

YUK HUI

machine and sovereignty
for a planetary thinking



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For a Planetary Thinking

Yuk Hui



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For Ben, my dear brother

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Preface

In August 2022, I invited Professor Carl Mitcham to deliver the Bernard Stiegler memorial lecture; Carl asked if it would be possible to develop a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* after Leo Strauss. This question was driven by the belief that Strauss did not explicitly address the question of technology in his political philosophy and that philosophy of technology hasn't yet engaged with political philosophy in a profound way. Today, it has become both inevitable and necessary to take technology into consideration in political philosophy; however, this relationship has yet to be thoroughly examined and comprehensively contemplated. Coincidentally, I had been working on a similar project since I finished the manuscript of *Recursivity and Contingency* in summer 2018. I was tempted to explore the implication of the epistemological questions raised in the book in political thought, especially in view of the process of technological planetarization. However, due to various reasons, I was not ready to pursue the project right after *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019). Therefore, the current work is preceded by *Art and Cosmotechnics* (2021), which I consider the second volume of *Recursivity and Contingency*. *Machine and Sovereignty* is the third and the last volume of this series that has taken me more than a decade. It will be also my initial response to Carl's question.

A large part of this book was written during the Covid-19 pandemic when the geopolitical drift became overwhelming: the upsurge of nationalism and identity politics, the intensification of border control, the increasing tension of wars and the worsening climate crisis. These shocks were existential especially when I had just relocated from Europe to the unrestful Hong Kong. Reading Hegel and Schmitt became equally an uncanny experience: abstract concepts became not only concrete but also intimate, and at the same time intimidating and disturbing. The thinking of Hegel and Schmitt embody two modern political forms—the nation-state and the *Großraum*—and a future planetary thinking will have to surpass both. We will have to forcefully open new perspectives for planetary thinking and a new concept of history to come. In order to do so, one cannot avoid respecting them as

philosophical adversaries, meticulously engaging with their thinking while seeking moments to break through and take leaps. Not being trained as a specialist in political and legal thought, this study was more than laborious; meanwhile, I had to develop my own method of reading the classics of political philosophy, which I term *political epistemology*. Political epistemology is central to the megamachine of Lewis Mumford, as it legitimates and guides the operation of the megamachine. It is our Ariadne's thread for exploring the planetary. The first parts of this study endeavor to lay down the epistemological foundation of Hegel's and Schmitt's political thought and the two political forms they wanted to justify. The later part of the book elaborates on the agenda of technodiversity, a concept that I developed in *Recursivity and Contingency*. This historical-epistemological study is, however, far from being complete. Despite its obvious limitations, I hope that it can still provide some insights to conceive a planetary thinking capable of addressing some of the current impasses.

This project would not be possible without the support of various institutions: the City University of Hong Kong, especially Professor Richard William Allen from its School of Creative Media; the Hong Kong Research Grant Council, for its Social Sciences and Humanities Prestigious Fellowship (2023), which allowed me to take time off from teaching and focus on completing the book and sponsored this book to be open access; the Berggruen Institute's support of my research on the planetary between 2021 and 2022.

I want to thank the following friends and colleagues who have engaged with this writing process. Pieter Lemmens and Anders Dunker have given feedback on several chapters. Colleagues from the Centre for Critical Thought and the Law School, University of Kent, including Jose Bellido, Alex Damianos, Maria Drakopoulou, Gian-Giacomo Fusco, Conor Heaney, Philipp Kender, and Connal Parsley, have organized reading groups to comment on various chapters and gave critical feedback regarding legal thought and international relations. Milan Stürmer spent more than a year with me reading Hegel's *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* sentence by sentence every week online. I want to equally thank Pieter Martin from the University of Minnesota Press for finding this project a home, the two anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments, and Joel White for copyediting and commenting on the manuscript.

Yuk Hui

Summer 2024, Rotterdam/Tokyo

Introduction

For a Planetary Thinking

The current work immodestly calls for a planetary thinking—a thinking that Kostas Axelos already announced in view of the domination of planetary technology and the threshold of a new epoch to come during the 1960s. The rationale behind this call is simple: we do not yet think planetarily and must learn to think planetarily, even though this may well take a considerable amount of time to come. The planetary is viewed as such, but it remains the unthought.¹ To think planetarily doesn't necessarily mean proclaiming or defining the sovereignty of outer space, or delving into terraforming and geoengineering, even though such topics might be anticipated in a book dedicated to planetary thinking. To think planetarily, first of all, means thinking beyond the configuration of modern nation-states, which have not been able to move away from vicious economic and military competition; second, it means formulating a language of coexistence that will allow diverse people and species to live on the same planet; and third, developing a new framework that will enable us to go beyond the question of territory, respond to the current ecological crisis, and reverse the accelerated entropic process of the Anthropocene. The task of planetary thinking resonates with the idea of perpetual peace as proposed by Abbé de Saint-Pierre and then later by Kant, Fichte, and others. One must note that when these authors were writing, modern nation-states were still young in Europe, and thus the nation-state could be considered the most appropriate political form. Industrial capitalism was still in its infancy, and the damage of planetarization was not yet foreseeable.² Organic nature, captured by two key concepts, community and reciprocity, stands as the model for perpetual peace because different parts constitute the whole, and every part will be conditioned by each other and the whole. Therefore, Kant enthusiastically claims that perpetual peace will be “guaranteed by an equilibrium of forces and a most vigorous rivalry” between

the states.³ This is why, instead of looking at the world from the lens of the nation-state and nature, we demand a new framework for the planetary. Considering there have been many excellent studies on the planetary from philosophers,⁴ historians, designers, and Marxist scholars,⁵ we propose to take a different path to carry out this inquiry.

Following my previous works, this treatise will attempt to bring technology to the forefront of political thought. For planetary thinking to be possible, we cannot avoid and ignore the long tradition of political philosophy, but we must likewise read the history of political thought through a new lens: the question of technology. We might again, immodestly, call this attempt a search for a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus*. A *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* means that our inquiry no longer sees politics and technology as separate spheres; instead, we have a rather urgent task before us: bringing technology to the centrality of political philosophy, or, in other words, to ground a political philosophy in technology. This underlines our intention of reading political thought and its history. However, this task is both trivial and enormous. It is trivial because one could hardly fail to recognize that today technology is the main battlefield where different nation-states enter into conflict. Indeed, military offenses have now been transformed into information warfare. It is an enormous philosophical task because to achieve it successfully, one must laboriously retrieve the concept and the role of technology from Plato to contemporary political philosophers, as was the task of deconstruction, especially Jacques Derrida's and Bernard Stiegler's work. Deconstruction shows that philosophy, since the beginning, repressed (*verdrängt*)—in the Freudian sense—the question of technology. Therefore, it is necessary to make visible the *centrality* of technology in philosophy as the unthought that is, nonetheless, indispensable to thinking. Therefore, from the point of view of deconstruction, a political philosophy that ignores technology is defective and has to be rethought anew through the lens of technology. A *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* would be necessary for political philosophy if we follow the school of deconstruction.

However, what does it mean to say that technology is central to political thought? Do we mean that technology is a necessary tool of governance or that politics must respond to any technological development that brings new dynamics to communities? Or do we need an ethics of technology for every apparatus or application—for example, to make Amazon Alexa's way of addressing children more ethical? This way of posing the question

still takes technology and politics as two spheres: one sphere acts or reacts to another. A *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* suggests that the political and the technical are not two separate spheres. *Nomos* is, first of all, a technical activity before being jurisprudential. Moreover, one could conceive the political as a technological phenomenon—a phenomenon in the sense that political forms such as the polis, empire, the modern state, and the *Großraum* are particular manifestations of technological progress *and* its imagination while, at the same time, technology is contained and constrained by these different political forms. These forms are manifestations of what Lewis Mumford called *megamachines*. The first megamachine emerged from the end of the fourth millennium, which we see in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, and Peru, where various components—political, economic, military, bureaucratic, and royal—assembled into a gigantic machine according to the division of labor.⁶ Mumford provided us with a grand history of the megamachine, passing by absolute monarchy, which, in his view, aligns with the megamachine sustained by a mechanistic epistemology. With the idea of a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* in mind, we start our journey.

§1. On the Planetary Condition

Technology has brought about a new human condition that exceeds Hannah Arendt's observation from 1958, when the launch of Sputnik struck the political theorist with a new form of alienation of man from Earth. On the first page of *The Human Condition*, Arendt wrote that the launch of Sputnik was “second in importance to no other, not even to the splitting of the atom.”⁷ We should also remind ourselves of the shock that Heidegger received when he saw the image of the Earth taken from the moon in 1966, which confirmed his analysis in the lecture “The Age of the World Picture” (1938) and led to his lament of a technological catastrophe in the interview “Only a God Can Save Us” (1966).⁸ The Earth being grasped as an image of the globe symbolizes the *zeitgeist* of the second half of the twentieth century. One could consider it a *spatial revolution* in various senses; first, it constitutes the first time that the Earth was observed from outer space, not the other way around, and before human beings even observed it. This observation of observation, so to speak, reverses how outer space was perceived in everyday experience: the Earth is no longer the ground upon which we stand and look into the sky since now it exists in the form of an

artifact available for manipulation. It resonates with what Marshall McLuhan said about Sputnik during an interview in the 1970s: “Sputnik created a new environment for the planet. . . . Nature ended, and Ecology was born. ‘Ecological’ thinking became inevitable as soon as the planet moved up into the status of a work of art.”⁹ Nature disappears since it is no longer enchanted and mysterious but only part of a much larger artifact. This artifact is not static. Instead, it is understood as a dynamic system. *Ecology*, a term coined by the biologist and zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) to describe “the entire science of the relationships of the organism to its surrounding external world,”¹⁰ hence acquired a technological and political meaning.

Space is no longer a geometrical representation; instead, space, thus conceived, is now a dynamic system in which different forces and factors reciprocally act on each other. James Lovelock was one of the first to have studied the dynamic between the geosphere, biosphere, and atmosphere. His early Gaia theory (before the collaboration with Lynn Margulis) tells us that the Earth is a cybernetic system capable of homeostatic functions.¹¹ One of the most provocative caricatures of the Earth as a machine comes from Richard Buckminster Fuller’s description of it as a spaceship. Earth is a spaceship, and we, the Earth’s inhabitants, are only its passengers. This image of the spaceship was illuminated in the novella *The Wandering Earth* written by the science-fiction writer Liu Cixin, which was made into a film in 2019, the sequel of which, in 2022, was infiltrated with a “patriotic cosmopolitanism.”¹² The passengers must anticipate the wreckage one day in the future. For a few decades now, we have already heard the alarm of climate change and ecological crisis, and this alarm is getting louder and more frequent. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change constantly warned us about the necessity of immediate action: it’s “now or never!”¹³ In response, entrepreneurs such as Elon Musk have been exploring the possibility of emigrating to Mars or escaping to another galaxy—although in the name of humanity and its dream of “being among the stars”; of course, this would be only for the ultrarich who could afford it.

Besides Plan B, that is, to escape to the other planets, Plan A is to steer the spacecraft to a safer place. If the Earth is a spaceship, this also means that one can modify its structure, improve its speed, and energize it. *Terraforming* is a manifestation of the power of modern technologies capable of engineering the planet’s atmosphere, biosphere, and geosphere. Similar voices are also heard, for example, in the “Ecomodernist Manifesto”

signed by people such as Stewart Brand and his colleagues from the Breakthrough Institute, who claim that more advanced technologies can repair the damage caused by technology on Earth. As such, the key to the survival of planet Earth is the further advancement of technology. The same wish can be seen at work for the transhumanists who see the possibility of endless enhancement of the human body and intelligence in technology. Eco-modernism, transhumanism, and prometheanism join hand in hand in this technological epoch, where anthropocentrism has surged to a historical height. Both Plan A and B are an objectification of the Earth as artifact, as something subject to engineering and design. These forms of planetarization are a consequence of modernity, yet they are not the planetary thinking that we are aspiring to.

Retrospectively we could identify the process of planetarization with that of technological globalization—in the sense that modern Western technology becomes a global phenomenon and the common aim of human development. That is to say, science and technology have detached themselves from the scientific community of the West and become the foundation of global communities consisting of researchers from everywhere. This resonates with Heidegger's 1964 article "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," in which he famously indicates two meanings of the end of philosophy. First, it means "the triumph of the manipulable arrangement [*steuerbare Einrichtung*] of a scientific-technological world and of the social order proper to this world"—in other words, society will be grasped as a cybernetic model because the term *steuerbare Einrichtung* refers explicitly to cybernetics. Second, the "beginning of the world-civilization will be based on Western European thinking."¹⁴ Heidegger did not mean that Western European thinking is superior than other forms of thinking and that, as such, it will become the base of world civilization. What he means is that Western European thinking finds its completion in cybernetics, and that cybernetics, the synonym of modern technology for him, will be a planetary phenomenon. Therefore, it is because of and through cybernetics that the progress of the world civilization is now based on Western European thinking. This verdict of Heidegger's became even more evident after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, when a thermodynamic ideology started ruling the globe. By *thermodynamic ideology* we mean an epistemology that originated from physics and then penetrated the economic and political sphere, becoming its operating principle.¹⁵ A thermodynamic ideology is closely associated

with the free market, open society, economic freedom, and so forth. It also indicates a new form of individualism whose freedom is defined by the market. An open system is often described in neoliberal principles and a closed system as authoritarian communist regimes. The East lost any resistance in the face of the demand for an open society and a free market. Today the East has returned with fierce technological competition and, most significantly, an ideological war.

Yet, we must ask, what could non-Western thought's role in the planetarization process be? The contest between the West and East brought about reactionary and nationalist politics in the past century and will continue to grow. However, what remains to be asked is if non-Western thought could contribute something more and even negate such an ideological manipulation. Searching for a ready-made theory of the planetary in various philosophical traditions would end in vain since no one in history has already anticipated our current situation. Thinking is epochal in that it belongs to a particular epoch, and even when a system of thought is passed to us, it can only gain its relevance through radical reinterpretation. Therefore, it is not my aim to claim that Western thinking failed and Eastern thinking will triumph, because such opposition is merely ideological and against thinking itself. While postcolonialism has been trying to pin down the relation between planetarization and colonization—that is to say, the relation between colonization and capitalism that exploited the planet to its extreme in the form of farming, mining, hunting, and fishing, etc.—it has almost always been silent on the issue of technology and the possibility of non-Western thought's contribution to a planetary thinking of technology and politics given the coming global catastrophes. On the other hand, Marxism tends to reduce all causes to capitalism, for capitalism is the synonym for the economic activities that exhaust the planet and create consecutive ecological mutations associated with climate change and the Anthropocene. However, today's crisis is economic, technological, and political. Therefore, postcolonialism and Marxism should also be reevaluated in the development of a planetary thinking. Before directly addressing planetary thinking, let us look into the phenomenon of planetarization to understand its essence.

