magic

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[7] Jünger remarks that "Technical thinking, imbued with an unlimited drive for power, acts imperiously and recklessly. Full of unshakable faith in organization, it promotes and expands organization in all directions, and engulfs unorganized life wherever it finds it. That is why technical progress is accompanied by an ever more mushrooming growth of bureaucracy" (1949, 73). Bureaucracies can be a frightening prospect for philosophers of technology because they give the appearance of turning the art of government into a mechanical process of regulation (Juenger 1949, 98-99). In an Orwellian nightmare mechanical government will hide itself behind propaganda that convinces individuals that only one policy and one mode of administration are possible. Whether or not this occurs in reality it is true that bureaucracies are constantly called upon to justify their level of systematization and efficiency. Presumably bureaucracies are thought to be more legitimate insofar as they are more technological. The irony is that bureaucracies often have to use verbal obfuscation to hide their own inefficiency and disorganization from an inquiring public.

words that are destined to produce certain effects and to stir up certain emotion" (Cassirer 1946, 283).

If the philosophers of technology are right, citizens' experience of thought control is an experience of technology as a historical force. According to this account technology does not necessarily support a particular regime. Rather, technological politics is itself a regime of automatic effects and automatic thoughts. The autonomy of government and politics from human thought or intention is simply another facet of technology's existence in the world.

Adorno points to a conflict between this view and previous human experience when he writes that modern political and philosophical language relies on the atmospheric content, or 'aura,' of words to induce belief in phenomena that would not otherwise be experienced as real: "Elements of empirical language are manipulated in their rigidity, as if they were elements of a true and revealed language. The empirical usability of the sacred ceremonial words makes both the speaker and listener believe in their corporeal presence" (1973, 7). Adorno recognizes that this magical language violates logic, but also thinks that it really does produce its effect autonomously. When 'both the speaker and the listener' are affected by the aura of magical language they conform their thinking to the system that it expresses regardless of its illogicality: "When [the jargon] dresses empirical words with aura, it exaggerates general concepts and ideas . . . so grossly that their conceptual essence, the mediation through the thinking subject, disappears completely under the varnish" (Adorno 1973, 12).

The third critical aspect of technology is that it is progressive. This means that it seeks to overcome the limitations of time and experience. Simpson speaks about a

progressive coming together of means and their effects as one of the key goals of

'technological thinking':

> [Technology] seeks to minimize the time necessary to realize a given
> goal, thus liberating us from 'the burden of having to wait.' It seeks to
> give us more time, rendering us in effect closer and closer to being
> immortal . . . by rendering us less vulnerable to what occurs in time, to
> the vicissitudes of time (1995, 23).

The philosophers of technology claim that technology does not operate according to our

previous experience of time. This is because that experience involves uncertainty about

whether there will be a systematic connection between our actions and the effects they

produce. By shrinking time, technology reveals the effects it produces together with their

causes in an ever-repeating cycle (Heidegger, Question 1977, 23). This shrinking of time

also allows us to see how technology builds upon itself to create previously unknown

effects (Heidegger, Turning 1977, 37). For these thinkers, technological change reveals

progress as something timeless, or as something that expresses itself in time without

being endangered by it. Technological progress shows us that systematic self-ordering is

here to stay as part of human experience. Our critical uncertainty is no longer whether

effects will be reliably produced but whether we can integrate the ever-changing pattern

of these effects into our experience.

The philosophers of technology do not think that technology will eliminate time

itself from human experience, however. Rather, technology gives us enough time to see

progress happening, while by the same token by endangering our autonomy. Thus any

inquiry into technology must deal with the anxiety caused by our empirical awareness of its existence.

1.3   Technology and Anxiety

We have seen that for the Heideggerian/Ellulian literature technology is systematic, autonomous, and progressive. Our recognition of its existence in the world confronts us with the inadequacy of traditional forms of social stability, and the problem of how public life can re-vitalize itself under technological conditions. In this account of technology, the magical aura of technological language is never quite sufficient to submerge the modern citizen's awareness that technology has the potential to isolate her and make her public life a source of anxiety. Once again Verene introduces us to this difficulty when he writes that "[w]e live in an ever-present middle in which information replaces thought and media replaces imagination" (2016, 21). The apparent war of technology against thought and self-reflection seems to eliminate the possibility of conversation between citizens. Social intercourse now becomes a matter of mutual participation in technology itself: "[This] is the world of the technologically engaged individual obsessed with the matter at hand, the task to be performed, the blog to be written, the Facebook entry to be posted. . . . Everybody is busy. Everybody is engaged" (Verene 2016, 22).

Mass technological obsession is portrayed by the philosophers of technology as a spiritual disease that leads people to destroy self-awareness and seek total alignment with the mind of the crowd. This is humanly impossible, so an age of information is also an age of anxiety about whether one is successfully engaging with technology. In this

context technology represents the idea that the real essence of persons can be captured in a systematic process of producing and consuming information. An efficient absorption into this universal process should unite the individual to her fellows and remove the need for thought.[8] The 'matter at hand' is a task in the program of self-discipline required for this union.

Why would modern citizens seek this unity of self-forgetfulness? Simpson tells us that "important features of technology come into view when we understand it to be a response to our finitude, to the realization that we are vulnerable and mortal and that our time is limited" (1995, 14). According to these thinkers the 'middle' that we live in as modern citizens is a state in which we are still aware of our own mortality as persons but convinced of the immortality of the 'task to be performed.' The technology of thought-discipline is supposed to allow us to live in this 'ever-present' and participate in an immortal system of effects regardless of our individual mortality. For the philosophers of technology this response to technology is dangerous because it promotes a view of human beings as nothing more than systems of effects (Heidegger, Question 1977, 26-27). Speaking about Karl Jaspers' diagnosis of this danger Verene writes that

> We have lost our own image of the human and have been dissolved into
> our component parts. We remain only as certain functions we can
> perform. There is no technique by which to acquire self-knowledge.
> Thus technique can be said to dehumanize. The fascination with the
> importance of the individual and individuality where there is none really

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[8] "Technological thinking is obviously collectivistic. But such collectivistic thinking presupposes an individual, freed and cleansed from all conflicting considerations, an individual that will abandon itself unreservedly to the collective. Technology has no objection to the individual as such, so long as he surrenders unconditionally to the technical organization" (Juenger 1949, 97).

to be found, coupled with the fascination with the possibility that we are nothing but our roles, dominates the modern personality (2016, 26).

Verene helps us recognize the contradictions in this kind of technological thinking about the individual. If all knowledge is technical knowledge, we cannot know anything about ourselves as persons. This epistemic gap does not cause us to stop self-reflecting, however, but drives us to try and recreate ourselves in the image of a technical process. Procedural personalities cannot be autonomous because they are individual material beings subject to time and mortality. Since we do experience technology as autonomous, this effort will force us to see ourselves as mere components of a larger social machine.

For the philosophers of technology, the technique of reducing all experience to a system of causes and effects is dehumanizing. This dehumanizing perspective on ourselves arises at the same time as we come to recognize technology as a truly autonomous being. It is not so much our recognition of another autonomous being besides humanity that causes our crisis of identity, but rather our historical experience of technological progress as something beyond our immediate agency. Darby says that the coming together of cause and effect

only appears to be, in that the space between them is relatively but progressively invisible. This is so because *in* the space in-between is time itself. . . . the change we see in our time is coming so swiftly that we see it less and less, and we are progressively coming to consider what we don't see as normal, for the normal is precisely what is nearest,

and therefore, not questioned. Time is Being. And both Time and Being
are progressively becoming invisible (2004, 67).

For this literature self-knowledge becomes impossible when we allow the speed of
technological progress to obscure the fact that it is still happening as a process within
time. If we come to think of technology's autonomy as something timeless and
ahistorical, we will come to view technological progress as a shrinking of the time
required for the appearance of human beings. Instead of seeing technology as a process of
continuously increasing possibility, we will see it as a prison nearing completion. We
experience anxiety because we think that technology may escape time entirely and
prevent all self-knowledge and self-experience through its autonomous social ordering.

Simpson writes that moderns may seek to be absorbed into technology before they
disappear as persons. For anxious citizens "existence in time has to be considered a
burden. To experience time as alienating in this way is to experience it as the source of
constant change, of uncertainty, contingency, loss and irretrievability. The vision of a
nonalieneated existence would go hand with the project to annihilate time" (Simpson
1995, 51). The anxious citizen experiences technology as both the source of her
alienation within time and her hope of salvation from the very progress that gives rise to
technology in the first place. The problem with such a hope is that it requires the person
to think of herself as a cause at the same time as she has accepted a view of herself as a
system of effects. It also requires her to believe in a future that is ceasing to exist as
technology is collapsing Time and Being into each other. For the philosophers of
technology anxiety will not find relief as long as it allows a particular view of technology

to hide the person from herself. To face the danger of our disappearance as persons we need to investigate the relationship between technology and forgetfulness.

1.4 Technology and the Past

Verene explicates the attitude toward the past required by an understanding of technology as the governing force of modern social organization: "The transcendence of the technical appears unnecessary as things move ever forward. . . . In technological society the past holds no significant meaning. It contains what we are leaving behind" (2016, 23). The past cannot hold meaning for a society that believes in the progressive and automatic systematization of all human life.[9] For the philosophers of technology this belief will lead us to leave behind the past in the same way that we move forward into the future, that is to say unconsciously. Our concern with the ever-increasing speed of technological progress causes us to be absorbed by the moment and to sacrifice memory. From this viewpoint, there is no point speculating what might have preceded, caused, or conditioned technological progress because it is supposed to be effectively timeless as well as self-sustaining.

For the philosophers of technology, the anxious modern citizen is not concerned with either the past or the future but with the 'problems' of technological life in the present. The chief of these problems is of course how the citizens themselves can become more technological. This is a problem without a solution because the short-sighted view

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[9] "Technique has become autonomous; it has fashioned an omnivorous world which obeys its own laws and which has renounced all tradition. Technique no longer rests on tradition, but rather on previous technical procedures; and its evolution is too rapid, too upsetting, to integrate the older traditions" (Ellul 1967, 14).

of technological progress as a static and timeless systematization of society does not allow time for citizens to become anything. Darby writes that this anxiety about the loss of the future leads moderns to attempt to regain time for becoming by leveling the past and remaking it technologically. When this attempt is successful however, modern citizens lose the reference points that would allow them to see the reality of technological progress in time:

> Since the purpose of this action is to satisfy desires, technology begets forgetfulness. This is so because one's object of desire is always non-existent for one; one's appropriation of it, and satisfaction from it, will always take place in the future. This is but another way of saying that artifice is always oriented towards the future, and consequently, because of its future orientation, a rationalization of the world through technology is conducive to mass forgetfulness (Darby 1982, 4).

How does the modern citizen's quest for technological integration cause her to forget herself? The problem is that for her to conceptualize herself as satisfied in her individuality the citizen would have to believe that she had a future. This is because the satisfaction of desire is a quality of our future selves, which is to say that our individuality is historical and worked out in time.

Darby points out that attempting to gain individuality through impersonally rationalizing technology will turn the citizen's awareness away from her historical character. This attempt paradoxical because it will increase her anxiety to reach the future at the same time as it strengthens her belief in technology's ability to destroy that future.

In this view, technology breeds forgetfulness when citizens occupy themselves in acting

towards the non-reality of their future existence outside of time.

The desires of a technological society are unique because its members think the

speed with which technological progress makes these desires unreachable is self-

justifying. According to the philosophers of technology, modern citizens come to believe

that the only way to save themselves is to preemptively integrate with the overarching

autonomous system before it destroys time. The perception that technology can destroy

time is taken as the proof that it is the only power strong enough to secure the individual,

even though human individuals are historical by their nature. Simpson remarks that

technological citizens cannot face the past because they cannot face the future. There is a

psychic conflict built into their view of technological time because it is supposed to

guarantee possibility by homogenizing possibility:

> The idea of progress presupposes an understanding of the future as the
> locus of that which does or can differ in some essential respect from that
> which now is or which has been. . . . This understanding of the future is
> compromised by technology's rancor against the uncontrolled past and
> its concern with predicting and controlling the future. The goal of
> technology is the 'domestication' of time, that is, the prediction and
> control of that which appears in time. . . . *Technology is fundamentally
> an expression of and response to the 'terror of history'* (Simpson 1995,
> 53-54).

Temporality is both the ontological foundation of technological progress and the enemy

that it is meant to overcome. The modern citizen will not remember the past because she

thinks she will be faced with change as mortality rather than change as progress. The

'terror of history' is the source of her radical commitment to controlling the future, but

this commitment is expressed automatically and without reflection because she has destroyed the past for herself.

Darby elucidates the political impact of this attitude to the past. Technology is thought to give citizens the power to destroy the past and create the future, but it has not yet succeeded in integrating them into a timeless process of self-ordering. So citizens still have to deal with the problem of political order in the world of change and mortality:

> [M]an, in his self-ordained role as creator, must either divine political orders 'ex nihilo' or fashion them from the unsturdy debris of his own historical journey. Existentially, the loss of stable supports for order too often results in the agony of forgetfulness, but politically, this loss of collective memory does not abrogate the need of *making* a memory as a justification for order" (Darby 1982, 3-4).

Darby points to the difficulty of creating mythic memory through sheer invention, or Cassirer's magic. The debris that is left over from a technological upheaval lacks the context of memory when citizens have destroyed it through fear. Citizens are tempted to understand themselves as mere processes because their first instinct in a psychic crisis is not to travel the long road to remembering the past. Rather, the pressures of an uncontrolled future causes citizens to project their present experience into the past.

According to the Heideggerian/Ellulian tradition, modern citizens perceive the leveling of the past as a necessary condition for opening the future. They hope thus to integrate autonomous technological progress as the memory of a movement toward a final state of order in the present. This memory is itself a technology, a work of magic that hides citizen's basic anxiety about the destruction of their previous foundations for personhood. The hoped-for final order must either be one in which citizens can be purged

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of their need to think of themselves as persons with a past and a future or one in which

technology really gains the ability to control both past and future. The latter state is more

attractive to the modern citizen because it raises the possibility of some new form of

personal freedom, but it also raises the problem of personal groundlessness.

1.5   Technology and Anthropology

Groundlessness is the modern citizen's perception that what it means to be a person is

constantly changing. For the philosophers of technology, this idea stems from an

anthropology which claims that human beings do not have stable natures. A progressive

technological system appears to constitute the whole experience of modern citizens. Their

view of themselves as merely functional systems is supported by technology's apparent

ability to reconstitute and reorder whatever it touches:

> Technology has as its project the transformation of nature both non-
> human and human. It is the progressively rational (=efficient)
> arrangement of cause and effect for nature qua nature (=ontological).
> Likewise, it is also the progressively rational arrangement of human
> nature (=de-ontological), where it involves the arrangement of means to
> ends" (Darby 2016, 303).

The transformation of nature referred to here should not be understood as the teleological

unfolding of possibilities contained within a species. This transformation is a change of

one nature into an entirely different nature. The progressive rationalization of means and

ends in human nature is thought to be desirable because it aligns the person with the total systematization of the world through technological progress.

A technologically conditioned view of human nature is inconsistent with a stable account of personality. This is problematic for the modern citizen because it is the loss of stable personality that causes her anxiety. According to the traditional view, "[n]ature . . . is whatever exists and is not otherwise. Nature *is* that which appears to be *what* is. It is the 'whatness' that appears to us. For this reason nature both nonhuman and human often is called the 'given" (Darby 2004, 62). The technological citizen cannot conceive of the conditions in which she could regain stable personality. The literature we have considered claims that she has forgotten her past existence as a historical being because technology has systematized her experience. This loss of the past is compounded by the breakdown of fixed nature. Lacking history or self-understanding the technological person cannot believe in her own appearance in the world. The citizen does believes that technology is revealing its own 'whatness' as it progressively orders her world, and hopes that she will be granted a stable nature in this new order. The philosophers of technology think that this is an ill-founded hope because technology is not revealing its own nature in opposition to existing natures. Rather, technology is revealing the malleability of nature in general.

Angus elaborates what an unreflective trust in the transformative power of technology means for the groundless citizen. Believing in the stability of technological

progress, and disbelieving in the stability of her own person, the modern citizen comes to see herself as an expression of technology:

> The social world cannot be known separately from its articulation in technical ends. . . . Both as the selective articulation of experience and its alteration through innovations, technology is an integral aspect of the human subject. It is not that technology requires us to choose this over that value, rather, it cuts the ground out from under the subject presupposed by humanist ethics (Angus 1987, 110).

Angus claims that there is no way to think about people separately from technology once we accept that technology conditions all the possibilities of knowledge and appearance. If all possible ends are achieved through technical means, then these ends must themselves be technological. According to this view human beings themselves can only be ends insofar as they are objects of technological innovation. For Angus, "technology raises the extreme possibility of the disappearance of the self, the knowing and acting subject which is the ground for the idea of responsibility" (1987, 114).

Jacques Ellul claims that the autonomy of technology in producing the materials of experience does not leave room for the autonomy of human beings. This means that the modern hope of achieving personhood within a world of change and progress is futile. He writes that "man . . . is entirely immersed in technology. He is not autonomous in regard to these objects. He is not sovereign, nor does he have an irreformable personality" (1980, 311). Ellul claims that technology is so successful in creating the objects of human experience that human beings can no longer think or act outside of the constraints of this autonomous systematization. The modern person will never gain sovereignty over her appearance in the world, since in fact it is technology that adapts her

subjectivity to the needs of its own appearance: "The human being who acts and thinks today is not situated as an independent subject with respect to a technological object. He is inside the technological system, he is himself modified by the technological factor" (Ellul 1980, 325).

Angus and Ellul see the end of personhood as a real possibility since they think that technological progress is progress towards a more technological world. Simpson, however, thinks that the malleability of nature revealed by technology extends to the nature of technology itself. He does not agree that technology forces a particular kind of experience on the human subject, but that changing means can be related to changing ends. Technology's autonomy in bringing new phenomena into appearance is mirrored by a human autonomy in choosing how to integrate and experience these phenomena. Simpson warns about the danger of abdicating responsibility for the ends of technological progress when he writes that "[w]hen . . . values become ends of technology, they migrate into, or are handed over to, the realm of technics" (1995, 13). For Simpson, there is a danger of handing over all of experience to technological structuring because human beings have the freedom to choose their relationship to technological progress.

Feenberg supports this position by arguing that the key freedom of modern individuality is the freedom to influence the structure of technological experience:

> Technologies enroll individuals in networks. These networks associate the individuals in various roles . . . . Once enrolled in a network individuals are motivated to address its failings and in some cases they also acquire potential power over its development. . . . the power of

individuals within a network is quite different from that of individuals
who have no connection to it (2011, 6-7).

Feenberg claims that if modern individuals can be made aware that they are participants in, rather than products of technological structure, they can recover their democratic political identity using the newly revealed possibilities contained within those structures. Feenberg takes the optimistic view that technological systems are human systems, or that human and technological systems are co-constituting. Personhood is indeed becoming technological, but human beings are themselves agents of the progress that will reveal them in their new aspects.

Regardless of whether human beings can re-integrate the technological and personal parts of their experience, the consensus among the philosophers of technology is that human existence in the modern world is fundamentally technological. This creates a political problem because the current understanding of citizenship is inadequate to accommodate both the burden of personal integration and responsibility for the direction of technological progress. Cassirer remarks that "[u]nder extremely difficult conditions man tries to cast off this burden. Here the totalitarian state and the political myths step in. . . . They suppress and destroy the very sense of freedom; but, at the same time, they relieve men from all personal responsibility" (1946, 288). Cassirer points us to the root of magical, technological thinking on the part of the citizen. Without a new understanding of human possibility citizens think that they must either find a way to create social order out of nothing in a world of constantly changing nature, or they must sacrifice all pretense to freedom. Even if citizens give up their sense of responsibility, their sense of anxiety does not leave them, however. The philosophers of technology seek to find the

solution to this anxiety by reexamining the function of citizenship in a world where personhood is progressive rather than fixed.

1.6 Technology and Citizenship

For the Heideggerian/Ellulian literature, personhood takes ontological priority over citizenship. This is because persons must first become aware of themselves as free beings in the world before they understand their condition as citizens. Citizenship cannot be viewed as a stable or static part of human existence since everything human is now made known in a world of technological progress. For the philosophers of technology, the first thing we must understand about citizenship is that it must be derived from human autonomy rather than any preexisting social order. When writing about the fracturing of Church authority at the beginning of the modern age, Darby remarks that

> the boundaries created by the difference — and thereby the distance — between subject and object gave sovereignty to the autonomous subject who literally became 'self-governing' in that he thought of himself and was thought to be a law unto himself. . . . It is through the participation in the process of the appearance of the object that the subject became lord over the object of his creation (2016, 302).

