**Magic and Empire:
Value and Efficiency in a Post-Historical World Order**

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Abstract

The subject of technology and what it means for political culture is central to any understanding of contemporary political science. Through the medium of technology human, and therefore political, action is today undergoing a rapid and fundamental change – so much so, in fact, that technology is increasingly becoming the sole mode of human existence. Efficiency, being the key to technology, has become the standard by which we judge value. Through the works of Jacques Ellul, Martin Heidegger, Alexandre Kojève, Samuel Huntington, Tom Darby and others I have, in this thesis, suggested a way to understanding the technological phenomenon in its political form: *universalizing (or globalizing) empire*.

In brief, because technology is an essentially human phenomenon, it is necessarily informed by historical self-consciousness (or civilizational self-consciousness) when it comes to calculations of efficiency. Further, the evident plurality of historical self-consciousness suggests that, rather than a single technological civilization, there are multiples of this type. What may have begun as a single globalization has become many globalizations, competing with one another in terms of their drive to universal recognition (in a Kojevian sense).

We are, I propose, at the opening of an era of universalizing technological empires, where international politics will be centred on competing world pictures – competing valued efficiencies – where the line between technology and magic has been blurred, and the business of politics is the creation, and destruction, of whole worlds.

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And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth: and they left off to build the city.

Genesis 11:6-8

Rising almost fifteen-hundred feet above the streets of Kuala Lumpur the Petronas Towers dominate the skyline of the Malaysian capital, a testament to both the unprecedented transformation the country has undergone in the decades since independence from the British Empire and to the strength and endurance of Malaysian culture in face of this transformation. The developers of the towers wanted an architectural style that would express the culture and heritage of Malaysia by evoking Islamic arabesques and employing repetitive geometries characteristic of Muslim architecture. An 8-point star formed by intersecting squares is an obvious reference to Islamic design, while curved and pointed bays create a scalloped facade that suggests oriental temple spires. The identical towers are linked by a bridge at the 41st floor, creating a dramatic gateway to the city. These twin towers of the East, the tallest skyscrapers in the world, embody both global technological civilization and Malaysian culture in a union of form and function – of ends and means – that gives evidence to us of the post-historical nature of today's global political landscape.

The encounter between civilization and culture is the defining moment of politics as we move through the twenty-first century, with the phenomenon now labeled 'globalization' being the growing spatial extension of the resolution of this moment in time. My purpose here is to come to an understanding of this encounter, both its origins and the consequences of its resolution.

This encounter is essentially technological in nature, and therefore my investigation has necessarily involved coming to an understanding of the nature of technology, its impact on political life, and its relationship to globalization.

Through the medium of technology human, and therefore political, action is today undergoing a rapid and fundamental change – so much so, in fact, that technology is increasingly becoming the sole mode of human existence. Globalization is the word we give to the spread of technological civilization (which is, as I will make clear later, civilization in its *crude* form) to all corners of the globe. This spatial extension brings about encounter after encounter between (crude) technological civilization and culture that brings about a transformation of both, resulting in the birth of Civilization (properly-so-called) as the final political form in a post-historical world.

I say post-historical because I believe that this encounter can be explained and, indeed, is best understood, in terms of the end of history thesis put forward by Alexandre Kojève in his interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The encounter between civilization and culture is an encounter between Kojève's 're-animalized man' and 'japanized man'. The encounter is post-historical in this sense, but is also dialectical. It is by coming to an understanding of how such a post-historical dialectic can take place that we will come to an understanding of this encounter – this technological encounter – in its fullest.

I will begin, then, with an examination of the technological phenomenon, primarily, though not exclusively, with reference to the works of Jacques Ellul and Martin Heidegger. Like others before me, I believe the fundamental nature of technology is found in efficiency. My own definition of efficiency (which is to follow) is, I believe, different than most and is based on an observation that Ellul's investigation into the nature of technology is flawed. Though, in general,

his observations are insightful and, in fact, contribute a great deal to my own understanding of the technological phenomenon (particularly as it relates to politics), his error emerges both in his largely mechanistic understanding of technology and in his refusal to properly understand what he terms 'magic'. I believe that Heidegger, in his *Question Concerning Technology*, provides an avenue to rescuing Ellul's ideas and to providing us with a deeper understanding of technology and efficiency.

By delving into this deeper understanding of the technological phenomenon, I have undertaken a re-examination of Kojève's post-historical archetypes (re-animalized and japanized men), in light of coming to an understanding of the encounter between civilization and culture, which can be understood as essentially an encounter between these two archetypes.

I. A Technological Phenomenology

The essence of contemporary politics is found in the post-historical encounter between civilization and culture in a globalizing technological world. I must, of course, explain what this means, and explanations begin with definitions – a marking of the boundaries of what is to be explained, to be explored. I will mark my beginning where I just now ended, with *technology*, and later ascend through the rest, as an understanding of technology, technological society, and its impact of political (and therefore human) action is necessary before proceeding any further.

Jacques Ellul's well-known work, *The Technological Society*, has been the jumping-off point for many investigations into modern technology, and it will play the same role in my own work here. Though written almost half a century ago, Ellul's observations and thoughts concerning the technological world he saw developing around him are still very much of value today. Though not the first investigation of the relationship between technology and the human world, Ellul was the first to offer a deep and comprehensive look at the technological phenomenon since Martin Heidegger. Before delving into the specifics of the work, however, a few general things need to be said about it.

First, throughout the majority of the book, and despite its title, Ellul uses the word "technique" rather than technology. I raise this point only in order that it may be put aside. Though the use of the word "technique" suggests, at first glance, that Ellul may be interested in something analogous to the Greek *techne* rather than that sometimes strange seeming compound of *techne* and *logos* that

we are dealing with here, this is not the case. For all intents and purposes, one could substitute “technology” for “technique” throughout the work, as Ellul considers the two terms (rightly or wrongly) to be interchangeable. In every case, when Ellul is discussing technique he is referring to that same phenomenon that others (including myself) refer to as technology.

Second, Ellul understands technology (and technological society) to be an essentially modern phenomenon. Though something akin to technology existed in pre-modern eras (that which we might properly refer to as *techne*, or craft), technology, as we know it today, is an entirely different creature. Modern technology differs from techniques of the past in that “for the first time technique has replaced nature as the ‘milieu’ or environment of human life. All social phenomena and human activities are to be understood as being situated within technique rather than having become influenced by an external technical factor.”¹

Lastly, despite the many strengths of Ellul’s work, his one major failing is that he adopts a far too mechanistic understanding of technology, despite even his own efforts to avoid doing so. On the one hand, Ellul takes pains to make it clear that, though the machine is its most visible and obvious manifestation, technology is more than this. “Technique has enough of the mechanical in it to cope with the machine,” he tells us, “but it surpasses and transcends the machine because it remains in close touch with the human order.”² He goes even further to say that, “Technique has now become almost completely independent

¹ Cooper, Barry (1986) “Hegelian Imperialism” in: *Sojourns in the New World: Reflections on Technology*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, p. 50.

² Ellul, Jacques (1964) *The Technological Society*, New York: Random House, p. 5.

of the machine, which has lagged far behind its offspring.”³ Yet, despite his insistence that the machine is only the crudest form of technology, Ellul simultaneously describes the machine as the ideal towards which technology drives itself. “The machine is solely, exclusively technique,” he explains, “it is pure technique, one might say. For, wherever a technical factor exists, it results, almost inevitably, in mechanization: technique transforms everything it touches into a machine.”⁴ It is this aspect of Ellul’s thought that leads to its incompleteness. He maintains an image of technology that, despite its many potential outward forms, has at its centre an unyielding, unchanging heart of pure, cold steel. It is because of this understanding that such a bleak vision of technological man emerges from the work. In the end, Ellul believes that in a world dominated by technology human beings would exist only in a semi-conscious twilight world in which the only true consciousness would be the machine-consciousness of an all-embracing technology.⁵ This focus on a mechanistic understanding of technology is Ellul’s only major error and, though significant, it does not detract from value of the main body of his work to any investigation into the technological phenomenon. My own solution to this mechanical fallacy will be elaborated below, but for now I wish only to make the reader aware of it before proceeding further. For now then, I will turn to an examination of what Ellul believes to be the fundamental characteristics of modern technology.

³ Ibid, p. 4

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, p. 6

Ellul posits five essential characteristics of modern technology: *technical automatism, self-augmentation, monism, autonomy, and universalism*.

The first of these characteristics, technical automatism, is most easily described as "the one best way."⁶ Technology is automatic, it is self-moving in the sense that choice between methods has been eliminated or, more properly, has been pre-determined by equations of technological efficiency. Ellul, throughout his work, understands technology in terms of means, as "nothing more than means and the ensemble of means."⁷ Thus the importance of recognizing technical automatism is that, as Ellul sees things, human beings are no longer able to choose among means as the choice is made for us (whether we realize it or not) by the internal necessities (the efficiency) of technology. "The human being," he writes, "is no longer in any sense the agent of choice ... he can decide only in favour of the technique that gives the maximum efficiency."⁸ If human beings are no longer the agents of choice, then equally we cannot speak of such choices as being made according to any strictly human measure. For Ellul, technical automatism in technology means that efficiency is the only measure, and efficiency (as he understands it) is a calculating and mechanical standard that is inhuman in the sense that it removes from human beings the agency of choice, leaving us instead only the task of implementation.

Further, "technical activity automatically eliminates every non-technical activity or transforms it into technical activity."⁹ Technical automatism makes it

⁶ Ibid, p. 80

⁷ Ibid, p. 19

⁸ Ibid, p. 80

⁹ Ibid, p. 83

impossible for technological means to co-exist with non-technological means. The former will always replace the latter as soon as possible. "The milieu into which a technique penetrates becomes completely, and often at a stroke, a technical milieu."¹⁰ Technology is thus expansive and exclusive, based on an efficient ordering of means which becomes the only path open to humanity.

But Ellul's description of this automatism is limited in that it defines rational and efficient choice in material terms only, as an equation of efficiency that references given-being (nature, the natural world) but not humanity. Human beings are no longer agents here because Ellul has *a priori* situated humanity outside of given-being, outside of the 'stuff' that technology transforms but which also provides the basic laws governing equations of efficiency. Ellul has made human beings into a *dependent* variable. He forgets that if human (which is to say, historical) beings are among the matter made or transformed by technological ordering, then the historical self-consciousness of human beings must necessarily become an *independent* variable in the calculation of efficiency in terms of "the one best way".

This being said, it remains valid to posit technical automatism as a real characteristic of the technological phenomenon. Though human beings should be understood as independent variables, we are not necessarily conscious of this fact, or able to act as agents in the sense of choosing contrary to the nature of our historical consciousness (though this, too, is certainly possible). However, the simple fact that history will enter into the equation means that in no way can one consider technical automatism as evidence of the inhumanity of technology,

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 84

which is the picture Ellul is trying to paint for us here. Rather, we find herein evidence that, at least in some part, technology is characteristically human and tethered to history, to Spirit.