Planetarization as a modern project is, first of all, the synchronization of time. First, through the convergence of transportation and communication technology, it can create a synchronicity between different geographical territories and machines;¹⁶ second, through the advancement of

science and technology, it constitutes a global time axis, a common mode of existence of humanity. *Nomos*, as Carl Schmitt claims in *The Nomos of the Earth*, is “the measure by which the ground and soil of the earth [*Grund und Boden der Erde*] in a particular order is divided and situated; it is also the form of political, social, and religious order determined by this process.”¹⁷ In Schmitt’s thought, we see that the history of the *nomos* of the earth is fundamentally a history of the revolution of space—that is, the constant conquest of space, or what he calls the *elements* (land, sea, and air), via technological means. Ultimately, we see that the conquest of the elementary form of space finally arrives at a qualitative change: the suppression of space and its conversion to time. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the global financial industry and logistics functioned according to a synchronicity that ensured the circulation of money and goods. This does not mean that space is without importance; on the contrary, borders still function regularly, but territories are made into smooth planes via global logistics, the standardization of commodities, and the artificialization of food (such as animal farming and greenhouse agriculture), which allow these products to be detachable from any fixed locality. During the pandemic, the smooth plane was suspended, and suddenly, the experience of time was no longer the same as it was. Regarding global logistics, one now expects a longer wait time for mail and goods to arrive. In the summer of 2021, I sent a postcard from Berlin to Japan, which took more than two months to arrive. This is longer than it took for Mori Ōgai to send mail from Berlin to Tokyo more than a century ago. The interruption of global logistics reveals the true meaning of globalization: an increase in synchronicity that constantly compresses space to the shortest distance. This synchronicity is fragile because it depends on machinery, which relies on the energy market and is also vulnerable to the state power’s intervention into the spatial order.

This synchronicity also expresses itself in the synchronization of history; that is to say, it is only through technology that humanity could be said to follow a linearity that goes from *Homo faber* to *Homo deus* via *Homo sapiens*. The human is, first of all, a technical being, and therefore the evolution of the human has to be conceived as the continuation of technical activities. In anthropology of technology, André Leroi-Gourhan affirms the fundamental role of technics in the process of evolution. He rejects the commonsense saying that human beings descend from apes because, for him, this claim ignores the fact that the invention and use

of tools conditions human evolution. Leroi-Gourhan and his contemporaries, such as Édouard Le Roy and Henri Bergson, accepted that there is a discontinuity between *Homo faber* and *Homo sapiens*.¹⁸ Like Georges Bataille, who in *Lascaux ou la naissance de l'art* (1955) associates the birth of art with *Homo sapiens*,¹⁹ Leroi-Gourhan considers that there is a break between the technical, which characterizes *Homo faber*, and the intellect, which characterizes *Homo sapiens*. The former is associated with the hand and the latter with the brain. However, this assumed rupture is problematic or even contradictory because, if the human is first of all *Homo faber*, then that which defines it—namely, technology—became nonessential for *Homo sapiens*.²⁰ And if technology is nonessential, then we have difficulty in understanding the evolution of *Homo sapiens*. As Leroi-Gourhan defines it in *Gesture and Speech* and other works, technics could be understood as an anthropological universal, namely, the externalization of memory and the liberation of organs. The flints used in ancient times should be understood as the crystallization of body gestures, which was only possible after a long process of biological evolution when complex motor nervous systems were developed. Or, as per the example of Lascaux, these paintings are the externalization of the memory and imagination of *Homo sapiens*, which we inherit today and represent in various technical means. That is to say, the intellect is not separable from technics. On the contrary, the technical is at the same time its externalization and its support. Thus, the criticism that Bernard Stiegler levied against Leroi-Gourhan in his *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus* concerned the emphasis that was put on the opposition between the technical and the intellect, arguing that it is merely a repetition of Bataille's thesis and, as such, risks being self-contradictory.²¹ This rejection of the rupture between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo faber* in terms of the separation of the intellect from technics also refuses the infamous fall that Jean-Jacques Rousseau described in his *Discourse on the Origin and Basis of Inequality Among Men* (1755).

Thus, we can understand that anthropogenesis is grounded on technical activities and that the human is, thus, no longer the master who creates technology but rather the human who is made possible *by* technology; in other words, the human is a technological phenomenon. The anthropological understanding of technology unifies the history of the human species, and civilizations are synchronized to the same global axis of time by technological convergence—a world history is present to us at the same time as a history of the anthropogenetic excess, namely, technology, or more pre-

cisely Western technology. Thus, as was claimed earlier, the second meaning of synchronicity completes human history that moves from *Homo faber* to the highly evolved *Homo sapiens* and now toward a new possibility. This possibility is exploited by science fiction as the *Homo deus*, the realization of the human as God. It is also the end of Feuerbach's famous critique of God as the projection of human desire because *Homo deus* is no longer a projection but the realization of such a projection. Science fiction reigns in this epoch of planetarization and takes philosophy to the *Schwärmerei*, where everyone could be called a philosopher of technology.

§2. Planetary Thinking as Political Epistemologies

The objectification of the planet in the twentieth century on all levels ranging from abstract representation to scientific exploration, including mining, earth system science, automated agriculture, hydroengineering, and geoeengineering, as well as to the preparation for space war, has presented us in the twenty-first century with an urgent task to conceive a new political form, one that allows us to imagine a future for peace and coexistence between different peoples, between humans and nonhumans. Planetary thinking will have to firmly grasp the process of planetarization and develop a *language of coexistence*. Planetary thinking here has to be strictly distinguished from global thinking. Globalization started during the Age of Exploration toward the end of the fifteenth century, together with colonization; culminated after the fall of the Berlin Wall, celebrating the thermodynamic ideology; and while debatable, is claimed to have ended with the Covid-19 pandemic. In this sense, globalization is planetarization. Planetary thinking should be oriented toward the future with a new conceptual framework. The obstacle is that today we still think primarily from the perspective of the nation-state and its economic and military interests. The planetary should not be confused with a new configuration of power between the states, such as a bipolar or multipolar configuration, because this does not change the nature of politics. For this would be the mere continuation of the politics of the nation-state, the difference would only be related to who has more power and more control over resources and the world market.

It is also the objectivation of the planet that urges us to take it as a subject and think planetarily. This is also why Bruno Latour suggests formulating his planetary agenda on two premises. The first premise claims that all

humans confront the same ecological mutations. Because these mutations are planetary, and we are this planet's inhabitants, we must think planetarily. This premise might remind us of Kant's premise of the *Weltbürgertum* from his "Perpetual Peace," where Kant states that the surface of the Earth is communally possessed by everyone (*das Recht des gemeinschaftlichen Besitzes der Oberfläche der Erde*) and that it follows that the right of visiting a foreign country should be recognized as a natural law because borders are only artificial.²² Therefore, the planet as a common object everyone shares is imperative to imagine, constituting a collectivity beyond artificial boundaries. The second premise of Latour's project states that since Europeans have never been modern, Europeans and non-Europeans should, therefore, find a way to collaborate to overcome the impasse of modernity.²³ It is an impasse because the system of knowledge that originates from European modernity has spread its wings through new transportation and communication technologies, pervading the world and at times seeming irreversible—this was a subject closely examined in *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics* (2016). The title of Latour's exhibition at the Taipei Biennale 2020, "You and I Don't Live on the Same Planet," concisely summarizes his effort to think planetarily. Latour hence calls for a new diplomacy; in response, we will endeavor to address it as an epistemological diplomacy.

Therefore, we will have to understand planetary thinking historically, that is to say, to reconstruct planetary thinking to expose its limits and conceive of other possible political forms. Planetary thinking means more than just developing thinking capable of dealing with larger scales and sizes. There is no doubt that scale is an important element, but at the same time, when the scale is too large, one ignores the question of locality, which is equally essential to a planetary thinking. Hence, our objective here is not to propose a grand politics of dividing and transforming the planet Earth. Instead, we seek to revisit the fundamental question of technology and its implications for the twenty-first century.

Kojin Karatani, in his book *The Structure of World History*, suggests that the current political form, which he formulates in terms of the trinity of capital-nation-state, must be surpassed or sublated since it has already attained its limit. Even though the work critiques Marx and the Marxians, who reduce economy to its modes of production, the inspiration is Kantian since he is attracted to Kant's notion of the "world republic" as the political form that might transcend the nation-state. His main target is, thus, Hegel. Because Hegel, instead of Marx, is the philosopher who

truly grasped the unity of capital-nation-state. Marxians still consider the nation and the state as superstructures separated from the economic base. Instead of the mode of production, Karatani analyzes world history from the perspective of modes of exchange. World history is conceived in terms of three dominant modes of exchange: the exchange of gifts, state-enforced distribution, and the world market, each corresponding to three dominant modes of power: the gift, the state, and money. Karatani thus proposed to conceive a mode D that would sublate the nation-state; Mode D is the return of Mode A (the gift economy) in a higher form.

Karatani sees very clearly that to carry out the task of overcoming the nation-state, it is necessary to develop a thorough critique of Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*.²⁴ However, instead of further pursuing Karatani's analysis of the history of the economy, I wish to start with the notion of unity in what Karatani calls the "unity of capital-nation-state." Karatani, through his reading of Kant, compares the capitalist economy with the sensibility, the state with the understanding, and the nation with the imagination. If, in Kant, it is the imagination that synthesizes the sensibility and the understanding, then likewise, the nation synthesizes capital and the state. Therefore, Karatani claims, "The capitalist economy (sensibility) and state (understanding) are held together by the nation (imagination). Together they form Borromean rings, where the whole collapses if any of the three rings is removed."²⁵ We contend that this unity cannot be grasped topologically by Borromean rings—this also differentiates our reading of Kant and Hegel from Karatani's. Karatani also recognizes that Hegel's dialectics is key to understanding the unity, as he writes, "This Borromean knot cannot be grasped through a one-dimensional approach: this was why Hegel adopted the dialectical explanation."²⁶ However, this grasp remains too underdeveloped.

This unity has to be approached from the perspective of a political epistemology instead of a Borromean diagram. By *political epistemology*, I mean the epistemology transposed from science to politics, economy, and technology, which consequently constitutes a new paradigmatic shift in the modes of knowing, organization, and operation of society. Or in other words, there is such an epistemology behind every megamachine. We do not see only one megamachine and one epistemology, but rather the evolution of the megamachine alongside epistemologies that adequately justify its existence and specific forms of organization. The history of planetary thinking could then be studied through an examination of

various political epistemologies. This book will depart from two major epistemologies, mechanism and organism. The organism, or its analytically and mathematically deduced model, *organicism*, presents an epistemology radically distinguished from the mechanism that fashioned the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The culmination of mechanism could be read in correlation with the emergence of political absolutism and regimentation, which Mumford endeavored to evidence in his reading of Descartes and Hobbes in the second volume of *The Myth of the Machine*. The shift from mechanism to organism characterizes a crucial epistemological rupture toward the end of the eighteenth century. Kant's *Critique of Judgment* stands out as the major work that placed organism at the top of philosophy in Germany and constitutes one of the most profound treatises on organism understood as a proto-model of the philosophical system.²⁷ We could even claim that Kant imposed the organic condition of philosophizing, which has continued until our time—notably, the last chapter of Mumford's *The Myth of the Machine* is titled “The New Organum.” It is dedicated to the “organic world view” seen as the antidote to the “mechanical world view” that has dominated since the seventeenth century. This analysis of the history of organicism was one of the main tasks undertaken in *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019) and *Art and Cosmotekhnics* (2021), and we will continue in the current work by extending it to political philosophy.

Importantly, a critique of the nation-state does not mean that the state is the opposite of planetary thinking. Instead, we have to recognize the state as a stage in the history of such thinking, that which has yet to be rendered explicit, and we will attempt to do so in the current work. This unfolding of a planetary thinking will start with a critique of Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, focusing on the concept of the organic form. What makes Hegel's political philosophy significant is his justification of the modern state as the culmination of reason and the political form under which freedom and the ethical life are possible.²⁸ Hegel's justification (*Berechtigung*) is logically deduced from his dialectical method. Dialectics will arrive at an organic form, which is also its principle. Thus, the political form of the modern state is organic, in contrast to the state machine that was seriously criticized for its positive and mechanistic nature in his earlier writings, such as the “German Constitution.”²⁹ The organism of the state in Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* points to an *imaginary organic machine*.³⁰ That is to say, it is not yet an organism

because an organism is already organized (or already concrete in the sense of Simondon), it is a fact; for the state, it is a goal³¹ because the state is a form of organization that assimilates the organism under the principle of *reason* and *effectiveness*.

The projection of an emerging epistemology into politics often encounters problems because it remains speculative and, therefore, always ahead of its time. In his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, the young Marx challenged Hegel's organic state, asking what the difference would be between the organism of the state and the organism of the animal. Marx criticized Hegel, arguing that he could not explain the specificity of the organic state, and as such, his theorization remained only formal and empty. This criticism is important, however, not because Marx was right (Marx nonetheless recognized Hegel's theorization as a "great advance") but because Marx did not manage to comprehend its central role in Hegel's philosophy.³² The opposition between materialism and idealism, which the Marxians employed against Hegel, comes from an intended misreading of Hegel, and it fails to see that the genesis of the spirit already implies a becoming organic that cannot do without a history of externalization. That is why a nuanced reading of Hegel's political philosophy is fundamental to a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus*, and why earlier we called the Hegelian state an imaginary organic machine. The question that concerns us is what the limit might be of Hegel's political epistemology as a planetary thinking, and what succeeded it in the twentieth century.

Two limits have pushed us to develop a planetary thinking further. First, Hegel only applied organicity to the interiority of the state, never pushing it toward its exteriority. To put it plainly, Hegel refuses what Kant did to conceive of an organicity of international relations and stops at a straightforward friend-enemy relation, which echoes that of Carl Schmitt. Second, the imaginary machine that Hegel conceptualized seems to have been realized by cybernetics, as Hegel scholar Gotthard Günther famously argues in his *The Unconsciousness of Machines: A Metaphysics of Cybernetics*.³³ Günther's conclusion comes from his dedicated studies on Hegel's logic and his turn toward cybernetics after immigrating to the United States. Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetics, had already announced that cybernetics overcomes the dichotomy between vitalism and mechanism because, through the notion of feedback, cybernetic machines are capable of assimilating the behavior of organisms. Retrospectively, we can also understand why Heidegger claims that cybernetics marks the completion or

the end of philosophy. Today, when we look at the development of artificial intelligence and machine learning, we cannot ignore their origin in cybernetics, no matter how fast they have evolved in the past decades. This organic machine could be identified as belonging to various domains other than technology—for example, economy, ecology, and the earth sciences.