For technological citizenship to be a successful remedy for the anxiety of personal instability, persons (subjects) have to find the power to make themselves appear as beings in the world. Since citizenship is part of this appearance in the world, autonomous persons must have the power to create themselves as citizens.

This view of citizenship allows persons a way to express their autonomy in the world, but it also distances them from their objective existence in society. Citizenship,

according to one of the pre-modern views, includes both ruling and being ruled (Politics, 1277a26-28). The technological person rightly sees this common law of citizenship as a constraint on the exercise of her powers of self-creation. Darby raises the problem this attitude poses for the existence of a society of autonomous citizens as the key question for his study of technological time:

> Society then is the boundary that forms the collection of our expressed uniqueness, each with its separate destiny. Society is the association of separate destinies existing together, and this existing together in separateness is the condition that makes politics both possible and necessary. But since the uniqueness of each of us is expressive of the time of our own biographies, and since society is but a collection of our many histories, is it possible that the every-changing moments of either the self or society can be the seat for truly meaningful speech of action? (1982, 7).

Society is a shared experience of living together. This experience is necessary but not sufficient to enable the possibility of politics (Politics, 1278b25). According to Darby's reading, society's purpose is not the joining together of persons for the sake of survival but an arena for the expression of personal uniqueness. The person needs society as a context of meaning for the momentary appearances of its selfhood. The problem faced by the philosophers of technology is that of how this context can exist if all of the individuals in society are both autonomous and progressively realized. What can such a society hold in common, or how can it really contain a shared experience?

For the philosophers of technology, society shares an experience of technological progress. That is to say, although each person gives her citizenship autonomous expression, this expression happens within the wider context of technological progress.

From his perspective that technological progress happens in a fixed manner, Ellul claims

that this progress provides the object and the context for shared uniqueness:

> How could this human being . . . sovereignly perform what is expected
> of him: i.e., make choices, judgments, or rejections in regard to
> technology as a whole or individual technologies? How and in terms of
> what could he give a different direction to technology than the one that
> technology gives itself in its self augmentation? What initiative could he
> take that would not be primarily technological? . . . Man is still perfectly
> capable of choosing, deciding, altering, directing . . . But always within
> the technological framework and toward the progression of technology
> (1980, 325).

For Ellul, human beings are still perfectly capable of expressing their uniqueness. What is

different in the modern age is that human uniqueness is technological uniqueness.

Technological progress is self-ordering, so the self-ordering of the autonomous citizen

will have to take account of this progress. Personhood must become the locus of

autonomy because citizenship and social identity appear within a structure of action,

deliberation, and thought whose possibilities have already been determined by

technological progress.[10]

  Cassirer warns of the danger of unreflectively accepting technological progress as

a social framework. He claims that citizens may come to experience progress as necessity

through the unconscious operation of technological myth. Citizens can easily find

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[10] "The point is no longer machines or mechanization but that we are living in a technological system. . . . Simply, we have to ask ourselves what will actually become of man in this system and whether we can preserve the hope, so often formulated by idealists, that man will 'take in hand,' direct, organize, choose, and orient technology. . . . [M]an, achieving consciousness, finds technology already here. For him, technology constitutes a milieu which he enters and in which he integrates. . . . without our realizing it, this environment shapes us in the necessary forms of behavior" (Ellul 1980, 311).

themselves assenting to the myth of their unfreedom before they have reflected on the meaning of personhood or the meaning of progress (Cassirer 1946, 286). The person who is struggling to come to terms with her own autonomy alongside the autonomy of technological progress is tempted to think that a sufficient manipulation of human nature can cause people to act as though they were not the authors of their own deeds. For the philosophers of technology, the strain of realizing our own autonomy may cause us to see technology as a threat to that autonomy rather than the occasion of its revealing. This failure to conceive of autonomy will result in the loss of uniqueness. Such citizens "have ceased to be free and personal agents. Performing the same prescribed rites they begin to feel, to think, and to speak in the same way. Their gestures are lively and violent; yet this is but an artificial, a sham life. In fact they are moved by an external force" (Cassirer 1946, 286). The philosophers of technology are concerned with guarding against this artificiality while preserving a shared experience of technological progress. This concern leads to the problem of acceptable and unacceptable hegemony within technological society.

1.7   Technology and Hegemony

The philosophers of technology agree that while rigid technological thinking hides the possibility of citizenship, it encourages a vision of a totalizing state. This technological state, or condition, defines a world in which autonomous systematization no longer faces any friction or resistance. In this version of the eternal present technological progress is

allowed to legislate for human affairs in addition to conditioning them. As Feenberg
writes:

> Technology is power in modern societies, a greater power in many
> domains than the political system itself. . . . if this is true, technology
> should be considered as a new kind of legislation, not so very different
> from other public decisions . . . . The legislative authority of technology
> increases constantly as it becomes more and more pervasive. But if
> technology is so powerful, why don't we apply the same democratic
> standards to it we apply to other political institutions? (1999, 131).

Here Feenberg draws our attention to the danger that the philosophers of technology see
in uncriticized hegemony. When citizens see politics as nothing more than a system of
power relations, it becomes normal to equate systematizing technology and the political
system.

According to Feenberg, we should not think that technology's autonomy frees it
from the need to exist within society. As he puts it "[t]he technical always already
incorporates the social in its structure" (1999, 210). Along with the other authors in the
Heideggerian/Ellulian tradition, Feenberg is concerned with the damage that an
unquestioning belief in technological autonomy will cause to political freedom. Verene
explains the danger of the autonomous technological state in terms of myth. He claims
that

> To redefine the state through the logic of mythical thought is to
> eliminate the possibility of moral judgment . . . . Politics becomes not a
> matter of ideas put into action but the purveyance of images and rites
> that relieve the self of individual responsibility and the state from any
> acts of rational justification. . . . Myth is always present in the
> background of social life, ready to appear as the manner of thought to

grip the individual and unite the individual with the collective in times of political tension or crisis" (2016, 34).

Verene explains that the technological state as a vision of public life excludes deliberation and political action. Even though, like Feenberg, he does not hold that citizens are constrained to accept this myth, he believes that it can exist as a substratum of civic consciousness. Verene is pointing to a myth that claims that society can survive without citizens. Simpson writes that when citizens choose to believe this myth, the technological state can actually become self-perpetuating and self-directing: "technology itself decides upon the best means, and, to the extent that we increasingly abdicate our power to make legitimate choices . . . . it becomes self-determinative without any decisive human intervention" (1995, 21).

For the philosophers of technology, citizens may choose to believe in the full autonomy of the technological state because it seems to incarnate systematic progress. This attitude reflects a citizen belief that self-making is a feature the non-human rather than the human. Thinkers in the Heidegerrian/Ellulian tradition think that systematic and autonomous progress belong first to historical humanity, and that the technological state is merely one possible expression of this power of self-making. In Darby's analysis of how technology combines both *techne* and *logos* he writes that

> *Techne* pertains to the universalizing and homogenizing of making (*poesis*). This re-presentation in the form of a thing (= object = a being that stands before us) is demarcated by clear boundaries (= completeness = wholeness). . . . *Logos*, in an archaic form, is a gathering together of

experience that leads to perception, or, we might say, to knowledge (2004).

Techne is homogenizing because the form in which a thing is made obscures our perception of its composite elements. In this interpretation, forms result from the human desire to have names for the parts of our experience. There are "objects" of experience because we have made objects that can be experienced as unities. For the philosophers of technology, technological progress reveals that the unity of experience is imposed within the human being before it is imposed on the world. Thus technological hegemony is really internal hegemony, because human beings can break and make the boundaries of their own natures by imposing unity on self-experience.

When speaking about Hobbes' technological attitude toward human nature, Darby writes that

all boundaries originate with, and are shaped by, the self-made being: man. As the being who makes himself from an infinite array of possibilities, man makes his own purposes and shapes his own ends. In doing so, he becomes the spirit of modern science: technology (2016, 305).

The modern belief in the power of information technology is representative of the view that human beings are self-making. Information technology is supposed to manipulate the disembodied data of experience in such a way that it can become raw material for the construction of a mind or person. In this context, to "in-form oneself" means to choose both the categories and the content of one's own experience, and to shape the previously formless data into a personal identity. Human beings must begin as a non-persons so that

they are not constrained by previous forms as they progressively bring themselves into appearance.

For the philosophers of technology, the totally self-sufficient technological state presents an attractive but impartial vision of the reality of self-making. The technological state appears free to homogenize experience without the interference of social authority (Juenger 1949, 79, 99). This apparent freedom allows the modern citizen to believe in the possibility of progressive self-making, but the impersonal nature of the technological state obscures the roots of its autonomy within human existence. Technology can help lead us to adequate self-knowledge as the beings that are always becoming, but the reality of mortality causes us to retreat into the homogeneous present and away from our destinies in the past and the future (Simpson 1995, 24, Heidegger, Question 1977, 32).

This is an ironic and anxious situation because there is no necessary relationship between the technology of becoming and the advent of a totally impersonal state. For Ellul, impersonal technological hegemony traps citizens into a kind of progress that is unfree and closed, rather than free and open:

> The rapid changing of these social relations gives an illusion of freedom. But it is not man who causes these changes. It is they, stemming from the progression of the system, that determine man, and it is their 'pressing' character that restrains his liberty. He is constantly more and more defined by his situation in the system (1980, 322).

The hegemonic claim that technological progress will inevitably systematize human nature in a particular way destroys the possibility of deliberating about the reality or advisability of the technological state. Feenberg writes that "[I]n the technical sphere, it is commonly said, legitimacy is a function of efficiency rather than of the will of the

people, or rather, efficiency *is* the will of the people" (1999, 131). For the philosophers of technology, the identification of politics and society with an impersonal system of causes and effects legitimizes the suppression of the particular ends and particular means of individual persons (Angus 1987, 111).

Ellul puts the homogenizing effects of the technological system on human nature in terms of anxiety. He claims that the technological state produces

> a type incapable of reacting directly to . . . the forms of concrete things, incapable of functioning without anxiety in any domain, and even incapable of feeling alive unless authorized or commanded by a machine and with the aid of the extra-organic apparatus furnished by the machine deity (1980, 313-314).

For the philosophers of technology, persons in the grip of this kind of technological thinking believe that their very existence depends on the technological state.[11] Every aspect of experience is viewed as the product of impersonal mediation. Questioning the nature of things or persons becomes an insupportably anxious activity. What does this underlying anxiety tell the philosophers of technology about human nature?

Heidegger writes that technology endangers our ability to see that the essence of nature is fundamentally becoming. He thinks, however, that along with this danger comes

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[11] Darby gives us a picture of how giving ontological priority to the technological state will affect the possibility of further progress: "[Efficiency] is self-referential, relatively autonomous, progressively sovereign . . . . If the relative difference between cause and effect and means and ends were reduced to zero, it would mark the advent of complete efficiency. In such an instance, technology would become a totality. This would be the same as universal homogeneity, which under the Second Law of Thermodynamics equals a state of homeostasis or entropy (2016, 304). The progressive sovereignty of the technological state would mean the destruction of all autonomy outside of itself. This state would be totally objective, but it would not have any room for individuality because it would define the whole of experience in terms of a single form. The cosmos would be totally undifferentiated. This kind of progress is self-contradictory since the fully realized technological state would not itself have sufficient autonomy to bring new forms of existence into appearance, or to change into something other than itself.

the possibility of human beings realizing that technology calls them to cooperate with it

and reveal themselves as the ones who determine the direction of natural becoming:

> the coming to presence of technology cannot be led into the change of its destining without the cooperation of the coming to presence of man. . . . Man is indeed needed and used for the restorative surmounting of the essence of technology. . . . man's essence must first open itself to the essence of technology. This opening is, in terms of that coming-to-pass which discloses, something quite different from the event of man's affirming technology and its means and promoting them (Heidegger, Turning 1977, 39).

For Heidegger, human beings can redirect technology away from the radical

systematization of experience, but they cannot destroy technology. Technology and

humanity are co-products of a world that is always changing the way it reveals itself.

Technology is the means by which this change is expressed, and humanity is the means

by which it is understood.

Heidegger thinks that true self-knowledge will result from a successful integration

of technology and human nature.[12] This true self-knowledge will come into existence

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[12] Mumford writes that "No matter how completely technics relies upon the objective procedures of the sciences, it does not form an independent system, like the universe: it exists as an element in human culture and it promises well or ill as the social groups that exploit it promise well or ill. . . . In order to reconquer the machine and subdue it to human purposes, one must first understand it and assimilate it. . . . The machine itself . . . is a product of human ingenuity and effort: hence to understand the machine is not merely a first step toward re-orienting our civilization: it is also a means toward understanding society and toward knowing ourselves" (2010, 6). Although Mumford does not ascribe autonomy to technology in the same way as Ellul, he likewise assumes that human experience will henceforth be technological. Mumford takes his position on the relationship between humanity's self-knowledge and the assimilation of technology before Heidegger addresses the question from an existentialist perspective. Mumford thus does not conceive of technology in terms of revealed Being, so it is interesting that he also calls for an orientation towards technology for the sake of the human spirit.

through a 'turning' that applies technological thinking to technology itself. Heidegger

says that

> [i]n the coming to presence of the danger there *conceals* itself, therefore, the possibility of a turning in which the oblivion belonging to the coming to presence of Being will so turn itself that, with *this* turning, the truth of the coming to presence of Being will expressly turn in—turn homeward—into whatever is (Heidegger, Turning 1977, 41).

Heidegger claims that Being has its home within human nature, or, that humanity is

where Being can be known as Being. In this passage Heidegger shows that he is thinking

of Being as an essentially empty category since oblivion is what the 'turning' reveals.

The rescue Heidegger offers from the systematization of experience is another

kind of homogenization. Rather than technology operating as an active force of historical

progress toward stasis, technology is that by which humanity examines itself and finds

literally nothing (Heidegger, Turning 1977, 44). Heidegger's 'coming to presence' seems

to come from and lead to a place without any tangibly existing things other than

technological process. This ontological nowhere contains the possibility of creating a

world, but this possibility exists because Being needs a way to reveal itself (Heidegger,

Turning 1977, 43). In this interpretation of technological becoming, however, human

individuals do not appear to have any ontological status as persons apart from their role

as knowers of Being (Heidegger, Turning 1977, 42).

1.8   Conclusion

Heidegger, Ellul, and the thinkers in their tradition agree that human experience has

become technological. For them, this means that modern individuals have to deal with the

presence in their lives of an efficient, systematizing force, with at least some degree of autonomy. Technology's autonomy exacerbates the individual's sense of anxiety about their place in a changing world. Individual anxiety relates to the human desire to gain personal expression, or identity. The satisfaction of this desire appears to be jeopardized by the progressive formlessness of technological experience. Individuals have trouble understanding themselves as persons because the outward expression of these identities is subject to constant technological change.

These thinkers also hold that modern individuals experience society as technological. That is to say, that society is subject to a progressively emerging efficiency that does not seem to be entirely directed by human agency. This collective experience jeopardizes citizenship in the same way that the individual experience jeopardizes personality. The destruction of stable social forms unsettles political order at the same time that citizens feel themselves powerless to direct society's future.

For the thinkers we considered in this chapter, we can understand the source of technological anxiety if we accept that technology has the power to change human nature, both personal and social. Not only so, but this technological power appears to be reordering life and society in a way that is antithetical to human agency. If this particular form of technological progress is left unchecked, it will homogenize experience according to the principle of self-sustaining efficiency. Modern persons and modern

citizens will be atomized and reduced to the raw material consumed by a fully autonomous technological hegemon (Juenger 1949, 176).

The way to the recovery of personality begins with the realization that humanity has the same power over nature that technology does.[13] Nature qua nature is the realm where Being reveals itself, and this revelation will always be progressive. The challenge of modern humanity is to integrate the individual and social experience into the technological experience. Technology and humanity are both expressions of Being, so they both have the autonomy to reveal new forms within nature. The technological state seeks hegemony in the absence of social direction, but technology does not need hegemony to remain autonomous. The human experience will necessarily be technological, but it does not have to be impersonal. Individuals can use technological efficiency to facilitate the free expression of Being, and society can systematize itself in the pursuit of freely chosen human goods.[14]

The status of citizenship is still in question, however. The myriad forms of Being may outwardly differentiate individuals, but technology reveals their ontological

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[13] "While the machine increased the servitude of servile personalities, it also promised the further liberation of released personalities . . . . No part of the environment, no social conventions, could be taken for granted, once the machine had shown how far order and system and intelligence might prevail over the raw nature of things. . . . *In projecting one side of the human personality into the concrete forms of the machine, we have created an independent environment that has reacted upon every other side of the personality*" (Mumford 2010, 323-34). Mumford is optimistic that as technology gives an objective form to humanity's capacity to master nature, it also educates us to our fundamental independence and creativity. Technology challenges us to the discipline of mastering our own nature so that mechanization can be made to serve a humane future (2010, 363, 372).

[14] Ellul thinks that all technological means are necessarily inhuman (1967, 338-340). Technology's exclusive focus on increased efficiency means that the new world it reveals is explicitly unnatural (Ellul 1967, 20-21, 79). We could say that Ellul's position represents the challenge that the philosophers of technology are trying to overcome.

sameness. Citizenship is contained within a stable structure of authority that acknowledges the social status of individuals as persons. Technological humanity may progressively reveals individuality and personality as aspects of Being, but it does not reveal stable persons or a stable structure of authority. Technological humanity lives in the realm of creation out of nothing, so the progressive revelation of Being is beyond given authority. Citizenship and stable authority are thus revealed as outdated forms no longer useful for self-realized and technologically empowered humanity.

2 Chapter: Hegemonic Freedom

2.1 Introduction

Alexandre Kojève offers us an alternative to the Heideggerean/Ellulian account of the role of technology in bringing about social hegemony. His account is explicitly political because it starts from the premise that history is driven by human struggle and human work. The hegemonic state can only come about through the dialectical overcoming of the given conditions of human nature. This dialectical overcoming through struggle and work eventually satisfies all human desires and reveals the final truth about human nature. For Kojève, technology is a necessary tool in this project of achieving the End of History through natural transformation. Kojève's seeks to explain why the hegemonic state is the most desirable goal for political life since its achievement will require an intentional and universal application of technology in eliminating difference between citizens. I argue that for Kojève, perfect technological hegemony is desirable for citizens because it will allow them to recognize themselves in the homogenous state while maintaining their power over human nature.

Kojève's argument relies on three main premises: that human struggle seeks to satisfy a desire for recognition, that human work creates a new world through transformative negation, and that human beings can recognize their own potential fulfillment as an attribute of a social structure that perfectly unites recognition and negation. We will consider each of these premises in turn. I will conclude by showing that for Kojève, the technological achievement of political and social hegemony brings about the perfectly legitimate state and the final form of human nature.

2.2   Struggle and Recognition

Kojève's theory of political progress rests on his analysis of political struggle. For Kojève, political struggle is founded on the human desire for recognition. Recognition is an acknowledgement of one's own dignity by a person one understands to be an equal: "[f]or the desire to be 'recognized' in one's eminent human reality and dignity (by those whom one 'recognizes' in return) effectively is, I believe, the ultimate motive of all *emulation* among men, and hence of all political *struggle*" (Kojève, Tyranny 2013, 143). Recognition thus requires consciousness of the idea of dignity, consciousness of the existence of an other, a mechanism for establishing equality, and a mechanism for expressing equality. Struggle establishes the existence of dignity and the existence of the other, while work (and later technology) creates the conditions for equality and the understanding of equality. To satisfy the human desire for recognition, work and struggle must ultimately come together in the political community. In Kojève's scheme of politics, true recognition can only be given by citizens to other citizens, since only citizens have consciously overcome their natural inequalities.

Recognition is a political phenomenon because it requires a structure of authority. For Kojève, authority refers to the dignity that allows someone to command without resort to fear or compulsion:

> to get oneself 'recognized' by someone without inspiring fear . . . or love in him, is to enjoy *authority* in his eyes. To acquire authority in someone's eyes, is to get him to *recognize* that authority. Now a man's authority (that is to say, in the final analysis, his eminently human value, though necessarily his *superiority*), is *recognized* by another when that other follows or carries out his advice or his orders not because he cannot do otherwise . . . but because he spontaneously considers them

worthy of being followed or carried out, and he does so not because he himself recognizes their intrinsic value, but only because *this particular person* gives this advice or these orders (Tyranny 2013, 143-44).