The second characteristic of modern technology put forward by Ellul is one of self-augmentation. Concerning its growth and expansion in the world we see that technology is, in this way too, automatic. It expands most often slowly, but surely, sometimes making great leaps forward but only after a period of anonymous accretion of the conditions necessary for this leap. Technology is characterized by a gradual, almost organic, growth and augmentation that occurs every time a technical or more efficient means is applied to even the smallest of tasks. Ellul suggests that this self-augmentation is governed by two laws: 1) In a given civilization, technical progress is irreversible; and 2) Technical progress tends to act, not according to an arithmetic, but according to a geometric progression.¹¹ In other words, once technology has entered into a society, it will begin to grow and spread at an ever-increasing rate, augmenting itself through the sheer weight of its process of efficient ordering. Further, this self-augmenting process is neither reversible nor even arrestable short of a complete collapse of the society itself.

The third characteristic of technology is what Ellul described in his native French as *unicite*, which is most often translated as monism. Technology is monistic in that, though it is manifest in many and diverse forms throughout the world, it yet reflects a single essence, a common set of defining characteristics, in all of these forms. Technological monism demonstrates that though technology

¹¹ Ibid, p. 89

must adopt different forms depending on the particular natural or historical environment in which it moves, it nevertheless expresses a universalistic and universalizing aspect that is central to its character, and is able to embrace all of these diverse forms. One further characteristic of technological monism is that technology cannot be purposively directed to certain *good* ends and away from *evil* ones. Ellul addresses, and rejects, the common argument that if we would only use technology more responsibly we could resolve many of the world's evils and pursue only virtuous ends. Such arguments misunderstand technology, taking it to simply be a tool improperly used, rather than the larger phenomenon that it is. The discovery of how to split the atom inevitably led to the development of nuclear weapons just as much as it did to nuclear energy or medicine. "There is no purpose or plan that is being progressively realized," writes Ellul, "We are dealing with a phenomenon blind to the future, in a domain of integral causality."¹²

Ellul's fourth characteristic of technology is autonomy. At the core of this technical autonomy is "the complete separation of the goal from the mechanism, the limitation of the problem to the means, and the refusal to interfere in any way with efficiency."¹³ Ellul thus understands technology as a phenomenon divorced from ends, dealing exclusively with means – efficiency of means is of primary importance, and may even require a change in the goal, the ends, should it interfere with the efficient ordering of the means. Technology will not tolerate judgment from without (that is to say, from the non-technological), nor will it

¹² Ibid, p. 94

¹³ Ibid, p. 133

accept limitation – its autonomy extends not only to nature, or to non-technological ordering, but also to humanity. Technology seeks “the elimination of human variability and elasticity.”¹⁴ We see here some further evidence of Ellul’s perception of technology as an essentially mechanistic phenomenon – he proposes that technology is an example of means, as “mechanism”, separated from ends whereas a better understanding of technology and, in particular, efficiency, would be as a growing-together of means and ends rather than their formal separation – a concept I will return to later. Without denying that autonomy is a fundamental characteristic of technology, I would suggest that it is a characteristic that is often misunderstood. Technology becomes autonomous from man to a degree that man need act less and less on the natural world, that he need *work* less. In other words, work enters the domain of technology. Autonomous technology becomes the world in which humanity acts, lives, and plays. It is truly autonomous when we as human beings no longer need act upon nature (given-being) in order to transform (negate) the world to suits our needs, our ends. Rather, technology does this for us in a kind of cybernetic relationship. One can thus understand greater technological autonomy as greater human freedom in the sense that technology becomes a kind of servo-mechanism through which human beings are able to transform and mould the world around them through an act of will alone.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 135

¹⁵ Take, for example, virtual reality. Already this phenomenon has developed far beyond its crude beginnings in oversized goggles and simple geometrical forms. Today thousands of people, through the medium of the internet, adopt alter-ego personas and immerse themselves in expansive worlds – worlds that contain other travelers like themselves, that have flora, fauna, weather, towns and cities that change over time. These are worlds populated by “users”, who can transform all that is around them with a simple

The fifth and final characteristic put forward by Ellul is technical universalism. "From a geographic point of view," he writes, "it is easy to see that technique is constantly gaining ground, country by country, and that its area of action is the whole world."¹⁶ Technology thus has inherent to it an expansive quality, one without limit except for the spatial limits of the planet itself (and, with the notion of 'the conquest of space' that began during the Cold War but continues today, perhaps not even limited to this planet alone). Ellul understands technological universalism in terms of a geometrical progress along a more or less predetermined trajectory – one that ends with the expansion of technology into all areas of all societies. The technological world paves one road to be followed by all peoples. Though he did not have the word for it at the time that he wrote, Ellul, when discussing technological universalism, is discussing what we today call Globalization. "In the course of history there have always been different principles of civilization according to regions, nations, and continents. But today everything tends to align itself on technical principles."¹⁷ The United States, Ellul suggests, being perhaps the most completely aligned to technical principles, lies furthest along this trajectory (is the most 'globalized'), with France a few years behind, and China perhaps a decade or three even further back, yet all three along the same path of globalization, of universalization. Thus we have notions of development and underdevelopment, of technical progress, of centers of civilization and of backwaters or traditional (formerly barbaric, or savage)

movement of the hand, in which all action is but play. Here, though perhaps they are "real" only as electric pulses passing through microchips, human beings play in the ethereal realms of gods.

¹⁶ Ellul, p. 116

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 117

cultures. The colonialist and later imperialist eras were early movements in what Ellul understands to be the universalization of technology. Further, because technological, these various epochs of modernity were largely inevitable, practically beyond human control to prevent from occurring, as is the case with globalization today. War, commerce, and the export of technical specialists are the mechanisms, the handmaidens, of technological universalism and it is through these forces that technology moves from one society to another. "The old civilizations collapse on contact with the new, and the same phenomenon appears under every possible cultural form."¹⁸

While I largely agree with Ellul's understanding of the universalizing character of the technological phenomenon, his concept of an historical trajectory of technological progress misses the mark. The encounter between globalizing technological civilization and the various cultures it engages with throughout this process of universal expansion (including the various cultures of the Western world) takes place only in a post-historical context, and thus any attempt at marking a trajectory or quantifying this encounter in terms of time would be extremely difficult, if not also senseless. This encounter that is the universalization of technology (globalization) takes place in a sort of non-time at the end of history.¹⁹ The resolution of this encounter could take years, decades, or even centuries – it may be that this encounter, in its essence, can *never* be

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 121

¹⁹ This concept of non-time comes from a reflection on Alexandre Kojève's work found in Tom Darby's book, *The Feast: Meditations on Politics and Time*. Kojève's understanding of the end of history is understood here not as an end of time, but rather as a non-time – an era, so to speak, wherein the end of history is present in principle, but has not yet become actual in the form of a universal and homogenous state. In Darby's own words: "All moments of our cosmic drama have been compressed in between a crucifixion and resurrection. Kojève's unsaid message seems to be that our 'time' is the non-time between Good Friday and Easter." (*The Feast*: pp. 187-188)

resolved. But, even if such were to be possible, the very universalizing nature of technology means that the encounter cannot be considered resolved until it has been resolved *everywhere*.

I will explore this encounter in further detail below, but for now I wish to turn to the work of Martin Heidegger in his *Question Concerning Technology*, in order to arrive at both a deeper and a clearer definition of technology. The ideas put forth by Heidegger concerning the nature of modern technology provide the means for addressing some of the shortcomings in Ellul's own theory.

Heidegger begins with what he refers to as the "instrumental and anthropological definition of technology."²⁰ This definition comprises what are perhaps the two most commonly given answers to an inquiry about technology, that it is: a) a means to an end; and b) a human activity. Certainly, Heidegger argues, this definition can apply to all technology, both pre-modern and modern, but, when concerned specifically with modern technology, it does not offer a complete picture. This instrumental definition is "correct", yet it is not "true". It does not uncover the essence of technology. This definition focuses its attention primarily on technology as a kind of craftsmanship, as a system of means, which is to say a relationship of causality. Rather, Heidegger understands technology as "a way of revealing."²¹

Heidegger begins by questioning the Greek root word, *techne*. "It reveals," he writes, "whatever does not bring itself forth and does not yet lie here before

²⁰ Heidegger, Martin (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, New York: Harper & Row, p. 5

²¹ Ibid, p. 12

us, whatever can look and turn out now one way and now another.”²² What is being said here is that *techne* is a mode of revealing that which does not bring itself forth in nature (*physis*), of revealing (of presencing, or more crudely of making) those things which do not naturally reveal (make) themselves. For example, a flower is able to bud and then bloom by means of its own nature and without the aid of an outside agent. A sacrificial chalice on the other hand, to use the classic example, cannot reveal itself without the aid of such an agent, one who employs a craft or an art, to bring about this revealing. *Techne* has to do with this second kind of revealing. Further, this mode of revealing that is *techne* reveals what is to be brought forth according to the perspectives of the four Aristotelian causes. This revealing is what Heidegger believes has been misunderstood as the efficient cause, so misunderstood because it has been thought of as subsequent to and dependent on the material and the formal causes. Rather, Heidegger understands the efficient cause as that which gathers together – *in advance* – the other three causes. In the causal chain the efficient cause is prior to all others in that it conceptually prepares the way for a revealing that would not take place without it. “*Techne* is the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *Techne* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiesis*; it is something poietic.”²³ *Techne* is precisely this revealing, this prior gathering together much more than it is the manipulating of matter or the employing of means that takes place in the traditional understanding of the efficient cause. This, however, is *techne*, is

²² Ibid, p. 13

²³ Ibid

revealing through human agency, in the pre-modern era only. Modern technology, though its roots are found in pre-modern *techne*, is something fundamentally different.

"The revealing that holds sway throughout modern technology does not unfold into a bringing-forth in the sense of *poiesis*," writes Heidegger, "The revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such."²⁴ This challenging that Heidegger writes of is a setting-upon nature. Modern technological revealing is not poietic in that it is bringing-forth neither in itself (revealing in the sense of *physis*, of nature), nor is it even, in its essence, bringing-forth through human agency or artisanship (revealing in the sense of *techne*). Modern technology is a gathering-together in the sense of ordering, but an ordering that is not a maintenance of a natural order but rather one that sets-upon nature in such a way that it is transformed into a standing-reserve of energy, of *stuff*, ready-at-hand for human ordering and human use. To all of this Heidegger gives the name *Enframing*.