Continuing this line of investigation, we might want to ask if the completion of philosophy in cybernetics also means the completion of Hegel's philosophy of right? Or does this completion also transcend the first limit mentioned above that the cybernetic system can extend from the interiority of the nation-state toward the exteriority, forming a gigantic organic machine that marks the milestone of the World Spirit in the coming centuries in the name of the "omega point" (Teilhard de Chardin) or the singularity (Kurzweil)? These questions, as speculative as they are, are nonetheless important for us to reflect on a political form adequate to future planetary thinking.

§3. Search for a Planetary Politics beyond the Nation-State

Is the state still relevant today? There have been many rumors that the state is dead and that the sovereign has already been dissolved by global capitalism.³⁴ Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's trilogy could be considered the most systematic exposition on the lost cause of the nation-state and the guidebook for the new revolutionary subject, the *multitude*. According to the authors, as an empire, global capitalism has "taken sovereignty out of the way" because the sovereign has weakened its ability to decide on monetary and military matters.³⁵ In other words, globalization has incorporated every outside into its inside.³⁶ However, during a debate in 2016, Roberto Esposito challenged Negri that the opposite was, in fact, true because, in the past decade, due to the global financial crisis, it was in the end the national governments that saved the banks.³⁷ To borrow Esposito's words, "The *nomos* of the earth (to use Carl Schmitt's formula), along with production and distribution, goes back to being a kind of sharing out in a new geopolitical order of the world."³⁸

Negri retorted that what Esposito's thinking lacks is precisely political.³⁹ Our task is not here to defend Esposito, the political immunologist, against Negri, the Marxist revolutionary. However, since the pandemic, it might be clear that the state was never withering away. Indeed, the trinity of nation-state-capital has become more exposed; fascism and national-

ism have prevailed in many countries, including Italy, and all announcements of the end of sovereignty and capitalism are simply misdiagnoses that take the immediate as the ultimate truth. In hindsight, the discourse of the multitude gained momentum during the antiglobalization movements towards the end of the millennium. However, over the past decade, the antiglobalization movement has become relatively quiet. Instead, we observe seemingly perplexing anarchist gestures, exemplified by figures such as the conservative anarchist Audrey Tang (the minister of digital affairs of the Taiwan government), the utopian anarchist Elon Musk (as he claimed on X), and the ultimate anarchist Donald Trump (named by the *New Statesman*⁴⁰).

There are other more profound challenges to project onto political epistemology, which were outlined earlier: the reading of modern political thought through the lens of the opposition between mechanism and organism, as well as the framework of the nation-state. Carl Schmitt's work should be carefully studied in this context. Carl Schmitt, a professor of constitutional and international law and a legal theorist of the Third Reich, stands out as one of the most profound thinkers of planetary thinking after Hegel. Schmitt is not Hegelian; instead, what we find in Schmitt's writings concerning Hegel is a mix of admiration and discontent. Schmitt distinguished three types of legal thought specific to his time: decisionism, normativism, and "concrete order and form thinking [*konkretes Ordnungs- und Gestaltungsdenken*]." We can understand the normativism Schmitt speaks of as corresponding to the mechanism, or the positivism of Hans Kelsen (notably, Schmitt's intellectual rival), and the "concrete order and form thinking" as corresponding to organism, which is exemplified in the political thought of Hegel since Hegel's state is "the concrete order of orders, the institution of institutions."⁴¹ Schmitt's position, as we all know, is decisionism, which we will formulate as a political vitalism.

The political, according to Schmitt, is based neither on mechanism nor organism but rather on decisionism. In his *Political Theology*, Schmitt concisely defined the sovereign as "he who decides on the exception."⁴² This power to decide on the exception and the friend-enemy distinction gives soul to the nation-state. The word *soul* here is not merely to be understood in its literal sense. Indeed, we can find in Schmitt's treatise on Hobbes a comparison of Hobbes's mechanization of the state with Descartes's mechanization of the human.⁴³ Schmitt's characterization of the sovereign as the power to declare the state of exception returns us not to an absolute

power but rather to a legal framework that allows the sovereign to override all legalities, for the sovereign is the ultimate ground of legitimacy.

This definition partially resolves the ontological problem of sovereignty. But the most puzzling question remains: What exactly is sovereignty? We are still looking for a satisfactory answer in both positive and natural law traditions. Positive law returns us to a presupposed *basic norm*, while natural law has been ceaselessly challenged by historicism in the past centuries, arguing that its foundation is only historically valid.⁴⁴ Schmitt's vitalism may be intrinsically a liberalism, as Martin Heidegger remarked in his seminars on Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, where we read, "Carl Schmitt thinks liberally: 1. because politics is 'also' a sphere; 2. because he thinks in terms of the individual and his bearing."⁴⁵ This comment may sound ironic because Carl Schmitt ceaselessly criticized liberalism as the seed of the collapse of the sovereign, which he finds in Hobbes and modern liberal democracy.

This political vitalism pushes Schmitt to reflect on the future of sovereignty given the world wars and the new international order that emerged due to these new dynamics. Schmitt saw the limit of the nation-state and its decline in light of American imperialism (after the distortion of the Monroe Doctrine) and the collapse of the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, which once defined the global order. In other words, when the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* reigned over the global spatial order, it was intrinsically Eurocentric; its obsolescence suggests a new global spatial order that ought to appear, which, however, insists on the independence of sovereigns.

Schmitt's development of the *nomos* of the Earth attempts to provide a new political form after the nation-state and a *history of planetary thinking*. This history is equally a history of space conquests and spatial revolutions. Schmitt develops an elemental philosophy of geopolitics by neatly, and probably too neatly, plotting a trajectory from the *nomos* of the land to that of the sea and finally to the air. What is fundamental in Schmitt's rationale, though he only implicitly acknowledged it, is the question of technology. Again, this is how we could read Schmitt's political thought as a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus*. In his "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations" (1929), Schmitt already suggests that one shouldn't understand technology as anything neutral in the twentieth century. Spatial revolutions would not be possible without technological advancement. The development of sea power would not be possible without the Industrial Revolution, without which there would not be an opposition between the Behemoth

(Continental Europe) and the Leviathan (England). The same goes for air power, which was only possible with the invention of aircraft, making it possible to fly across several sovereignties within a couple of hours.

In “The New *Nomos* of the Earth” (1955), Schmitt proposed three scenarios to conceive future planetary politics.⁴⁶ First, the configuration based on individual nation-states remains unchanged; second, the unification between the West and the East (in the East, he includes the Soviet Union and China). However, Schmitt does not see unification as necessarily desirable; thus the third scenario, the development into a new political form, which he calls the *Großraum*, or the big space. The *Großraum* is that which Schmitt wants to justify, as Hegel did with his political state. The *Großraum*—a term that, according to Schmitt, has its origin in the “technological-industrial-economical-organizational domain [*Bereich*]” during the turn of the century when energy and electricity supply unified the *Kleinräume* into a *Großraum-wirtschaft*.⁴⁷ More precisely, it is an imagination enabled by the spatial revolution brought about by air succeeding land and sea. The geographers Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright, in their book *Climate Leviathan: A Political Theory of Our Planetary Future*, suggest that climate change will lead to the emergence of planetary sovereignty, which they call the *climate Leviathan*. The planetary sovereignty will decide on the state of emergency for the sake of the security of lives on Earth.⁴⁸ Though referring to Schmitt, they do not seem to have grasped that Schmitt might be the exact person who would immediately reject such a planetary sovereignty because he is precisely skeptical of any political institutions speaking in the name of humanity. If there is an “advancement” of planetary thinking in Schmitt, it is not a planetary sovereignty but the *Großraum*.

The *Großraum* is that which aims to resist the universalism of American imperialism. Universalism here should mean *universalization*, the promotion and homogenization of a set of values and knowledge regarded as the exclusive truth. Could the political vitalism and the *Großraum* of Schmitt succeed Hegel’s organism and the nation-state, becoming the blueprint of future planetary politics? It is, nonetheless, necessary to bear in mind Schmitt’s involvement in National Socialism and his justification of the Third Reich. However, one should not discredit all of his thought, rejecting it outright, as many so-called intellectuals do today with Heidegger and others. Like Schmitt, Heidegger wanted to justify National Socialism as a philosophical project, and Alexander Dugin, the right-wing and traditionalist thinker, who picked up Schmitt’s *Großraum*, integrated it into his

Eurasian project—which has subsequently been used to justify the “special military operation” in Ukraine. This does not mean that any discussion on Schmitt can only appear as a depreciation of his thought, which occupies the moral high ground. This is for sure politically correct, but it is philosophically insufficient. Instead, we should expose the limit of Schmitt’s theory and, through this exhaustion, shed new light on a planetary thinking that defends both democracy and freedom. Again, we want to ask what the limits of Schmitt’s theory of sovereignty and the *Großraum* might be in view of the new challenge of the ecological crisis and the intensified competition of digital technologies.

§4. Toward a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* of the Planetary

Hegel and Schmitt are the two key thinkers we will be addressing in detail in this work. Their works provide us some of the most fundamental analysis of the state and planetary thinking, which we cannot overlook or simply adopt. Our reading of Hegel’s philosophy of right and Schmitt’s *nomos* of the Earth aims to construct a historical trajectory of a philosophy of the planetary, as well as to reintegrate technology into political philosophy to a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus*. Such a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* does not employ a geometrical method as per Spinoza but an algebraic one, or, more precisely, the concept of recursivity that we have laid down in the previous work. However, a project exploring a “planetary thinking” that sets to expose Hegel’s political state and Schmitt’s *Großraum* to their limits immediately encounters its own limits imposed by its interrogators and academic disciplines to which they belong. We must acknowledge and keep in mind this limitation throughout our exploration. Indeed, a planetary thinking could include anything like political economy, earth science, ecology, and so on. One could equally speculate on the ontogenesis of the planet⁴⁹ or the intrusion of Gaia⁵⁰ or even developing a fiction-theory of the meltdown of the planet as some authors have done. These are not the paths that we will pursue here. We must acknowledge the challenge of defining planetary thinking in a concrete manner, akin to a policy report. While narrowing our investigative focus, we also generalize it as a unified methodology. The relationship between technology and political epistemology, or epistemology at large, serves as our Ariadne’s thread.

How could planetary thinking develop beyond what Hegel and Schmitt have laid down without recourse to a transcendent figure of the Earth? Even

though we agree with Isabelle Stengers on the necessity to counter the rationalists by bringing into light the transcendence of Gaia, it is doubtful if the technological and economic activities will restrain themselves because of any fear of the intrusion of Gaia. The current ecological mutation and the extreme climatic change associated with it do not seem to have awakened those who live in the game of capital. We hope to develop another line of inquiry while at the same time keeping in mind any possible dialogues with these authors in the various chapters. Indeed, we do not suggest an emancipation from transcendence, as readers will find out, the different positions of transcendence in the political forms which we will unfold throughout the book. The seemingly logical sequence underlined by the spatial revolution from the nation-state, *Großraum*, and finally the planet itself must not ignore the fact that these apparent stages are actually contemporary to each other. In other words, we will not be able to eliminate the state since the disappearance of the state is not yet foreseeable; nor could we escape the *Großraum* because we are now living in the epoch of the *Großraum*. Instead, we must recognize that the political state represents one stage in the development of planetary thinking, such as the family and civil society were stepping stones to the modern state. The completion of the modern state did not lead to the elimination of the family and civil society. Therefore, it is reasonable that Karatani proposes a federation of states, mode D, as succeeding mode B (state-enforced distribution) and mode C (capitalism). Mode D will be the return of mode A (gift economy) in a higher form, where sovereignty becomes a gift—for when sovereignty becomes a gift, the sovereign state would be naturally dissolved. The mode of exchange D remains as an idea. That is, since a regulative principle guides it, it may never be realized. The technical difficulty is that of synchronicity. Because even if a revolution were to happen in one country or even two, it would be soon extinguished by the neighboring countries that do not desire such changes. Revolution is either a world revolution or it is nothing. Therefore, a world revolution can only happen when every state is synchronized; however, because the possibility of such an event is so low, a federation of states can only be a semblance (*Schein*).⁵¹

Whether a world republic could come into being remains uncertain because, like in all political theologies, when the Second Coming of Christ will happen is never clear. In a perplexing turn, Karatani asserts that what Kant called a world republic is what Schmitt calls a world state; Moreover, he contends that Schmitt implies the possibility of abolishing the state

through exchange.⁵² However, as we commented earlier, Schmitt would outright reject the idea of a world state, because such a world state would mean for him an absolute depolitization and homogenization, leaving behind only consumerism and entertainment. The difficulty of conceiving a planetary politics of coexistence is that first of all, it has to recognize differences and maintain the heterogeneity of different forms of life, and a single bureaucratic system can hardly achieve this; on the contrary, it could and most likely would be manipulated by the most powerful states. Heterogeneity and plurality cannot be supposed; they must be maintained and cultivated.

A *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* must bring technology to the forefront to emphasize a technological consciousness. Juxtaposing organicism, mechanism, and vitalism, it looks into the possibility of an organology in the sphere of politics. The term *general organology* was used first by Georges Canguilhem⁵³ to characterize Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution* (1907).⁵⁴ Organology (originally the study of musical instruments) is a study of the relation between technology and the other parts of the body, in which technical tools could be considered artificial organs. Organology has to be distinguished strictly from technological determinism, which is fundamental to Marxist analysis. Marx famously claimed in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist."⁵⁵ In contrast to technological determinism, organology suggests that all new organs produce conflicts. Thus, new programs or studies are required to resolve these conflicts. As we will argue, technological acceleration is a fundamental cause of war because it tends to produce a negative organology. Therefore, a technology-oriented program should first consider what we call *technodiversity*.⁵⁶ Technodiversity, noodiversity, and biodiversity comprise a matrix through which we can systematically conceive a new language of coexistence beyond the nation-state and the Anthropocene. In the following chapters, we will address the concerns outlined here.

Chapter 1, "World Spirit as Planetary Thinking," reads Hegel's theory of the world spirit as a planetary thinking and interprets the relation between freedom and political forms. Chapter 2, "The Organism of the State and Its Limit," engages with Hegel's demonstration of the state as an organism and the young Marx's critique. We will equally look into the limit of Hegel's organismic thinking by reading Mou Zongsan and Zhao Tingyang.

Chapter 3, “From Noetic Reflection to Planetary Reflection,” sketches a human-earth relation departing from Hegel’s anthropology. The chapter looks at how this Hegelian motive could be further traced in the domain of bioeconomy and cybernetics, and to what extent it could be considered as a future. Chapter 4, “Mechanism, Organism, or Decisionism,” looks into Schmitt’s negative response to the question raised in chapter 3 and Schmitt’s political vitalism as a refusal of the mechanistic and organismic epistemology of the state. Chapter 5, “*Nomos* of the Digital Earth,” examines Schmitt’s concept of sovereignty and the *Großraum* and evaluates his theories against the current debate on digital sovereignty and planetary governance. Finally, chapter 6, “An Organology of Wars,” turns toward organology to understand the source of war, to conceive a new language of coexistence through a close engagement with Bergson’s critique of war and his influence on André Leroi-Gourhan, as well as to articulate the meaning of democracy and diversity from the perspective of organology. Chapter 7, “Toward an Epistemological Diplomacy,” elaborates on a framework of biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity.