Kojève writes that those who recognize authority carry out a command not because they have made a judgement on its choiceworthiness but because they spontaneously trust the person giving the command. If this is true, we can understand this as a statement on the inadequacy of conflict for providing satisfaction. Rational discussion on the relative merits of a command will either fail to form agreement, at which point the citizens will have to have recourse to authority, or one side of the argument will have to overcome all the others. Victory in a non-violent context of argument still implies that the opposing position is not worthy of recognition. Kojève's contention that the desire for recognition is the fundamental human and political drive means that political satisfaction comes about through the office of citizenship, rather than through deliberative politics or the assertion of individual prerogatives.

For Kojève, satisfaction does not necessarily include happiness, so political progress is not directed toward the individual citizen but toward the fullness of humanity as a whole (Tyranny 2013, 143). The desire for recognition is specifically human since it derives from our self-understanding as human beings. So according to Kojève, it is the pursuit of humanity rather than the pursuit of happiness that drives political struggle. This political struggle is contained within a larger arc of historical progress that allows humanity to move from a pre-political struggle for domination to a political struggle for recognition and a post-political state of satisfaction. Historical progress is necessary because the struggle for domination can only result in one person killing the other whose

recognition she[15] hoped for, or the surrender and consequent enslavement of the other. Although humanity's consciousness of dignity and its consciousness of the other are formed in the struggle for domination, this struggle does not produce equality and thus is not a direct basis for citizenship and politics (Fukuyama 1992, 147).

How does Kojève think that a structure of authority can come to be instituted? Why does he think that the struggle for domination will progress beyond itself and create the human world of politics and recognition? For Kojève, human beings' first attempt to gain recognition will be constituted by acts of struggle (Tyranny 2013, 156). Action[16] occurs in the present, and action that leads to the risk of death or defeat takes no account of the future. On the face of the argument it seems as though the only possibility is the continual repetition of the struggle for recognition. Kojève thinks, however, that the root of action is not instinct but desire. Desire for recognition is a conscious motive because it must be actualized against the resistance of our given conditions or the will of another. Our instinct is to preserve our bodily life, but we cannot know beforehand whether we will survive the struggle. The other also desires to preserve her dignity and will at the very least resist our attempt to subdue her if she does not actively try to kill us in return.

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[15] I have used the feminine personal pronoun throughout when referring to the participants in Kojève's version of the dialectic of history. Although Kojève uses the masculine pronoun, I thought it was useful to remind the reader that dialectical accounts of history seek to describe the shape of human existence in general. For Hegel, the distinction between male and female is relevant at least as it contributes to the distinction between private and public life in the classical era. When investigating the character of the post-historical and post-political human, however, we are not concerned with the accidental drivers of progress. We are concerned instead with the choiceworthy possibilities of humanity in its totality.

[16] For Kojève, action covers both struggle and work (Kojève, Tyranny 2013, 168). Action is a human choice to bring about change in the world. Kojève says that the purpose of this change is to create meaning that can be discussed between oneself and one's fellows (Kojève, Letters 2013, 255-56). Struggle brings meaning by elevating discourse above the level of instinct, and work brings meaning by allowing for speech about future projects.

When the desire for recognition is asserted through acts of struggle, it negates both our own instincts and those of the other who faces us. To Kojève, this indicates that although the struggle for recognition negates our future bodily survival, it also negates the conditions of our present existence.

According to Kojève's reading of Hegel, the negation of life contained in the early stages of the struggle for recognition points us to humanity's dialectical structure. In Hegelian thought, a dialectical structure is one in which truth emerges through a historical process of action, reaction, and overcoming. As Michael Roth writes, "self-consciousness . . . according to Kojève . . . is inseparable from historical development. Without the dialectical tension provided by history, self-consciousness tends toward dissolution" (1988, 144). Humanity is potentially dialectical because it is composed of many members and many societies that may oppose one another (Fukuyama 1992, 61). Humanity is actually dialectical because it would cease to exist without the ability to supersede the ancient fight to the death. Kojève writes that

> If, on the one hand . . . Self-Consciousness and Man in general are, finally, nothing but Desire that tries to be satisfied by being recognized by another Desire in its *exclusive* right to satisfaction, it is obvious that Man can be fully realized and revealed—only by realizing a universal Recognition. Now if—on the other hand—there is a *multiplicity* of these Desires for universal Recognition, it is obvious that the Action that is born of these Desires can—at least in the beginning—be nothing but a life and death *Fight* (1980, 40).

For Kojève, the achievement of human fullness begins with a plurality of desires struggling with one another for recognition (1980, 43). Butler writes that "Desire is itself dependent upon the availability of a proper historical community to express its own

transformative potential" (1999, 68). Self-Consciousness, or self-recognition, is not

possible for human beings until they have grasped their essential natures as Desires for

recognition (Kojève 1980, 15, 40, Roth 1988, 104-105). This Desire is made known

through action, so human nature must be revealed in dialectical time, which is to say in

history (Butler 1999, 74). How can human nature be made known when for Kojève, this

historical action first takes the shape of a fight that will kill its participants?

The struggle for recognition becomes paradoxical rather than futile because

oftentimes both participants survive and come to a new living arrangement: "[o]ne must

suppose that the Fight ends in the victory of the one who is ready to go *all the way* over

the one who—faced with death—does not manage to raise himself above his biological

instinct of preservation (identity). (Kojève 1980, 41). The victor becomes the Master

when the Slave surrenders for the sake of her survival. The paradox is that the desire for

recognition has not been eradicated in either combatant because the end of the struggle

did not provide satisfaction. The Master cannot recognize the human dignity of the Slave

because she surrendered, and the Master cannot be satisfied by gaining domination rather

than authority. By the same token, the Slave cannot recognize her own human dignity but

only the Master's dignity as a conqueror. In Kojève's theory, a Master's human dignity is

merely implicit because she has failed to either kill or be killed. The dead cannot

recognize another or recognize themselves, but only they have finally proven their

superiority over natural existence.

The Master-Slave relationship contains potentially the authority that could not be

actualized through the life and death struggle. Kojève does not think that the Master's

acquisition of slaves halts her struggle for recognition. The Master is still conscious of

her desire for recognition even if she is not conscious of the impossibility of actualizing it through domination (Sobel 2015, 30). The Master or Masters will seek to extend the scope of the struggle as far as possible in their quest for satisfaction. In the context of his analysis of a tyrant's motivations Kojève writes that "a man is fully satisfied only by the recognition of those he himself recognizes as worthy of recognizing him. . . . to the extent that a man seeks recognition, he would do everything in his power to make the number of those 'worthy' of recognizing him as large as possible" (Tyranny 2013, 157). The person who has extended her dominion as far is it will go does not stop at enforcing her bodily or intellectual superiority but asks her Slaves to participate in building the public realm. The Master's care for the docility or compliance of her Slaves is combined with a care for preserving her own capacity for struggle. In practice this means that the Master forces the Slaves to work:

> The Master, who was able to force the Slave to *recognize* him as Master, can also force the Slave to *work* for him, to yield the result of his *Action* to him. Thus, the Master no longer needs to make any effort to satisfy his (natural) desires. The *enslaving* side of this satisfaction has passed to the Slave: the Master, by dominating the working Slave, dominates Nature and lives in it as *Master* (Kojève 1980, 46).

We will see later that for Kojève work[17] has a transformative capacity lacking in other forms of action. The Master's motive in eliciting labour from her Slaves still flows from the fight for recognition, however. The Master sees that the Slave, although less

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[17] Work is the compulsory performing of services by the Slave out of fear for her own death (Kojève, Letters 2013, 232). Performing these services requires the Slave to make and build use objects, so work is action to change the conditions of existence.

than human in her eyes, is still capable of action in the sense of struggling against non-human nature through work. If we accept Kojève's account of the psychology of slavery, then slavery is the appropriation of another's action against nature. The Master acts to dominate the Slave, while the Slave acts to dominate nature. Kojève thinks that recognition rather than domination is the intended result of action, so slavery must be driven by something other than the desire to conquer non-human nature. Slavery allows the Master to satisfy her natural needs without work. From the Master's perspective this means that she is freed for a higher kind of action, that is, the fight for recognition.

We have observed that this is a paradoxical situation because the Master can never find recognition by gaining more slaves, and the Slave can never recognize herself in her own dignity. In Kojève's language, the Master's satisfaction has an 'enslaving side.' The scope of the Slave's action is bound to the natural world and the Master's recognition is reduced to recognition by Slaves as parts of that natural world (Kojève 1980, 46). For Kojève, Masters recognize themselves as Masters, which is to say that they understand themselves to be the lords over the whole of natural existence. This lordship began with the Masters' willingness to overcome their natural instinct of biological survival and continues through their exemption from the work necessary to preserving their biological lives. Kojève claims that what Masters really desire is recognition of their absolute human dignity, so this lordship is not a true source of satisfaction for them.

Here we can see why Kojève thinks that the Master/Slave relationship is the beginning of a dialectical history. Kojève claims that when the Master began her fight

for recognition her intention was to see a reflection of her perfect humanity in an other. The fact of the Slave's surrender means that "at the end of the Fight, he is recognized only by a *Slave.* . . . if to be a man is to be *Master,* the Slave is not a man, and to be recognized by a Slave is not to be recognized by a *man*" (Kojève 1980, 46). The Master/Slave relationship is a new kind of co-dependent human existence. Individually, both Masters and Slaves fall below full humanity. For Kojève, Masters lose the self-consciousness of their desire for recognition when they consent to become lords over the less-than-human. Masters think that being a Master is what it means to be human. Slaves preserve the memory that recognition rather than domination is the true human good, but they lose their capacity to act independently toward this goal. The dialectic Kojève proposes seeks to bring together the Master's dominion over human and non-human nature with the Slave's desire for universal recognition.

For Kojève, the Master/Slave relationship is not simply contradictory because the Slave's work produces something visible and intelligible. Both the Master and the Slave can recognize that the household and later the city are the result of domination, although they may not draw the correct conclusions from this fact. The Master may erroneously suppose that her struggle for recognition is a struggle for increased domination. The Slave may erroneously suppose that the Master's bloody struggle is the cause of the public world. It is true that the Master's action increases the scope of slavery, but the growth of the public world comes from the Slave's work. Masters and Slaves do not realize that Slaves are not part of the natural world even though they

act on the natural world and are subjugated through their natural desire for survival. According to Kojève's argument, the household and the city give tangible evidence that the human desire for recognition leads to a historically effective dialectic. At this point, however, neither the Master nor the Slave understand that the public world contains potentials that go beyond mere domination over nature.

2.3   Work and Negation

The desire for recognition becomes the driver for history through the Slave's work (Drury 1994, 29). The Slave creates the public world as the arena of progress as she preserves and builds on changes to the natural world at the Master's command (Sobel 2015, 35). The Slave begins to see a way forward as she observes her ability to structure the given conditions of her and her Master's lives. The way forward through work within the public world allows time for building a structure of authority, time that goes beyond one or many individual lifetimes. Neither the Master nor the Slave have the luxury of understanding how their actions will lead to a stable structure of recognition, however. In Kojève's view, Masters are always thinking about how to maintain their dominion over the Slaves, for otherwise they would jeopardize the conditions for their continued existence as Masters. Kojève writes that "the tyrant always has some 'current business' which it is impossible to drop without first completing it. . . . It may also be that it takes more years to conclude 'current business' than there are years in the tyrant's own life" (Tyranny 2013, 137).

In Kojève's dialectical scheme, Slaves are no more useful for bringing authority into being because their concern is with the satisfaction of their Masters. Slaves have an idea of recognition, but it is an idea of recognition in the abstract, since only their Masters are actually recognized (Kojève 1980, 49-50). Masters and Slaves are incapable of recognizing themselves as partial representations of a greater human whole (Kojève 1980, 59). This means that for Kojève, the problem of building a structure of true authority is a problem of knowledge. Slaves and Masters must come to know that humanity as such is the desire for recognition before they can understand why they must replace domination with authority.

Philosophical understanding on its own is not sufficient to bring about a state of recognition because the intellectual efforts of individual philosophers do not change nature through work. Kojève writes that: "in order to reveal Being, the philosopher must, on the contrary, 'participate' in history, and it is not clear why he should then not participate in it *actively* . . . . The only thing that could keep him from it is *lack of time*" (Tyranny 2013, 152). Philosophers do not have any more time than the Master or the Slave, and their struggle to gain recognition for their wisdom has removed them from the wider project of transforming the public world (Kojève 2013, 159). So in asking how Kojève sees a structure of authority coming to be realized, we are asking how he thinks Being[18] can become aware of itself in a way that individual Masters, Slaves, and philosophers cannot.

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[18] In the passage cited above Being is used in the Heideggerean sense of humanity as a whole. Kojève says that for Hegel "Being=Truth=Man=History" (Tyranny 2013, 152). For Kojève, History is the same thing as the self-consciousness of the human species (Tyranny 2013, 169). Absolute and total Wisdom still needs to

Kojève's History is able to integrate the Master's overcoming of biological

necessity, the Slave's power of transformation, and the philosopher's ability for self-

reflection. It is only able to do so, however, through a process of struggle between

humanity's transformative drives and its given nature (Kojève, Letters 2013, 233).

This struggle necessarily takes time because humanity can only be understood as the

Desire for recognition if humanity is transforming itself for the sake of that which it

does not yet have (Kojève, Tyranny 2013, 156). A philosopher like Kojève must thus

turn to the study of dialectical History in her desire to understand authority within

society. Authority is a stable order within Being once it has overcome its internal

contradictions and become that which it was not.

In Kojève's account of historical dialectic, this process of becoming something

new is referred to as negation. By negation, Kojève means a fundamental change in

the nature of the thing being negated. A tree is negated when it is chopped down and

turned into boards and sawdust, and the raw lumber is negated when a craftsman

shapes it into a stool. This fundamental change contains both creation and

destruction, since both the lumber and the stool can just as easily be burned. Kojève's

point is that human beings have a unique ability to modify the conditions of existence

in unnatural ways: they can choose to die, they can choose to subjugate themselves,

be verbalized by a human thinker for us to be aware of it, but this Wisdom is something that can only be
achieved by and contained in the whole of historical human experience.

they can choose to create things unnecessary for mere survival, and they can choose to create ideas.

According to Kojève, the Master's action in seeking death is the originating negation. This action is not significant because of the real death that it causes. Just as biological life is natural, so is biological death. Even the Master's consciousness of risking her life would be mere foolhardiness if she were not risking it for the sake of an idea. The Master is fighting for recognition. She does not grasp the nature of the recognition for which she is seeking, but she does know that she fights according to desire rather than instinct (Kojève 1980, 41). The Master's failure to find death does not halt dialectical progress but enables it. For Kojève, the most important outcome of the Master's fight is the creation of the idea that human beings are not defined by their biological existence. This is because "Man will risk his biological *life* to satisfy his *nonbiological* Desire" (Kojève 1980, 41). The struggle for recognition is the struggle to find or reveal a true human being, and only those who negate the idea of themselves as primarily biological can participate in this struggle.

In Kojève's account of the struggle for recognition the idea of non-biological humanity has two important outcomes. First, the Masters will direct their activity to the purely negative, to non-creative destruction (Kojève 1980, 41). The fight for recognition in itself only ends in death or slavery, so the Masters will continue to kill and subjugate without finding satisfaction (Kojève 1980, 41). Second, the Masters' understanding of themselves as non-biological beings leads them to dissociate human dignity from the labour of self-preservation. Perpetuating the fight is far more important than working to survive, so Slaves are formed as a second class of human being.

The Slaves' work is the second and more creative negation. The Masters

understand only that someone else must feed them and house them if they are to continue

killing: "[t]he Master's superiority over Nature, founded on the risk of his life in the Fight

for prestige, is realized by the fact of the Slave's *Work*. This Work is placed between the

Master and Nature (Kojève 1980, 42). Kojève understands Masters as asserting a static

and perpetual superiority over nature in general. Their negation of their own biological

lives allows them to make this claim unopposed, but it can only be made real by the

Slaves' struggle with nature. The Slave transforms the conditions of the Master's

existence, so she destroys in order to rebuild and recreate.

Roth argues that for Kojève, we know that work is creative negation because it

produces something to satisfy specifically human desires. Unlike animal desires, human

desires are directed towards a recognition of value in a person or object. Human desire is

thus satisfied by work to produce something that endures rather than something that is

consumed (Roth 1988, 98). The Slave is the one who negates the given conditions of her

and her Master's life in order that the Master may live in a world that recognizes her

superiority over nature. The Master, however, only observes nature serving her bodily

needs and providing the materials for her struggle with other Masters. The Slave, by

contrast, observes nature changing, pushing back, and reacting in new ways as she mixes

her work with given existence. This means that the Slave is the one who understands that

nature is changeable and potentially dialectical.

The Slave's creative negation moves dialectical progress forward because it unites

natural change with an abstract idea. Kojève points out that contrary to the Master, the

Slave has a clear idea of the other. The Slave knows that Masters exist and that they have

overcome their natural instincts in the fight for recognition. The Slave does not yet know

that she has surpassed her own nature by subjugating herself to the Master, but she does

know that when she works, she works on behalf of a non-biological being. As Butler

writes, Kojève thinks that "human desire is less an organic given than the negation or

transformation of what is organically given; it is the vehicle through which consciousness

constructs itself from a biological into a nonbiological, i.e., distinctively human, being"

(1999, 67). The desire for recognition has allowed the Master to supersede biological

instinct, but it is the Slave's desire for satisfaction through work that prompts the

transformations of nature that allow the Master to remain non-biological. Transformative

work for non-given, ideational ends requires what Kojève calls "technique." He says that

"the idea that engenders a technique is a *scientific* idea, a scientific concept" (1980, 49).

In Kojève's system, the Slave's possession of scientific ideas about nature, the

Master, and the possibilities of their interrelationship is synonymous with knowledge

about society. As Cooper remarks, "[t]he Slave . . . can recognize his own work in the

world as specifically human, artificial, and unnatural. . . .In general one may say that the

Slave's labour forms or creates a human world" (1984, 98). Technology is actually the

means by which the Slave applies this knowledge to create the specifically human world.

This seems to indicate that for Kojève, historical progress is a technological unfolding of

human possibility through creative destruction. In this context, true human possibility

means the possibility of gaining recognition. According to Kojève, the Slave at first

works for the satisfaction of the Master but begins more and more to work for the idea of

recognition as an individual (1980, 49-50). This separates the struggle for recognition

into two parts. On the one hand Masters seek to create a universal structure of recognition

that does not take account of the human value of the Slaves whose work supports the State. On the other hand, the Slaves work toward actualizing themselves as individuals but must do so without the benefit of an other, since Masters only see the Slave's work and not the Slaves themselves (Kojève 1980, 59-60).

Once the Slave gets a hold of the idea that the Master became the Master through negating her personal, biological life, the Slave begins to think of extending this negation in a systematic way. Kojève remarks that for the Slave this means becoming conscious of her potential freedom and striving to actualize this freedom in society (1980, 49-50). The Slave who tries to systematically implement a free society is not struggling to become a Master herself, but to abolish the distinction between Masters and Slaves. For Kojève this is "the conscious and voluntary transformation of given existence, by the active abolition of Slavery" (1980, 50). The goal of this stage of Kojève's historical dialectic is to move humanity from a state of conflict and servitude to one of deliberate and intentional action upon human nature. This action struggles against human and non-human nature at the same time as it creates human beings who find their dignity in this struggle rather than the struggle against the other.

Thus, according to Kojève, the creative negation of work holds out the possibility of reaching universal citizenship. Kojève thinks that in order to see how this possibility is actualized in history we must first consider how the Slave finds dignity in work, and how the Master is persuaded to adopt this 'slavish' attitude. As we have remarked earlier, for Kojève work proceeds by negation, which is to say by changing the nature of the thing worked on. Once the Slave has learned to work for the sake of an idea, whether the Master's right to survive or the Slave's desire for freedom, working becomes intrinsically

more satisfying than fighting. Kojève's fights for recognition do end by transforming the participants into Masters and Slaves, but it does so without making them aware of this change. Work, by contrast, can be done self-consciously. When the Slave plans to make a suit of armour or build an aqueduct and then actually does it, she sees an idea transformed into a reality, and one kind of nature changed into another kind. Kojève refers to this as the 'joy' of labour, and says that "[a] man can work hard risking his life for no other reason than to experience the joy he always derives from *carrying out* his project or, what is the same thing, from transforming his 'idea' or even 'ideal' into a *reality* shaped by his own *efforts*" (Tyranny 2013, 140).