"It [Enframing] is nothing technological, nothing on the order of a machine. It is the way in which the real reveals itself as standing reserve"²⁵ Enframing is itself a gathering together, which is to say that it is a kind of *techne* in that its role is akin to that of the efficient cause. But it is more than this, more than what we have already established as pre-modern *techne*. "Enframing means the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon man, i.e. challenges him forth, to

²⁴ Ibid, p. 14

²⁵ Ibid, p. 23

reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing reserve."²⁶ Enframing, which is to say modern technology, not only challenges nature but also, and more originally, challenges man. The first order of technology is to set-upon human beings in order to cause us to set-upon or challenge nature to reveal itself as standing reserve. Thus, on the one hand, the mode of revealing that is modern technology is still human in that technological challenging or ordering takes place within a human world and not beyond it. Yet, on the other hand, technological revealing no longer happens "exclusively *in* man, or decisively *through* man."²⁷

"Only to the extent that man for his part is already challenged to exploit the energies of nature can this ordering revealing happen," writes Heidegger, who then goes on to ask, "If man is challenged, ordered to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing-reserve?"

Human beings are thus the first to be challenged by technology, which challenges-reveals man as standing-reserve even before it challenges-reveals the natural world as such. However, this original challenging is more properly understood as man challenging himself at this original moment. "He [man] never is transformed into mere standing-reserve. Since man drives technology forward, he takes part in ordering as a way of revealing."²⁸ Thus, technology is, in essence, something both outside and within man, something that, at its original moment, challenges us, but at the same time is the challenging with which we make demands of nature and transform it to reflect our own human order. Understood from this point of view, technology can be understood as an

²⁶ Ibid, p. 20

²⁷ Ibid, p. 24

²⁸ Ibid, p. 18

immense power in the hands of modern man, and further it is a power that demands that it be used. There is, however, an equally immense danger.

“That which has already claimed man and has done so, so decisively that he can only be man at any given time as the one so claimed.”²⁹ Thus, Heidegger describes how, though human beings are not simply standing-reserve and do participate in the ordering-revealing that is modern technology, the catch is that we are now able to be human only insofar as we participate in this ordering-revealing of nature. In other words, man can now *be* only as technological man. We have been “claimed by a way of revealing,” writes Heidegger.³⁰ The technological way of revealing has become the only way of revealing and thus has put us in danger of losing sight of our own essence in the essence of technology that is challenged to us in Enframing. Because of this, we may be denied “more primal truth”³¹ than the truth that we are able to reveal as technological beings. I will deal with Heidegger’s response to this inherent danger of technology in the next section, but for now we should address the picture of technology that comes into focus now that we have had an opportunity to engage with the theories of both Ellul and Heidegger.

It has been my contention that Ellul’s too mechanistic understanding of technology has led to a misreading of this phenomenon. Ellul’s five essential characteristics (automatism, self-augmentation, monism, autonomy, universalism) provide a place to begin, yet are far from an end.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Ibid, p. 19

³¹ Ibid, p. 28

In describing all of his essential characteristics, Ellul holds efficiency as the only measure in a technological world. I don't dispute this; in fact I endorse it. The trouble with Ellul is that, for him, efficiency is something inhuman. He considers efficient choice in material terms only, and because of this his theory of technology lacks the depth that would make his five characteristics truly *essential*. Ellul has characterized humanity as the only dependent variable in a calculus of efficient ordering. His understanding of efficiency is purely material and mechanical because, for him, technology is informed and bound only by the physical laws of given-being – the sciences of physics, chemistry, mathematics, and so on. He situates human beings entirely outside of these equations, in a sense conjuring for us a vision of a technological world that is being created (or, more properly, that is creating itself) in opposition to a separate and distinct human world. This is why his technological society is so bleak. It is presented as something outside of the human, an ascendant technological world that conquers a waning human world. It is a cold iron nail set to bind sacred flesh. It is through Heidegger's observations that we begin to find an avenue to rescue from this mechanical fallacy.

Heidegger does not lose sight of the fact that technological ordering-revealing takes place within a human world, that it can only take place within a human world and not beyond it. Though, as Heidegger makes clear, technological revealing (*Enframing*) no longer happens exclusively in or decisively through human beings, it yet remains an essentially human phenomenon (despite the dangers it may pose to humanity in the poietic sense).

Human agency informs technological ordering-revealing, and this ordering-revealing takes place, must take place, in a human world, an historical world. This being the case, it becomes clear that humanity cannot be the dependent variable that Ellul envisions it to be. Rather, history, like physics, chemistry, and mathematics, must also equate into technological ordering. Evidently, then, we must come to an understanding of efficiency that goes deeper than the material, deeper than the mechanical of a given-being divorced from the human, which falsely heralds the technician as prophet.

II. Efficiency and Magic

Technology is, "efficient, and brings efficiency into everything."³² This first observation is an important one, for technology is driven by efficiency and, just as technology increasingly penetrates everywhere, so too does efficiency. Technology brings efficiency into everything, even human activity. It becomes internal to human life. "It notes what every means devised is capable of accomplishing and selects from the various means at its disposal with a view to securing the ones that are the most efficient, the best adapted to the desired end."³³ Technology, thus understood as means, is selected and refined based on a standard of efficiency.

Technical automatism, Ellul's first fundamental characteristic, is the clearest indication that technology moves according to principles of efficiency. As stated above, the choice between methods, between means, is largely predetermined by equations of technological efficiency. When more than one possible technological solution presents itself, these possible means compete with one another on the grounds of greater efficiency.

Thus, in order to judge which technological means is better (more efficient, more powerful) in a given area, one must possess a standard, basic measure of efficiency by which to make that judgment. Such a measure is necessary not only for technical automatism, but for all of Ellul's fundamental characteristics of technology. "What characterizes action within a particular [technological] activity

³² Ellul, p. 5

³³ Ibid, p. 21

is the search for greater efficiency.”³⁴ What is this standard, basic measure of efficiency by which judgment can be passed?

Darby, in approaching this question, offers us insight into the nature of efficiency by defining it in terms of a relationship between means and ends, and in this way offers us an answer to our question of standard and measure. He explains that, “technology is the progressively rational (efficient) arrangement of means and ends (for humans) and cause and effect (for nature).”³⁵ This relationship between means and ends is of critical importance in coming to an understanding of what is meant by efficiency. The goal of technology, through efficiency, is to bring means and ends so close together that the line between them becomes irreversibly blurred. Technology functions, it justifies itself, “by transforming the means necessary to survival into valued ends.”³⁶ In a technological world, the value of action is not found in the ends that result from such action. Work is no longer undertaken for the sake of some valued end or goal. Rather, because the distinction between means and ends is so blurred, the work itself holds value more originally. Although Ellul, as cited above, described efficiency in terms of the best means for a desired end, what we come to understand now is that in the technological world the means are the ends. Or, more appropriately, technology is a “copenetration of knowing and making [...]

³⁴ Ellul, p. 20

³⁵ Darby, Tom (2001), “On Spiritual Crisis, Globalization, and Planetary Rule” in: *Faith, Reason and Political Life Today*, Peter Lawler & Dale McConkey editors, Lexington Books, p. 52

³⁶ Kroker, Arthur (1986) “Life Against History” in *Sojourns in the New World: Reflections on Technology*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, pp. 150-151

Through technology the abstract (possible) and the actual (concrete) become one."³⁷

Means and ends, knowing and making, desire and fulfillment – the opposition between elements begins to dissolve. The answer to the question concerning the basic measure of efficiency is to be found in this relationship, for efficiency, "is and can only be measured as the progressively diminishing difference between those means and ends or causes and effects."³⁸

With what we have thus far, I can give a definition of efficiency as: *the progressive dissolution of the distinction between means and ends that provides the engine for technology and its expansion, both internally and externally, into every facet of man and the modern world.* This is a good first definition, but it will require more refinement before we are through.

Heidegger, as noted above, understands that the efficient cause is prior to all others – it gathers together, in advance, the other three Aristotelian causes. The efficient cause prepares the way for revealing. Modern technology challenges nature, but this challenging does have the way prepared for it. Technological challenging-revealing moves within the gathering-together of efficiency. Thus, technology, at its heart, has this efficient gathering together, and therefore, Heidegger's concept of Enframing must be, in essence, efficient.

Enframing is a gathering together akin to the efficient cause. The key here is that Enframing challenges not just nature, but also man – and man more originally. *Man is among the material that is gathered together.*

³⁷ Darby (2001), p. 42

³⁸ Ibid, p. 53

However, more than this, in the technological world Man is both that which is gathered-together as well as he-who-gathers-together. Man thus makes himself, challenges himself, and transforms himself. Technology, driven by efficiency, establishes a standing reserve not just in nature but also in Man. For today, "our instruments serve not just to control and manipulate non-human nature but human nature as well."³⁹ That this is true is evident in many areas of the technological world, from the methodologies of the social sciences, to the techniques of managing human resources or of mass media marketing. The danger that Heidegger saw is a technology that transforms (negates) Man just as easily, and just as dispassionately, as it does nature.⁴⁰ This same fear drove Ellul's work as well.

*But where danger is, grows
The saving power also.*⁴¹

This danger truly exists only if Man is also ignorant of himself. Only if this pertains will Man transform himself into something he is not, or something that he cannot survive being. But Man is more than simply conscious, he is self-conscious and not ignorant of his being, and thus the danger that Ellul and Heidegger see (each in his own way) is much less of a monster.

³⁹ Darby (1986) "Reflections on Technology" in: *Sojourns in the New World: Reflections on Technology*, Ottawa: Carleton University Press, p. 4.

⁴⁰ "Nature, the art whereby God hath made and governs the world, is by the art of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an artificial animal [...] For by art is created that great Leviathan called a Commonwealth, or State, in Latin Civitas, *which is but an artificial man; though of greater stature and strength than the natural...*" Hobbes, Thomas (1962). *Leviathan*, New York: Collier Books, p. 19 (emphasis added).

⁴¹ Heidegger, p. 28

Human self-consciousness, though not the only facet of efficiency, is an integral part of this gathering-together, this Enframing. "He is never transformed into mere standing-reserve," writes Heidegger, "Since man drives technology forward, he takes part in ordering as a way of revealing."⁴²

Heidegger proposed that the safeguard against a technological tyranny, against man losing all control of his being, of his destiny, could be found in art – "a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it."⁴³ Such a safeguard is certainly necessary if, in the name of efficiency, human spirit is to be saved from being the final sacrifice on the slaughter-bench of history. This 'saving power', this art akin to the essence of technology yet fundamentally different from it, is magic.

Before moving further, it is necessary that I be clear on what is meant by *magic*. Ellul uses the word in his own work, describing magic as the earliest expression of technique. "Because we are obsessed with materialism," he writes, "and do not take magic seriously, it has little interest for us, and we are unaware even today, as we study technique – the techniques that relate to men – that we are drawing on the great stream of magical techniques."⁴⁴

Ellul describes technique (=technology) as being divided into two distinct paths – two historical trajectories that, while they run parallel to one another, do not interact. The first, which we already have examined in the first section, is

⁴² Heidegger, p. 18

⁴³ Heidegger, p. 35

⁴⁴ Ellul, p. 25

material technology. The other is technology of a spiritual order, dubbed 'magic' by Ellul.

"Magic," Ellul writes, "developed along with other techniques as an expression of man's will to obtain certain results of a spiritual order."⁴⁵ Whereas material technology is described in terms of a machine ideal – an automatic, self-augmenting order of factories, scientific research, sociological reports, and technical expertise – spiritual technology is characterized as a somewhat chaotic aggregate of religious rites, ceremonial masks, mystical drugs, and the relationship between the human self and the divine other.