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World Spirit as Planetary Thinking

World History only shows us how the World Spirit comes gradually to the consciousness of truth and the willing of it. This consciousness and will dawns in the Spirit; Spirit finds its main points, and in the end it arrives at full consciousness.

—G. W. F. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*

This sublation of externality that belongs to the concept of spirit is what we have called the ideality of spirit. All activities of spirit are nothing but different ways of driving what is external back into the inwardness that spirit itself is, and it is only through this driving back, through this idealization or assimilation of what is external, that spirit becomes and exists.

—G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*

Where should we embark on the journey of planetary thinking? We commence with Hegel, the philosopher who delineates a planetary perspective in the name of the *Weltgeist* and justifies the political state as the condition for freedom. For this reason, it is essential to navigate through Hegel, not only comprehending his logical arguments but also acknowledging their confines. Engaging with Hegel's planetary thinking demands an intellectual exercise, a speculative endeavor. For our purpose, we start with the question of political epistemology outlined in the Introduction. Since *Recursivity and Contingency*, we have investigated the historical significance of the opposition between mechanism and organism and argued that the rupture of organism from mechanism characterizes a paradigmatical shift in modern Western thought. To put it simply, mechanism is characterized by a linear causality that could be traced to a first cause. For example, imagine a mechanical watch: one can trace the cause to the spring; the mechanism is fragile when one part of it is accidentally broken,

and the whole causal chain will fail. On the contrary, organism is characterized by a nonlinear causality: a first cause is not self-evident, and the whole always recursively adjusts itself in case of an accident arriving at any part. *Recursivity and Contingency* started with the claim that Kant, especially in the *Critique of Judgment*, imposed the organic condition of philosophizing; that is to say, for philosophy to be, it has to be organic. Today, the opposition between mechanism and organism might seem banal, even to the eyes of a layperson, since it remains completely doubtful whether one can reduce a living being to a mechanical one—not to mention that it is still not possible to make a perfect humanoid robot.

The courage of speculative reason in mechanism unveils its own immaturity because it took the essential as unnecessary and identified linear causality as the truth of nature. But it is only through recognizing its immaturity that reason progresses toward its maturity or the Absolute. This essential, which we might call a historical truth, is only valid for one time.¹ After that, it will be posited as a question or a challenge to be answered according to the “journey of the consciousness” or the “odyssey of the spirit proper.”² This division between organism and mechanism has its significance only when the organism is understood as a nonlinear form of organization and reasoning, which has an affinity to the living world—something that mechanism lacks, it being governed by repetitive operations with linear causality. The identification of reason with an organic form is a recognition of the *nontriviality* of reason. Nontriviality in the sense that it is not linearly derivable. Instead, it is always paradoxical and resists simplification. This division is nothing banal, but rather it is the leading thread that we use to reconstruct histories of ideas and to expose reason to its limit in light of our contemporary situation. Mechanism and organism also represent two kinds of *political epistemology*, reflected as two modes of governance, two imaginations of the megamachine, or two concepts of the state. We can find it, for example, in the political writing of Edmund Burke, where he claims that the whole cannot be reduced to parts; in the Hegelian Ernst Kapp, who characterizes despotism as mechanism and freedom as organism;³ as well as in more recent political theory inspired by cybernetics.⁴ We can also think of Herder, Novalis, and the Schlegels, who each proposed different versions of organic communitarianism⁵ as a response and critique of the state machine—in a very literal sense meaning the mechanization of the state as a top-down and linear operation.

Hegel's treatise on the relation between reason and the state, between spirit and the world history, stands out as one of the most sophisticated treatises of political philosophy. Hegel's project should not be considered in the same category as Herder's nor that of the romantics, including his collaborator and competitor, Schelling;⁶ on the contrary, Hegel's philosophy of right should be seen as an effort to overcome, on the one hand, mechanism, and on the other hand, an uncritical reception of organism or teleology. This overcoming is also a sublation (*Aufhebung*) because it doesn't only overcome both but also preserves what is *necessary* for them. By *uncritical reception* we mean that the concept of the organism is taken from and is made equivalent to nature; therefore, it prioritizes nature over the artificial. That is to say, in the dogmatic reception of organism, nature is not only the source of inspiration but also the ground of politics. Furthermore, the realization of humanity (such as it is said by Kant, Schiller, and Herder⁷), thus posed as a task of the human species, is an assimilation of the qualities one finds in nature. The priority of the organic nature over the artificial, often taken as mechanism, is also grounded on two presuppositions: on the one hand, on the theology of creation, and on the other hand, on the scientific concept of organism irreducible to mechanical explanation. For Kant, one of the early philosophers of organism, this realization of humanity is a hidden project of nature (*Vollziehung eines verborgenen Plans der Natur*).⁸ It is hidden because it is not given as such; this destination is unknown to the human species, but the progress of humanity is also progress toward the maturity of reason. However, Kant stopped at nature; he proposed a political philosophy at most but never a philosophy of history proper. As Leo Strauss noted, the philosophy of history plays little to no role in Kant's three *Critiques*.⁹ Strauss also noted that Kant would have had to confront Herder if he were to develop a philosophy of history—as we know, Kant published two reviews of Herder's philosophy of history (*Philosophy of the History of Mankind*, 1784–91 and *Junctures on the Beginning of Human History*, 1786), where Herder was named a poet and his work that of poetry.¹⁰ Kant's solution was simply not “permitting its [philosophy of history] entrance into the system proper.”¹¹ Our rationale is, however, different from Strauss's, as we will show later, that is, a philosophy of history is only possible in Hegel, who, influenced by Herder, exposed the genesis of second nature (customs, habits) as the condition of the spirit.

We claimed earlier that Kant imposed the organic condition of philosophizing, meaning that he extends the concept of the organism to almost all domains of philosophy. The formulation of the organismic nature of reason by way of reflective judgment, which we find in the *Critique of Judgment*, clarifies the operation concerning purposiveness and morality that Kant couldn't fully elaborate in *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*. Indeed, Kant, in §64 of the *Critique of Judgment*, a paragraph dedicated to the explanation of an organism, draws an analogy between the organism and the state:

We may make use of an *analogy* to the above mentioned immediate physical ends to throw light on a certain union, which, however, is to be found more often in idea than in fact. Thus in the case of a complete transformation, recently undertaken, of a great people into a state, the word *organization* has frequently, and with much propriety, been used for the constitution of the legal authorities and even of the entire body politic. For in a whole of this kind certainly no member should be a mere means, but should also be an end, and, seeing that he contributes to the possibility of the entire body, should have his position and function in turn defined by the idea of the whole.¹²

It is often said that the “transformation . . . of a great people into a state” refers to the establishment of the United States,¹³ that is, not only to the sociality of the people but also the federal system, and its relation to the state is compared *analogically* to an organism. However, this relation between the state and organism is still an analogy; that is to say, Kant was unable to talk about the “organism of the state” as Hegel would do later in *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. In other words, Hegel takes the idea of the organic not simply as an analogy but also as having an “objective reality.”¹⁴ Or, as we will claim, the organic, as a political epistemology of freedom, only came to a full force in the thinking of Hegel, manifesting itself as a kind of *mechano-organicism*. However, first of all, one has to bear in mind that these oppositions between nature and artifice, organism and mechanism, are not irreconcilable in the philosophy of Hegel because such opposition is only the beginning of dialectical logic. The dialectical logic will finally sublate the opposition between organism and mechanism, meaning to preserve the necessary and to overcome contingency. Dialectics is neither

$0 + 1 = 1$ nor $1 + 1 = 2$, but rather it aims at a unity that encompasses both thesis and antithesis. In contrast, such unity is thought through in most concrete terms instead of mere abstraction or categorization. Therefore, the universal, which is opposed to the particular, is not truly universal. The universal that Hegel is aiming at is not a universal form that could be applied to all individuals, but rather it is the possibility of the particulars; only when universality is attained can rationality and effectiveness coincide. The universal is the desire of reason and its self-identity. Likewise, necessity for Hegel is not that which is opposed to contingency, but rather the spirit recognizes that contingency is its own possibility toward absolute necessity.¹⁵

Dialectics, as an organismic logic, functions like a monster capable of engulfing every form of existence. This dialectical logic implies ontogenesis and autogenesis (though Hegel did not use this word),¹⁶ which could be applied in different domains to understand the movement of concepts. In the domain of ontology, it is the sublation of the opposition between being and nothing as becoming (Introduction to *Logik*); in the domain of politics, it is the sublation of the individual (defined according to desires) and the communal into the concrete, rational, and universal state; in the domain of international politics, it is the *Weltgeist*'s sublation of the opposition between the West and East and the progress toward planetary freedom. Contradiction is not that which is to be avoided, but rather it is the prerequisite of the dialectical movement. Dialectics unveils the world behind its phenomenon. However, unlike Plato's Idea, Hegel's *Idee* is not transmundane but rather a world of movement in which the phenomenon, or even historical truth, is ephemeral, being only a mere appearance. Therefore, it might be more justified to call dialectics a theory of individuation.

§5. Individuation of the Spirit as Historical Process

Hegel's theory of individuation is a game of triads (or syllogisms), where each element of the triad is, in turn, composed of another triad. The world, or even the cosmos itself, could be seen as the rhythmic generation and cancellation of these triads. One difficulty of reading Hegel is that one needs to loop back to the previous triads constantly, but since each of these elements refers to other triads, the looping goes on and on. Similar to when one wants to trace a complex recursive algorithm, one gets lost in the numerous

and laborious listing of triads. In each triad, there is a *tendency* to arrive at the self-consciousness of the concept; such a tendency is *desire* (*Begierde*). Each dialectical movement of the concept contributes to another dialectical movement. Hegel's cosmos is sublime, like a psychedelic becoming, where everything is generated and transformed recursively in the form of triads. The world neither moves mechanically nor is it vulnerably exposed to contingency; it individuates dialectically, meaning recursively. Hegel did not have recourse to the word *recursivity*, nor did Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*; they had to, therefore, either reuse existing terms, such as *circular*, or search elsewhere. However, *circular* can also mean mere repetition, whereas visually, there is no difference between beginning and end—for example, a closed automaton, in which every part repeats the same procedure in every cycle. Recursion is different: it is circular, but it never repeats itself; like Heraclitus's river, one cannot step in it twice.

The soul individuates in time and as time. The soul, the first form of subjective spirit,¹⁷ is that which returns to itself recursively instead of repetitively, as we see in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Aristotle criticized that the soul cannot be circular since the soul is as capable of *not* thinking as it is capable of thinking. If thinking can be interrupted, then it is not circular.¹⁸ Retroactively, we might say that Aristotle is a thinker of linearity in this respect since he is unable to think of a circular form that is not repetitive, in other words, that is, recursivity. All thinkers of linearity, when confronting the question of the absolute beginning, be it temporal or causal, are haunted by infinite regression. Aristotle emphasized this in Book A of *Metaphysics*, "those who maintain the infinite series destroy the good without knowing it. Yet no one would try to do anything if he were not going to come to a limit."¹⁹ If the series is infinite, then there is no telos, and insofar as there is no telos, there is no Good. Therefore, Aristotle demands a prime mover—an unconditional cause, a cause that is not the effect of another cause, namely, the Absolute. Hegel's dialectics is not linear; it is eternally circular—the Absolute is not at the beginning. At the beginning, it is only the immediate and abstract existant. Therefore, nous for Hegel consists of constant returning to itself in order to self-differentiate and attain self-consciousness. Hegel's interpretation of *πάσχειν* and *ἐνεργεῖν* in nous of Aristotle's *De Anima* in *Philosophy of Mind* and *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* is criticized as a misreading, one of scandalous nature.²⁰ In *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel commented on the prime mover: "God is pure activity [*reine Tätigkeit*]. . . . [He is] the substance which in its

potentiality also has its actuality, the substance whose essence [*potentia*] is itself activity and in which the two are not separable; in it, possibility cannot be distinguished from form [*Form*], and it is that which itself produces [*produziert*] its own content, its own determinations.”²¹ God is no longer the original and ultimate point that emanates but rather a circle, a pure activity. It also holds true for the subject, which ceases to be a substance, but rather becomes pure activity. This circular image of thinking is attributed to Hegel’s “misreading” of Aristotle’s *De Anima* since he superimposed his own theory of individuation on the Aristotelian text.²² Or perhaps more precisely, as Catherine Malabou has claimed, Hegel sets up a “speculative relation between teleological circularity and representational linearity.”²³ Dialectics is fundamentally a *theory of individuation*: everything individuates, and therefore, everything is in becoming as a result of a syllogism: being—nothing—becoming. The spirit is no exception; it moves from childhood to adulthood in a triadic sequence. Individuation does not aim for a philosophy of nature, or perhaps more accurately, the philosophy of nature is only an instance of a dialectics that is not yet able to fully overcome contingency. And in this sense, Hegel moves beyond the philosophers that were before him because, for most of them, individuation was thought of from the perspective of nature or of God. Spinoza, for example, provided a point of departure for philosophy with his concept of *causa sui*, namely, the inseparability of the concept from being, as well as the immanent causation of the process. However, for Hegel, Spinoza falls prey to an oriental view that affirms the unity of substance and lacks an occidental principle of individuality.²⁴ That is to say, Spinoza’s substance remains a totality, namely, God, which is close to the metaphor of the dark night in the preface of the *Phenomenology*. Even though *causa sui* already means a self-causation and, therefore, movement, this process lacks a dialectical method; Spinoza’s method is geometric, therefore, mathematical and formal. The attributes are for Hegel only forms and representations, which reflect the substance from outside, and the substance is incapable of “immanent reflection.”²⁵ The famous dictum attributed to Spinoza’s theory of individuation, *omnis determinatio est negatio*, is for Hegel only a determination of a negativity (coming from outside), but not yet the negation of the negation. In Hegel, the individuation of the spirit is dialectical, teleological, and, therefore, historical. The spirit individuates in time and as time. Or maybe we can say that the Spirit is time as per the last paragraph of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “Die Zeit ist der Begriff selbst, der da ist”:

Time is the concept itself that is there and which presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition; for this reason Spirit necessarily appears in time, and it appears in time just as long as it has not grasped its pure concept, i.e. has not annulled time. It is the outer, intuited pure self which is not grasped by the self, the merely intuited concept; when this latter grasps itself it sublates its time-form [*hebt seine Zeitform auf*], comprehends this intuiting, and is a comprehended and comprehending intuiting. Time, therefore, appears as the destiny and necessity of spirit that is not yet complete within itself [*der nicht in sich vollendet ist*].²⁶