Kojève's Slave could be defined as a Desire to gain recognition by working upon inanimate nature. This Desire can be satisfied because the tangible products of work give testimony to, or recognize, the power of their creators to change nature (Roth 1988, 112). What is more, the transformation of nature opens up the possibility of new projects and new ways of life (Roth 1988, 101-102). The aqueduct enables not only the public fountain but also the public bathhouse. For Kojève, the Slave moves humanity far beyond the fight for recognition and the struggle for survival. Dialectical humanity is now working humanity, which is to say humanity that is primarily concerned with choosing its own way of life. As Roth remarks, "for [Kojève] human life is essentially characterized by the will-to-change" (1988, 110). If inanimate nature is malleable in the way that Kojève asserts, then the object of slavish Desire is also malleable. And if the object of Desire is changeable, then the nature of satisfied Desire is changeable as well. The Slave progressively builds up the city because she is aware of herself as the one who desires the

maximum expression of new, diversified, and sophisticated kinds of work (Roth 1988, 111).

In this context Kojève makes the startling ontological claim that humanity becomes part of the natural world through the Slave's work: "It is only by rising above the given conditions through negation brought about in and by *Work* that Man remains in contact with the concrete, which varies with space and time. That is why he changes himself by transforming the World" (1980, 52). In the beginning of Kojève's story, nature and humanity are both expressed statically, which is to say unknowably. Nature must simply be dominated or negated out of existence for the sake of human survival, and human beings separate themselves into thoughtless killers and frightened servants. Under these conditions it is impossible to understand the contingency of the natural world and the future-orientation of human desire.

The natural world is, however, capable of generating, absorbing, and responding to variations in its contingent composition. Natural cycles of snow, rain, and flood motivate the Slave to secure the city's water supply against shortage. This engineered supply reveals new uses once it is pressurized, and water that was previously stale or dangerous changes colour and becomes potable. Dammed reservoirs create new flooding dangers, however, and mineralized water discloses a new ability to damage transmission systems (Ancient Roman Aqueducts). Human beings are perfectly capable of transforming natural volatility through work, but this capacity is unknown before the Slave's quest for recognition within society (Cooper 1984, 98). Kojève writes that the Slave changes herself by changing the World, he is claiming that work reveals humanity as something knowable.

The change in the Slave's nature cannot merely be a change in the type of tasks she has to perform to ensure the Master's survival. Rather, the change in the Slave's nature is her ascent to consciousness of the 'concrete.' The Slave cannot yet see the way to the abolition of slavery as such and universal recognition, but she has become aware that both humanity and the world are progressive realities. As Fukuyama writes, "[t]hrough science and technology, the slave discovers that he can change nature, not only the physical environment into which he is born, but his own nature as well" (1992, 194). The Slave does not indeed find true recognition from an other, but she does find satisfaction in bringing herself and the Master into contact with the world of progress, or History.

The Slave's success in making the Master aware of progressive reality engenders the phenomenon of state-building. Kojève remarks that once Masters become statesmen, desire for creative success displaces desire for victory as their fundamental motivation: "in general the 'bourgeois' statesman who renounces glory on principle, will exercise his hard political 'trade' only if he has a 'laborer's mentality. And he will want to justify his tyranny as nothing but a necessary condition for the success of his 'labor" (Tyranny 2013, 141). Masters have access to powers of compulsion the Slaves do not enjoy, but according to Kojève they take a step towards a structure of authority and citizenship once they come to see political life as an arena for work rather than domination (Sobel 2015, 26). Masters cannot of course gain true recognition for themselves by dint of any amount of political management. What they can do is integrate the Slave's creative efforts into a structure that is explicitly directed toward rule and progress rather than to survival.

As Strauss understands Kojève's argument, the drive for progress reveals technology as the great enabler of satisfaction for both Masters and Slaves (2013, 186). We might understand technology as a complete integration between the natural and human capacities to change through creative negation. A truly technological society would enable all of Kojevè's Slaves to live like Masters, at the same time as both classes become aware of the reality of dialectical progress. Progress would no longer be something that Masters take on as a project or that Slaves work toward for the sake of freedom. Progress would be a historical reality once everyone had the ability to self-consciously choose their own way of life without the necessity for struggle.

We have now reached the point in Kojève's narrative where we have to deal with the problem of the final state of universal recognition. Strauss remarks that by eliminating the functional boundary between Masters and Slaves, technological progress also eliminates the possibility of meaningful work (2013, 209). The Slave cannot reveal any new possibilities of existence or creation that technology is not already revealing, and the Master cannot develop new ways of maintaining order or rule that technology is not already implementing. In Kojève's terms, this means that fight and struggle have come to an end:

> Truth emerges from this active 'dialogue,' this historical dialectic, only once it is completed, that is to say once history reaches its final stage . . .in and through the universal and homogeneous State which, since it implies the citizens' 'satisfaction,' excludes any possibility of negating *action*, hence of all *negation* in general, and, hence, of any new 'discussion' of what has already been established" (Kojève, Tyranny 2013, 168).

True knowledge about history as progress towards the final state of recognition is only possible when there is no more negation to be done. This final fundamental change in human nature means that humans are no longer primarily Desires oriented toward the future or to the ideal- but Self-Consciousnesses who understand their own satisfaction in the present.

2.4   The State of Satisfaction

Kojève thinks that a structure of universal citizenship and non-violent recognition is made possible by the universal state. The 'Universal and Homogeneous State' is recognizable as the final form of authority because it has wiped out or superseded dialectical history. For Kojève, the U.H.S. is ultimate synthesis of both Master and Slave. It has risked its bodily or actual existence many times as it sought to express universal humanity through the Alexandrian, Roman, and Napoleonic empires. Unlike the Master, the U.H.S. died and rose again because it was the incarnation of Humanity. Now, at the End of History, the U.H.S. lives in all of us who have received the gift of recognition through its victory over dialectic. The U.H.S. is also like the Slave because it has overcome contingency through the power of technology and liberated all of us from the struggle for bodily survival. The U.H.S. is greater than the Slave because it no longer finds its value in work. Rather, the U.H.S. understands itself to be the final actualization of all natural possibility, which is to say that the U.H.S. is the union of humanity, inanimate nature, and dialectic in the eternal present.

Kojève's theological account of the U.H.S. has one critical problem, or rather, one critical phenomenon to explain. How is it that humanity can recognize itself as humanity

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in the absence of historical progress toward dominion over nature (Drury 1994, 38-39)?

How can the U.H.S. contain the structure of mutual recognition in the absence of self-conscious struggle (Roth 1988, 139)? This is not merely a semantic question because up until this point in Kojève's account dialectic is the mechanism by which human beings can recognize themselves in an other. But when Kojève claims that Desire has come to an end, this can only mean that we have reached a point where we are immediately present to ourselves in the other. As Darby remarks, "[f]ull recognition is accepting the particularity of a finite ego as a universal and infinite value" (1982, 163). We can say that this other is the U.H.S., but the U.H.S. is not properly speaking a human being. Nor is it true to say that human beings no longer experience time. Even if history is over, nothing is immediately present to us besides our sensory experience. Becoming aware of our own state of self-recognition requires at the very least some period of reflection and the speaking or thinking of certain words.

Let us return to the tyrant who precedes the full realization of the U.H.S. The tyrant with a 'labourer's mentality' has been unconsciously infected by the dialectic. She is a Master who seeks recognition from her own Slaves. Kojève gives a sketch of the measures a tyrant will implement in this situation: she will "distribute all kinds of 'prizes,' especially honorific ones, on order to establish 'Stakhanovite' emulation in his State in the fields of agriculture, industry, and commerce," establish a standing army, a secret police, conscription, undertake public beautification projects, and spread the myth that she is nothing more than an ordinary citizen who happens to be titular owner and protector of the 'fatherland' (Kojève, Tyranny 2013, 139). This sketch is obviously a reference to Stalinist Russia, and it is impossible to tell whether it is satirical. Although

Kojève probably sees the humour in the tyrant's talent for self-deception, the thrust of his argument is that this sort of tyranny is necessary to bring about the U.H.S.

One thing that should be apparent to us is that this structure of rule does not actually require the tyrant. Her origins as a Master give her an initial claim to ownership of the state, but if the citizens can actually be persuaded to believe that the ruler is only replaceable manager, this claim loses all legitimacy[19]. Kojève is describing the state of affairs that he thinks will actually cause citizens to work for recognition from the state. If Stakhanovitic production is actually possible, as it is with sufficient technological resources, it represents production so far beyond bodily needs as to make the struggle for survival meaningless (Kojève 1980, 161n). The Second World War is the last time conscription could have been justified as actually necessary for the purposes of defense, and it was of course superseded by a technological development that destroyed the possibility of another open war between the powers.[20] Universal military service is important because it is the best way to unite the struggle for recognition with service to the state in the person of an ideal citizen (Kojève, Letters 2013, 232-33). The foundation of the secret police shows where the real threat to the State lies. The threat comes from citizens who see their historical individuality as something valuable regardless of its recognition by the State.

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[19] "The tyrant becomes an administrator, a cog in the 'machine' fashioned by automata for automata" (Kojève, Letters 2013, 255).
[20] Kojève might agree with Churchill that WWII was unnecessary, though not on grounds of justice and strategic common sense. For Kojève, the violent expansion of the Third Reich would be a misguided attempt to bring back a limited Roman Empire under the pretext of a Slave revolt against the victors of WWI. Kojève would see Hitler as an old-fashioned tyrant drunk on technological possibility who failed to see that history was bringing a universal empire into being.

In the same way that the tyrant is working for a goal beyond her comprehension, the citizens who fight for personal recognition in the realm of non-violent political life do not truly understand what they are doing. For Kojève, these citizens would have the Master's blindness to the fact that no historical human being is sufficient to provide recognition for another. A person with a life-story is someone who will die wondering whether they were significant, and who will be unable to answer this question because they can only point to their individual struggles against nature or other human beings. Kojève's End of History means the entry of all the Slaves and all the Masters into an eternity of pure self-recognition. Kojève is indicating the coming of the perfect state, of a structure of authority completely devoid of contingency:

> In fact, the political man, acting consciously in terms of the desire for 'recognition' . . . will be *fully* 'satisfied' only when he is at the head of a State that is not only *universal* but also politically and socially *homogeneous* . . . that is to say of a State that is the goal and the outcome of the collective labor of all and of each (Tyranny 2013, 146).

Kojève claims that this universal and homogeneous state is the one political utopia that has actually been made possible by progress. The collective labour he speaks of cannot of course be work for survival, even the survival of the state. According to Kojève, the universality, or perhaps immortality, of this state is the source of its legitimacy. The universal labour of the satisfied citizens must thus be directed to the political and social homogeneity Kojève speaks of. Kojève takes Alexander the Great's vision of citizenship within an ecumenical empire as his template for recognition within a politically and socially homogeneous state. Here, recognition was recognition of an

"essence' common to all men [which is] 'Logos' (language-science)" (Kojève 2013, 171).

We could say that for Kojève, the embryonic U.H.S. recognized humanity's universal capacity for self-knowledge. This self-knowledge was knowledge of basic human homogeneity. This homogeneity was partly biological and partly political. Alexander's Empire was possible because racial characteristics did not prevent anyone from adopting Hellenized culture. Alexander's empire was desirable because it was the only means of bringing unity and stability to all of Greece, Asia Minor, and Persia. These regions had seen many experiments with city-states, national kingdoms, and ethnically segregated empires. For Kojève all the previous forms of political life were conceptually and factually superseded by Alexander. He writes that "Alexander . . . was clearly ready to dissolve the whole of Macedonia and of Greece in the new political unit created by his conquest" (Tyranny 2013, 170).

The simple fact that Alexander's empire existed gave self-recognition to any of its citizens who chose to reflect on the meaning of its triumph. The logical state made the political homogeneity of its citizens self-evident to those who were in fact logical.[21] The logical citizens of the logical state had their eyes opened to the equivalence of their individual struggles for recognition. Although these struggles took place within many political forms, the resulting disunity and instability was the common factor that allowed

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[21] "All man can become citizens of one and the same State (=Empire) because they *have* . . . one and the same 'essence.' And in the last analysis this single 'essence' common to all men is '*Logos*' (language-science) . . . . The Empire which Alexander had projected is not the political expression of a *people* or a *caste*. It is the political expression of a *civilization*, the material actualization of a 'logical' entity, universal and one, just as the *Logos* itself is universal and one" (Kojève 2013, 171).

Alexander to conquer them all equally. Alexander's logical state was only potentially universal, however. What it lacked was the means to reveal homogeneity to and within its illogical citizens. To put this another way, Alexander's empire could not control the conditions of human existence beyond the limits required for ancient citizenship. It was still dependent on slavery, personal rule, and education.

In Kojève's history, the technological state must supersede the logical state for universal self-recognition to become a reality. The Roman and Alexandrian empires were incomplete because their citizens were former Masters (Kojève 1980, 57). These Masters could be conquered and then taught to accept the authority of the conqueror. The unity of these empires depended on the Masters' recognition of the conqueror's cultural superiority and the authority that this gave her. The stability of these empires nevertheless relied on the conqueror's ability to maintain and spread a structure of domination over slaves treated as economic beings. Slaves might no longer be less than human, since the imperial structures allowed for them to become free. Slavery was however recognized as necessary for the support of the homogeneous political unit. True universality was impossible because Masters could not be educated to understand the transformative power of work or the fatal instability of personal authority.

Kojève writes that the age of the Master sets the stage for the age of the Slave (1980, 45). Unlike Masters, Slaves are capable of finding satisfaction because they can see the completion of their work. Since the Slaves are working to transform nature so that they might be recognized, this means that historical progress is directed to the liberation of all the Slaves. Kojève writes that "to be able to cease being *Slave*, [a man] must have *been* a Slave. . . .The Master is only the 'catalyst' of the History that will be realized,

completed, and 'revealed' by the Slave or the ex-Slave who has become a Citizen" (1980, 47). The Citizens who were Slaves can reflect on their former condition and understand that they gained what they worked for. For Kojève, these Citizens can see the proof in their own beings that human nature is changeable and perfectible. They can also see that it was through their own action that they changed nature, so they are able to recognize their own power.

In Kojève's dialectic the age of the Slave brings us close to the End of History. What is still lacking is the realization of the final legitimacy of universal and homogeneous political life. The Masters have enfranchised all the Slaves, and they along with the Slaves have set themselves to the work of making everyone worthy of recognition. At the End of History, Masters and Slaves will realize that they are fundamentally equal, that humanity itself is not expressed through the struggle for recognition but through the U.H.S. Kojève writes that "History will be completed at the moment when the synthesis of the Master and the Slave is realized, that synthesis that is the whole Man, the Citizen of the universal and homogeneous State" (1980, 44). Perfect self-recognition becomes perfect self-knowledge of oneself as an instance of universal humanity homogenized and actualized by the U.H.S. As with the previous homogeneous empires, the existence of the U.H.S. is what makes this full knowledge of oneself possible (Kojève 1980, 45).

Kojève's U.H.S. is perfectly authoritative because it is perfectly able to provide the means for satisfaction through technological domination of inanimate nature, as well as the means for homogeneity through technological domination of human nature. In contrast to the ecumenical empires in the age of the Masters, the U.H.S. has no need to

persuade its citizens of its legitimacy. Boris Groys writes that for Kojève, "[p]hilosophy is . . . also a kind of technology. It can produce things that function, beyond any persuasion. . . . The philosopher-tyrants create the state machines to which humans have to accommodate themselves – simply because these state machines are there and function" (2016, 32). Groys shows us that the technological authority of the U.H.S. is inarguable once progress has created self-sufficient mechanisms for universal satisfaction. Because the U.H.S. has true knowledge of the desires of its citizens and true knowledge of how to dominate nature it is able to establish its reality and necessity independent of any political struggle.

The concrete and undeniable existence of the U.H.S. allows for the self-recognition of the formerly enslaved and the formerly tyrannical once they understand that the U.H.S. came to be through their own efforts. The U.H.S. is the final expression of our own dialectical possibilities, so it is the free realization of full humanity. Kojève concludes that "the end of human Time or History—that is, the definitive annihilation of Man properly so-called or of the free and historical Individual—means quite simply the cessation of Action in the full sense of the term" (1980, 159n). Here Kojève claims that we can recognize the coming of the U.H.S. through the end of historical individuality, work, and the struggle for recognition. The freedom of the individual has been superseded by the freedom of the human species to gain dialectical union with its own nature. Kojève also says that in the U.H.S. citizens recognize each other as authoritative "without reservation," which is to say without forethought or the need for proof (1980, 159n). Strauss claims that for Kojève this sort of automatic recognition can only take place in a "classless" society (2013, 193). In the absence of meaningful or functional

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distinctions between citizens, seeing the other is the same as seeing oneself. The end of historical individuality is the beginning of freedom because individual distinctives prevent this mutual recognition from taking place.

For Kojève, technology is a prerequisite for ending historical individuality because only technology can provide enough abundance to satisfy both the state as a whole and all its members. Strauss interprets Kojève to mean that the U.H.S. will present each of the citizens with "the opportunity, corresponding to his capacities, of deserving well of the whole, and receiv[ing] the proper reward for his desserts or get[ting] what is good for him" (2013, 193). This "equality of opportunity" is a fundamental equality because there is no question of competing for goods or honours. Everyone is recognized because the state gives everyone the maximum recognition they are in a condition to receive. And everyone is equal because this recognition is not earned but granted through technological abundance.

2.5   History and Homogeneity

There is one final difficulty with Kojève's account of universal self-recognition through a state of perfect homogeneity. The logical empires failed in their universality because Masters and Slaves could not be made to understand their condition of imperfect recognition. How does Kojève think the U.H.S. will be able to produce the capacity for self-recognition in a society without classes at all? Its citizens may be satisfied and recognized, but do they realize this fact?

Kojève thinks that achieving social hegemony is crucial for bringing an end to political struggle. This is because the citizens of the U.H.S. will only be able to recognize

themselves in each other if they see the other as being worthy of recognition. Slaves recognize Masters as worthy, but the reverse is not true. Self-recognition is not possible for the Slaves because the Masters maintain a structure of domination. The Slave's awareness of this domination prevents her from seeing herself as equal to the Master. The Slaves will only stop working towards liberation when the Masters willingly recognize their former slaves as equals. Another way of putting this is to say that whenever a citizen thinks of herself as superior to another, she will seek to prove this superiority through political struggle leading to domination.

Ironically, the process of homogenization Kojève looks to is carried out by the Masters as one of their political projects. The statesman's desire for universal recognition is coupled with the technological means to enrich and educate the Slaves (Kojève 2013, 145-46). The statesman (or tyrant) thinks that she is enfranchising Slaves just enough to make them worthy of providing recognition while still maintaining her unquestioned domination. The statesman's hope is that domination can be transformed into authority without jeopardizing her position as the most satisfied member of humanity.

What the statesman does not understand is that when the slaves are removed from the necessity of constant labour and given limited authority over their private lives they will begin to recognize each other (Roth 1988, 112). Kojève writes that "the political goal humanity is pursuing (or fighting) at present is not only that of the politically *universal* State; it is just as much that of the socially *homogeneous* State or of the 'classless Society" (Tyranny 2013, 172). The State is necessary for maintaining all the citizens at the requisite level of enrichment and independence, but the statesman herself is superfluous once the former Slaves can recognize themselves in each other (Kojève,

Tyranny 2013, 170). The classless society arises when the Slaves are freed and the Masters are turned into figureheads (Kojève 1980, 43-44). According to Roth, Kojève thinks that classlessness may even progress so far as to empty the satisfied citizens of all individuality apart from their status as members of the U.H.S. (Roth 1988, 116).

Philosophy finds its proper place at the End of History because the philosopher can make knowledge of universal recognition available to all. This knowledge is available to the philosopher because she has the example of the U.H.S. before her, in which everyone's desires are recognized and recognized equally (Groys 2016, 33). Citizens have the freedom to ignore their fundamental equality, but the U.H.S. provides incontrovertible proof that the evolution of human nature is over to anyone who thinks about their own place within it (Roth 1988, 139). Kojève remarks that philosophers are uniquely well positioned to teach statesmen and citizens because they understand that "what has to be reformed or opposed is nothing but 'prejudices,' that is to say something unreal and hence relatively unresistant" (Tyranny 2013, 149). Philosophers are the ones who recognize the malleability of human nature and show how its homogenization can be achieved technologically (Roth 1988, 129). Political struggle disappears at the End of History because the teaching of the philosophers coincides with the fact of universal technological domination.