Two important aspects of magic emerge out of Ellul's discussion of it as the earliest expression of technology. First, *magic is spiritual*. It is an intrinsically human phenomenon brought into being through custom, ritual, and historical human action. Seen in this light, magic is akin to an Hegelian definition of Spirit, and can be understood in a broad sense as the culture of a society. Second, *magic is technological*. It is a relationship of spiritual means to spiritual ends driven by efficiency. Magic is a technological expression of the relationship of the human with the divine, or more properly of the temporal with the eternal.

Thus we have in Ellul's work an incarnation of the technological that is spiritual, that is valued and that is born of rite, of tradition, and of culture. Yet he rejects magic as a true expression of technology. Why? Ellul gives two reasons: fixity and particularity.

On the one hand, fixity is an aspect of the magical that gives evidence of its technological nature. As Ellul sees it, magic expresses "a relationship between

⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 24

the ready-made formula and a precise result."⁴⁶ When invoking gods, precision is a necessity and thus magical ritual is driven by rules of efficiency, lest error be made and, rather than resulting in divine aid, divine outrage could be the result. However, rather than a *progressive* union of means and ends, magical efficiency is *instantaneous*. Ritual, once consecrated, becomes immutable. The instantaneous character of spiritual efficiency lends it an air of falseness. Not only is it fixed in nature, claims Ellul, it is also particular. "Every milieu resists imitating the technique of another social or ethnic group. When a civilization dies, it transmits to its heirs its material but not its spiritual apparatus."⁴⁷ Thus, whereas material technology is described in progressive and dynamic terms, spiritual technology is instead fixed and stagnant. – a kind of historical stillbirth.

Thus Ellul introduces the concept of magic as an expression of technology, but then dismisses it as irrelevant to an understanding of the nature of modern technology. In this he was mistaken.

To help illustrate this error, I refer to Mircea Eliade's exposition of the nature of alchemy in his work: *The Forge and the Crucible*. In tracing the origins and history of alchemy, Eliade shows how this ancient tradition has endured into even the modern world. The endurance of alchemy, or rather of "alchemical ideology", is not found (as is commonly believed) in the science of chemistry. Chemistry adopted the empirically valid knowledge of alchemy – no more, no less. On the surface, then, we see the chemical sciences adopting, as Ellul would put it, the material but not the spiritual apparatus of alchemy as pre-modern

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ellul, p. 25

Western civilization gave way to modern Western civilization. However, as Eliade makes clear, it is wrong to believe that this alchemical spirit died on the Periodic Table.

“We must not believe that the triumph of experimental science reduced to nought the dreams and ideals of the alchemist. On the contrary, the ideology of the new epoch crystallized around the myth of infinite progress and boosted by the experimental sciences and the progress of industrialization which dominated and inspired the whole of the nineteenth century, takes up and carries forward – despite its radical secularization – the millenary dream of the alchemist.”⁴⁸

The alchemists’ dreams of perfection – of the philosopher’s stone, the transmutation of lead into gold – survive in modern notions of perfectibility and progress, ideas that are inherent to technology itself, ideas that lie at the core of efficiency. “The visionary’s myth of the perfection, or more accurately, of the redemption of Nature, survives, in camouflaged form, in the pathetic programme of the industrial societies whose aim is the total transmutation of Nature, its transformation into ‘energy’”.⁴⁹

Eliade’s description of the transmutation of Nature into energy is not far from Heidegger’s notion of the transformation of given-Being into standing-reserve. Whether these efforts of transmutation are “pathetic”, as Eliade claims, I will leave aside. What is important is that Eliade give a clear example of how so-called spiritual apparatus can survive and adapt to even such radical

⁴⁸ Eliade, Mircea (1956). *The Forge and the Crucible*. University of Chicago Press, p. 172

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 172-73

transformations as the move from pre-modern to modern. How they can, in fact, even shape such transformations.

“Chemistry has received only insignificant fragments of the alchemical heritage. The bulk of this heritage is to be found elsewhere [...] in the systems of political economy, whether capitalist, liberal or Marxist, in the secularized theologies of materialism, positivism and infinite progress – everywhere, in short, where there is faith in the limitless possibilities of *homo faber*, everywhere where the eschatological significance of labour, technology and the scientific exploration of Nature reveals itself.”⁵⁰

While it is true that the wholesale transmission of spiritual technology rarely, if ever, happens, Ellul's characterization of spiritual technology as being incapable of progress, both in space and time, is far too narrow an assessment of so-called magic and overlooks its enduring and adaptive power. The “results of a spiritual order” that lie within the domain of magic are revealed in a progressive union of means and ends just as they are in more strictly materialistic concepts of technology. Despite the pain and upheaval of modernization the will to the spiritual remains in the modern world (perhaps made even more necessary by the processes of modernization) and in fact nourishes all human technology.

It is perhaps possible to describe a pre-modern type of spiritual technology as isolated, fixed, and particular, but this is certainly not possible when dealing with spiritual technology in the modern world, which, being technological, shares with material technology those aspects of technical automatism, self-augmentation, monism, autonomy, and universalism. Just as material technique

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 173

has become material technology (as described in Heidegger's investigations), so too has magical technique become magical technology. Magic in its modern form is that spiritual technology that defines the core values of a tradition, of a people, of a culture and shapes the development and expression of material technology in that culture.

By focusing on ritual activity (the "spiritual apparatus") as definition of the magical, Ellul in fact repeats his earlier mechanical fallacy in which he confuses machine and technology. Though ritual (particularly of the religious variety) is the most spectacular aspect of spiritual technology, it is so only in the same way that machines are the most spectacular aspect of material technology. Spiritual technology can no more be clearly understood and adequately defined through observation of religious ritual than material technology can be defined by perusing the blueprints of a video game console.

Ellul further asserts that, "the two aspects of technique [material and spiritual], although both are social, are sharply separated and would seem to have interacted very little anywhere."⁵¹ Barry Cooper, in an essay on nihilism and technology, elaborates on this by writing that, "if technology is the one best way, as Ellul indicated, it can be directed by nothing: not ideology, not prudence, not piety, not common sense. Technological activities are undertaken because they can be."⁵²

This nihilistic understanding of technology, a technology devoid of spirit, is precisely what frightened Ellul, Heidegger, and others. In a different essay,

⁵¹ Ellul, p. 27

⁵² Cooper, Barry (1989). "Nihilism and Technology" in *Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism*. Carleton University Press, p. 167

Cooper writes that technology “is unified and homogenous, with no essential differences among its several branches or regional variations.”⁵³ He writes that technology subordinates all religions, myths, virtues, and ethnic particularities to its own imperatives. He describes technology as unregulated by human institutions, values, or history. He draws a stark line between the spiritual and the material. However, for all its frightening and monstrosly characterized qualities, we must not forget that technology is essentially a *human* phenomenon.

Material and spiritual technology do, in fact, interact often. The examples of such interaction given by Eliade are pointed enough: the diverse ideologies of political economy, the secularized theologies of materialism and positivism. But other examples abound, architecture being perhaps the most obvious – the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, the Burj Al Arab Hotel in Dubai, or the late World Trade Center in New York City to name but a few.

Magic underlies technology like a shadow, but like a shadow it is often overlooked because one has grown so accustomed to its presence. Technology, particularly in the political realm, consists exactly of the interaction between spiritual and material technology. The two influence one another on many levels, both subtle and overt, and spiritual technology represents, in a very tangible way, the human element of the *causa efficiens* that is so integral to the Enframing that is technology.

Technology is not, nor has it ever been, value free. Yet, “most today take technology to be neutral and thereby ‘value free’ [...] And indeed, were we to perceive of technology differently it would not work as it does, or it would not be

⁵³ Cooper (1986), p. 52

correct, not *efficient*, and thereby would not be technology.”⁵⁴ Technology operates as it does because we perceive it as based on a neutral and disinterested concept of efficiency. And while, when acting technologically it may be necessary to carry such a concept of technology and efficiency with us, to do the same while thinking on technology is dangerous. “We have seen that the value by which one determines the use of technology is internal. We know that this internal value is that which lies in the darkest depths of the heart of our technology. This value is efficiency.”⁵⁵ But we must not forget that this efficiency is itself rooted in value decisions. *In the darkest depths of technology beats a human heart.* The value in efficiency is internal because man has taken technology within his breast, and feels it beating there.

The saving power that Heidegger invokes in nothing other than magic – spiritual technology. The danger (as understood by Heidegger and Ellul) arising out of modern technology is the loss of the Spirit to efficiency. Neither of these thinkers needed to be so concerned, however, as the endurance of the Spirit and the spiritual has always been strong, and though in the West efficiency masquerades as a faceless god, it is in fact value-laden, inured with spirit of the cultures of the West that gradually have been drawing together as a civilization united by common technology rooted in a shared valued-efficiency.⁵⁶

What we see in this spiritual aspect of technology (this *magic*) is an element of efficiency that is essential to a complete understanding of it – namely,

⁵⁴ Darby (2001), p. 52

⁵⁵ Darby (1986), p. 19

⁵⁶ When describing his doctrine of causation, Aristotle ranked beauty and utility equally with respect to the *causa finalis*. What is magic, if not beauty?

that efficiency, in a way akin to how light can be described as both wave and particle, operates simultaneously both in terms of material efficiency and valued (or spiritual) efficiency.

Thus we come to a second, and more complete, definition of efficiency as: *the progressive dissolution of the distinction between means and ends, understood as simultaneously both material and Spiritual, that provides the engine for technology and its expansion, both internally and externally, into every facet of the modern human world.*

III. Valued-Efficiency and The Age of World Pictures

To better understand the importance of this dual nature of technology I return to Heidegger, this time in his essay, *The Age of the World Picture*.

Using broad brush strokes, Heidegger divides Western history into three eras – Greek, Medieval, and Modern – each defined by a particular metaphysical foundation, a particular way of understanding humanity and its relationship to the world. The ‘world’, as Heidegger uses the term, is “a name for what is, in its entirety. The name is not limited to the cosmos, to nature. History also belongs to the world.”⁵⁷

For the Greeks, everything that is “belongs to Being because it is demanded and determined by Being.”⁵⁸ In this metaphysical system, which Heidegger attributes mainly to Aristotle, human beings are object rather than subject. Rather than man looking at the world, it is the world that presents itself to man. It is human beings who are looked upon by that-which-is, and are caught up and borne along by it. This is the cyclical closed-circle image that is most commonly used to represent the Greek world (figure 1).