The Concept does not have a pre-given form; the Concept is not a mold that imposes itself on raw material in order to realize itself; the Concept realizes itself as time and in time. In this sense, time is the Concept itself, while the Concept is not time but rather a time with its time-form sublated. The separation between Concept *and* time does not allow us to grasp either Concept or time fully. The Concept actualizes itself through externalization and internalization. Therefore, it demands time, but it is also precisely time itself. For without such movement, then time would be nothing other than pure becoming (or *Zeitform*, as Hegel terms it). Instead, this becoming is not in itself contingent, but it cannot proceed without contingency. Contingency is what enables it and what it has to overcome with its logic²⁷ until it arrives at the Absolute. It is worth looking at this concluding paragraph of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in detail:

As its fulfilment consists in perfectly knowing what it is, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its withdrawal into itself [*Insichgehen*] in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection [*Erinnerung*]. Thus, absorbed in itself, it is sunk in the night of its self-consciousness; but in that night its vanished outer existence is preserved, and this transformed existence—the former one, but now reborn of the Spirit's knowledge—is the new existence, a new world and a new shape of Spirit. In the immediacy of this new existence the Spirit has to start afresh to bring itself to maturity as if, for it, all that preceded were lost and it had learned nothing from the experience of the earlier Spirits. But recollection [*Er-innerung*], the inwardizing, of that experience, has preserved it and is the inner being, and in fact the

higher form of the substance. So although this Spirit starts afresh and apparently from its own resources to bring itself to maturity, it is none the less on a higher level that it starts. The realm of Spirits which is formed in this way in the outer world constitutes a succession in Time in which one Spirit relieved another of its charge and each took over the empire of the world from its predecessor. Their goal is the revelation of the depth of Spirit, and this is the absolute Notion.²⁸

History, we are told, is the self-knowing of the Spirit. This knowing involves an externalization of the Idea (the living Concept or the life of the Concept). This externalization is not an imprint of the idea on matter, like the instantiation of the Platonic form or the Aristotelian hylomorphism, but rather a constant self-realization of the idea, augmenting its capacity for self-determination. This process of externalization is technical in the sense that it produces technical apparatus, writings, infrastructures, and institutions. This process of externalization is a *tendency*—if we can follow Henri Bergson and André Leroi-Gourhan's use of this term. For Bergson, the *élan vital* is the most fundamental tendency that expresses itself in two other tendencies, namely, instinct and intellect, and the intellect is that which produces tools and produces tools with tools; for Leroi-Gourhan, this fundamental tendency is the externalization of memory qua the liberation of bodily organs. In Kapp, a student of Hegel and the first philosopher who produced a book on the philosophy of technology, externalization is considered as the projection of organs, which will be internalized, and this circular form is that which conditions self-consciousness:

Self-consciousness proves to be the result of a process in which knowledge of an exterior is transformed into knowledge of an interior. This knowledge, turning back toward the exterior and expanding our understanding of it, in turn provides new information about our interior, ultimately producing, in this endless complication of our orientation in the world and of our self-orientation generally, the content of all knowledge [*Wissen*]*—in short, the sciences* [*Wissenschaften*].²⁹

It is, therefore, hard to say that Hegel's is an idealist dialectics in contradistinction to a materialist dialectics because the idea cannot develop without

the material other.³⁰ The negativity in the process of individuation comes not only from the outside but also from the act of the spirit itself, an act that is the potential source of both contingency and negativity. When returning to itself, Spirit has to recollect (*erinnern*) but also to internalize (*er-innern*), to *organize*. The recollection and internalization of that which is externalized partakes of the same act. This act of returning to itself is endless. Like sinking into the night of self-consciousness, it has no end; it is “desire in general.” Desire, for Hegel, is less psychological than it is rational. To desire is to enter into a laborious activity because the object of desire, that is to say, the Absolute, is never given as such and will not be given as such at any moment. Therefore, we see that this returning act of self-consciousness is also endless. Every return to the inner self via the outer actuality is the only beginning of another act starting anew ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow A'$). But this new beginning is one that is richer than the previous one since it is based on a higher degree of self-consciousness ($A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow A' \rightarrow B' \rightarrow C' \rightarrow A''$).³¹ The aim of individuation is the absolute concept or absolute knowing.

§6. World Spirit as Planetary Thinking and the Place of Reason in History

It is worth recalling that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* starts with the question of immediate experience (the here and now of sense sensation) as the abstract universal, and the task of the phenomenology is to clarify how this abstract universal can pass into the concrete universal. Phenomenology is, therefore, the description of the individuation of self-consciousness from the private person to the social class, to a people, and finally to world history. Through a ceaseless return to the self as well as the historical sedimentation of its externalization, world history emerges as the horizon of self-consciousness. The individuation of the Spirit is the becoming of the world, namely, human history. It is “a journey of consciousness,” “a pilgrimage of reason,” or “an odyssey of spirit proper.”³² Hegel’s *Weltgeist* is, therefore, planetary thinking, asserting its foundation entirely on reason. It is a *Geist* that moves dialectically. It is one that is able to comprehend not only the human world but also cosmic existence. World history is, therefore, nothing but proof of dialectical reason. Reason plays a fundamental role in Hegel’s philosophy of history because reason is, at the same time, the *cause*, the *effect*, and the *solution*. World history is also *known* and *made visible* by dialectics—in the sense that dialectics is central to the

political epistemology that is capable of knowing the Absolute. While the planetary did not appear to be a major problem or concern in the nineteenth century, since the twentieth century, it has become a key question and one that must be revisited.

In Alexander Kojève's infamous reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, he takes the lord and bondsman dialectics and understands it as the motive of history: history could be seen as a constant struggle for recognition. This struggle for recognition also follows the logic of dialectics; that is, it always begins with a historically constructed, priorly given contradiction that then, in turn, sublates it. The lord and the bondsman represent an inequality in which the self-consciousness of the lord is the being in itself and for itself, while that of the bondsman is being in itself as bondsman and being for the lord out of the fear of death. The fear of death for the bondsman maintains the unequal relation between them. However, the bondsman, through his work (the negation of the thing), gains a self-consciousness of being independent, while the lord recognizes that he depends completely on the bondsman, who has been serving the mediation between him and the thing. Mutual recognition is now demanded since the bondsman likewise has to be recognized, and the lord also wants to be recognized by a similar or higher social class. Work here is that which transforms the relation: work is also presented as a tendency of negation, that is, the motor of the dialectics.

The Spirit's individuation follows dialectics and culminates in the self-consciousness of different historical protagonists. After the section on the lord and bondsman, Hegel continues with the world spirit of stoicism, skepticism, and unhappy consciousness. Stoicism, we are told, "as a universal form of the World-Spirit" is principally a phenomenon born of a time of "universal fear and bondage" because it sees the truth in thinking itself and therefore refrains from the otherness. It is also precisely because of this that it was also "a time" when "universal culture . . . had raised itself to the level of thought."³³ Freedom of thought is itself an abstract freedom because it escapes the other (i.e., external reality) and withdraws into itself. It is an "incomplete negation of otherness [*unvollendete Negation des Andersseins*]." Therefore, we see that for Hegel, skepticism redirects the stoic, independent consciousness to confront the other and imposes negativity on it. Skepticism gains its self-consciousness by causing otherness, which appears in the first instance and claims to be real, to vanish. In comparison with stoicism, which withdraws into thought itself, skepticism

negates the otherness in order to be self-content. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, consciousness progresses according to its degree of maturity and independence. In comparison with stoicism and skepticism, the unhappy consciousness advances beyond the confinement in thinking itself, characteristic of stoicism and the renouncement of the externality of skepticism. It arrives at a moment of consciousness where it affirms the other without recognizing the other as the other of the self or itself as the unity of both. This is also, for Hegel, the passage to Jewish consciousness. In Judaism, a proto-model of the dialectics of the lord and the bondsman plays out,³⁴ where a duality of extremes develops in which essence is beyond existence and God outside humanity (the immutable); this is said to leave humanity stranded in the inessential. In Christianity, a unity between the immutable and the particular is called forth through the figure of Christ as God incarnate, namely, that in this experience, the immutable is unified in the particular and the particular with the immutable; however, such unity pretending to be a happy union is, in fact, another unhappy consciousness, because both the immutable and the particular still remain an “other.” For this reason, Jean Wahl claims that Jesus is still a Jew, and his effort to reunite is, first of all, an act of separation:³⁵ “Hegel strove to describe this unhappy consciousness that is the Christian and romantic soul . . . since the Jew does not have the privilege of unhappiness or that he shares it with the soul who is most completely opposed to him.”³⁶

In general, we could probably say the unhappy consciousness is tragic in the sense that it is a necessary stage toward freedom, a stage where the contradiction between the self and the other, the law of the family and the law of the state, the mortal and God come to the fore.³⁷ The tragic nature of Judaism and its continuation in Christianity is not the same as that of Greek tragedy, not only because, as Hegel says, Christianity is a religion of pain,³⁸ but also because it is not able to overcome the contradiction and to reunite each half: every attempt at reunification is only a step toward separation. The unhappy consciousness is a decisive moment for the subsequent formation of a community because it constitutes the unity of the split, and for Hölderlin and Hegel, such a reunion was precisely the desire of the Germanic nation.³⁹ This phenomenon, or rather this tendency, repeated itself on the eve of the second world war and continues to be repeated today among the extreme Right and the neoreactionary by figures such as Peter Thiel and Nick Land.⁴⁰ The unhappy consciousness feels without understanding the participation of the universal in the particular,

leaving this contradictory duality insurmountable since it is still only a feeling, not a concept:

The object of unhappy consciousness . . . is the unity of the immutable and the specific. But unhappy consciousness does not relate to its essence through thought, it is the feeling of this unity and not yet its concept. For this reason, its essence remains alien to it. . . . The feeling of the divine which this consciousness has is a shattered feeling, precisely because it is only a feeling.⁴¹

We may follow Wahl that “abstraction is the synonym of unhappiness,” and for the spirit in order to have true joy, it has to move toward the concrete universal. This consists of Hegel’s historical analysis but also the aim of his own project—to search for a true union beyond the unhappy consciousness that continued into modern times and that expresses itself in the separation between the church and state, and the state and civil society. Empty abstraction, or semblance (*Schein*), like all immediate phenomena, must be put to the test as an initial movement of the Concept. The test, dialectics, leads to the self-consciousness of the Concept, the Idea. Self-consciousness means reason is aware of itself, not only in an abstract way, like when one is conscious of oneself without which one could not even think and speak (*in itself*), for to speak is to be conscious of what one spoke and going to pronounce next; but also that reason is able to know and determine itself in the most concrete form (*for itself*), namely, that the progress of reason (or the journey of *Geist*) is at the same time rational (*vernünftig*) and effective (*wirklich*):⁴² rational because it is not contingent or arbitrary, effective because it actualizes (*verwirken*) itself in reality, both as *movement* and as *externalization*.⁴³ “It [reason] lives on itself, and it is itself the material upon which it works. Just as Reason is its own presupposition and absolute goal, so it is the activation of that goal in world history—bringing it forth from the inner source to external manifestation, not only in the natural universe but also in the spiritual.”⁴⁴ If there were no discourse of reason, there would not be any philosophy of history in the West, including a philosophy of world history, because a philosophy of history already presupposes reason instead of utopia as its end. This explains why a philosophy of history only appears after the Enlightenment, the Age of Reason. World history is the unfolding of reason’s self-searching and becoming self-consciousness; in order to do so,

it has to act in reality, and through acting (*wirken*), it returns to itself in order to set off again. Reality (the Other) is the being of the externalization of the spirit, but it is, at the same time, the world in which the spirit is necessarily situated (the Other without which the Spirit is nothing). The world complexifies and concretizes as and through the actualization of spirit, through its self-knowledge and self-willing. Thus, we may say that reality is one aspect of actuality insofar as reality is its externalized part, and actuality is the possibility of reality insofar as actuality is conditioned by a pregiven setting—be that a concrete situation or a historical context. The spirit seen in this way is negentropic in the sense that it creates order through the “extraordinary force of the negative.”⁴⁵ This order is not arbitrary. Namely, it is not whatever order, but rather rational order. This doesn’t mean that every act is rational since, as is apparent, we encounter all kinds of stupidity every day. However, insofar as the process of actualization is a recursive movement, it is capable of self-correction in the next cycle of actualization. Therefore, what is rational is preserved, and the passive part of actuality, or that which is not considered rational, is dissolved (*löst sich auf*) in the next movement.⁴⁶

The world civilization, one may say, is the technical retention of the spirit’s memory of this world, which allows it to act on it recursively. We may follow Hegel and call it second nature. Second nature is not limited to habits, for habits are mostly sustained by technical objects—for example, writing or dining equipment. The world civilization as second nature is that which allows the spirit to progress since the spirit inherits it, and it is that which the spirit has to fight against in order to be free—not to be incarcerated in a mere in-itself, and never an achieving self-consciousness.⁴⁷ There is no definite goal that can indicate the end of history since such a goal is always only a stepping stone toward the Absolute. The Absolute is not a road sign which indicates a definite destination; instead, it is only an indication of the culmination of the self-knowledge of the “infinite actual spirit.”⁴⁸ We might say that the Absolute is, therefore, a *threshold* beyond which the spirit sets off on a new journey, indicated by a new direction and desire for higher spiritual achievement. In the *Philosophy of Mind*, the Absolute is the moment when the Other no longer poses as a limitation to the Spirit but rather presents itself as the means toward the absolute being-for-itself of the Spirit, which we could find in art, religion, and philosophy.⁴⁹ The Absolute spirit is distinguished from the subjective spirit (anthropology, phenomenology, and psychology) and the objective spirit

(right, morality, ethics), being a *distinct* moment of the development of the Idea. I emphasize a “distinct moment” instead of saying a “later moment,” as is the first impression when reading Hegel, where one might think that the absolute spirit is what succeeds the subjective and objective spirit. However, in terms of temporality, both successiveness and simultaneity coexist; otherwise, Hegel’s own recursive logic would be only in service of linearity. The absolute spirit is always already at work (*energein*) with both subjective and objective spirit; only its culmination is not yet experienced. It is called absolute because it is the moment when the spirit is no longer dependent on anything other than itself, namely, that the spirit is able to grasp itself as what it is:

The absolute Spirit is the *identity*, of the being eternally in itself, as the returning and returned into itself [*ebenso ewig in sich seiende als in sich zurückkehrende und zurückgekehrte Identität*]: the one and universal *substance* as spiritual [*geistige*], the judgement in itself and in a knowing [*in sich und in ein Wissen*], for which the substance is (known) as such [*für welches sie als solche ist*].⁵⁰