For Kojève it is simply no longer true to say that some are born courageous and some cowardly, that some must die and others live, and some must rule and others serve. Human beings individually (and humanity collectively) are technologically self-sufficient and perfectly able to overcome the given conditions of their existence (Strauss, Restatement on Xenophon's Hiero 2013, 211-212). In Kojève's vision, the greatest

service the U.H.S. offers to humanity is its insistence on this fact. The U.H.S. does not

seek to compel subservience but to propagate the philosopher's knowledge. As long as

the U.H.S. does not permit its authority to decay then true self-recognition is possible for

all who listen to the philosopher's teaching.[22] Its authority is impregnable as long as it

incarnates humanity's actual state of being. In practical terms, this means maintaining an

unquestionable technological dominion over nature, as well as preventing the

reintroduction of political action.

Strauss writes that

> The actual satisfaction of all human beings, which allegedly is the goal
> of History, is impossible. It is for this reason, I suppose, that the final
> social order, as Kojève conceives of it, is a State and not a stateless
> society: the State, or coercive government, cannot wither away because
> it is impossible that all human beings should ever become actually
> satisfied (2013, 211).

As Kojève himself admits, some citizens of the U.H.S. will still insist on conceiving of

their humanity in terms of opposition to an other (1980, 162n). These individuals cannot

be satisfied in Kojève's sense because their desire for recognition is only directed toward

pure negation rather than toward the success of a project. There are no more projects left

to undertake and no more wars to fight but these honour-seeking citizens of the U.H.S.

still have not completed the dialectical path of history. Strauss claims that this will

necessitate coercion, at least against rebels and reactionaries if not also against ordinary

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[22] The philosopher is part of the U.H.S. because the philosopher speaks on its behalf. Kojève does not think that he or any other philosopher serves as the self-consciousness of the U.H.S. Rather, because the U.H.S. is the final political form it must permit its citizens to choose whether or not to become self-aware themselves. Philosophy is thus necessary as an intermediary between the End of History and potentially complete human beings.

citizens. For Strauss, the U.H.S. simply will not be able to permit ways of thought or behaviour that call the U.H.S.'s status as an eternal being into question.

Kojève might respond that the U.H.S. can only have self-recognition through the philosopher if all of its members are also potentially satisfied (Cooper 1984, 224-225). Strauss takes issue with what the U.H.S. will have to do to those who refuse to actualize this potential, but Kojève really thinks that the End of History is a realm of freedom. He writes that history ends when the Slave imposes her liberty on the Master, who she already recognizes as being essentially human (1980, 50). The Slave has the freedom to dominate nature through work and technology, and the freedom to see an other who is worthy of recognition. At the End of History the Slave does violence to the Master by giving her the technological tools to dominate without risk, and by creating a state that is too universal to be ignored or killed.[23]

For Kojève, the End of History is not a matter of the secret police rounding up dissenters from the party line. Instead, the End of History occurs when tyranny has served its purpose and becomes pointless. The great project of homogenizing humankind has succeeded and every citizen has full dominion over herself and over nature (Roth 1988, 117). Since there is nothing left to fight for, Masters who insist on risking their lives are not rebellious but suicidally insane (Kojève, Letters 2013, 255). The distinction between

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[23] "Man can be truly 'satisfied,' History can end, only in and by the formation of a Society, of a State, in which the strictly particular, personal, individual value of each is recognized as such, in its very particularity, by *all*, by Universality incarnated in the State as such; and in which the universal value of the State is recognized and realized by the Particular as such, by *all* the Particulars" (Kojève 1980, 58). The Masters are in the ironic position of being recognized by the State whether they want to be or not. And insofar as anyone is a citizen of the U.H.S. they have to recognize its universal value, because the U.H.S. provides them with technological leisure to reflect on their own condition and the technological equality they can recognize as citizenship. It is simply impossible to think of oneself as a citizen without at the same time thinking of the U.H.S.

the human being and the sub-human will have reappeared, but it will be a true distinction founded on knowledge and ignorance. Strauss writes that "the universal state requires universal agreement regarding the fundamentals, and such agreement is possible only on the basis of genuine knowledge or of wisdom" (2013, 194).

Human beings will be those who realize that they live within a universal and homogeneous state and sub-humans will be those who do not realize this fact. Those who remain ignorant are incapable of being human because they cannot recognize themselves even when the dominion of the whole world is offered to them. So Kojève can say that all human beings are satisfied at the End of History and humanity as a whole is satisfied. Those who are not satisfied must have been passed over by history, because neither the teaching of the philosophers nor the existence of the U.H.S. is sufficient to give them self-recognition. This means denying the experience of the mass of their fellow citizens, who have understood their own natures and the world around them to be mutable, or dialectical. They deny not only technology but also the world that technology built, and with it their own freedom.

2.6 Conclusion

Kojève claims that we are living at the end of historical progress because technology has enabled the complete satisfaction of human desire, including the political desire for recognition. In Kojève's vision, technology is created because of the human drive to build a lasting world. This drive reveals society to be a progressive project for transforming nature into something recognizably human. Technology provides the means for human beings to systematically transform nature for the satisfaction of all their

possible needs, thus creating a new world of unbounded possibility. Kojève calls this new world the U.H.S. Technology is crucial for recognition because it allows masters and slaves to have equivalent levels of domination over nature, which is to say that it eliminates the meaningful difference between them. Thus all the citizens of the U.H.S. can recognize each other as equals worthy of giving and receiving social personhood.

The technological homogenization of masters and slaves turns recognition into self-recognition, thus eliminating the need for political struggle. No citizen of the U.H.S. needs to fight for recognition from another because the U.H.S. reveals how every citizen is already an image of every other citizen. Not only so, but every individual in the U.H.S. can recognize themselves in the state as it expresses their own perfect domination over nature. By guaranteeing limitless technological possibility to its citizens, the U.H.S. synthesizes the work of the slave and the autonomy of the master, thus recapitulating the whole of human development.

The U.H.S. is universal both because it makes technological domination available to all members of the human species and because it eliminates the possibility of political alternatives. It is homogeneous because this technological domination includes domination over the historical identity of individual persons. Technology allows citizens to recognize themselves and each other as the creators of the perfectly stable and thus perfectly authoritative State. Technology does not, however, allow citizens to recognize themselves as distinct individuals with distinct historical projects, since the U.H.S. satisfies all possible projects. This is why technological domination necessarily leads to the End of History and the end of political action.

3 Chapter: Representation and Social Differentiation

3.1 Introduction

Edmund Burke presents an extensive response to the challenge of radical social reorganization according to an abstract system. He views the political project of the French Revolution as dangerously utopian, since it does not take account of the particular, historical, and conventional sources of state legitimacy. For Burke, the state is legitimated by a structure of citizenship that allows for the representation of particular interest and that acknowledges the primacy of social convention. Representative citizenship determines the possibilities for social change according to a pragmatic understanding of existing convention rather than according to abstract reasoning. Any attempt to reorder society without regard for conventional representation will have to rely on force and will risk destroying the possibility of citizenship altogether.

Burke is an appropriate interlocutor for the thinkers we have examined so far because he opposes political rationalism without also opposing the state. Burke was faced by the challenge of a regime that sought to legitimize itself by remaking society on a logical and calculable basis. The French revolutionaries did not acknowledge the authority of history or convention so they thought that their project would gain in authority as it systematized government and society. Burke did not primarily seek to show that this argument was faulty but to show that its implementation was impractical on ontological grounds. Both Heidegger/Ellul and Kojève agree that technology is becoming progressively more authoritative, regardless of whether they think it will bring about a utopia. Burke's argument about how it is ontologically impossible for radical, systematic social change to preserve an authoritative state speaks to the heart of our

question about technology. If citizenship and the state cannot survive progressive, unconstitutional change, then technology would be a primarily destructive force whose autonomy could never translate into authority.[24]

In this chapter I argue that a Burkean perspective on technological progress undermines its perceived autonomy and challenges its liberating potential. This is because Burke does not accept that any social institution, including citizenship, can create itself out of nothing, and because the actual history of social progress particularizes citizens. Social particularity demands hierarchy, representation, and distributive justice, so real progress cannot eliminate political agency or political identity. If Burke's analysis of progressive, systematizing political projects persuades us, we will also see that technology cannot really lead to the social hegemony that is feared or hoped for by the thinkers we have considered. Not only would free citizenship be incompatible with the technological hegemon, but social organization in general would not survive technological manipulation. For Burke, the U.H.S. would be revealed as a tyrannical ambition that could make use of technological means of compulsion but that could not represent individual or social goods.

We should note that Burke correctly identified the coming of a chaotic tyranny at a very early stage of the French Revolution. At the time Burke wrote the *Reflections* in 1789-1790, the Revolution was still largely constitutional and in fact bore some comparison to the English case. The nobility had been excluded from representation in

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[24] Although Burke would have been unfamiliar with the term technology, his language is applicable to the concepts it describes. I discuss this more fully in note 29 on page 95.

the National Assembly on the basis of property and the holdings of the French church had

been expropriated to fund the operation of the National Assembly (Michelet 1967, 115-

16, Pocock 1987, xxv). The French King and Queen were forced to return to Paris from

Versailles in a symbolic move indicating the strength of popular sovereignty, and the

Bastille was likewise emptied of its occupants and destroyed (Michelet 1967, 161-62,

177, 281-282). Although England did not have popular sovereignty, it did have

representative government and parliamentary supremacy, and it too had created a national

financing scheme through the Bank of England (Pocock 1987, xxviii).

Burke, however, saw the risk of the coming Terror latent within the National

Assembly's immoderate and unconventional approach to this constitutional change. Thus

we should take seriously his warning against the dangers of rationalizing and self-

legitimating political projects. Just as in Burke's own day, a rationalizing political project

claims to be able to eliminate arbitrariness and personal tyranny from social life. Even

though technological rationality aims to decrease violence as it automates compliance,

Burke's thesis about society's conventionality alerts us to the possibility of chaos. Social

breakdown is always surprising and often unanticipated, but as Burke's predictions show

we can sometimes discern the destructive logic implicit in rationalizing projects.

In the following sections I will first consider Burke's view of the purpose of the

political community as well as the role of the constitutional state within it. I will then

develop Burke's view of why radical systematization is bound to fail as a political

project, before considering his perspective on the effect that total equality or hegemony is

likely to have on the political community. Finally, I will examine Burke's portrait of a

truly free political community as one that satisfies citizens in their particularity.

3.2   The Conventional Foundations of Society

For Burke, it is impossible to think of a political community arising out of nothing. By the same logic, Burke also believes it impossible for a society to exist in a constant state of innovation or re-invention. Society exists for the sake of satisfying specific needs that are founded in human nature. These needs are not precisely biological but relate rather to the human desire to plan for the future.[25] Human beings always exist within society, so we can establish true human wants as the ones that can only be satisfied through social organization.

For Burke, society above all enables and protects the production and acquisition of property. He writes that

> If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for
> which it is made become his right. It is an institution of beneficence; and
> law itself is only beneficence acting by a rule. Men have a right to live
> by that rule; they have a right to justice; as between their fellows,
> whether their fellows are in politic function or in ordinary occupation.
> They have right to the fruits of their industry; and to the means of
> making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of
> their parents; to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring; to

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[25] This is why for Burke, it would not make sense to say that technologically produced material abundance obviates the need for social organization. In contrast to Aristotle and Hobbes, he does not think that society is first formed for the sake of bodily survival. Burke does not give an origin story to account for the existence of society because he thinks that it is natural for human beings to live within a structure that gives meaning to how they live and to what they leave behind. In this he is closer to Hegel and Kojève since he views the collective project of social life as the specifically human part of human life.

instruction in life and consolation in death. Whatever each man can

separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for

himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all

its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favour (Reflections

1993, 59).

In this passage we see that society is beneficent and just because it increases its members'

ability to acquire property, it protects this property from encroachment by their fellows,

and it guarantees the passage of this property to their offspring. Property does not

represent pure material acquisition, however. Rather, it represents something like 'quality

of life.'[26] This is essentially the classical liberal conception of society as an institution

that protects its members' ability to better their station in so far as it is in their power to

do so.

What Burke adds to the classical liberal view is an understanding that people are

only willing to abide by society's rules when they view their pursuit of self-improvement

as part of a larger project. This is why the right to education for oneself and one's

children features in the passage cited above. Burke claims that "no name, no power, no

function no artificial institution whatsoever, can make the men of whom any system of

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[26] Fennessy writes that according to Burke, "[i]n society, the source of moral obligation is the relation
between men. This relation is in very large part concerned with making provision for human wants: it is
concerned with *things*, with goods and institutions which serve human welfare. . . . What is good for a man
becomes in some way 'due' to him, owed to him by other men, because of the moral relationship in which
all men exist" (1963, 141). Fennessy says that for Burke the conventional relationships between human
beings in society all aim at the good or advantage of their parties. Thus society as a whole is directed
toward the improvement of its members.

authority is composed, any other than God, and nature, and education, and their habits of life have made them" (Reflections 1993, 40). For him, socialization is not an onerous necessity but a fundamental human need. Socialization allows human beings to be consoled by the prospect that their children, their fellows and their fellows' children will protect, pass on, and improve upon the gains they have made in their lifetimes.

In Burke's philosophy no system of authority can use artificial means to make society in its own image, but by the same token authority should be very concerned with the natural means that determine the character of society's members. Habit and education can and should be made to support a system of productive and inter-generational property-holding. When authority works with these tools, however, it does so not according to purely instrumental rationality but according to convention. Convention rules the use of authority because authority itself is conventional. Burke maintains that

> If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be
> its law. That convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of
> constitution which are formed under it. Every sort of legislative, judicial,
> or executory power are its creatures. They can have no being in any
> other state of things; and how can any man claim, under the conventions
> of civil society, rights which do not so much as suppose its existence?
> Rights which are absolutely repugnant to it? (Reflections 1993, 59).

Civil society and the authority that rules it are the products of convention because convention is the guarantee of continuity. Since the purpose of civil society is to protect a

meaningful structure of property-holding, convention is the necessary foundation of legitimate authority. Convention outlasts the articulation of particular arguments and it gains force from habit rather than persuasion.

Burke is arguing that lawful authority is conventional authority, so the unconventional assertion of new rights is unlawful. New rights such as universal access to consumer goods or the perfectly efficient provision of government services or rapid commute times are illegitimate to the extent that they damage conventional socialization. If we agree with Burke that we become part of society through a process of acculturation, then his argument presents a serious challenge to the possibility of all-encompassing technological rationalism. Many philosophers of technology argue that technology is powerful enough to remake the habits and lifestyles of modern human beings. According to Burke's argument, this power would be more aspirational than real because technology does not acculturate. Technological rationality seeks to explain the desirability or inevitability of certain patterns of thought and action according to immediately revealed effects. Socialization, by contrast, explains these patterns according to tradition and imparts them through imitation. By Burke's assessment technology would be constrained to prize individuals away from society in order to implement its plan, which brings into question the very existence of a technological society.

The first chapter of this thesis presented the argument that technological rationality progressively narrows the gap between means and ends, and that modern human beings are driven to use technology to hide their anxiety about the future. Burke would argue that technological rationality accomplishes the reverse of its intention when it destroys the conventions that guarantee the future of society: "A spirit of innovation is

generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors" (Reflections 1993, 33). For Burke, society will always look to its own preservation, so radical innovation is actually antisocial when this innovation seeks to disrupt the transmission and imitation of social tradition. If Burke is correct in claiming that a disregard for convention is selfish and individualistic, then modern anxiety is an antisocial condition. We cannot think that technology will lead to social transformation when its use is rooted in an antisocial condition.

Why would Burke think that a deliberate disregard society's future in the interest of a more efficient present will delegitimize state authority? In a famous passage in his *Reflections* Burke opines that although society is a kind of contract,

> it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born (Reflections 1993, 96).

A disregard for the conventions of the past and continuity with the future in some way breaks the contract of society. Burke does not mean that some external authority will punish the current generation for failing to meet the terms of an agreement that it was

born into. Rather, he claims that society will fail in its goal of improving the conditions of existence when it stops considering its place in time.

Burke reaches this conclusion because he thinks that people will not think of themselves as members of a society if they are not socialized to think so. When society tries to recast itself in a different form it opens the question of why it should retain the members that it had previously. Burke argues that the governing conventions of society determine a group of human beings as a society. When human beings attempt to rewrite the conventions that welded them into a corporate body, they sacrifice their ability to recognize themselves as a body and regress to being individuals outside of society.[27] Even if they were to somehow be successful in cobbling together a new agreement, these pre-social individuals would be faced with a long struggle to turn their agreement into a convention.

For Burke, a technological society of the kind we considered in the first chapter would be a sort of contradiction in terms. Even if its members could be somehow persuaded that the continuity of their efforts with the past and the future was not important, a technological society would be incapable of socializing them to think of themselves as a society. Burke would say that there is no way in which it is possible for a

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[27] "In a state of Rude nature there is no such thing as a people. A number of men in themselves have no collective capacity. The idea of a people is the idea of a corporation. It is wholly artificial; and made, like all other legal fictions, by common agreement. What the particular nature of that agreement was, is collected from the form into which the particular society has been cast. Any other is not *their* covenant. When men, therefore, break up the original compact or agreement which gives its corporate form and capacity to a state, they are no longer a people; they have no longer a corporate existence; they have no longer a legal, coactive force to bind within, nor a claim to be recognized abroad. They are a number of vague, loose individuals, and nothing more. With them all is to begin again. Alas! they little know how many a weary step is to be taken before they can form themselves into a mass, which has a true, politic personality" (Burke, Political Philosophy 1987, 245-46).

society to choose to be unconventional, or to live with constantly changing conventions. We could only say that a technological authority was maintaining its hold on a number of disconnected individuals through overwhelming force.

But for Burke, such an authority would not be scientific at all. Unless we grant that technology has independent and inhuman existence, we must think that technological rationality is a characteristic of human thought. Authority describes the legitimate government of human beings formed in society, and a science of government must deal with them in their capacity as conventional beings. Burke writes that

> The science of government being therefore so practical in itself, and intended for such practical purposes, a matter which requires experience, and even more experience than any person can gain in his whole life, however sagacious and observing he may be, it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society, or on building it up again, without having models and patterns of approved utility before his eyes (Reflections 1993, 61).

According to Burke's understanding, authority can claim to be scientific when it operates empirically. That is to say, scientific authority bases its actions on individual and collective observation of institutional behavior over long periods of time.

This prolonged study will teach the holders of authority that society is conventional, and that any successful social change will to some degree rely on the

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example of precedent.[28] In Burke's theory, a progressively technological society would suffer a constitutional crisis because its leaders would not possess the scientific understanding necessary to explain the legitimacy of constant social change. This scientific understanding would be made inaccessible by the progressive destruction of earlier social forms. Thus technological progress would have to proceed mechanically and without the benefit of governing conventions or legitimate authority.

Burke teaches us that an unconventional society is both implicitly and explicitly unconstitutional. A society that actively destroys and remakes its own conventions on an ongoing basis will suffer from a failure of the knowledge and skill required to provide it with unifying institutions. In addition, those who are able to articulate the change they see in their own lifetimes may come to see any existing formal convention as illegitimate. Burke pointed this out when he replied to the view that the French Revolution proved the illegitimacy of any government formed without the consent of the people at large. Referring to the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Burke writes that

> The Revolution is built, according to their theory, upon a basis not more
>
> solid than our present formalities, as it was made by an house of lords
>
> not representing any one but themselves; and by an house of commons
>
> exactly such as the present, that is, as they term it, by a mere 'shadow
>
> and mockery' of representation (Reflections 1993, 57).

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[28] "By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 33).

In Burke's view, the Glorious Revolution succeeded in restraining royal prerogative because the parliamentarians of the day knew that constitutional change had to proceed conventionally. Rather than claim an absolute authority as the representatives of the people to change the constitution, these members of the commons and lords appealed to preexisting tradition in establishing the supremacy of Parliament. English observers of the French Revolution, however, held it as an absolute principle that government should operate under instruction from the people (Burke, Reflections 1993, 16). In the English context this would have meant a titular monarchy and a delegatory House of Commons. Burke asks why representative government or parliamentary supremacy should then be part of the English constitution at all, since these conventions were not themselves established through direct democracy.