Figure 1: GREEK

⁵⁷ Heidegger, p. 129

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. 130-31

For the Middle Ages (sometimes referred to as the Christian world) to be in Being means to belong within a specific rank of a created order, a rank appointed from the beginning, which supposes an *end*, and which cannot change. That which is, is because of the original cause of creation, and not because it is brought before man and placed within the realm of his knowing or being at his disposal (*figure 2*).⁵⁹

Figure 2: MEDIEVAL (THEOLOGY)

Now, in the Modern Age, where the world has become picture, "what is, in its entirety, is now taken in such a way that it first is in being and only is in being to the extent that it is set up by man, who represents and sets forth."⁶⁰ The age of the world picture is understood in anthropological terms. We human beings, as subjects (which is to say as independent variables) set the world before

⁵⁹ It is evident that technology could not have existed as anything more than mechanical technique in the Middle Ages. Efficient ordering, as a dissolution of the distinction between cause and effect, is not possible in a theologically defined world where God is the primary cause.

⁶⁰ Heidegger, pp. 129-30

ourselves and understand it, in its entirety, through our historical self-consciousness ("that for which man is prepared"⁶¹). And more, in the modern, technological world, in which all that is is transformed into standing reserve, we transform both Nature and ourselves (as *subiectum*) with reference to this enframing world picture.

In the modern age, the world does not present itself to man as it did in the Greek age. Rather, it is man who causes the world to be present, he challenges-forth Nature through scientific research that projects a ground plan (*Grundriss*) onto Nature and thus sets the boundaries in which all that is can be presenced. Thus, the modern age is also unlike that of the Middle Ages, as man no longer stands within a divinely ordered world, but rather stands outside of it as subject. Man stands at the fulcrum between a Nature that he brings to presence, and which he then re-presents as a world picture, an anthropologically ordered Being (figure 3).

Figure 3: MODERN (ANTHROPOLOGY)

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 129

Further, "the more extensively and the more effectually the world stands at man's disposal as conquered, and the more objectively the object appears, all the more subjectively, i.e., the more importunately, does the *subiectum* rise up, and all the more impetuously too, do observation and teaching about the world change into a doctrine of man, into anthropology."⁶²

In the modern world, in a modern world picture, the more the material aspects of technology (those which relate most closely to given-Being) expand and dominate, the more the spiritual aspects of technology (those relating most closely to man) are able to expand and dominate as well. Material and spiritual technology work in tandem, each supporting the other in setting a world picture. And, further, because this modern world is also a technological world, as efficiency increases, the difference from abstract picture to actual diminishes. Through technology (material and spiritual), *abstractions* of the world as anthropology become *realities* of the world as anthropology. "Man becomes that being upon which all that is, is grounded as regards the manner of its Being and its truth. Man becomes the relational center of that which is as such."⁶³

Though modernity can be understood as essentially the same everywhere it has penetrated, the fact of historical self-consciousness being an independent variable in the spatial expansion of modernity through technology, twinned with the existence of more than one historical self-consciousness (more than one culture, more than one valued-efficiency) means that there must exist a plurality of world views. In other words, there exists more than one picture of everything

⁶² Ibid, p. 133

⁶³ Ibid, p. 128

that is in its entirety. "However, everywhere that whatever is, is not interpreted in this way, the world also cannot enter into a picture; there can be no world picture."⁶⁴

Because a world picture is a representation of everything that is in its entirety, and in the modern world "whatever is comes into being in and through representedness"⁶⁵, world pictures that differ have great difficulty in recognizing one another. What exists in one world picture can appear incomprehensible and false to an individual, society, or culture that has a different world picture. This is because elements of the first are beyond the horizon of the representation of all that is, in its entirety, for the second. Further, the more the lines between the abstract and the actual are blurred, the more irreconcilable these differences become.

This interplay between material and spiritual technology, between material and valued-efficiency, and its representation in a world picture is reflected in the work of Samuel Huntington in his much debated book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Though Huntington's theory has its flaws, it does provide a good framework through which technology can be understood in terms of the political.

Huntington's theory (which is an expansion on an article he published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993) attempts to describe the post-Cold War international order in terms of a struggle between rival civilizations – power blocs based on

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 130

⁶⁵ Ibid

cultural affinity. He argues that in contemporary international relations the behaviour of nation-states "is shaped as in the past by the pursuit of power and wealth, but it is also shaped by cultural preferences, commonalities, and differences."⁶⁶ He asserts that, in the post-Cold War world symbols of cultural identity, whether religious, ethnic, social, or nationalistic are the most important determining factor in the identity of most people, and consequently cultural identity is a primary source of political identity.⁶⁷

Huntington begins by reviewing some common models through which the post-Cold War international system has been interpreted. The first is a "one world" model, one where Western liberal democracy (and usually the capitalist economic system) stands unchallenged across the world. It is the model made popular in Francis Fukuyama's end of history thesis. The one world model describes a single world picture having triumphed over all others at the close of the twentieth century. Huntington dismisses this model as being too far divorced from reality to be adequate, as evidenced by continued conflict in many parts of the world.

The second is a two worlds model, in which international relations is described in terms of "us versus them". This model was employed often during the Cold War, and has been re-formulated in terms of an East-West cultural conflict, or North-South in terms of conflict over economic disparity. Huntington

⁶⁶ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Touchstone, p. 21

⁶⁷ Although he never explicitly gives a definition to the political, Huntington's opening remarks, which characterize political/cultural action in *us vs. them* terms, resound with the ideas presented in Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*, wherein political action is characterized in terms of a friend-enemy antithesis.

rejects this model as well, on the grounds that contemporary international relations are too complex to be usefully envisioned in such a simple way.

The third is a realist model of individual states, each acting out of its own self-interest. Huntington finds this worldview severely limited as well. He argues that it assumes that all states perceive their interests in the same way and that they all act in the same way. Rather, "values, culture, and institutions pervasively influence how states define their interests [...] States with similar cultures and institutions will see common interest."⁶⁸ In short, power is not the only coin that states recognize, and it is not the only way they measure their place in the world.

To elaborate, "states define threats in terms of the intentions of other states, and those intentions and how they are perceived are powerfully shaped by cultural considerations. Publics and statesmen are less likely to see threats emerging from people they feel they understand and can trust because of shared language, religion, values, institutions and culture. They are much more likely to see threats coming from states whose societies have different cultures and hence which they do not understand and feel they cannot trust."⁶⁹

Also, international institutions coupled with intra-state devolution of powers has led to new notions of sovereignty and to a greater permeability of state borders, all of which helps to erode a realist argument. Some have even suggested that the international system is entering into something like a post-Westphalian period that more closely resembles the medieval era (such as the

⁶⁸ Huntington, p. 34

⁶⁹ Ibid

model of international Europe elaborated by political scientist Ole Waever, in which he proposes what he terms “neo-feudalism”).⁷⁰

Huntington proposes a new model for contemporary international relations – a civilizational model. This approach holds, first, that forces of integration are bringing differing worldviews together (as in the one-world model), but this is also simultaneously giving rise to a counter force of cultural assertion and civilizational consciousness. Second, that the world can be understood as divided into two main groups, but this is so only in that it is a Western *one* set against a non-Western *many*. Third, that nation-states are and will remain the most important actors in international affairs, but their interests, associations, and conflicts are increasingly shaped by cultural and civilizational factors. Lastly, the civilizational model holds that, though the world is rife with conflict, it is those conflicts that occur between states or groups belonging to different civilizations that pose the greatest danger of escalating into larger conflicts. At this point, then, it is necessary to explain exactly what is meant by the term *civilization*.

Huntington draws a distinction between *civilization* in the singular, and *civilizations* in the plural. In the singular, civilization is meant to suggest an ideal, a way of measuring the worth of a culture or a society. It refers to the civilized in opposition to the barbaric or the savage. Civilizations, in the plural, refers instead to different cultures, each civilized in their own way. It is a rejection of civilization as an ideal, wherein “civilization and culture both refer to the overall way of life of a people and a civilization is a culture writ large. They both involve the values, norms, institutions, and modes of thinking to which successive generations in a

⁷⁰ Waever, Ole (1996). “European Security Identities”, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34(1): 103-132

given society have attached primary importance.”⁷¹ Huntington is concerned with this definition of civilizations in the plural, and he rejects the usefulness of the singular definition of the term.

For the purpose of understanding how technology is shaping politics and political action it is, however, necessary to retain some notion of civilization in the singular. Specifically, this singular is technological civilization, which is civilization in its *crude* form. Technological civilization refers to Heidegger’s Enframing, to technology as a mode of being. I say *crude* because I am referring here solely to material technology. It is, of course, as stated earlier, impossible to define technology without reference to its spiritual aspects. But, to understand the phenomenon that is globalization, to which I will speak in full in the next section, it is necessary that we understand crude technological civilization as one movement in the spatial extension of technology.

Huntington’s plural use of the word civilization is interchangeable with the word culture. Indeed, Huntington would have been better off using the word culture exclusively, as this would have avoided the confusion of the two terms that at times muddies his arguments.⁷²

Culture should be understood here as primarily referring to spiritual technology. Culture is a collective historical self-consciousness described by, among other things, tradition, religion, language, blood, myth, and geography, that sets forth a given world picture. It is the second movement of globalization,

⁷¹ Huntington, p. 41

⁷² Huntington in fact specifically rejects the idea of a distinction between civilization defined in mechanical terms in opposition to a definition of culture as values, ideals, and morals. For Huntington the two terms are generally interchangeable. In short, he does not consider technology as a distinct phenomenon.

which is the encounter between crude technological civilization and the valued-efficiency of culture. For now, I will return to Huntington's arguments as a way to understanding this encounter more fully.

In the civilizational model, "the crucial distinctions among human groups concern values, beliefs, institutions, and social structures."⁷³ Political action is focused on the encounters taking place between the contemporary world's major civilizations, identified by Huntington as: Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, and Latin American (with a nascent African civilization that has yet to coalesce into a political unit).

The history of the interaction of civilizations is broadly classified into three eras. The first is a period of more than three thousand years where contact between civilizations was, with a few exceptions, "either nonexistent or limited or intermittent and intense."⁷⁴ Because of constraints of time and space, most of the interactions of this earliest era occurred within civilizations rather than among them.

The second era begins with the emergence of the European empires circa 1500 A.D. "For four hundred years, intercivilizational relations consisted of the subordination of other societies to Western civilization."⁷⁵ This is the era in which modernity takes root in the West, and from there begins its expansion across the globe.⁷⁶

⁷³ Huntington, p. 43

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 48

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 51

⁷⁶ Huntington attributes the success of the European empires not so much to a broad technological superiority, nor to a superiority of ideas, values, or religion. Rather, the West "won the world [...] by its superiority in applying organized violence." (p. 51). A similar argument is made in Victor Davis Hanson's book, *Carnage and Culture*, which credits the success of Western imperial ambitions to a culturally rooted

The beginning of the third and present era, in the twentieth century, is marked by the demise of the European empires and a move from “a phase dominated by the unidirectional impact of one civilization on all others to one of intense, sustained, and multidirectional interactions among all civilizations.”⁷⁷ This is the age of world pictures, where “global political geography thus moved from the one world of 1920 to the three worlds of the 1960s to the more than half-dozen worlds of the 1990s.”⁷⁸

Huntington rejects the notion of an emerging universal civilization – a universal human culture. Modern societies do have much in common with one another, but the argument that they will necessarily merge into homogeneity, he writes, “rests on the assumption that modern society must approximate a single type, that modern civilization is Western civilization and that Western civilization is modern civilization.”⁷⁹ This identification is false. “The West was the West long before it was modern.”⁸⁰

Huntington argues that, while non-Western civilizations are indeed modernizing, they are not necessarily (and in most cases are assuredly not) *Westernizing*. Three possible responses to the West and to modernization are proposed: *Rejectionism*, *Kemalism*, and *Reformism*.