Independence also means that the spirit is able to *free* itself *from* the world and *in* the world.⁵¹ This act of freeing (*Befreiung*) is the freedom of the spirit but also its capacity to free contingency as contingency, that contingency is no longer arbitrary but rather rational. The absolute Spirit is the manifestation of the recursive movement of the subjective spirit (characterized by *Erinnerung*) and the objective spirit (characterized by *Entäusserung*), and it *appears* as the last moment of the development of the Idea. In the three absolute spirits, philosophy (concept) is the unity of the previous two, art (sensation, intuition) and religion (representation). According to Hegel, the life of the spirit is only known retrospectively since philosophy is always a latecomer. For Hegel, the Absolute, however, is not the end as it is often read after Kojève. Since for Hegel, world history—the becoming self-consciousness of the planetary—holds no particular consciousness as its goal:

World history does not begin with any conscious goal, such as we find in the particular spheres of human life. The simple social instinct of human beings already involves the conscious goal of securing life and property and insofar as this life in common has

already come into being, that goal is extended further. . . . That goal is the inner, indeed the innermost, unconscious drive; and the entire business of world history is (as we said) the work of bringing it to consciousness.⁵²

There is something uncanny here since history, the actualization of the human spirit as time in space, is driven by something unconscious, something that we thought we had grasped, but it might be only partial, for self-consciousness is a process without a quantifiable endpoint. However, this self-knowing is far from aleatory; it is rational, namely, logical. For example, the formation and development of a *Volk* could be read as the self-knowing process of its spirit whose *archē* is already inscribed in the oracle of Delphi; it is also thanks to this self-knowing, that the *Volk* develops a program that preserves its people and continues to survive. In this process, only what is necessary will be preserved; those that are merely contingent and dangerous for the preservation of the people will be eliminated—for example, the irrational demand of the king, the unethical exploitation of one class over the other, or the unjust appropriation of private property. By the same token, when we consider the world civilization, there must be, so postulated by Hegel, a spirit that will be common to all cultures and realizes itself by unifying them. The world spirit is in itself a rational force which constantly actualizes itself in its own self-knowing and in the world: “Reason recognizes that which is true, which is in and for itself, that which has no limits. The concept of the spirit is returned into itself. In this movement spirit makes itself its own object. In this way progress does not proceed into infinity. There is rather a purpose, namely, the turn into itself.”⁵³

The diversity of the world civilizations will finally subsume themselves to reason because those who are left behind will not be admitted; the irrational will not be able to survive in world history. The movement toward the concrete universal also means the subsumption of planetary diversity to a logic that governs the synchronization and the unification of all different civilizations. The world spirit is time itself; it conquers space via synchronization. The synchronization process is made possible by technology and assured by reason—namely, reason is the *necessary* measure of progress. Certain particularities might stay, but they still have to follow the dialectical logic. Contingency can only have a place in history after it has become necessary. A civilization that wishes to resist reason will only be conquered and then dismantled. Places that have nothing to contribute to

the spirit will be eliminated—for example, Siberia, if one is to recall what Hegel writes about it: “First, the northern slope, Siberia, must be eliminated. This slope, from the Altai chain, with its fine streams that pour their waters into the northern Ocean, does not at all concern *us* here; because the Northern Zone, already stated, lies out of the pale of History.”⁵⁴ Who is this “us” that bears the interests of the spirit? Europe, or more exactly, Western Europe or the Prussian state? Indeed, Hegel excludes both the Poles and the Slavs from the spirit’s journey toward the Absolute even though he noted that the former liberated Vienna from the Turks and the latter had been drawn into the sphere of occidental reason.⁵⁵ Instead, both Poles and Slavs, not regarded exactly as belonging to the West, were only contingent to world history. The same goes for both Asian and African civilizations. We read in *Philosophy of History*, “the History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning.”⁵⁶ §393 of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind* remains a controversy regarding Hegel’s racism and the privilege he gave to the Caucasian race: “It is in the Caucasian race that mind first attains to absolute unity with itself; here for the first time mind [*Geist*] enters into complete opposition to naturalness, apprehends itself in its absolute independence, breaks free from the oscillation between one extreme and the other, achieves self-determination, self-development, and thereby produces world-history.”⁵⁷

It is beyond our intention to criticize Hegel’s analysis of the African spirit as childish and the Asian spirit as being stuck in post-childhood because the intention is to interpret Hegel’s texts philosophically, as they deserve, though it does expose the fundamental question concerning the place of reason in Hegel’s philosophy, for reason is *universal* but also *homogeneous*.⁵⁸ Reason will have to expand itself when it wants to become truly planetary. What Hegel insists is that European rationality will one day reign the world because it will be proven to be the most rational and mature spirit in and of the entire human history. The European spirit, not through its geography but its rationality, is destined to be the universal spirit, and it will synchronize those “local spirits” (*Lokalgeister*) which struggle to be in history and to be part of history.⁵⁹

The principles of the spirits of peoples [*Volksgeister*] are in general restricted on account of their particularity, for it is in this particularity that, as existent individuals, they have their objective actuality and their self-consciousness. Their deeds and destinies in their

relations to one another are the manifest [*erscheinende*] dialectic of the finitude of these spirits, and out of it arises the *universal spirit*, the *spirit of the world*, free from all restriction, producing itself as that which exercises its right—and its right is the highest right of all—over these finite spirits in world history as the *world's court of judgement*.⁶⁰

World history does not belong to a particular people, but rather its subject, the world spirit, emerged in the dialectical movement of particular and finite civilizations. The world spirit is the self-legitimizing juridical body that justifies the progress of world history. This was the ending paragraph before Hegel entered into the last pages of the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* dedicated to the question of world history, also a transition from his critique of right in 1821 to his lectures in the next years on the philosophy of history. Today we might question if this *Weltgeist*, which Hegel sees in Napoleon mounted on his white horse in Jena in 1806 just before he sent off his manuscript for *Phenomenology of Spirit* to his publisher, is not simply a bias or even an illusion. As Nietzsche wrote in the *Untimely Meditations*, for Hegel, “the summit and end point of the world process coincided with his own individual existence in Berlin.”⁶¹ The Prussian *Volksgeist* is the world spirit observed by Hegel at the University of Berlin and now, perhaps, from the Dorotheenstadt Cemetery. Alexander Kojève once thought that Hegel’s identification of Napoleon with the end of history was a mistake; it wasn’t Hegel but Kojève himself who saw the end of history, and it wasn’t Napoleon but Stalin who indicated the completion of the *universal and homogenous state*.⁶² However, Kojève is much more sympathetic to Hegel, asking why it was Hegel and not the others who recognized Napoleon: “Why then is it Hegel who attains it, and not some other of his contemporaries, all of whom know that there is a man named Napoleon? But how do they know him? Do they truly know him? Do they know what Napoleon is? Do they understand him?”⁶³

It was only Hegel who recognized Napoleon, not as a Frenchman who conquered Jena or a short general riding a white horse, but rather as *world soul*, which proves his philosophy of history. It was later the Franco-Russian Hegelian Kojève who would claim to be the only philosopher after Hegel capable of recognizing the Absolute through Stalin. The history that we know is a past that belongs to the human being. For sure, there is time and space before human beings, but it is not a history of the spirit; as Hegel

writes, “World-history is not connected with revolutions in the solar system, any more than the destinies of individuals are tied to the positions of the planets.”⁶⁴ The movement of the spirit is guided by reason and realizes itself through the collective actions of the human species; the reverse is also true, that human actions emerge from the becoming self-consciousness of the spirit. Contra Nietzsche, this historical process, thus conceived by Hegel and realized at the same time through European colonization, is but another proof of the dialectical logic and carries Hegel’s world process beyond Berlin.

Thus, in *The Concept of the Political* (1932), Schmitt defended Hegel against Nietzsche: “The question is how long the spirit of Hegel has actually resided in Berlin. In any event, the new political tendency which dominated Prussia after 1840 preferred to avail itself of a conservative philosophy of the state, especially one furnished by Friedrich Julius Stahl, whereas Hegel wandered to Moscow via Karl Marx and Lenin.”⁶⁵ The world spirit and the Western philosophy of history are inseparable. We may even say that Hegel’s spirit has reached far beyond his own imagination. We mentioned earlier what Hegel had to say about Siberia. Siberia, however, was not really eliminated; for it maintained its vitality through Moscow. And after Schmitt’s writing, the world spirit traveled further, this time from Moscow to Beijing, the world’s second-largest economic force and probably the only force that can resist the USA in the 21st century. The German writer Moritz Rudolph wittily described Hegel’s *Weltgeist* as salmon. Salmon go back to the same stream from where they were born to, spawn and die. Hegel said that the *Weltgeist* began in the East, voyaged to Greece, and then to the Roman Empire. And in Hegel’s time, it traveled to the Germanic people. This journey is, at the same time, a becoming self-consciousness as well as a liberation—a moving toward concrete freedom. Like salmon, it is now going back to where it began, where it will probably end. Hegel’s *Weltgeist* has traveled through the entire world, from the East to the West, and back again, having briefly visited the USA after Hegel’s death (Hegel had already anticipated the triumph of the New World).

This rhetoric risks being a cliché, fitting the typical discourse of the “decline of the West” as was claimed a hundred years ago by conservatives such as Oswald Spengler. More recently, we also often hear political slogans such as “decline of the west and rise of the East” claimed by Eastern nationalists, self-fulfilling the history of the world spirit or encounter

science fiction novels such as *The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from The Future*, where the destruction of the West occurs due to climate change.⁶⁶ But maybe one could say, later with astonishment, that by the cunning of reason, the *Weltgeist's* tour to the East was actually only a disguise, because the West is its true home! Was not Marx already a forerunner when he saw the realization of the Hegelian *world spirit* as a *world market*, which “chases the bourgeoisie over the whole terrestrial globe.”⁶⁷ Today one could equally argue that the world market is a necessary stage of dialectics. Philosophy is always a latecomer; its understanding of history is always only an *après coup* or a *Nachträglichkeit*, as Hegel writes in the introduction to the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, that the owl of Minerva only spreads its wings when the dusk falls. But one thing is at least clear, the thinking of the *Weltgeist*, be it a traveller or a synchronizer, is a planetary thinking. This does not mean that all historicist discourses are planetary thinking; for if the *Weltgeist* is a planetary thinking, this is because it considers the world not as a passive being to be conquered, but rather it understands the world as an organism that will finally arrive at its own completion: self-consciousness.

The question of self-consciousness was never posed in China, according to Hegel, since in China, the spirit and nature still needed to be clearly distinguished, one from the other. Religion and state did not have the same sense in the West as they did in China since the individual's true faith, Hegel claims, “can exist . . . independently of any external compulsory power,” while this was not the case in China.⁶⁸ Therefore, one can also claim by following Hegel that a political state is not possible in China. Hegel's explanation of Chinese philosophy in his lectures on the history of philosophy remains the most superficial of understandings, something we would not find today from any Westerner interested in eastern thought. This is partly due to the lack of literature available in Hegel's time, as well as the turn against a hyperbolic admiration of Chinese culture that occurred in the eighteenth century, especially after the Macartney Mission—the first British envoy to China and whose trade proposal was arrogantly declined by Emperor Qianlong. The description of the *Gua* in the *Iching* (Hegel calls the speculative philosophy of the Chinese)⁶⁹ as the “most abstract,” and “most superficial categories of understanding”⁷⁰ could also be seen as a retort against the romantic perception of China in the past century in Europe, especially in the work of Leibniz.

Today, it is probably too easy to prove that Hegel is fundamentally

Eurocentric—for clearly, he was. And it is also not at all difficult to renounce Hegel's concept of history as being Eurocentric—for it patently was. However, this is not what makes Hegel relevant, and it is also not what makes Hegel less interesting today. On the contrary, what is intriguing in Hegel's political philosophy and philosophy of history is this primordial form of planetary thinking, which is not simply an ideology like those culturalist slogans we see today in the mass media but rather a systematic discourse on the self-consciousness and self-determination of the world and how it is driven and determined by reason.

§7. Freedom as the Drive of the Transitions of Political Forms

Why should we pay attention to Hegel's planetary thinking today if it is true that the *Geist* is no longer in Berlin and that European thinking, from the perspective of today's geopolitics, might be considered provincial? If there is a *Weltgeist*, and if world history is the pursuit of freedom and reason, then should one be an optimist about the future of humankind and the future of the planet? Or is such faith in *Weltgeist* fundamentally just a theology with a secularized camouflage, as Rudolf Haym reproached Hegel of doing in his influential *Hegel und seine Zeit*, that Hegel's *Weltgeist* is merely an ideological trick?⁷¹ Or, as Marx argued, that it is clearly just pantheist mysticism?⁷² Hegel's planetary thinking—his concept of the *Weltgeist* and its relation to world history, is still pertinent, even today, and we could argue that it is becoming even more so. In this faith, planetary freedom is promised: "This is one of the truths of speculative philosophy: that freedom is the only truth of Spirit."⁷³ The individuation of the Spirit will lead to freedom as something necessary—namely, without which there is no individuation. Contrary to Kant's nature that guarantees perpetual peace, Hegel's reason intends to be the guarantee of planetary freedom. Philosophical contemplation of history is only valid when history is seen as the history of reason: "It is only fitting and proper to philosophic contemplation for us to take up history at the point where rationality begins to enter into worldly existence, not where it is still merely an unrealized possibility; that is to say, history must begin where rationality makes its appearance in consciousness, will, and action."⁷⁴ However, this faith in reason is by nature like the faith in God; that is to say, such a theory of planetary freedom is also a theodicy. History is eschatological in the sense that the endpoint—if it exists, is the moment when the spirit realizes its

promise of freedom. We have to step back by asking what is meant by freedom for Hegel and *what planetary freedom might look like* if we were to follow and prolong Hegel's analysis of the world spirit. Without answering these questions, we are still far from justifying that Hegel is one of our contemporaries.