The same problem faces us when we conceptualize technological society as an arena of progressive efficiency. If efficiency is the criterion for legitimacy, why should we seek to increase the efficiency of social institutions that were not founded with efficiency in mind? How can we legitimize the university, the city council, or the workplace social committee? It seems unlikely, however, that technological progress can operate without participation from the whole range of social institutions between the state and the family. But technological rationality may struggle to explain why society would sanction technological progress when this progress could reveal society's illegitimacy at any moment.

Burke is not claiming that society will never embrace a form of progress that undermines constitutionality. What he is claiming is that the failure of constitutionality

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will also lead to the failure of progress. The conventional institutions that give society its shape are also the sites of the power for social change. When commenting on the National Assembly's decision to confiscate the property of the monastic establishments, Burke claims that by doing so it is willfully destroying a tool needed for the accomplishment of its progressive agenda. He writes that

> To destroy any power, growing wild from the rank productive force of the human mind, is almost tantamount, in the moral world, to the destruction of the apparently active properties of bodies in the material. It would be like the attempt to destroy (if it were in our competence to destroy) the expansive force of fixed air in nitre, or the power of steam, or of electricity, or of magnetism. These energies always existed in nature, and they were always discernible. They seemed, some of them unserviceable, some noxious, some no better than a sport to children; until contemplative ability combining with practic skill, tamed their wild nature, subdued them to use, and rendered them at once the most powerful and the most tractable agents, in subservience to the great views and designs of men (Reflections 1993, 159).

For Burke, scientific progress is a child of human ingenuity acting to unlock natural forces. Technology does not produce its own power but harnesses electrical and chemical energy already present in the world. Not only so, but technology arises in response to articulate human goals.

In the same way that material science produces tools, legislative science produces conventions. For Burke, neither of these sciences creates its materials nor do they work by destroying the relationships that are already present in their objects of study. Burke is separated from the philosophers of technology by his commitment to the principle that nothing emerges from nothing. For him, there can be no progressive revelation of forms that are not contained potentially within society. If we accept that technology can produce entirely new modes of social existence, then we might believe that there is a legislative science that can create a non-constitutional society. If Burke is correct in thinking that science necessarily begins with observation, however, then we cannot think that the *a priori* logic of technological revolution is in fact scientific. To Burke, the claim that technology can produce a new kind of society by destroying the old overlooks the means that have to be used in effecting social change. In the next section we will consider the kind of change that Burke thinks society will in fact experience if it persists in trying to conform to abstract rationality rather than legislative science.

3.3   Geometrical Reasoning and Constitutional Change

Burke thought that society could not be held together entirely by logical principles. There are two reasons why this is so. The first is that society cannot be described using logical propositions, and the second is that a society that tried to describe itself logically would

end up contradicting itself. For Burke, this would mean that a progressively technological society is both impractical and conceptually incoherent.[29]

To begin with, Burke insists that society is composed out of human beings. In society, the human mind superimposes an intangible structure on the physical existence of the human being. Whether or not an individual's participation in a particular society is entirely voluntary, the sheer fact of society's intangibility imposes a creative mental effort on the individual. This means that the effects of social causes are unpredictable and

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[29] What Burke refers to as geometrical or arithmetical reasoning is similar to Aristotelean calculative reason. These terms all refer to the systematic application of logical principles within a certain field of cause and effect. For example, if I take a region previously organized by parish and township and reorganize it according to survey lines, I can reallocate population and taxation base until departments have equal power by these measures. Such an approach does not make use of the practical wisdom that under the old division accounted for ties of culture, language, and kinship. The taxation capacity of the new departments may vary greatly depending on their degree of alignment with historical loyalties, and people may chose to move to other regions if the new authority lacks this source of legitimacy. These effects cannot be predicted, so they are simply ignored by the reordering authority: "As they have contrived matters, their taxation does not so much depend on their constitution, as their constitution on their taxation" (Burke 1993, 180).

The revolutionaries contended that the obvious intelligibility of the new political distribution was sufficient to ensure its legitimacy. To put this another way, a system of representation and government based on calculable principles was most consistent with human freedom. As we discussed in the first chapter, efficiency means narrowing the gap between cause and effect. In the revolutionaries' case the gap existed between the historical causes of a particular regime and its present arrangement. Efficiency guaranteed legitimacy because this meant rooting institutional arrangements in observable, quantifiable, and contemporary causes.

So for Burke, geometrical reasoning is both systematic and efficient, as well as progressive, since the revolutionaries sought to extend it throughout the whole of French society. Geometrical reasoning is, however, not the same thing as technology because it is not autonomous, even though the revolutionaries thought it was self-legitimating. Geometrical reasoning is very close to technological reasoning because both are activities in the minds of would-be legislators who hope to see the coming of the systematic, efficient, and autonomous commonwealth. Burke is trying to demonstrate the ways in which this line of thinking is not self-consistent. He is not speaking about technology per se since he does not have our conception of the self-directing machine, the robot. He does, however, know a great deal about the technical multiplication of production and energy so he is not oblivious the effects that machines can have on nature.

thus cannot be systematized.[30] We observe that society is somehow stable but we cannot go much further than recognizing the conventions that describe that stability.

These conventional descriptions of social structure are themselves creations of the human mind. They can certainly be changed, but they cannot be changed according to universal logical principles. We do not have a complete logical description of the human mind so we cannot make absolute statements about the conventions it is prepared to live with or how it will respond if these conventions change. Burke says that

> Nothing universal can be rationally affirmed on any moral or any
>
> political subject. Pure metaphysical abstraction does not belong to these
>
> matters. The lines of morality are not like ideal lines of mathematics.
>
> They are broad and deep as well as long. They admit of exceptions; they
>
> demand modifications. These exceptions and modifications are not made
>
> by the process of logic, but by the rules of prudence (Political
>
> Philosophy 1987, 237).

The rules of prudence are not something like the ageless maxims of statesmanship. Knowledge of the inevitable exceptions and modifications to social convention can only

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[30] "Individuals are physical beings, subject to laws universal and invariable. The immediate cause acting in these laws may be obscure: the general results are subjects of certain calculation. But commonwealths are not physical but moral essences. They are artificial combinations; and, in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind. We are not yet acquainted with the laws which necessarily influence the stability of that kind of work made by that kind of agent. There is not in the physical order (with which they do not appear to hold any assignable connexion) a distinct cause by which any of those fabrics must necessarily grow, flourish, or decay" (Burke, Vol. 3 1999, 63).

be gained by long experience of the individual human beings who happen to compose a society.

Even if someone were to gain adequate knowledge of a society they would still be faced with the problem of the opportune moment for change. Someone may have persuaded his or her fellows to assent in principle to constitutional change but lack the institutional tools to implement this change. Constitutional change certainly does happen, but the time and means for its occurrence are as unpredictable as the appearance of an intellect capable of effecting it.[31]

Projects to extend technological rationality throughout society ignore the contingency of the moment because this contingency interferes with uniform efficiency. According to Burke, the success or failure of such a project will be determined not just by the adequacy of knowledge but by the suitability of the circumstances that preceded it and the cooperation of the society it is applied to. Burke assumes that it will never be possible to control or predict social contingency, but of course the philosophers of technology claim that technological progress is capable of doing so. Burke and the philosophers of technology agree that the knowledge required to effect radical social change cannot be gained from a scientific study of the past. From his own observation of contingency, however, Burke also concludes that no *a priori* logical system can fill this gap in knowledge. If we agree with Burke that the conditions of human beings' social

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[31] "There are moments in the fortune of states when particular men are called to make improvements by great mental exertion. In those moments, even when they seem to enjoy the confidence of their prince and country, and to be invested with full authority, they have not always apt instruments. A politician, to do great things, looks for a *power*, what our workmen call a *purchase*; and if he finds that power, in politics as in mechanics he cannot be at a loss to apply it" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 158).

existence develop out of the past, then it seems that we must take this effect of contingency seriously. For Burke, people who undertake the logical reorganization of society are characterized by an ignorance of their material and an ignorance of their ignorance (Freeman 1980, 238). Radical projects fall into tyranny because imposing order, however violent, is easier than dealing with unknown contingency.

Burke's impression of the French revolutionaries is that they mistook the arbitrariness of convention for its unreality. This led them to propose a state structure that could be described in logical terms:

> The French builders, clearing away as mere rubbish whatever they found, and, like their ornamental gardeners, forming every thing into an exact level, propose to rest the whole local and general legislature on three bases of three different kinds; one geometrical, one arithmetical, and the third financial; the first of which they call the *basis of territory*; the second, the *basis of population*; and the third, the *basis of contribution* (Burke, Reflections 1993, 173).

He was sharply critical of this project on the grounds that it did not bear any discernible relationship to the reality of the social beings who were meant to inhabit it. The absolute rationalization of society was a mere fantasy to the extent that human beings are capable of unpredictable action, are subject to the influence of their passions, and have interests that do not conform to a systematic pattern (Burke, Reflections 1993, 183).

Burke seems to think that society is political because it is not logical. To put this another way, conventional politics is the human way of dealing with the inevitable contingency of life in society. Strauss goes so far as to claim that for Burke, a sound constitution is "the unintended outcome of accidental causation" and situational prudence (1953, 314-315). Or as Weston explains it, Burke saw constitutional improvement not as a guiding social project but as the outcome of "successive solutions of particular problems that from age to age arise to endanger the developing constitution" (1961, 217). Regardless of whether the circumstances of the moment find their origin in history, human nature, or divine influence, political projects must be judged in relation to these circumstances rather than their own conceptual consistency.[32]

The technological state might fail as a political project because of its effect of severing society from its own past. Even under opportune circumstances, the technological project requires society to conform to its own inner logic rather than previous convention. Burke thinks that this will endanger society's ability to function or even to recognize itself as a society. For him society is a work of convention, so the wholesale destruction of convention opens the question of whether a society exists. At a conceptual level, all the former members of society are reduced to the status of mere individuals. These individuals may not be willing to abide by the new structure either

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[32] "But I cannot stand forward, and give praise or blame to any thing which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing colour, and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 7-8). Strauss remarks that for Burke, constitutional legitimacy relies on the ability of particular societies to meet human needs and provide human goods, and that this legitimacy can only be established by experience rather than in the abstract (1953, 298).

because of their attachment to the old structure or because of their preference for alternative conventions. Burke writes that

> If men dissolve their ancient incorporation, in order to regenerate their community, in that state of things each man has a right, if he pleases, to remain an individual. Any number of individuals, who can agree upon it, have an undoubted right to form themselves into a state apart, and wholly independent. If any of these if forced into the fellowship of another, this is conquest, and not compact (Political Philosophy 1987, 247).

Burke does not think that society has a strictly contractual basis, so he recognizes that some kind of association will persist in spite of a revolution in convention. This new society will have to rely on violence and compulsion rather than habit and consent, however, so it will be disorderly rather than orderly. By this principal a technological society would not be a realm of orderly and unthinking efficiency but instead a system trying to violently impose itself on anti-social chaos.[33] Burke does not think that the rational atomization of society will reveal human beings as raw material that can as easily be ordered one way as another. Rather, human beings will start acting entirely according

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[33] While describing the conventional nature of international society and the subsidiarity of national society to this great historical consensus, Burke writes that "The municipal corporations of that universal kingdom are not morally at liberty at their pleasure, and on their speculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to separate and tear asunder the bands of their subordinate community, and to dissolve it into an unsocial, uncivil, unconnected chaos of elementary principles" (Reflections 1993, 97).

to contingency rather than convention and will thus form a mass that actively resists any attempt at systematization (Freeman 1980, 241).

Reestablishing order after the demise of the previous regime cannot be accomplished through either consensual or majoritarian methods. Burke points out that the majority can impose its will only when a constitution already exists that specifies the terms under which it can do so. The majority can only avoid civil war with the minority or minorities if the whole of society has already agreed to abide by the decisions of the majority. This conventional solution is impossible when society is being reconstituted from first principles.[34]

Burke already understands that the solution to this problem of legitimacy is a universal empire. Like French revolutionary society, the technological regime can only be conceived of as a totalizing force that leaves no room for dissent or opposition.[35] Such a project will first seek to overthrow all existing conventional communities before restructuring the whole world according to its own inner logic. Burke rightly observes

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[34] "But amongst men so disbanded, there can be no such thing as majority or minority; or power in any one person to bind another. The power of acting by a majority, which the gentlemen theorists seem to assume so readily, after they have violated the contract out of which it has arisen, (if at all it existed,) must be grounded on two assumptions; first, that of an incorporation produced by unanimity; and secondly, an unanimous agreement, that the act of a mere majority (say of one) shall pass with them and with others as the act of the whole" (Burke, Political Philosophy 1987, 246).

[35] "It is in this manner that France, on her new system, means to form an universal empire, by producing an universal revolution. By this means, forming a new code of communities according to what she calls the natural rights of man and of States, she pretends to secure eternal peace to the world, guaranteed by her generosity and justice, which are to grow with the extent of her power" (Burke, Vol. 3 1999, 248).

that a state of permanent global revolution hardly seems like a solid foundation for a rational society.[36]

For Burke, the actual form of the logical regime can be recognized by its project of destroying existing conventions rather than by the concrete realization of its own vision. He writes of the revolutionaries that

> they professed a resolution to destroy every thing which can hold States together by the tie of opinion. Exploding, therefore, all sorts of balances, they avow their design to erect themselves into a new description of Empire, which is not grounded on any balance, but forms a sort of impious hierarchy, of which France is to be the head and the guardian. The law of this their Empire is any thing rather than the publick law of Europe, the antient conventions of it's several States, or the antient opinions which assign to them superiority or pre-eminence of any sort, or any other kind of connexion in virtue of antient relations (Vol. 3 1999, 247-48).

Technology's claim to rule similarly militates against society's acceptance of existing convention or law when these are rooted in history and particularity. Technology's

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[36] In this context, the Revolutionary Army and what we call "technological disruptors" both refer to the well-known phenomenon exemplified by "the vanguard of the proletariat." The prophecies of a new order usually account for the violence that precedes their full realization as a necessary levelling of the old regime. Burke's point is empirical: the revolution may be real but it never quite moves beyond the phase of violence because there is still some of the globe left to incorporate.

universal empire is thought to be maintained not through international law or constitutional tradition but by its monopoly on the power to destroy and create social forms.

To think of technology as the guardian of all social possibility is to think of it as an irresistible conqueror. The philosophers of technology often do see technology this way, but unlike Burke they see conquering rationalism as an impersonal force. If we agree with Burke that human beings will ultimately be responsible for tearing down the old order, then we can see that a rationalizing project is merely one possibility among the many that lie at the intersection of convention and contingency. Burke was troubled by the French revolutionaries' single-mindedness in their attempt to systematize society. Regardless of their success in actually realizing this project, they were prepared to elevate geometrical consistency above the wishes of their fellow citizens. For Burke, such an outlook made a mockery of citizenship because it saw citizens as potential rebels whose old loyalties needed to be eliminated. Economic crisis, expropriations, and purges were all legitimate tools for levelling the society that obstructed the new project.[37] This behaviour is characteristic of tyrannical human conquerors, however, rather than of the world historical forces that rationalizing projects are thought to be.

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[37] "It is impossible not to observe, that in the spirit of this geometrical distribution, and arithmetical arrangement, these pretended citizens treat France exactly like a country of conquest. Acting as conquerors, they have imitated the policy of the harshest of that harsh race. The policy of such barbarous victors, who contemn a subdued people, and insult their feelings, has ever been, as much as in them lay, to destroy all vestiges of the antient country, in religion, in polity, in laws, and in manners; to confound all territorial limits; to produce a general poverty; to put up their properties to auction; to crush their princes, nobles, and pontiffs; to lay low every thing which had lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distresses, the disbanded people, under the standard of old opinion" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 184).

Burke holds that an explicitly rationalizing authority will prioritize the perfection of its scheme over its achievability or legitimacy. Efficiency is an abstract quality just as much as the 'rights of men' that Burke so mistrusted.[38] Burke thinks that when an abstract property is made the basis of citizenship the concrete manifestation of citizenship must first be destroyed. The inconsistent, historically contingent structure of society and politics cannot argue against the absolute truth of the new project.[39] Burke and the philosophers of technology agree that rationalizing projects aim at the perfection of a form. If Burke is correct in thinking that this perfection cannot be achieved without eliminating the irregularities of convention, then citizenship in a technological society cannot mean a new evolution of an existing form. According to the logic of technological rationality, this new citizenship could only be realized after the old form of citizenship has been destroyed along with the society that supported it.

As Burke points out, the levelling of citizens and citizenship will leave society without something that can properly be called a state. The technological state will remain ephemeral when its supposed citizens no longer have any concrete ties to one another.

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[38] Fennessy writes that for Burke, abstract rights presuppose an individual existence outside of society, where people are free to govern themselves and struggle against nature as they see fit (Fennessy 1963, 140). Proposing something like a right to an efficient state ignores the fact, however, that individuals outside society do not succeed in this struggle. Even if the efficient state is a true political ideal, human beings can only move towards it within a historically contingent society.

[39] "They despise experience as the wisdom of unlettered men; and as for the rest, they have wrought underground a mine that will blow up at one grand explosion all examples of antiquity, all precedents, charters, and acts of parliament. They have 'the rights of men.' Against these there can be no prescription; against these no agreement is binding; these admit no temperament, and no compromise: any thing withheld from their full demand is so much of fraud and injustice. Against these their rights of men let no government look for security in the length of its continuance, or in the justice and lenity of its administration" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 58).

Burke still thinks of the state as something that exercises legitimate authority, while the philosophers of technology think of the state as the monopoly on power, whether legitimate or not. Burke does understand that the desired homogeneity of the rational state is supposed to be the basis of its legitimacy. He claims, however, that far from legitimizing the rational state, the attempt to impose homogeneity will eliminate the particular and contingent reasons that citizens have for remaining loyal to the state.[40] As Burke notes, "[n]o man ever was attached by a sense of pride, partiality, or real affection, to a description of square measurement" (Reflections 1993, 198). If we agree with Burke that state authority must be recognized by citizens as legitimate, then we will not see the technological hegemon as a state but rather as an anti-social power unit.

Since citizens typically value their citizenship, even if they support the rationalizing project, many will be prepared to risk their lives when they realize that it is being taken away from them.[41] Even if civil war is averted, the threat of violence by disenfranchised citizens will force the rational regime to maintain itself through naked

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[40] "It is boasted, that the geometrical policy has been adopted, that all local ideas should be sunk, and that the people should no longer be Gascons, Picards, Bretons, Normans, but Frenchmen, with one country, one heart, and one assembly. But instead of being all Frenchmen, the greater likelihood is, that the inhabitants of that region will shortly have no country" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 198).

[41] "None of us who would not risque his life rather than fall under a government purely arbitrary. But although there are some amongst us who think our Constitution wants many improvements, to make it a complete system of liberty; perhaps none who are of that opinion would think it right to aim at such improvement, by disturbing his country, and risquing everything that is dear to him. In every arduous enterprize, we consider what we are to lose, as well as what we are to gain; and the more and better stake of liberty every people possess, the less they will hazard in a vain attempt to make it more" (Burke, Vol. 1 1999, 279). In this passage from the Speech on Conciliation, Burke expresses his opinion that the British colonies are unlikely to rebel if they are allowed to govern themselves according to English constitutional tradition. With all its flaws this constitution provided real liberty because it contained a concrete expression of citizenship. By the same principal, however, a 'purely arbitrary' government that suppresses a meaningful structure of citizenship is likely to provoke open revolt.

power (Freeman 1980, 14). Burke writes that "kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle" (Reflections 1993, 78).

This presentation of the rationalized state differs quite markedly from the conception outlined in the first chapter, where technological authority is insidious and unquestioned. We must remember that for Burke, radical social change must involve the actions of human beings. If political reorganization succeeds, it succeeds through the use of power. A rationalizing, homogenizing authority that established itself by destroying convention and historical structure will have to maintain its power through the same methods.[42] Otherwise this authority would itself become irrational, contingent, and conventional.

Burke acknowledges that as society changes over time constitutional convention must also change for the sake of preserving citizenship (Reflections 1993, 21-22). For Burke, this change must be accomplished within a particular state so it should be subject to the contingencies of that state's development. Constitutional change from the outside, or according to an abstract plan, empowers its agents to act without limit. Burke enunciates this principal when speaking about the Revolution of 1688, where he states that

> It is true that, aided with the powers derived from force and opportunity,
> the nation was at that time, in some sense, free to take what course it

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[42] "But power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert antient institutions, has destroyed antient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 78).

pleased for filing the throne; but only free to do so upon the same grounds on which they might have wholly abolished their monarchy, and every other part of their constitution. However they did not think such bold changes within their commission. It is indeed difficult, perhaps impossible, to give limits to the mere *abstract* competence of the supreme power, such as was exercised by parliament at that time; but the limits of a *moral* competence, subjecting, even in powers more disputably sovereign, occasional will to permanent reason, and to the steady maxims of faith, justice, and fixed fundamental policy, are perfectly intelligible, and perfectly binding upon those who exercise any authority, under any name, or under any title, in the state (Reflections 1993, 20).