Rejectionism is adopted by states that wish to bar all Western and modernizing influences. Practiced most notably by Japan until 1854, the

military superiority. Such an assessment is, perhaps, too narrow, as it was not solely the ability of the West to conquer territory through force of arms that created empires, but also its ability to effectively exploit that territory and people once conquered, as well as its ability to destroy and then transform the other into a *colony* of the West.

⁷⁷ Huntington, p. 53

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 54

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 69

⁸⁰ Ibid

wholesale rejection of modernity became extremely difficult at the height of European power in the nineteenth century, and is today almost, of not definitely, impossible.⁸¹

Kemalism is a response that embraces both modernization and Westernization, at the cost of abandoning one's indigenous culture. The government of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who tried to transform Turkey in just this way, epitomizes this method. In Huntington's analysis, this type of response to modernization is usually destructive, creating what he terms a "torn country".

Lastly, reformism is an attempt "to combine modernization with the preservation of the central values, practices, and institutions of the society's indigenous culture."⁸² Huntington suggests that this reformist response is the most popular, usually the most successful, and is the response that is giving rise to the challenge of the West by non-Western civilizations.⁸³

The civilizational model suggests that, in general, states will follow a path to modernization somewhere in between Kemalism and reformism that in the end leads to an indigenous culture made stronger through the transformation. "In the early phases of change, Westernization thus promotes modernization. In the later phases, modernization promotes de-Westernization and the resurgence of indigenous culture."⁸⁴ Modernization, or more properly the globalization of

⁸¹ Cambodia, under the Khmer Rouge, offers an example of the grim extremes that are necessary to adopt a rejectionist policy.

⁸² Huntington, p. 74

⁸³ Though it is not discussed by Huntington, a possible fourth response to modernization might be found in Jeffrey Herf's theory of *reactionary modernism*, wherein, in a paradoxical way, Enlightenment reason and the bulk of modernity are rejected but modern technological ordering is embraced. Herf offers Nazi Germany as an example of this response to modernity (Herf, Jeffrey. *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, culture and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁸⁴ Huntington, p. 76

technological civilization, though it will necessarily transform the cultures it encounters, also strengthens them. "In fundamental ways, the world is becoming more modern and less Western."⁸⁵ There is, after all, a precedent for this. "Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, European culture began to develop, facilitated by the eager and systematic appropriation of suitable elements from the higher civilization of Islam and Byzantium, together with the adaptation of this inheritance to the special conditions of the West."⁸⁶ This is to say that the West "Islamicized" without becoming Islamic, just as today other civilizations are "Westernizing" without become Western.

Huntington's theory of a civilizational world order offers a way to understanding how globalization is the encounter between crude technological civilization and culture, the interplay between material and valued-efficiency, and how, as we move through the twenty-first century, the growing spatial extension of the resolution of this encounter is the defining moment of politics.

Globalization is the actualization of the relationship between material efficiency and valued efficiency, which is the encounter between *crude* technological civilization and culture. "Globalization is the actualization of technology."⁸⁷

Technology has always been this encounter. The actualization of technology first took place in the West, and for this reason (and this reason only) we have the false identification of technological civilization with Western

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 78

⁸⁶ Huntington, p. 74

⁸⁷ Darby (2001), p. 58

civilization that Huntington speaks of. The first moment of globalization took place in Western Europe (and later in North America) exclusively, and so was not recognized as “global” in character. But technology, in that it is automatic, universalizing, and autonomous has always been global – for a time only in potential (recognized or not) but now increasingly actual, in that globalization is the progressive actualization of technology. It is the progressive dissolution of the distinction between means and ends, between material and spiritual, the resolution of the encounter between crude technological civilization and culture, *everywhere*.

The “civilizations” that are the focus of Huntington’s theory are the political alignments that emerge through the resolution of this encounter. As globalization brings the expansion of technological civilization it, at first, bears with it the valued-efficiency of the West where the encounter first took place – this is what has been called modernization, or, at other times, “the white man’s burden”. However, though indigenous culture will certainly give way upon first contact with globalizing technology, it is not long before culture experiences a resurgence, a resurgence that is facilitated and even encouraged by the technological tools now at its disposal. This is reflected in Huntington’s assertion that Westernization promotes modernization, but then recedes as indigenous culture becomes empowered. Thus the particular collective historical self-consciousness of culture, through its encounter with technology, is transformed from its pre-modern form into a spiritual technology, based on a new valued efficiency. Thus,

the resolution of the encounter between crude technological civilization and culture produces *civilization properly so-called*.

This encounter was first initiated on a global scale during what Huntington demarcates as the second era of civilizations – the era of Western empire. However, because the West was able to so effectively dominate its colonies, the resolution of the encounter has been delayed by centuries. With the end of the Cold War this encounter is now finally able to resume its way to resolution, free from an overwhelming dominance of Western military or ideological power. The clash of civilizations is a clash of *technological civilizations* (properly-so-called). It is a “clash”, a confrontation, because each of these technological civilizations is based on a particular world picture – a particular representation of everything that is in its entirety unique to each emerging technological civilization.

The borders of a civilization are set based on a relative similarity of the world pictures of its members. Intra-civilizational political activity is often more successful than inter-civilizational political activity because the former operates within a zone of shared valued-efficiency (or, at the minimum, largely compatible valued-efficiencies). Technological states that share similar world pictures find it easier to relate to one another and conflicts between them tend to remain limited and of low intensity, with little chance of “spill-over”. Technological civilizations define themselves based on philosophical assumptions, values, social relations, customs, and outlooks on life and, further, these definitional characteristics and their promotion are often the focus of political struggle, not just as desired ends,

but also as desired means. Politics is a means not just for people to advance their interests, but is also a means of self-definition.

Where world pictures are too dissimilar, however, conflict is much more likely to erupt, and to escalate, as values essential to the Enframing of one may be incomprehensible to another, and, as has been noted already, the more the lines between the abstract and the actual are blurred (which is to say the more the technological mode of being comes to dominate), the more irreconcilable these differences become. Thus Huntington's notion of torn countries and fault-line states.

Given that the first encounter between technological civilization and culture gave birth to Western empire, it is not unreasonable to expect a resurgence of the imperial ideal now that technology is transforming and empowering the non-Western worlds. It may be that empire is an essential characteristic of technology in its political expression. The clash of civilizations might more properly be called the clash of technological empires, as is suggested by Darby.⁸⁸

This resolution of this encounter is post-historical in nature and is best understood in terms of the end of history thesis as put forward by Alexandre Kojève in his interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The encounter between civilization and culture is an encounter between Kojève's 're-animalized man' and 'japanized man'.

⁸⁸Ibid, p. 58

IV. Post-Historical Politics

Kojeve, with the opening line of his *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, sets forth the essential difference between man and given-Being: "Man is Self-Consciousness. He is conscious of himself, conscious of his human reality and dignity; and it is in this that he is essentially different from animals".⁸⁹ Of course, as Kojeve himself says about Hegel, my object here is not to prove the thesis of either the *Phenomenology of Spirit* or of Kojeve's interpretation of it as to do so would require a reiteration of the entirety of both works. Rather, I shall only indicate certain assertions made by Kojeve as a way to understanding the post-historical nature of the aforementioned encounter between civilization and culture.

Man is Self-Consciousness, and this Self-Consciousness arises out of *Desire*. It is desire that separates humanity from given-Being because to desire an object outside of oneself is to become aware not just of the object desired, but also of the *self* as that which desires. "Desire is always revealed as *my* desire, and to reveal desire, one must use the word 'I'".⁹⁰

Desire, in turn, leads to *negation*. The subject, the "I", negates (which is to say transforms, or destroys) the object of desire in order to be satisfied. "The human I must be an I of *Desire* – that is, an *active* I, a *negating* I, and I that *transforms* Being and creates a new being by destroying the given being."⁹¹ But, Kojeve asserts, this act of negating resulting out of desire for a Natural object is

⁸⁹ Kojeve, Alexandre (1996). *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Basic Books, Inc., Cornell University Press, p. 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 37

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 38

fleeting, and cannot give rise to Self-Consciousness in any meaningful sense. In order for Self-Consciousness to truly appear (in order to the human to be able to distinguish itself as something different from given-Being), its Desire must be directed towards some non-Natural object, toward something that goes beyond given-Being. The only object that goes beyond given-Being is Desire itself (Desire is absence of Being, it *nihilates* Being). Therefore, Self-Consciousness arises only when desire is directed toward Desire itself. The reason for this distinction is that desire when directed at an object in Nature (i.e. hunger directed at food), once satisfied, disappears. "The Animal raises itself above the Nature that is negated in its animal desire only to fall back into it immediately by the satisfaction of this Desire."⁹² Thus animal desire, which is to say Desire directed at or by Nature, leads to what Kojève terms *Sentiment of Self*, but not to Self-Consciousness. The Animal does not transcend the given. Desire is humanizing, gives rise to Self-Consciousness (rather than Sentiment of Self), when it is directed toward another non-being. To desire the Desire of another is to desire *recognition*. Human beings, to be recognized, must impose the idea they have of themselves onto beings other than themselves. Man must "transform the (natural and human) world in which he is not recognized into a world in which this recognition takes place."⁹³ Self-Consciousness desires objective proof of its existence as Self (it already has *subjective* proof), and thus desires recognition of the Self by the other. Self-Consciousness, to be satisfied, desires the recognition of another self-consciousness. And thus to achieve this recognition, to satisfy its

⁹² Ibid, p. 39

⁹³ Ibid, p. 11

desire of another Desire, the self-conscious human must negate that other Desire. Since Desire is action that negates the given, the very being of the self-conscious human is *Action* (negating action, the nihilation, or transformation, of Being). The first truly human Action, then, is that Fight to the death that Kojève proposes.