For Hegel, the fundamental question of right is freedom, as he wrote in §29 of *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, "Right [*Recht*] is any existence at all which is the existence [*Dasein*] of the free will. Right is, therefore, by definition, freedom as Idea." We might even generalize Hegel's claim that the presupposition of freedom in right is fundamental for all European constitutions, including those of ancient Greece, while the association of right and individual freedom only came after the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Hegel lived in modern times when individual freedom gained unprecedented significance in politics. For the Greeks, freedom was the cornerstone of the polis, and vice versa, the polis being the condition of freedom; thus, the political thought of Plato and Aristotle are philosophies of the polis, and for the latter, a man without a polis is like a hand without a body.⁷⁵ However, what the Greeks meant by freedom is not the individual freedom that we understand today as that which is granted to every citizen as a right, but rather the freedom of settlements, the slave trade, and participation in popular assemblies, as is revealed by Socrates's response to the challenge of Glaucon and his brother Adeimantus in the *Republic*, where Socrates imagines the founding of a city governed by the aristocracy, starting from a group of five people, and gradually adding populations with different craftsmanship. The polis, in Socrates's speech, consists of different *technai*, each of which defines the role of the citizen as well as demands his excellence or virtue. Socrates's rhetoric against Thrasymachus's challenge on the value of justice is very much based on his analytic definition of the polis according to *technai*—for example, wage earnings and money making is a *technē* that should be distinguished from the *technē* of shepherding. By confusing shepherding and money making, farming and guarding, the city fails to understand that each individual citizen can only be good at one *technē*, and excellence or virtue is an expression of the mastery of a particular *technē*.⁷⁶ When every citizen performs the *technē* that defines their identities, e.g., a carpenter achieves the excellence of his own skill, then it is justice. However, the meddling and exchange between different *technai*—for example, a carpenter who does the job of a shoemaker—is considered injustice.⁷⁷

For sure, one should distinguish the philosophy of the polis in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, for the latter consists of a series of attacks against the former. Aristotle also gives a lower status to mechanical laborers by questioning if they could be counted as citizens⁷⁸ because a citizen is strictly defined as a person who "shares in the administration of justice and in the holding of office."⁷⁹ It is beyond our purpose here to investigate Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and his writings on the classification and ranking of knowledge into theory, praxis, or technics as well as its relation to the classification of goods in the *Politics*;⁸⁰ however, we might still be able to claim, as Joachim Ritter does, that for Aristotle, a citizen who is able to be self-dependent is free, namely, to realize the purpose of nature in his own praxis; that is to say, he is able to realize the humanness of being a human (i.e. the human *ergon* or *ergon* in general).⁸¹ In other words, the question of justice is modeled on appropriateness, exemplified by the realization of one's own *nature* and one's individuality in the polis through *habits* and *reason*. The three elements, nature, habits, and reason, are the means by which individuals become good and virtuous.⁸²

Greek freedom as a political right is fundamental to the polis since it is preventative to the formation of tyranny.⁸³ The political right introduced by Solon spread out to the poleis, followed by the reorganization of the *phylai* by Cleisthenes after getting rid of the tyranny of Peisistratus.⁸⁴ We know that Cleisthenes divided Attica into three regions (Athens and its surrounding, coastal areas, and hinterland), each having ten groups of demes; he then selected each deme from three regions to be linked together to form a *phyle*. That is to say, each *phyle* is a mixture of demes from three different regions. This reorganization, first of all, broke the *synetheiai hai proteron* (customary and familiar connections), and it, at the same time, also destroyed the foundation of aristocratic influences (*Areopagos*).⁸⁵ This institutionalization reintroduced the civic right or equality of male adult citizens and created a civic time and civic space. This is also the moment of the emergence of isonomy, namely, the equality of citizens (notably except enslaved people, foreigners, children, and women)⁸⁶ be that nobles or middle class, as well as the conviction that the government of the city belongs to the citizens, as is claimed by Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet, in order "to establish isonomy is to place *arche es to meson*."⁸⁷

This emphasis on individual freedom also brought about a crisis of individualism—or in the words of Nietzsche, an extreme Apollinarism—and disrupted collective and communal life. The conflict between individualism

and collectivism become a thematic of the tragedy. We are also told that it is during the governance of Cleisthenes that a theatre in honor of Dionysus was built at the base of the hill of the Acropolis, and the choruses were reinstituted of having fifty men and fifty boys from the ten demes (to sing songs in honor of Dionysus).⁸⁸ The birth of individualism in ancient Greece expressed in the art and affirmation of the individual right was countered by the communal life of the polis.⁸⁹ The polis assumes an identification between private individuals and citizens, but it also indirectly undermines the degree of individual freedom; as Hegel found in Plato, there is an exclusion of particularity from the state.⁹⁰ This parochial nature of the polis was also cause of the instability of the universal that it attempted to establish.⁹¹

From Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, we know that at least around 400 BC, the selection of the civil servants (boule, court juries, etc.) was made through a machine known as *kleroterion*, a simple mechanical random generator, which chooses members of the council randomly from the pool of applicants. The destiny of the polis fell on the shoulder of the citizens and conditions the ethical life of the Greeks. If, for the Greeks and the Romans, individual freedom was still limited to privileged individuals, Christianity opened a path to the universal, to the equality of everyone to be beloved by God.⁹² It is only since the French Revolution that freedom has become the right of every individual. The French revolution was a monumental event for Hegel where its new individualism couldn't be countered by the political form of the polis or that of Christian religion. The scientific revolution and industrialization also meant that philosophy became detached from theology and metaphysics, and the private individual from the citizens of the polis. Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* could be read as a response to this event, asserting the new task of philosophy.⁹³ Industrialization brought Aristotle's definition of the freeman to an end. Because the free citizen, for Aristotle, is one who is able to develop their talent, to realize themselves. However, in the industrial epoch, as it was later more clearly pointed out by Marx, the workers had to alienate their labor time in order to make a living—such alienation led to the rise of the most dangerous class for Hegel, the rabble (*Pöbel*), the unorganized or inorganic mass. Therefore, for Hegel, in modern society, the concept of freedom is no longer the same. In the past, self-restriction was largely due to the moral pressure of the collective and the communitarian norms (especially as a member of the church); this is now fading into the background.

It would, for sure, be incorrect to argue that individual freedom only appeared in modern times in the West; instead, what is meant here is that the history of political thought in the West is tantamount to a history of individual freedom and the political form associated with it. That is why Hegel claims that subjective freedom and individual conscience did not appear in China, while it was a mode of freedom that advanced in India. In the *Philosophy of History*, we read Hegel's distinction between substantial freedom and subjective freedom:

substantial freedom must be distinguished from subjective freedom. Substantial freedom is the abstract undeveloped Reason implicit in volition, proceeding to develop itself in the State. But in this phase of Reason there is still wanting personal insight and will, that is, subjective freedom, which is realized only in the Individual, and which constitutes the reflection of the Individual in his own conscience. Where there is merely substantial freedom, commands and laws are regarded as something fixed and abstract, to which the subject holds himself in absolute servitude.⁹⁴

Subjective freedom and individual conscience could be characterized as the right to will—one that is promised in the social, economic, and juristic domains. Such right to will is also the beginning of the multiplication of arbitrary demands, an entropic expansion of individual desire, which leads to a new social and economic structure beyond the family, namely, civil society. In ancient Greece, civil society was a slave to political society;⁹⁵ in the Middle Ages, the two converged and identified with each other; the Reformation introduced private judgment of the reading of the Bible as a form of individual freedom, which was succeeded by the Enlightenment—in this sense Protestantism for Hegel preceded the Enlightenment. Thereafter, reason instead of virtue becomes the cornerstone of modernity;⁹⁶ the separations between the state and religion and civil society and the state constitute the condition of a new political thought.⁹⁷ Civil society has to be overcome by the state because, although it is based on rights, it aims at nothing concrete because it is driven and maintained by the interests of certain individuals and social groups. Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* is not a defense of right, but rather a critique of right (or the idea of right), a critique against the arbitrariness of individualism and the domination of self-interest in civil society. Thus, Hegel, throughout the book,

clearly distinguishes freedom (*Freiheit*) from arbitrariness (*Willkür*), an entropic becoming, in order to, step by step, redefine freedom in the modern state:

We can recall that in the *Philosophy of Right* a similar progression has to take place. In this science too, we begin with something abstract, namely with the concept of the will; we then proceed to the ensuing actualization of the still abstract will in an external reality, to the sphere of formal right; from there we go on to the will reflected into itself out of external reality, to the realm of morality, and thirdly and lastly we come to the will that unites within itself these two abstract moments and is therefore concrete, ethical will. In the sphere of ethics itself we then begin again from an immediacy, from the natural undeveloped hope that the ethical mind has in the family; then we come to the rupture of the ethical substance in civil society; and finally we reach the unity and truth, present in the political state, of those two one-sided forms of the ethical mind.⁹⁸

This order from family to civil society and to the political state is nothing temporal but logical. This transition also does not mean that family and civil society are canceled, but rather they are sublated in the sense that they are unified into the political state. Kojin Karatani was right to have pointed out that it was Hegel and not Marx who grasped the unity of the Capital-Nation-State.⁹⁹ We will have to confront Karatani's reading of Kant and Hegel later; here, we want to raise the question concerning what is meant by unity.

Karatani uses Borromean rings to demonstrate this unity; however, this is not sufficient because not only are Borromean rings too static but also the relation between each ring depends on an overlap. This defect of describing the trinity in terms of the Borromean ring is precise because Karatani's readings of Kant and Hegel miss the organicity that already concerned Kant in "The Architectonic of Pure Reason" regarding purposiveness and that Hegel developed beyond the three *Critiques* in his own philosophical project. We recall that in "The Architectonic of Pure Reason," Kant distinguishes understanding from reason and concepts from ideas. The task of the architectonic was to search for a systemic unity of reason, which couldn't be resolved by the technical unity applied in the schematization of the understanding. Kant relies on the notion of

purposiveness, i.e., teleology, to arrive at the a priori “systematic unity” instead of empirical “technical unity.”¹⁰⁰ The search for purposiveness could be achieved by the reflection internal to the organic form. To some extent, we can say that Hegel took up Kant’s task and demonstrated how unity could be performed by dialectics.¹⁰¹ In Hegel’s *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, unity is exemplified in the idea of freedom. One tends to think that freedom means the liberty to choose, to speak, to write, to act, and its political form is what has been known as a liberal democracy. For Hegel, if freedom is thought of in this way, it remains arbitrary. While I have the right to say whatever I like, this right is still abstract and formal, and the act that is permitted by this right likewise remains arbitrary. Opposed to this arbitrary willing of right are laws and customs, those which forbid certain acts. For example, national security laws criminalize those opinions that are considered harmful and dangerous to the state. Laws are often considered to be necessary because, without them, chaos would reign. Without the laws of nature, nature would be completely opaque, and there would be no natural science since the sciences are built on laws that are, in principle, necessary; thus analogically, without social laws, society might fall into chaos, what Hobbes called the “war of all against all.” That is also to say, the determination of the will is only brought into *objective existence* through the state and its juridical system.¹⁰²

Therefore, the definition of sovereignty is not a question of territories and borders since it doesn’t yet touch the core of the concept; borders or boundaries only set limits to the applicability of the juridical system concerning rights. When a law is imposed, it means that a space is defined beyond which this law will no longer be applicable; and within this defined space, certain acts are not permitted. Otherwise, they will be criminalized and punished. Therefore, the question of space is twofold since, on the one hand, there is the spatial and territorial limit (i.e., land, sea, and air), and on the other hand, there is the limit on the actualization of the will. The superficial opposition between freedom and laws (of nature) persists and presents itself as a paradox: for if freedom means arbitrary (because it depends on individual will) and law means necessary (because it is grounded), then should individual freedom subordinate itself to the laws of nature? This contradiction or tension between freedom and law is an eternal subject in Western thought, and it once again gained momentum around the French Revolution. Rousseau’s *Social Contract* was one of the key efforts to reconcile the opposition between law and freedom, which we

can also find in Kant.¹⁰³ If, in Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, one finds on the one hand that the modern state promises a concept of right that implies individual freedom as historical progress, then on the other hand we see that this right is at risk of becoming merely arbitrary (abstract right) and therefore harmful to the political state. If this is the case, then we can read the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* as an attempt to resolve this contradiction systematically.

§8. Recursivity of Reason and Freedom in the Modern State

Before we see how this contradiction is potentially resolved by Hegel, we might want to understand how the opposition between law and freedom was phrased by Kant in the famous third antinomy of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. We know that the antinomies arise out of cosmological inquiries. Kant formulates it in this way “if the conditioned is given, then the whole sum of conditions, and hence the absolutely unconditioned, is also given” (A409/B436). This touches each antinomy, but in particular, the third antinomy, which concerns freedom and the laws of nature. Given an event, one can trace its causes infinitely because there is always a preceding cause to every conditioned event. And if the absolutely unconditioned exists (searching for it is the task of reason), then is it independent from causal laws or nature? If there is such a being beyond all causal laws, is it the source of freedom whilst being at the same time absolutely necessary (the question of necessity is that of the fourth antinomy)? Let us look at the thesis and the antithesis more closely:

Thesis: The causality according to laws of nature is not the only causality, from which the appearances of the world can thus one and all be derived. In order to explain these appearances, it is necessary to assume also a causality through freedom.

Antithesis: There is no freedom, but everything in the world occurs solely according to laws of nature.¹⁰⁴

Here Kant didn't yet deal with the question of freedom from the perspective of practical reason, but from theoretical reason. Kant resolves the antinomy through his transcendental idealism by associating the thesis with the thing-in-itself and the antithesis with the phenomenon. While the thing-in-itself might be free from the causalities of nature, all appearances none-

theless must follow the laws of nature. Therefore, according to Kant, both thesis and antithesis are to some degree correct. Kant's resolution of the antinomies in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not yet satisfactory because Kant is only attempting to bypass mechanism, and not overcoming it. In order to avoid contradiction within linear reasoning, Kant has to separate two realms so that even though both thesis and antithesis violate the principle of contradiction, insofar as they are limited into two completely separate realms, this contradiction is only one by appearance, that is, not a real contradiction. That is to say, Kant resolves it by drawing boundaries but not going beyond the boundary. This is one of the principal reasons why Hegel criticizes Kant's study of the four antinomies as suffering from a lack of depth. It is only in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and more specifically later in the *Critique of Judgment* that Kant brings in recursive reasoning, which resolves the antinomy in a more sophisticated manner—namely, the categorical imperative and reflective judgment.¹⁰⁵ However, for Hegel, this decisive act in Kant's later philosophy still suffers from the incapability to go beyond subjective representation: "If, in the concept of the faculty of reflective judgement, it does get to the Idea of mind, subjectivity-objectivity, an intuitive intellect, etc., and even the Idea of nature, still this Idea itself is again demoted to an appearance, namely to a subjective maxim."¹⁰⁶

This statement, on the one hand, affirms the significance of the reflective judgment in the concept of freedom; on the other hand, it reproaches Kant (as well as Fichte) for not having yet reached the concept, and the spirit, as being *in and for itself*.¹⁰⁷ In other words, Kant's concept of freedom (which is equivalent to morality and to the categorical imperative¹⁰⁸) remains too formal and subjective, and therefore not historically and objectively grounded. At the same time, Hegel sees that the antinomy shouldn't be limited to the four cosmological themes that Kant listed; rather, it should be generalized as a philosophical method.¹⁰⁹ We know that Hegel replaces the antinomy with his dialectical method, for dialectics is the Hegelian logic par excellence.