Regardless of how we view Burke's appeal to *noblesse oblige* as a moral restraint on the aristocrats who ruled the Britain of his day, his point about the factual power of revolutionary parliaments stands. If technocrats or bureaucrats are called upon to reorder society according to technological authority, there is little reason to suppose that they will not take this personal power and form a tyranny. In the next section we will consider a Burkean perspective on Kojève's solution to this problem in the form of the technologically empowered universal citizen.

3.4   Particularism and Representation

Like Kojève, Burke thought that freedom could best be guaranteed by an understanding of the state as the representative of citizens. Burke does not agree with Kojève, however, that citizens can be free even if this understanding is restricted to the philosophers. For Burke, representation is a public function of the state within the commonwealth, so it is not enough to identify the conditions under which technology cannot be used to support individual tyranny. For Burke, free citizenship is a positive good that must be protected explicitly and that can be understood by citizens regardless of their level of self-consciousness. If Burke is right in thinking that citizenship is meaningful only when it is understood, then the theoretical unity of the U.H.S. and the technological citizen will not suppress citizens' actual experience of tyranny.

Burke's thinks that a commonwealth of properly represented citizens is actually stronger than the tyranny of the rationalizing project. In a Burkean state, technology could not be used as a tool of unscrupulous power because the institutional form of citizenship would stand above the particular individuals who sought to destabilize the commonwealth. When writing about the denial of the franchise to Irish Catholics, Burke stated that

> Our constitution is not made for great, general, and proscriptive
> exclusions; sooner or later, it will destroy them, or they will destroy the
> constitution. In our constitution there has always been a difference made
> between *a franchise* and *an office*, and between the capacity for the one
> and for the other. Franchises were supposed to belong to the *subject*, as *a*

> *subject*, and not *as a member of the governing part of the state*
>
> (Miscellaneous 1999, 204)**.**

Burke thought that a constitutional state was strong enough to suppress disenfranchisement as long as it maintained a structure of citizenship. In the passage above, he claims that participation in a representative system is a general property of the British Constitution. Regardless of who happens to be exercising governing power, the government cannot disenfranchise large sectors of society without destroying its own constitutional basis.

For Burke, a technological authority that disenfranchised society as a whole would be radically unconstitutional. This unconstitutionality would make a technological state very precarious. A Burkean state protects its stability by fulfilling its representative function without needing to relinquish its monopoly on power. A technological state that sought to monopolize its power over society while excluding representation would, however, be one against many without the protection of a constitution. By contrast, a representative state has the luxury of claiming absolute authority by right, and any reduction or reconfiguration of this authority is resisted by the citizenry that depend on it.[43]

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[43] "The house of lords, for instance, is not morally competent to dissolve the house of commons; no, nor even to dissolve itself, nor to abdicate, if it would, its portion in the legislature of the kingdom. Though a king may abdicate for his own person, he cannot abdicate for the monarchy. By as strong, or by a stronger reason, the house of commons cannot renounce its share of authority. The engagement and pact of society, which generally goes by the name of the constitution, forbids such invasion and such surrender. The constituent parts of a state are obliged to hold their public faith with each other, and with all those who derive any serious interest under their engagements, as much as the whole state is bound to keep its faith with separate communities. Otherwise competence and power would soon be confounded, and no law be left but the will of a prevailing force" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 20-21).

What does representation mean for Burke? Representation in general means that the state serves the general interests of the citizens. Representation in particular means that the state provides an image of citizenship for the citizens. Burke writes that

> it is not the derivation of the power of that House from the people, which makes it in a distinct sense their representative. The King is the representative of the people; so are the Lords; so are the Judges. They all are trustees for the people, as well as the Commons; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and although Government certainly is an institution of Divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people. A popular origin cannot therefore be the characteristical distinction of a popular representative. This belongs equally to all parts of Government and in all forms. The virtue, spirit and essence of an House of Commons consists in its being the express image of the feelings of the nation (Vol. 1 1999, 118).

For Burke, a state built on the freedoms of citizenship can satisfactorily guarantee these freedoms without giving citizens the power to alter the state. Burke enunciates the theory that a state acting on behalf of the citizens must be derived directly from the citizens. Its organs may not be selected by the citizens or even precisely answerable to the citizens but the state answers for the citizens by answering to the constitution (Stanlis 1991, 238).

In theory, a technological state's autonomy would prevent it from answering to anything but itself. A technological state's progressive nature would also result in constant shifts of form, so its self-legislation could never establish a stable structure of representation for its citizens. Finally, the post-human character of the technological state as the expression of efficiency would prevent it from providing an image of citizenship for citizens. In the passage above, Burke notes that the House of Commons protects the freedom of citizenship by reflecting the individuality of the nation into the heart of the state. This observation is consistent with Kojève's understanding of the state as a kind of model or expression of its citizens' true desires. Kojève does not think, however, that the U.H.S. will fail to provide such a model. For him, the technological state may not be post-human because he thinks that human beings desire recognition rather than autonomy, even if they are recognized as homogeneous individuals. If we agree with Burke that freedom includes the freedom to be distinct, however, then even the U.H.S. will only succeed in modelling one kind of citizen, the self-conscious dialectical philosopher.

For Burke, citizenship as an office ranks far higher on the scale of public goods than participation in office as a privilege.[44] Citizens in government are first citizens and then governors because their duty is to bear citizenship at the highest levels of the state.

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[44] "The House of Commons was supposed originally to be *no part of the standing Government of this country*. It was considered as a *controul*, issuing *immediately* from the people, and speedily to be resolved into the mass from whence it arose. In this respect it was in the higher part of Government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity it was hoped would of course preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the Crown, but between the people and the fleeting authority of the House of Commons itself" (Burke, Vol. 1 1999, 117).

This kind of representation is in the interest of citizens at large, regardless of their preferences for particular governors. As long as citizens have some voice in the selection of their representatives, then this representative part of the state can be taken to speak for citizens as a whole, just as the sovereign can be taken to listen to and to act for the citizens as a whole. Burke refers to this as the principle of 'virtual representation.[45]

Burke's vision of virtual representation in and by the state diverges from Kojève's understanding of the universal citizen at the point where they consider the particular interests of citizens. In Kojève's U.H.S., citizens desire the freedom to maximize their technological mastery over nature. For Burke, however, the interests of citizens cannot be unified simply through a levelling of their opportunities. Rational statesmanship may aim at plenty for the citizens and prosperity for the nation, but citizens will display great variation in their receptiveness to the technological modification of their ways of life.

Kojève's technological homogenization of the citizen body relies on the power of technology to overcome nature. Burke believes, however, that citizens' social existence has already provided them with a 'second nature' that leaves citizenship as their main point of commonality. He writes that wise constitutional founders

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[45] "Virtual representation is that in which there is a communion of interests, and a sympathy in feelings and desires between those who act in the name of any description of people, and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them. This is virtual representation. Such a representation I think to be, in many cases, even better than the actual. It possesses most of its advantages, and is free from many of its inconveniences: it corrects the irregularities in the literal representation, when the shifting current of human affairs, or the acting of public interests in different ways, carry it obliquely from its first line of direction. The people may err in their choice; but common interest and common sentiment are rarely mistaken. But this sort of virtual representation cannot have a long or sure existence, if it has not a substratum in the actual. The member must have some relation to the constituent" (Burke, Miscellaneous 1999, 240).

had to do with citizens, and they were obliged to study the effects of

those habits which are communicated by the circumstances of civil life.

They were sensible that the operation of this second nature on the first

produced a new combination; and thence arose many diversities amongst

men, according to their birth, their education, their professions, the

periods of their lives, their residence in towns or in the country, their

several ways of acquiring and of fixing property, and according to the

quality of the property itself all which rendered them as it were so many

different species of animals" (Reflections 1993, 185).

In Burke's perspective, the universality of citizenship is foundational to the state because

of the social diversity of its members. Burke is not arguing that citizens become

heterogeneous because of fundamental difference, but that social existence allows

humanity to reveal its diversity through political life.[46] Cameron remarks that for Burke,

this ongoing process of social development is the only way for human nature to reach its

full expression (1973, 84). Kojève argues that the state can successfully represent a

homogeneous society because at the End of History, social development will reveal a

single fully realized human type. Technology enables society to achieve its true second

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[46] "The differences that distinguished historical men did not arise from a fundamental variety in the constitution of their minds. They arose from habits, opinions, and prejudices that men acquired and formed what Burke was to call man's second nature. 'Man, in his moral nature, becomes, in his progress through life, a creature of prejudice, a creature of opinions, a creature of habits, and of sentiments growing out of them. These form our second nature, as inhabitants of the country and members of the society in which Providence has placed us" (Dreyer 1979, 56).

nature as a great homogenizer. If Burke is correct, however, in saying that social second nature will always produce diversity, then the state would have to impose homogeneity in creating a single type of citizen. A legitimate Burkean state will have to find an articulated form of representation because its task is to bring unity to a citizenry that always exists within an articulated society.

Burke resists the rationalist view that there is a kind of knowledge that would be sufficient to bring new social forms into being. By this view technology could aim for known social ends but not unknown social ends. Neither the individual nor the collective could possibly have access to knowledge that would allow them to circumvent contingency and impose a new form onto social nature.[47] Burke does agree with Kojève that statecraft is a matter of time and patience: "The perennial existence of bodies corporate and their fortunes, are things particularly suited to a man who has long views; who meditates designs that require time in fashioning; and which propose duration when they are accomplished" (Reflections 1993, 158). This kind of social fashioning must work within the limits of contingency, however, so political wisdom must always account for the inevitable diversity of its subject. A political wisdom that sought to impose or reveal conformity in spite of contingency would be defeated by the duration required for such a project.

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[47] "In vain shall a man look to the possibility of making such things when he wants them. The winds blow as the list. These institutions are the products of enthusiasm; they are the instruments of wisdom. Wisdom cannot create materials; they are the gifts of nature or of chance; her pride is in the use" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 158).

For Burke, a constitutional state incorporating an articulated representative structure empowers citizens in a way quite different from giving them mastery over nature. He writes that

> As the first sort of legislators attended to the different kinds of citizens, and combined them into one commonwealth, the others, the metaphysical and alchemistical legislators, have taken the direct contrary course. They have attempted to confound all sorts of citizens, as well as they could, into one homogeneous mass; and then they divided this their amalgama into a number of incoherent republics. They reduce men to loose counters merely for the sake of simple telling, and not to figures whose power is to arise from their place in the table (Reflections 1993, 186).

According to this analogy, citizens must first have a place at the table before they can rise. Thus the universality of representation will be limited by the franchise, but as we have noted before, Burke does not think this limitation can be permanent. Rather, the commonwealth will suffer most if citizens are treated as though they could be represented in the abstract. Even if these citizens have the franchise, the total sameness of the state's attitude toward them will prevent individual expression and reduce them to pawns in a geometric game.

Diversified representation empowers the expression of citizenship because the commonwealth is founded on mutual benefit. For Burke, the idea that the commonwealth

is founded on the right to equal treatment by the state begs the question because it presupposes the state. There may be absolute rights in nature, but society itself is not part of primary nature. Society belongs to the second nature that is ruled by convention, and conventions are established for the mutual benefit of the parties with whom they originate. The representation that would result from a claim of right would have to be purely personal, because absolute right cannot be protected through conventional means. Burke writes that

> they who plead an absolute right cannot be satisfied with anything short
> of personal representation, because all *natural* rights must be the rights
> of individuals; as by *nature* there is no such thing as politick or
> corporate personality; all these ideas are mere fictions of Law, they are
> creatures of voluntary institution; men as men are individuals, and
> nothing else. . . . As to the first sort of Reformers, it is ridiculous to talk
> to them of the British Constitution upon any or upon all of its bases; for
> they lay it down that every man ought to govern himself, and that where
> he cannot go himself he must send his representative; that all other
> government is usurpation" (Miscellaneous 1999, 19).

Kojève's U.H.S. can only fulfill its representative function because its citizens are all literally the same person. Or to put it another way, the U.H.S. is the personality of its citizens. But if we accept the rationalist claim that the personality of the nation is a conventional fiction, then the U.H.S. must describe a state of nature in which the dialectic

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happened to produce a completely uniform mass of human beings. Regardless of its

concrete existence, the U.H.S. would be true simply because its description of one person

applies to all persons. If we agree with Burke, however that nations can have distinct

characters, we will also have to accept that this distinct character comes from the unique

personalities that compose it. Thus the very existence of nations would support the claim

that there is social differentiation, and that this differentiation is too extensive to be

represented on a purely individual basis.

Burke's commonwealth of mutual benefit distributes rights and privileges

according to the relative contributions of its members.[48] It does not matter whether we

can trace the differences in citizens' contributions to meaningful moral inequalities

because of course the relevant differences belong to 'second nature.' For Burke, the state

is a partnership to ameliorate the inequalities of social nature and ensure the preservation

of humanity's political expression. These inequalities arise as an inevitable result of

contingency interacting with the free individual pursuit of material welfare, so they

should not be viewed as injustices or inequities (O'Gorman 1973, 46). Rather, since the

social partnership assumes inequality, the state's role is to represent the classes and

interests that form as a result.

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[48] "In this partnership all men have equal right; but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership, has as good a right to it, as he that has five hundred pound has to his larger proportion. But he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint stock; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society; for I have in contemplation the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 59).

To Burke, the equality of citizens is not an equality of condition or of right but of access to justice from and care by the state.[49] A representative state can recognize individual citizens in their individuality because it also acknowledges the inequalities of their social condition. Such a state will be unable to use technological rationality in its dealings with citizens because individuality is to be protected, not mastered (Strauss 1953, 322-23). Burke claims that

> if the laws of every nation, from the most simple and social of the most barbarous people, up to the wisest and most salutary laws of the most refined and enlightened societies, from the Divine laws handed down to us in Holy Writ, down to the meanest forms of earthly institution, were attentively examined, they would be found to breathe but one spirit, one principle, equal distributive justice between man and man, and the protection of one individual from the encroachments of the rest. The universality of this principle proved its origin. Out of this principle laws arose, for the execution of which sovereignty was established (cited in Stanlis 1991, 36).

According to Burke, the necessity of the state's existence is indeed a universal principle, but it is necessary precisely to guard against homogeneity. Distributive justice acknowledges inequality and treats it with care so that it does not destroy the state's

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[49] Kirk refers to this as 'moral equality' (1960, 65-66).

representative basis. Sovereign justice does not seek to level the citizens but to protect their particular status from damage by another class or interest.

As we noted earlier, Burke does think that as a general principle all social groups should be given the franchise in some form. He also thinks that this franchise implies some kind of voice in government even if shares in power are not distributed equally. The diversity of representation by the state and the inequalities of power within government mean that citizens cannot look on the state as a simple reflection of their own selves. For Burke, the state represents the freedom of an articulated commonwealth that must be preserved and maintained through the efforts of all the citizens. He writes that

> The consecration of the state, by a state religious establishment, is
> necessary also to operate with an wholesome awe upon free citizens;
> because, in order to secure their freedom, they must enjoy some
> determinate portion of power. . . . All persons possessing any portion of
> power ought to be strongly and awefully impressed with an idea that
> they act in trust (Reflections 1993, 92-93).

The citizenry of a commonwealth may ascribe legitimacy to a project that seeks to give them radical equality of condition, but as Kojève shows us this equality can only be

achieved by excluding all citizens from a share in power.[50] Kojève's U.H.S. is the freedom of the citizens, and it secures their freedom by securing itself.

Burke does not agree with Kojève that citizens will only truly be able to recognize their own freedom when the state represents them in the form of pure individuality. Rather, he thinks that citizens will find satisfaction in all walks of life if the state respects the status of those vocations. When criticizing the French revolutionaries' attempt to impose radical equality of condition, Burke writes that

> [y]ou would have had a protected, laborious, and obedient people, taught
> to seek and to recognize the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all
> conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of mankind, and not
> in that monstrous fiction, which, by inspiring false ideas and vain
> expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious
> life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality, which it
> never can remove; and which the order of civil life establishes as much
> for the benefit of those whom it must leave in a humble state, as those

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[50] As we can see in the following passage, Burke also understands that simply parceling power out to citizens on a rectilinear basis will not work: "When these state surveyors came to take a view of their work of measurement, they soon found, that in politics, the most fallacious of all things was geometrical demonstration. . . . It was evident, that the goodness of the soil, the number of the people, their wealth, and the largeness of their contribution, made such infinite variations between square and square as to render mensuration a ridiculous standard of power in the commonwealth, and equality in geometry the most unequal of all measures in the distribution of men" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 174). Burke knew that rationalizing political projects would turn to homogenization because the alternative to diversity is unity, not arithmetical equality.

whom it is able to exalt to a condition more splendid, but not more

happy (cited in Kirk 1960, 66).

Burke's description of a successful civil society as one which may have to protect

inequality for the good of its own citizens raises the question of how they come to see the

representative state as truly representative of their freedom. We will turn to this question

in the last section.

3.5   The State of Freedom

To begin with, Burke is clear that the state and the commonwealth it protects are

legitimate insofar as they guarantee the freedoms of citizenship.[51] What then are the

freedoms of citizenship for Burke? As we observed before, Burke places the highest

importance on citizens' ability to improve their material circumstances and entail the

fruits of their labours to their descendants (O'Gorman 1973, 116). Considered in a body,

the citizens who practice and secure such a pattern of acquisition and inheritance form a

commonwealth that is always working to increase its own prosperity. This

commonwealth is a permanent expression of human freedom, for as Burke writes

"[c]orporate bodies are immortal for the good of the members, but not for their

punishment. Nations themselves are such corporations" (Reflections 1993, 141).

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[51] "As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience" (Burke, Vol. 1 1999, 287).

For Burke, the wealth of a state is a clear indication that it rules a free people.[52] Freedom loving citizens will see themselves represented in a state that treats their happiness and prosperity as its goal, and that uses the wealth it does extract to dignify the inevitable material inequality of society.[53] The state elevates and glorifies its figureheads to represent to all classes the hope that one day all will bask in a prosperous freedom. Representation in the state must be articulated so that both the present interests and the future hopes of society are expressed in this visible form.

Burke would have recognized Kojève's hope for perfect material prosperity as a laudable goal within the commonwealth. He would not have considered this project achievable through technological means, however, because citizens are not permanently satisfied by access to material goods. Kojève thinks that human nature is fulfilled by negating the material world to create new tools and objects, and by gaining permanent self-recognition as the creator of the U.H.S. Burke thinks, however, that citizenship includes ongoing collective enterprise and ongoing speech about this enterprise. If Burke

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[52] "For first observe, that, besides the desire which all men have naturally of supporting the honour of their own government, that sense of dignity, and that security to property, which ever attends freedom, has a tendency to increase the stock of the free community. Most may be taken where most is accumulated. And what is the soil or climate where experience has not uniformly proved, that the voluntary flow of heaped-up plenty, bursting from the weight of its own rich luxuriance, has ever run with a more copious stream of revenue, than could be squeezed from the dry husks of oppressed indigence, by the straining of all the politic machinery in the world?" (Burke, Vol. 1 1999, 285-86).

[53] "For those purposes they think some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed as it can be, in fomenting the luxury of individuals. It is the publick ornament. It is the publick consolation. It nourishes the publick hope. The poorest man finds his own importance and dignity in it, whilst the wealth and pride of individuals at every moment makes the man of humble rank and fortune sensible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue, that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and sanctified" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 98-99).

is correct in thinking that politically active citizenship is part of human fulfillment, then the social stasis of technological abundance will not lead to contentment. Citizens will only be satisfied when the state protects their ability to plan for the collective use and transmission of their prosperity along with their ability to increase it.

For Burke, state authority is present in the commonwealth because citizens need and want protection from each other and themselves when individuals pose a threat to collective freedom. The stability of freedom in the commonwealth requires an ongoing process of legitimation because the state must have the authority to restrain the citizens. Citizens must be free to express their individuality as vigorously as possible, so the state must be free to restrain them when their expressions threaten the commonwealth. Burke writes that

> Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human *wants*. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil society, of a sufficient restraint upon their passions. Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done *by a power out of themselves*; and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and subdue. In this

sense the restraints of men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned

among their rights (Reflections 1993, 60).