The self-conscious human is thus not being, but becoming. Human beings are, in essence, temporal beings. Humanity (subject, *Time*) opposed to Nature (object, *Space*). Humanity's *present* is the transforming of its *past* into its *future* through the negation of given-Being (both Natural and human). Thus, *Self-Consciousness is historical Self-Consciousness*. Further, if human Desire, as Kojève asserts, must be directed toward another Desire, this implies a multiplicity. Therefore, human reality can only be social. Historical Self-Consciousness can only be *collective* historical Self-Consciousness. "Self-Consciousness exists *in and for itself* in and by the fact that it exists (in and for itself) for another Self-Consciousness."⁹⁴

The Kojevian Fight to the death, then, results in the beginning of Self-Consciousness and the beginning of History. "If the human reality can come into being only as a social reality, society is human – at least in its origin – only on the basis of its implying an element of Mastery and an element of Slavery."⁹⁵ The Fight to the death, and its resolution in Mastery and Slavery, creates the necessary and sufficient conditions for the beginning of History, of historical Self-Consciousness. Because human self-consciousness is *historical*, this history

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 9

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 8

"must be a history of the interaction between Mastery and Slavery: the historical 'dialectic' is the 'dialectic' of Master and Slave."⁹⁶ This history ends with the dialectical overcoming of both Master and Slave. Thesis and antithesis merge into synthesis. Thus Kojève asserts the Master-Slave dialectic as the driving engine of History.

Kojève tells us that the relationship between Master and Slave is not recognition properly so called. It is an unequal recognition. The Slave recognizes the Master's historical self-consciousness, but the Master does not recognize this in the Slave. The Master's recognition is thus incomplete, as it is recognition from something that he considers a "thing" The Master has only a dependent Self-Consciousness. *The Master is recognized only because he has a Slave.* "The complete and absolutely free man, definitely and completely satisfied by what he is, the man who is perfected and completed in and by this satisfaction, will be the Slave who has overcome his Slavery. If idle Mastery is an impasse, laborious Slavery, in contrast, is the source of all human, social, historical progress. History is the History of the working Slave."⁹⁷

The Slave, through his labour for the Master, recognizes the value and the reality of human freedom in the Master, but he does not find this reality in his own slavish being. Thus, for mutual and reciprocal recognition to take place, the Slave must impose himself on the Master. "The Master," writes Kojève, "can never detach himself from the World in which he lives, and if this World perishes, he perishes with it. Only the Slave can transcend the given World (which is

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 9

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 20

subjugated by the Master) and not perish. Only the Slave can transform the World that he has formed in which he will be free.”⁹⁸ This is so because, in his work for the Master, the Slave has “understood the vanity” of given being and in coming to this realization (through Terror of death) has thus learned to transform (negate) it. In transforming the World through his work, the Slave transforms himself too and thus creates the conditions in which he can overcome his nature as Slave and realize his historical Self-Consciousness, his *freedom*, in the world. The resolution of the Master-Slave dialectic, the universal recognition of the Self-Consciousness (freedom) of humanity, is Kojève’s *end of history*.

The end of history was realized in principle in Napoleon-Hegel and, since that time, technology has become the way in which given being is transformed (in its entirety) to establish (and recognize) in actuality the historical Self-Consciousness (the freedom) of humanity – the *last* world created by Man.

In his work *The Feast: Meditations on Politics and Time*, Darby examines “a long and queer footnote”⁹⁹ in the latter half of the Introduction, in which Kojève suggests two possible modes of human social existence at the end of history. These post-historical archetypes are: the re-animalized man, and the “Japanized” man. Concerning the first, it is best to quote Kojève directly:

“If one accepts ‘the *disappearance* of Man at the end of History,’ if one asserts that ‘Man remains alive *as animal*,’ with the specification that ‘what *disappears* is Man *properly so-called*,’ one cannot say that ‘all the rest can be preserved indefinitely: art, love, play, etc.’ If Man becomes animal again, his arts, his loves, and his play must also become purely ‘natural’ again. Hence it would have to be admitted that after the end of

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 29

⁹⁹ Darby, Tom (1982) *The Feast: Meditations on Politics and Time*. University of Toronto Press, p. 171.

History, men would construct their edifices and works of art as birds build their nests and spiders spin their webs, would perform musical concerts after the fashion of frogs and cicadas, would play like young animals, and would indulge in love like adult beasts."¹⁰⁰

This post-historical image of humanity is one of man re-animalized. With the end of history and the resolution of the Master-Slave dialectic, this man is one who's Self-Consciousness has submerged into the world, into given-Being. This is humanity that has passed into and through Self-Consciousness and now is conscious only as part of the world, which is the last human world at the end of history. This man is satisfied in that he is *content*, but is not truly *happy*; *comfortable*, but not *sated*. For the re-animalized man, "there is no difference between world and self. The self is one with the fact of his existence in the world; as the world is natural, so is man."¹⁰¹ The re-animalized man no longer acts to negate the given, he no longer acts in a human fashion. Rather, he *plays*.

In opposition to this Kojève asserts the archetype of the "Japanized" man. This post-historical archetype is one who lives "according to totally *formalized* values – that is, values completely empty of all 'human' content in the 'historical' sense."¹⁰² To understand this concept better, I refer to an earlier discourse in his lectures where Kojève considers the possibility that the "absolute knowledge" of Wisdom may not necessarily be as universal as Hegel thinks. "It is possible," he writes, "that in the normal case man, even *self-conscious* man, opposes an *extension* of this consciousness, tends to *enclose* himself in it, to reject into the unconscious (the automatic, and so on) everything that goes beyond the already-

¹⁰⁰ Kojève, p. 159

¹⁰¹ Darby (1982), p. 173

¹⁰² Kojève, p. 162

conscious range. Now, if this is truly the case, the dialectical movement that ends in the ideal (and the reality) of Wisdom ceases to be *necessary*.”¹⁰³

This is the reality of the Japanized man. His world-picture is dominated by the spiritual aspects of technology while at the same time rejecting their universalizing nature. Japanized man lives not in a technological civilization, but rather in a technological culture (in the sense that culture, enclosed in itself, represents a *cult-ish* existence). Rather than prove his Self-Consciousness through the universal recognition of his world picture, the Japanized man simply does not recognize (even in potential) the reality of any world picture other than his own. He is a *snob*, as Kojève puts it, in that he refuses to recognize the other as anything more than object. His existence is an echo of the unequal recognition of the Master. The world picture of the Japanized man isolates itself from given-Being. It is a society of snobs who exist only through ceremony that has long since ceased to have meaning in that it is impotent when it comes to acting on or ordering either man or nature. Thus, as Kojève writes, Japanized man is “capable of committing, from pure snobbery, a perfectly ‘gratuitous’ suicide [...] which has nothing to do with the risk of life in a Fight waged for the sake of ‘historical’ values that have social or political content.”¹⁰⁴ Japanized man employs “a remythologized language, where all points to itself as a series of mirrors.”¹⁰⁵

With regard to these post-historical archetypes we find, once again, in Kojève’s earlier lecture on Hegelian Wisdom more insight into their nature. “Generally speaking,” he writes, “one need only think of all those who seek

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 82

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 162

¹⁰⁵ Darby (1982), p. 185

satisfaction-perfection in *absolute silence* [...] there is no doubt that men have been *satisfied* in unconsciousness, since they have voluntarily remained in *identity* to themselves until their death.”¹⁰⁶ Here, Kojève is again speaking of the argument against the universality of Wisdom – in this case the “unconscious” Wise Man and of the notion that Wisdom can be gained through disengagement from the human world.

The *absolute silence* of the unconscious Wise Man is characteristic of both the Japanized man and the re-animalized man. The first dwells entirely in the spiritual and is silent with regard to Nature – thus existing as a kind of disembodied shade. The second dwells entirely in Nature and is silent with regard to Spirit and thus exists only as the animal *Homo Sapiens*. So long as the unconscious Wise Man remains silent (refuses to enter into discourse), Hegel can refute his “wisdom” only by physically destroying him. But, if this unconscious Wise Man engages in speech, in dialogue (if he breaks his silence with regard to the world), he has already accepted the Hegelian ideal. This is the dilemma of both re-animalized man and of Japanized man – either risk existential destruction by remaining “unconscious” and enclosed, or risk metaphysical destruction through resolution of the encounter between civilization and culture. Again we are brought back to the question of the nature of this encounter.

Kojève asserts that, “the concept of moral perfection is meaningful only provided that it is *universally* valid – i.e. accepted as the model by *all* men,” and thus, “to assert the *plurality* of existential or moral types is to assert that

¹⁰⁶ Kojève, p. 84

recognition by *all* men is not implied in the ideal of the perfection realizable within each of these types".¹⁰⁷

The post-historical human can only be satisfied by *universal* recognition. He must assert that there is only one existential ideal, and this must be the ideal of his world picture. Further, it must be the ideal of his world picture not only as abstract, but also as *concrete*. His technological civilization must be the most *efficient*, the most actualized in being. "Since Being obeys the principle of identity to itself, there is only one unique knowledge that reveals it entirely. Therefore there is only one unique possible type of (conscious) Wisdom."¹⁰⁸

The satisfaction of the post-historical man is called into question the moment he is confronted with another man who claims satisfaction based on an existential ideal, on an identity with Being, that is alien to him. There are three possible reactions to such an encounter. The post-historical man may simply deny the reality of the other, insisting that only his world picture exists and that all outside of it is simple savagery. This is Kojève's Japanized man. He is Spirit divorced from Being.

Alternately, the post-historical man can "disappear". In face of an apparent plurality of existential Wisdom, he lets slip his historical Self-Consciousness and remains alive only as animal. He remains conscious of the world, but no longer in terms of a subject opposed to object. The re-animalized man retains the sentiment of self as the species *Homo Sapiens*, but is no longer self-conscious in a human (properly so-called) sense. He is content in the world, but no longer has

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 79

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 81

“any [discursive] understanding of the World and of self.”¹⁰⁹ He is Being divorced from Spirit.

Lastly, the post-historical man can respond in the way that is suggested by the “clash of civilizations”. Understanding that he can be satisfied only through *universal* recognition, he recognizes the existential reality of other world pictures, while at the same time desiring that they recognize his world picture.

Now, it is perhaps possible (and certainly tempting) to envision a situation where this clash takes place in the form of peaceful discourse that results in a mutual recognition. However, because there comes a point where the horizon of one valued-efficiency cannot encompass (or even touch) another, such discourse will inevitably break down. The borders of a technological civilization appear where these limits are revealed and discourse dissolves into babble. The encounter between multiple valued-efficiencies (which is to say multiple technological civilizations) produces contradictions – contradictions that demand resolution.

Therefore we see that recognition through discourse is possible only *within* the limits of a given technological civilization. Among different civilizations, disagreement, conflict, and war are much more likely to result, and are likely to be much more violent in character. Europe, in the era of its empires, demonstrated the effectiveness of organized violence in denying the existential reality of the *other*, in transforming the other into the self (which is to say, attempting to realize Self-Consciousness by making the other into a *mirror*). This is what Robespierre-Napoleon was able to accomplish in France and Europe.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 160

The “clash of civilizations”, the clash of universalizing technological empires, is the final dialectical movement. It is the dialectic of a world (of Worlds) where history has ended in principle, where the synthesis will determine the identity of Being in its entirety.