Burke would doubt technology's ability to eliminate coercion because he would doubt the

ability of material satisfaction to eliminate the passions. State authority can never be

totally unquestionable in the way the U.H.S. is supposed to be because by their very

nature citizens will challenge the government.

In Burke's view, the members of the commonwealth understand that the reason

their freedoms need state protection is found in their own conduct.[54] In order to gain the

freedoms that are most important, security of person and property, they give up the

freedoms that are less important, self-legislation and self-defence. The state regulates the

freedoms of the citizens because it cannot remove the natural latitude inherent in their

use. What the state does is force citizens to choose between their own good (and the good

of the commonwealth), and the satisfaction of their extreme individualism.

Burke's state is an object of ongoing political legitimation because citizens must

persuade themselves and each other that their freedom and prosperity depends on

authority and is not hindered by it.[55] A monolith such as the U.H.S. depends on the

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[54] "One of the first motives to civil society, and which becomes one of its fundamental rules, is *that no man should be judge in his own* cause. By this each person has at once divested himself of the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause. He abdicates all right to be his own governor. He inclusively, in great measure, abandons the right of self-defence, the first law of nature. Men cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and of a civil state together. That he may obtain justice he gives up his right of determining what it is in points the most essential to him. That he may secure some liberty, he makes a surrender in trust of the whole of it" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 59-60).

[55] "Liberty, too, must be limited in order to be possessed. The degree of restraint it is impossible in any case to settle precisely. But it ought to be the constant aim of every wise public council to find out by cautious experiments, and rational cool endeavours, with how little, not how much, of this restraint the community

citizens being persuaded of its absolute authority and unpersuadable by any other

argument, desire, or interest. In Burke's view, the state must consider the whole range of

its citizens' needs and desires in administering its authority and cannot treat them

according to abstract principle.[56] If the state does not care for and respond to the

particularity of its citizens' interests, its total conventionality will be revealed without the

moderating effect of reverence for sovereign authority.

Burke writes that since

> all political power which is set over men, and that all privilege claimed
>
> or exercised in exclusion of them, being wholly artificial, and for so
>
> much, a derogation from the natural equality of mankind at large, [it]
>
> ought to be some way or other exercised ultimately for their benefit
>
> (Miscellaneous 1999, 101).

For Burke, the benefit that the state provides to humanity is a representation of its natural

social diversity acting in harmony, as well as a representation of the higher human desires

for dignity, participation, and continuity.[57] Citizens cannot find self-recognition in

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can subsist; for liberty is a good to be improved, and not an evil to be lessened. It is not only a private blessing of the first order, but the vital spring and energy of the state itself, which has just so much life and vigour as there is liberty in it" (Burke, cited in Freeman 1980, 139).

[56] "The object of the state is (as far as may be) the happiness of the whole . . . and the happiness or misery of mankind, estimated by their feelings and sentiments, and not by any theories of their rights, is, and ought to be, the standard for the conduct of legislators towards the people" (Burke, cited in Dreyer 1979, 41).

[57] "They conceive that He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue willed also the necessary means of is perfection—He willed therefore the state—He willed its connexion with the source and original archetype of all perfection" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 98).

perfectly equal mastery over nature because their social existence is already supernatural.

The problem of society is not that of how to provide equivalent levels of material

satisfaction and persuade its members that this egalitarian state is the final form of human

evolution.[58] Rather, the problem is how to represent the inequalities that inevitably arise

when citizens are given the freedom to pursue prosperity on their own initiative.

      To Burke, the constitutional, representative state not only represents society's

understanding of its need for remedial justice, but also its aspiration for a fundamental

unity in spite of difference (Stanlis 1991, 64-65). The rationalization of the state prevents

historically differentiated citizens from conceiving of this unity. Their attention is

focused instead on the costs and rewards of the various methods of social reorganization.

Burke notes that the revolutionaries' plan to create federal sub-units according to

geometrical principles involved them in endless arguments about numerical, spatial, and

fiscal equality. For him, these debates ignore the fundamental question of how the state is

supposed to represent the citizens and how they are to be represented within the state.

Burke thinks that the revolutionaries should have stopped attempting to quantify the

relative power of the federal units in order to distribute sovereignty according to a fixed

plan. If they had done so, they would have seen that

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[58] "But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason" (Burke, Reflections 1993, 77).

[t]he representation, though derived from parts, would be a duty which equally regarded the whole. Each deputy to the assembly would be the representative of France, and of all its descriptions, of the many and of the few, of the rich and of the poor, of the great districts and of the small. All these districts would themselves be subordinate to some standing authority, existing independently of them; an authority in which their representation, and every thing that belongs to it, originated, and to which it was pointed. This standing, unalterable, fundamental government would make, and it is the only thing which could make, that territory truly and properly an whole (Burke, Reflections 1993, 188).

By a standing and unalterable government Burke seems to be referring to a constitutional monarchy taken together with parliament as a whole.[59] For Burke, a unified state includes not only a representative government, but also a constitutional sovereign and a differentiated citizenry. Kojève's U.H.S. identifies the state with the condition of being governed by technological egalitarianism. As we observed earlier, a technological state cannot be constitutional because its form of government is constantly shifting. Kojève is able to identify the U.H.S. as the final form of human development because he does not think that a state is necessarily a commonwealth, where public goods are maintained between citizens who would not be united without those goods. In the U.H.S.

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[59] This is what is referred to by constitutional scholars as 'The Crown in Parliament.'

there is no distinction between public and private goods because there is no distinction between the private and public person.

If Burke is correct in claiming that a radical equality of condition is inhuman and antisocial, then states must find their legitimacy in a commonwealth. Although the citizens of the U.H.S. may be perfectly represented by a universal technocracy, the absence of a constitutional sovereign means they cannot be unified in a commonwealth. According to a Burkean perspective, legitimation in an egalitarian state will break down when citizens spend their energies arguing about whether their individual and collective treatment by the state is truly universal and homogeneous (Burke 1993, 179, 181).[60]

Of course, Burke would not think that the U.H.S. can represent citizens even if it treats them perfectly equally. The U.H.S. governs by the logic of the dialectic rather than the preferences of actual citizens, who may not have entirely abandoned mastery and slavery. While the U.H.S. grants technological mastery to its citizens, it does not grant them agency in the matter of their own government. To Burke, this is a kind of paternalistic rule that avoids the indignity of subjugation but fails to grant true political freedom.[61] Burke holds that when the state systematically excludes citizens from government, it cannot fulfill its basic representative function. He writes that

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[60] In this context Burke is arguing that French attempts to equalize the bases of representation according to territory, population, and property simultaneously will create manifest inequality between individuals and between departments. Other than articulated, conventional representation the solution to these new contradictions appears to be popular democracy (Burke 1993, 189). This will destabilize the rational structure of the new state, however. Burke is claiming that trying to create representation according to equality of condition is incoherent, and that this incoherence will delegitimize the rational state.

[61] "In the other sense of the word *State*, by which is understood the *Supreme Government* only, I must observe this upon the question: that to exclude whole classes of men entirely from this *part* of government, cannot be considered as *absolute slavery*. It only implies a lower a and degraded state of citizenship; such is

[t]hey who are excluded from votes (under proper qualifications

inherent in the constitution that gives them) are excluded, not from the

state, but from *the British constitution*. They cannot by any possibility.

. . think themselves in an *happy* state, to be utterly excluded from all

its direct and all its consequential advantages. The popular part of the

constitution must be to them, by far the most odious part of it. To them

it is not *an actual*, and, if possible, still less a *virtual* representation

(Miscellaneous 1999, 204-205)**.**

Burke thinks that gaining representation for one's interests is an essential advantage of

citizenship. When the U.H.S. prevents citizens from representing themselves or their

fellows within government, it does so because it assumes that they have no particular

interests. In Burke's understanding the U.H.S. would forfeit its claim to represent the

interest of the whole of society as soon as it prevents citizens from expressing dissent or

particularity. Thus the U.H.S.'s fulfillment of its own conditions would destroy the

absolute legitimacy Kojève says it embodies.

(with more or less strictness) the condition of all countries, in which an hereditary nobility possess the exclusive rule" (Burke, Miscellaneous 1999, 201).

3.6 Conclusion

Burke allows us to see why technological society will have to sacrifice citizenship, and why this sacrifice will result in civil chaos and authoritarian rule. Technological political projects are anti-constitutional because they are unconventional. They are unlikely to succeed because they claim a right to reconstitute society that society cannot grant while it is being reconstituted. Constitutional citizenship allows for social evolution because it aims at preserving a particular society's particular identity in the face of contingency. Unconstitutional citizenship is an abstract identity belonging to no actual society that can grant rights or demand protection for itself.

If a technological political project does succeed, it will quickly destroy its own legitimacy as it seeks to fit human beings into predetermined categories. For Burke, contingency always produces social differentiation, so a citizenship that ignores interest and identity ignores its own unifying purpose. Technological projects seek to level the present by destroying the past, but in doing so they eliminate all the ties that hold a society together and all the institutions that effect political action. When technological states ask potential citizens to rationally assent to their legitimacy, the absence of a constitutionally stable form collapses their argument. When technological states turn to force they find that particular historical identity is not as irrelevant as they hoped.

Burke's commonwealth of state, citizen, and government holds representation as its public good. The actual representation of enfranchised citizens allows governors to rule through legitimacy rather than force as they recognize the particular interests of their society. The virtual representation of the citizens by the constitutional sovereign allows the commonwealth to secure its future as a project. A healthy state will not and cannot

attempt to equalize its citizens by satisfying their desires technologically.[62] Rather, the

representation present within it will allow it to see that the commonwealth must be

preserved through restraint as well as satisfaction. In Burke's state, the freedom to be

represented and have one's work preserved trumps the absolute right to take from nature

what one can.

The overwhelming abundance of technological provision eliminates strife

between citizens in Kojève's U.H.S., but it does not circumvent Burke's prescription of

restraint and conventional representation. For Burke, the state destroys the

commonwealth when it disenfranchises its citizens. Even if this is done consensually and

for the sake of an end to political struggle, still it will remove the representation of

humanity's ability to find unity in the face of contingency and difference. The U.H.S. is

merely an individual, and in its self-reflection it can only recognize its power over nature

and its resulting self-sufficiency.[63] For Burke political freedom allows human beings to

overcome their strife through devotion to their shared project. This project does not seek

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[62] Bevan thinks that Burke could not have known how much surplus production would result from
industrialization, and thus conceived of the satisfaction of desire in terms of the division of real property.
She contrasts this with Marx's vision of a technologically liberated communist worker being free to
"develop his own personality" (Bevan 1973, 186). Weston, by contrast, says that Burke's observation of the
improved diet of the working classes convinced him of his society's potential for material progress (Weston
1961, 207, 216). Burke's point is that citizenship and constitutional representation cannot survive radical
levelling whether or not this is the result of material improvement. Society can and should make citizen
welfare its goal, but not equalized welfare.

[63] In the U.H.S., the only people who recognize that they are recognized are the dialectical philosophers.
The U.H.S. is free because it recognizes itself, not because particular individuals have particular freedoms.
For Burke, citizens can know that they are recognized because their status is acknowledged by
conventional means. Conventional recognition through the franchise does not enable the purity of total self-
knowledge, but the fact of citizens' particularity is proved through their representation. Political combat in
Parliament may resemble war between the masters, but we should remember that for Burke remembering
one's citizenship was a higher constitutional duty than participation in government.

to reduce society to a single individual, however, or to eliminate struggle but to preserve

the memory of unity into an unwritten future.

Conclusion

In this essay we have examined three possible responses to the question of how technology affects the possibilities of political life. Thinkers in the tradition of Heidegger and Ellul postulate that technology, or technological rationality, seeks to order society according to a systematic, efficient, and autonomous process. They agree that the technological process is a real, progressive force in modern society that at the very least poses a severe challenge to citizenship. This is because technology tends to destroy the past, homogenize the future, and uproot the individual from the soil of common humanity.

According to these philosophers of technology, it is all too likely that technology's infinite promise will be expressed as a perpetual motion machine that unfolds itself without regard for human or political goods. The empirical existence of such a machine obscures both its human origins and its human uses within political discourse. The technologies of myth and mass persuasion are turned against formerly free commonwealths and reduce them to more or less willing servants of a technological tyranny. This tyranny is a hegemony because of its limitless power over nature, and because citizens submit the existing boundaries of their personhood to its efficient and autonomous plan.

Within the Heideggerean tradition, citizenship can be rescued, but only when individuals realize that progress and human freedom are interdependent. Citizens cannot destroy technology, but neither can technology destroy agency and common deliberation. Citizens must free themselves from technological ideologies that fix the future according to inhuman efficiency and seize their place as co-authors of the future. Commonwealths

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must find a way to structure deliberation about technology so that it reflects the true

infinity of possibility that faces humanity. Technology arises together with humanity

precisely because humanity is progressive and undetermined, so technology is fully

capable of being integrated into a human future.[64] The political outlook is darkened,

however, by the pressure of anxiety on the not-yet actualized personalities of modern

individuals. This anxiety makes the hegemony of a predetermined future seem like the

most attractive technological possibility, even if it requires the surrender of political

agency.

Kojève, by contrast, does not consider technology to be a co-productive force of

history but rather the expression of the human struggle against nature. This struggle

against nature is one side in the master-slave dialectic, where masters gain dominion by

risking death and slaves gain agency by seeking to modify the living conditions of their

masters. Both parties are driven by the universal human desire for recognition, so

progressive history is a journey towards universal satisfaction. Technology does not and

cannot order history because it is only the means to an end, namely the freedom of the

slave to free herself and her master from dependence on nature.

For Kojève, technology may be systematic and efficient, but its autonomy

requires some qualification. Technology as such is the expression of a human capacity to

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[64] Mumford writes that "As long as man's life prospers there is no limit to its possibilities, no terminus to its creativity; for it is part of the essential nature of man to transcend the limits of his own biological nature . . . . On the terms imposed by the technocratic society, there is no hope for mankind except by 'going with' its plans for accelerated technological progress, even though man's vital organs will all be cannibalized in order to prolong the megamachine's meaningless existence. But for those of us who have thrown off the myth of the machine, the next move is ours: for the gates of the technocratic prison will open automatically . . . as soon as we choose to walk out" (1970, 434-35).

order the world according to desire rather than according to nature. We experience technological autonomy because this ordering by desire is accomplished through the state. The technological state is autonomous because it is the absolute sovereign. This sovereign satisfies human freedom because it allows citizens to reintegrate mastery and slavery within their own persons. They are slaves because the state guarantees their ability to satisfy their bodily desires technologically. They are masters because the state recognizes them in their individuality without reservation. The state is worthy to give recognition because it is autonomous, or non-dependent. Citizens support the technological state because only technology can make it immortal.

For Kojève, technological hegemony is inevitable because it is the endpoint of human progress towards freedom. That is to say, technological hegemony is the most choiceworthy human good. The citizens of the technological hegemon are perfectly equivalent because their desires are fully and universally satisfied, and because the state is the unique image of their individual freedom. Even if not all citizens have walked to path of the dialectic to its end, this path leads to the same point. The full integration of mastery and slavery within history as the U.H.S. is to be repeated in the heart of every citizen until all struggle is finished. If or when individual citizens such as the philosopher reach this awareness, they also see that political life is over in principle, since politics relates to collective solutions to collective problems. In the U.H.S., however, technology has solved the problem of state legitimacy, the problem of human wants, and the problem of social identity.

Burke does not agree that human nature can be made homogeneous, whether citizens desire this homogeneity or not. For him, the kind of rationality that seeks to

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create society as an efficient system fails to understand how commonwealths are autonomous. Commonwealths gain the power to self-legislate through the development of convention. Conventions are rational but they are not systematic, because they are derived from the historical accommodation of particularity. Society arises because the individual pursuit of autonomy fails in the face of contingency. The same contingency that makes society desirable also makes it differentiated, since citizens seek a commonwealth in order to profit from their difference. Thus a legitimate commonwealth is one that moderates rather than eliminates inequality.

For Burke, the kind of power to modify human existence that other thinkers ascribe to technology already belongs to society by its very nature. Rationalizing, systematizing political projects will fail in their goals because their destruction of history and convention will destroy society's access to this 'second nature.' Would-be hegemons will have to resort to tyranny because their political technology cannot produce legitimacy out of a social void. Instead, technology will become a means of compulsion and the forcible remaking of society. This remaking will fail for the same reason society was established in the first place, that is the contingent differentiation of potential citizens in their struggle to give lasting meaning to their lives. The very individuality that is supposedly guaranteed by the technological hegemon will prove its undoing.

According to a Burkean perspective, a technological hegemon like Kojève's U.H.S. will not solve the problem of violence and legitimacy. The U.H.S. ascribes autonomy to the state in its being as an individual *qua* individual. It supposedly does not need to maintain itself through compulsion because it embodies the political recognition that lies at the end of dialectical history. Kojève thinks that citizens can recognize

themselves in the U.H.S. because it is their work that has brought complete and unchallenged mastery into being. As perfect equals within the U.H.S. they recognize each other as constituent parts of the great individual. Burke does not accept that such a condition could really be called citizenship, so the U.H.S. would not really satisfy the desire for human freedom and recognition.

To Burke, citizens will see themselves represented when their way of life is reflected by the state. Notwithstanding the material prosperity technology might enable, citizens will continue to draw advantage from it and each other according to their contingent differences. The U.H.S. as the great individual denies meaningful particular individuality and in doing so denies the commonwealth. A legitimate state must acknowledge the commonwealth both by guarding conventionality and by ensuring that particular interests find their voice within it. Burke claims that a state which attempts to represent citizens according to a single interest or abstract principle will disenfranchise the citizens and probably turn them into rebels. Thus the U.H.S. would have to turn its technological resources to a forcible and ultimately fruitless attempt to persuading citizens that boundless material satisfaction equates with happiness and political freedom.

As with any theoretical enterprise, we cannot establish the truth of these interpretations of technological citizenship purely on the strength of their arguments. Kojève's explication of how the struggle against nature produces both technology, citizenship, and ultimately freedom, is logically coherent, but it does not account for the modern experience of powerlessness in the face of progress. This experience motivates the thinkers considered in chapter one to describe this experience in ontological terms, but their habit of assuming technology's independence of human agency begs the

question. Burke is most cogent when arguing that it is ontologically incoherent to speak of technological rationality remaking society, as if society could destroy itself, or as if there was such a thing as unconventional conventionality. It is harder to assess whether modern citizens will really be content with diversified representation when significant inequality persists. Society's use of technology may fail to produce the perfect material abundance Kojève promises, but society's use of convention may also fail to legitimize a radically unequal distribution of technological products. That is to say, the thinkers who describe modern technological citizenship as a state of powerlessness and anxiety may be experientially accurate where they are ontologically deficient.

The next step in answering the question of how technology and technological progress affects the conditions of modern citizenship would rely on qualitative research on particular political cultures. Notwithstanding Kojève's claims for the universality of the modern condition, Burke's understanding of society as a conventional structure should allow us to determine whether people in different regimes will accept the legitimacy of purely virtual representation by the state or whether they require differentiated actual representation. We could then investigate whether these attitudes vary by social class and occupation, specifically classes and occupations that grant access to technological resources. We would also have to control for material inequality between regimes and within a society. Finally, we would need to determine which regimes were more technological than others in terms of their overall level of access to advanced technical methods.

I would hypothesize that regimes with lower levels of material inequality are more likely to ascribe legitimacy to virtual representation by a technological state, and

that the same would hold true for classes or interests with access to technological resources. Kojève is probably right that something like the U.H.S. gains legitimacy as material satisfaction increases and material inequality decreases. The caveat to this position is that we have no reason to assume that increased access to technological resources necessarily leads to this outcome. If inequality stays the same or increases even as overall prosperity increases, I would expect members of the less privileged classes and occupations to seek direct representation and adherence to conventional government. In highly technological regimes I would expect to see a fairly sharp division of opinion, perhaps indicative of the crisis of citizenship identified by thinkers following Heidegger and Ellul. A division of opinion leading to political conflict presumably would disprove their point about a decline in the agency of citizens, however. Such a conclusion would show that technology and technological rationality are really tools that can benefit some classes or societies but that cannot legitimate themselves. We would thus be left with the further question of whether either a universal regime or a constitutional liberal democracy are adequate to deal with the challenge technology poses to citizenship.

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