Politics in the post-historical is the dialectical resolution of this encounter between technological civilizations. This encounter takes place on two fundamental levels: First, it takes place within civilizations. Japanized and re-animalized men should not be understood as examples of different types of states (or of civilizations). Rather, these are archetypes representative of the conflict within technological civilizations that arises because of the Encounter. Some within a civilization will react as Japanized men, others as re-animalized men. Some will retreat into Spirit and deny Being; others will immerse themselves in animal being and forget Spirit. The synthesis of these two opposites must be a truly universal recognition of a single unique type of Wisdom. The *contentment* of re-animalized man is made true satisfaction (happiness) by testing the particular Wisdom of the Japanized man against Being in its entirety. In other words, re-animalized Man forces Japanized Man to acknowledge and confront universal Being, and Japanized Man in turn forces re-animalized Man to prove that his particular contentment is in fact universal satisfaction. Thus the internal post-historical dialectic of a technological civilization forces it into conflict with others, which is the second fundamental level of the Encounter – the crucible where particulars are ground and remade into a single, universal Wisdom.

This encounter is the age of (universal and universalizing) *Empires*. This is the age that ends with the end of history in actuality: Kojève's *universal and homogenous state*. "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*."¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 58

V. Magic and Empire

We are at the beginning of an age that is witnessing a rebirth of the imperial ideal. Empire is an essential expression of technology in the political. The clash of civilizations is the clash of technological empires. The light of dawn is about to break on the horizon, and in this shadowed light of the gloaming we see a world entering into an era of universalizing technological empires based on competing valued-efficiencies.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, in their appropriately titled work *Empire*, offer a conceptual description of empire in post-historical political terms. Their thesis asserts a new form of sovereignty, “composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule.” The authors give the moniker Empire to a global form of sovereignty that is essentially a postmodern/post-national theory of international political order. Empire is “*decentered and deterritorializing*”, an order of rule based on what Hardt and Negri understand to be the postmodern political geography of globalizing capitalism.¹¹¹ Thus it is understood, from the outset, that Hardt and Negri’s concept of Empire rests essentially on a Marxist theoretical base. Though I do not agree with this Marxian emphasis, their concept of Empire does offer some valuable clues as to the shape of politics in a post-historical technological world and is worth exploring.

Empire, as a concept, has four essential characteristics. First, it is a regime that encompasses all human space – it “rules over the entire ‘civilized’

¹¹¹ Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio (2000). *Empire*. Harvard University Press, p. xii

world.”¹¹² In other words, Empire is universalizing in character and global in scope. Second, just as it has no spatial boundaries, Empire also has no temporal boundaries – it is a post-historical form of rule. Third, “the object of its rule is social life in its entirety.”¹¹³ It exercises a “biopower”, wherein not just human relations but human nature itself is governed. To use Heideggerian language: Empire sets-upon man. Fourth and lastly, though Empire is often violent in action, it is an order dedicated to peace – a universal peace at the end of history.

The first two characteristics of Empire enumerated by Hardt and Negri align well with the concept of technological Civilization we have elaborated thus far. Technological civilizations are constituted on the basis of a world-picture (a representation of all-that-is in its entirety) rooted in a universalizing valued-efficiency. Being a political power unit, technological civilizations will naturally tend toward universalizing their rule – which is to say the realization and extension of a world-picture across the globe. Further, as we have seen, the encounter between civilization and culture that makes technological civilization possible takes place in a post-historical context. Thus technological civilizations share the dissolving spatial and temporal boundaries characteristic of Hardt and Negri’s concept of Empire.

What is of particular interest in this model is the concept of *biopower*. Based on a Foucaultian idea of a “society of control”, biopower is “expressed as a control that extends throughout the depths of the consciousnesses and bodies of the population – and at the same time across the entirety of social

¹¹² Ibid, p. xiv

¹¹³ Ibid

relations.”¹¹⁴ In the concept of biopower we have an appropriate way of conceptualizing the interplay of material and spiritual technology that generates the political environment for technological civilizations/empires.

“The imperial order is formed not only on the basis of its powers of accumulation and global extension, but also on the basis of its capacity to develop itself more deeply, to be reborn, and to extend itself throughout the biopolitical latticework of world society.”¹¹⁵ Empire is about the deepening and reproduction – in other words, the greater efficient ordering – of human social life and human perception of the world. Imperial order is about the resolution of the encounter between civilization and culture into technological civilization properly so-called, and biopower is a manifestation of this resolution.

Hardt and Negri's concept of biopower provides a way to understanding how technology (based on valued-efficiency) orders the political in terms of world-picture. However, biopower should not be understood as necessarily linked to capitalist development or Marxian theory. Biopower is more useful as a concept when taken as an example of technological political ordering in general (in that it echoes Heidegger's *Enframing*) rather than confining it to Marxian dialectical categories. The inherent difference between a Marxian analysis of bioproduction and an analysis of technological bioproduction that takes value-efficiency into account is that the latter understands the means of production to include historical self-consciousness; the former does not. This is not to say that Hardt and Negri's Marxian categories are irrelevant, as they may in fact be useful

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 24

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 41

in understanding certain relations of production within an imperial framework. They are, however, not representative of the core relationships of post-historical technological empire.¹¹⁶

As to the final characteristic, Hardt and Negri point to the reemergence of the “just war” as evidence of this aspect of Empire. Empire is dedicated to peace, but not shy of violence. It is a move away from the logic of *causa bellum* to that of *bellum justum*. More than this, “Empire is formed not on the basis of force itself but on the basis of the capacity to present force as being in the service of right and peace [...] Empire is not born of its own will but rather it is *called* into being and constituted on the basis of its capacity to resolve conflicts.”¹¹⁷ Imperial power is presented in terms of a police power, and as such it bears a similarity to the power of Huntington’s “core states” and can certainly be understood as imperial in terms of a civilizational model.

As Huntington sees it, “countries tend to bandwagon with countries of similar culture to balance against countries with which they lack cultural commonality.”¹¹⁸ In other words, the power of so-called core states tends to attract other states that share a similar world-view (based on a similar valued-efficiency) and repel those states that have too dissimilar a world-view.

¹¹⁶ Hardt and Negri suggest that in the production and deployment of biopolitical power, Empire also creates an environment where fractures appear and give rise to a *counter-Empire* (an antithesis that eventually leads to the overthrow of the Imperial order). However, what they do not consider is that biopolitical power could lead to the fracturing of Empire itself. The valued-efficiency of one technological civilization does not so easily replace the historical self-consciousness of another emerging technological civilization (even when considered from the point of view of post-national political ordering). Empire in the singular becomes multiple empires and thus, in turn, *multiple globalizations*.

¹¹⁷ Hardt & Negri, p. 15

¹¹⁸ Huntington, p. 155

In the end, however, all Huntington really offers with the “core state” model of imperial power is an old-style realist power theory. Core states should not be defined solely in terms of *power*, but rather as those states where historical self-consciousness (in terms of valued-efficiency) is best able to separate itself from spatial limitations – a negating an universalizing centre (or centres); a movement that expands then returns into itself, rather than a core of gravitic attraction. Political power is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the establishment of a core state. Political power must be coupled with a revolution of space.

Carl Schmitt's *Land and Sea* is a work concerned with empires and the imperial perception of space.¹¹⁹ Differences in the perception of space are significant among nations and among periods in history. Perception of space has to do with where one stands; it has to do with world-picture. Schmitt proposes that revolutions of space always accompany changes in history. He gives the example of the revolution created by Alexander the Great, which opened the Greek world into a new Hellenic Age, or of Julius Caesar's conquests in Gaul and Britain that opened up Europe as a special entity for the first time. The fall of Rome, in turn, led to a contraction of space – a Dark Age. But, Schmitt claims, the first spatial revolution on a *planetary* scale began with the discovery of the Americas and the circumnavigation of the globe. “For the first time in history, man was holding the terrestrial globe in his hand, the real one, as if it were a ball.”¹²⁰

Thus we can understand a spatial revolution as a significant change in the worldview of a society, people, or culture. It is a change in historical self-

¹¹⁹ Schmitt, Carl (1954). *Land and Sea*. Simona Draghici, trans. Plutarch Press.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 34

consciousness arising out of historical action. A spatial revolution “assumes the transformation of the notion of space at all levels and in all the aspects of human existence.”¹²¹

Schmitt cites England as the epicentre of the first global spatial revolution, or rather as the state to have adopted it most completely. England, beginning in the Elizabethan era, succeeded in turning its collective existence toward the sea. “By turning away from firm land and opting for the sea, a relatively small island, planted in the north-west of Europe gradually became the centre of a world empire.”¹²² The stage was set for England’s empire, not just because of military superiority, but because it was able to undergo a *planetary spatial revolution* by (metaphorically) casting its sovereignty away from land and onto the oceans. “The English world began to think in terms of bases and lines of communication [...] It was no more and no less than the mobile centre of a world empire.”¹²³

The planetary spatial revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began in Europe. It led, according to Schmitt, to the necessary political consequence of Europe conquering much of the world, transforming the newly opened horizon into colonial space. One result of this movement, however, has been the exporting of this new concept of planetary space to all cultures and all political centres of the earth. The era of European empire was the first step in making this spatial revolution truly planetary in scope.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 36

¹²² Ibid, p. 48

¹²³ Ibid, p. 51

¹²⁴ Reconsidering Huntington’s “core states” in terms of Schmitt’s maritime metaphor, one could reject the term *core*, in that it bears a certain “terrestrial” connotation, an understand such states as “anchors” instead. As emergent empires, technological civilizations can be understood as tethering themselves to an anchor

The advent of Heidegger's age of the world picture is a global spatial revolution (in a Schmittian sense). It is a dissolution of spatial boundaries akin to that suggested by Hardt and Negri. However, because there is a multiplicity of world-pictures, it is global only in principle. Globalization – the resolution of the Encounter between civilization and culture (embodied in universalizing technological empires) – is the coming to presence of this planetary spatial revolution in actuality. As suggested by Darby, "it seems that only a period of empire stands between us and planetary rule."¹²⁵

Empire is the political alignment of technological Civilization. It is a post-historical political order, *called into being*, acting in (and on) the world through biopower (as well as more traditional concepts of power), often on the principle of *bellum justum*, and is characterized by the dissolution of spatial and temporal boundaries. It is the resolution of the *technological* Encounter between civilization and culture through a (universalizing) planetary spatial revolution, brought to presence through political conflict.

Through an act of technological will imperial order is conjured into being and abstract historical self-consciousness, demanding divine and universal recognition, breathes itself upon the world and remakes Creation in its own image. The coming to presence of magic, of *real* magic, points to Empire. Magic is the imperial metaphor. This is not mere sorcery. It is the sound of bells at Easter.

state – a point of reference, a secure line to a strong base of real political power. But, of course, to truly universalize, this anchor must eventually be raised.

¹²⁵ Darby (2001), p. 59

The Indian drinks of the icy Araxes,
The Persians quaff the Elbe and the Rhine.
An age will come in the far-off centuries,
When Ocean will loosen the bonds of things,
And the whole broad earth will be revealed,
When Thetis will disclose new worlds,
And Thule will no longer be the bound.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Seneca, *Medea*, as quoted in Schmitt (1954), p. 31

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