For Hegel, logic is distinguished from nature according to its capacity to handle contingency. Nature demonstrates the weakness of the Concept since it is not able to resist contingency; logic is Concept in its full capacity of reflection, which unifies the in-itself and for-itself. History is contingent, but historicity, the movement of history as Concept, is the opposite. Since a historical event can arrive, be it a war out of the greediness and jealousy of a people, or a natural catastrophe, the logic according to which history

unfolds itself is nothing random because such contingency is always subsumed to a necessity based on the reflection of this accidental and immediate event. Dialectics is a logical operation based on recursiveness. It aims to resolve the antinomy not by exposing the limit of pure reason—for it still leaves the unconditioned as unknown, but rather to demonstrate the possibility of reconciliation—by making disappear those that are contingent and retaining those that are necessary: “Here, as elsewhere, the point of view from which things seem pure contingencies vanishes if we look at them in the light of the concept and philosophy because philosophy knows contingency to be semblance and sees in it its essence, necessity.”¹¹⁰

Dialectics is fueled by contingency (or, more precisely, the necessity of contingency) since without which, it will not move forward—thinking only becomes more concrete when it is tested against contingencies; while moving forward, it will have to sublimate these contingencies, so that only necessity subsists. Dialectics is *prohairesis* (volition) in the sense that it moves from the irrational toward the rational. The passage from arbitrary to freedom is the passage from irrationality and contingency to rationality and necessity, from subjective mediation to restitution of reality. Necessity has two meanings here; firstly, it means that contingency is recognized as that which is opposed to the necessary, and secondly, that the act (*Handlung*) overcomes contingency by either eliminating it or rendering it necessary, like the hero does. A hero is driven by his *hubris*, which leads to crimes and guilt while at the same time it is recognized as being necessary and as honorable.¹¹¹ Freedom is necessary as it is in Spinoza;¹¹² arbitrariness is contingent. For sure, not all acts of will are arbitrary, but they have the potential to be so. Therefore, a critique of right is proof of reason and necessity. Freedom, in this sense, has little to do with having more choices. Even the right to vote, for example, can also be arbitrary. One is given two candidates, and one votes one against another, just as if one were choosing among bags in a shop. Again, elections do not have to be arbitrary, but the act of voting can be purely arbitrary. The right to vote does not necessarily mean freedom; though, without the right to participate, one is definitely deprived of the possibility of freedom. True democracy and the tyranny of the majority refer to the same term. There are ambiguities when one comes to defining these political concepts, and it is precisely because of their ambiguity that reason is put to the test by contingency. The exercise of reason, or self-consciousness, is a tirelessly recursive process. It is certainly not a moment of enlightenment. This tirelessly recursive process characterizes

the movement of the spirit through its contact with and acting on the outer world, what Hegel calls the objective spirit. Consciousness is not to be understood as a substantial entity that has its reality internalized—for example, a microchip, which sits somewhere in the body or like the pineal gland, the soul's seat, in Descartes's mechanized being. Consciousness is a totality of dynamic relations—both internal and external:

Necessity does not become freedom by vanishing, but only because its still inner identity is manifested, . . . Conversely, at the same time, contingency becomes freedom, for the sides of necessity, which have the shape of independent, free actualities . . . are now posited as self-identical, so that these totalities of reflection-into-self in their difference are now also reflected as identical, or are posited as only one and the same reflection.¹¹³

Everything can be contingent, going out for a coffee, losing money, winning the lottery, or even a certain well-respected law of physics, but not everything can be necessary. Especially in the realm of thinking, why would one thought be necessary but not the other? Hesitation means defeat since it indirectly admits the contingency of such a necessity: the decision can also be otherwise. One is often confronted with choices—for example, going to study abroad, emigrating to another country, and so on. These options can be merely contingent when nothing is proven to be rational and necessary. Even the will to freedom can also be arbitrary since it could also be the demand of arbitrariness—for example, to do whatever one wills. What is given by right turns out to be nothing but consumerism, just as Adorno and Horkheimer described in *Dialectics of Enlightenment*. Therefore, Hegel's concept of freedom is not what we understand today as the freedom of speech or the freedom to vote. In fact, today, the opposition between liberalism and authoritarianism becomes an obstacle to understanding freedom. The degree of freedom thus defined tends to treat freedom as quantifiable properties, just like consumer products. Indeed, the demarcation used to characterize authoritarianism and liberalism becomes, at times, arbitrary and dangerous. What is more important is not the capacity to consume but the capacity to decide, that is to say, to think rationally (*vernünftig*).

Hegel's freedom means independence from the Other. However, this independence is not a fleeing from the Other but the overcoming of the

Other.¹¹⁴ Freedom is situated between arbitrariness and unconditional obedience; it denotes rational self-determination. Freedom is the possibility of reason since reason can go astray and fall victim to arbitrariness or its opposite. Freedom is necessity because, insofar that it is not arbitrary, it must have a reason to be. Absolute obedience is not the opposite of arbitrariness but is its conceptual twin since both are dogmatic and hence not conscious of their own conditions. Planetary freedom means, first of all, the *triumph of reason* since when every individual and group is able to exercise their own reason without violating the other's freedom to reason, we move toward the realization of freedom. However, this exercise of reason does not simply subjectively conform to moral laws; rather, it is ethical (*sittlich*) in the sense that it is also made possible by and through its own externalization, namely, objectification and institutionalization.

If we understand freedom in terms of choice (or varieties of choice), we are still lingering between intentional participation and pure consumption—and it is precisely in this context that mass media has its great influence today. And if we understand democracy as the freedom to choose our representatives, then such democracy is only valid when it is seen from the perspective of civil society, in which the individual's interest and preference are prioritized. The fundamental quest in Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* is to reconcile the universal and the particular, the communal and the individual, duty and right. It performs a logical demonstration of the organic structure and legitimacy of the state as the necessary and logical development beyond family and civil society. Families are private units, while in civil society, they have to engage with each other in different forms of association. That is to say, though the private reason tends to withdraw to itself, in civil society, it is involuntarily re-directed to the public since it cannot avoid the other. Each acts according to its own interest in the form of an individual, family, and/or corporation, which characterizes civil society, a distinctive social force that has emerged in modern times. However, civil society remains arbitrary, therefore, particular, and here comes Hegel's decisive claim that it is only in the state that a unification of the universal and freedom can be attained.¹¹⁵ Hegel's method is neither deduction nor induction but dialectics. This reconciliation finally leads, therefore, to the concept of the modern state as the most concrete outcome of the dialectical movement, which goes beyond the individual, family, and civil society. That is to say, freedom has to be realized through the modern state: "In the ethical essence, the state, nature is

robbed of this power, and necessity is elevated to the work of freedom, to something ethical.”¹¹⁶

Civil society is still too influenced by the interests of different groups and individuals; therefore, it remains arbitrary. Arbitrariness or contingency is precisely that which dialectics takes as an object of operation and that which it wants to overcome. Therefore, the ideal political system should be one that is able to maintain necessities. Family and civil societies are both moments of the Idea. They appear at the same time as semblance and abstract actuality. It is in the political state, through its institution and constitution, that duty and right are unified. To function, such a state cannot be a top-down system because a top-down system is still too mechanical, and it only organizes the upper layers of the system and leaves the bottom unorganized. Likewise, when politics is driven solely from the bottom up, it runs the risk of producing mere rabbles. The ideal state will be able to reconcile top-down and bottom-up organically. That is why we have claimed that the organic model is fundamental to Hegel's political epistemology.

The organism is not only a metaphor here because, as a philosopher, Hegel also develops a dialectical logic to clarify the operation of such organicity. If what characterizes organicity in Kant's writing is the parts-parts (reciprocity) and parts-whole (community) relation (see *Critique of Judgment*, §64), then in Hegel, we might say that it is characterized by self-consciousness, the constant movement to return to oneself and to rationalize oneself. Becoming self-conscious is a recursive movement that unifies structure and operation, self and Other. Dialectics is also a totalizing process: through its contact with the Other, the self develops a strategy that effectively integrates this relation to the Other within itself. In the process of totalizing, only necessity is preserved. The state is considered here the necessary development of the spirit, and the history leading toward the state is also nothing contingent because, while dialectics might allow for the cunning of reason, it will surely not tolerate contingency: “Spirit does not toss itself about in the external play of chance occurrences; on the contrary, it is that which determines history absolutely, and it stands firm against the chance occurrences which it dominates and exploits for its own purpose.”¹¹⁷

The ethical life that is only possible in the state is the promise of freedom. Here, ethical life is distinguished from the moral, as we have shown above. Morality insofar as it has its source in subjective feeling risks being

arbitrary because not all subjects are accustomed to self-reflection; morality is the possibility of internality, and it may not pass into actuality (*Wirklichkeit*). The ethical has its primary source in the Greek *ethos* (customs, habits), which is grounded in the polis—the ethical community (*sittliches Gemeinwesen*).¹¹⁸ The moral is an enterprise of Christianity that gives agency to the innerness of the individual. Throughout the history of philosophy, Joachim Ritter claims, especially via Christian Wolff, ethics is dissolved in the discourse of morality, which in turn becomes a discourse of human nature.¹¹⁹ Kant inherited the Wolffian theory of morality and developed a *subjective reflection* in order to arrive at universal laws.¹²⁰ Hegel's concept of the ethical is not a return to the Greek polis because the city-state is no longer adequate to accommodate the modern principle of individual freedom.¹²¹ Instead, it is the political state that has become the dominant political form of modern times. The ethical is the sublation of the Greek *ethos* and Kantian morality, for although Hegel criticizes Kant's practical philosophy, he nevertheless recognizes the importance of the reflective operation of morality. That is to say, Hegel was searching for a more articulated political form that is able to facilitate an *objective reflection*. On the contrary, the ethical life can only be fully realized in the state: it is neither moral sentiments nor codified rules, but rather it is their unity, like in Sophocles's *Antigone*. The state is not an entity that gives orders from top down, the way that, in mechanism, the spring is the prime mover. The state is a machine that is able to function like an organism constantly striving for a unity; the state is the externalization of the spirit, and it is also the place where the Spirit has traveled across a threshold. Individuation has taken place, and the state indicates metastability in which an organismic operation is attained.

The Organism of the State and Its Limit

Now, if the state is the greatest thing the human being is capable of creating, but only insofar as the state is an organism, then the idea of the state is in effect the idea of the organism, which ultimately means that the idea of the state is the greatest thing that human thought actually can attain. It should also be evident that we are not talking about the concept of the individual organic being as the norm. Rather, we are talking only of the organic idea, the being-organism, organicity—the supreme, divine life-source of every single organic structure.

—Ernst Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*

In the previous chapter, we suggested reading the philosophy of the spirit as a planetary thinking by analyzing the recursive and dialectical movement of the spirit. We ended with Hegel's claim that the political state is the culmination of the spirit and that only in the political state is freedom possible. What is this claim grounded on? At the beginning of the previous chapter, we started with the distinction between mechanism and organism, and following what was initially carried out in *Recursivity and Contingency*, we showed that the organic condition of philosophizing has, since Kant, become the paradigm of modern philosophy and that Hegel is probably the most systematic thinker in this line of thought.¹ If Hegel was able to make the claim about the political state, it is precisely because the development of the modern state demonstrates its organicity, and such organicity presents a superior form of organization. The state, as a political form, in this sense, is the *organic projection* of the community where reason and effectivity coincide.

In comparison, J. G. Fichte's concept of the state remains totalitarian in the sense that Fichte idealizes a police state in which "every citizen has his own determinate status, and the police know fairly well where each one is at every hour of the day, and what he is doing. . . . In such a state where everything is ordered and runs according to plan, the police will observe

any unusual activity and take notice immediately.”² The Fichtean state seems intolerable for Hegel because it is fundamentally mechanical—in the sense that everything runs according to plan, and that which deviates will be considered unusual and suspicious, very much in the same vein as the surveillance societies in which we are living. The mechanical nature of the state does not allow anything arbitrary to take place, and in this sense, it is not dialectical because dialectics do not start with pregiven rules but rather with the contingent. In an unpublished fragment on the German constitution dated from 1802–3, we can read Hegel’s clear critique of the mechanism of the state:

It is . . . a basic prejudice of those recent theories which have been partially translated into practice that a state is a machine with a single spring which imparts movement to all the rest of its infinite mechanism, and that all the institutions which the essential nature of a society brings with it should emanate from the supreme political authority and be regulated, commanded, supervised, and directed by it.³

The “single spring,” the authority, is that which “regulates, commands, supervises, and directs.” This mechanistic principle was shared by both Frederickian Prussia and Jacobin France, in the eyes of Hegel.⁴ In this mechanical model, any deviation from the norms and rules will lead to chaos in the mechanical system, like in a mechanical clock: when one part fails, the whole clock stops. Organicity, as demonstrated in *Recursivity and Contingency*, demands, contains, and eliminates contingency—without which there would be no movement and, therefore, no difference. Organicity redistributes the powers of the state and tames its tendency to subordinate everything to a single authority.⁵ Organism as the antidote of mechanism not only is the means by which Hegel reproaches his contemporaries but also takes up a prominent place in his philosophy of history. This is also why Hegel could claim that the idea of the state found in Europe was, in fact, absent in China: “What China lacks is the feature according to which the idea of the state is concrete in subdivisions internally determined and *organically* articulated as distinct domains. . . . The entirety of the state is something substantial; however, in particularizing itself it divides itself into multiple particular occupations that constitute the *organic* branches

of the state.”⁶ As we can see from this quote, that which distinguishes the state in China from that in Europe is its organicity—whether Hegel is correct is another debate.⁷ In the next section following the above quote, Hegel writes about the caste system in India, where, again, according to Hegel, it is possible to see the emergence of organicity. In this chapter, we direct our inquiry toward Hegel’s political epistemology and its implication in his state theory. The young Marx, in his critique of Hegel’s philosophy of right, was relentless with Hegel’s formulation, for it seemed to Marx that Hegel’s concept of organicity is ambiguous, and Hegel also failed to articulate the difference between the organicity of the political state and that of the animal. This confrontation between Hegel and Marx will be our entry point into clarifying Hegel’s concept of organicity, however, it must be kept in mind that such an elaboration of his thought is, at the same time, the exposition of its limits. To expose Hegel’s limits, we have to respect his theory and read him carefully. This limit, as we will show, is also the limit of the postulation of the political state as the culmination of the spirit, since for the spirit to progress, the state will have to be sublated.

§9. Spirit and the Organic Becoming of the Externalized

In the introduction to his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel states, “The state is the Idea of Spirit in the externalized form of human will and its freedom.”⁸ The Idea is distinguished from the Concept, for the former is the life of the latter. A living (*lebendig*) concept is one that is able to reflect into itself, to be conscious of itself. How can the Concept of State be conscious of itself? Or, in general, what does it mean when a concept is conscious of itself? We might say that the concept, when reflecting on itself, complexifies and concretizes itself while at the same time eliminates what is merely contingent. However, not all concepts concretize in time; it is only possible when the concept is dialectical in nature. The state as an idea of the spirit is modeled on an organicity or an organismic logic. There are two key terms here that we need to explore in order to shed light on the notion of planetary freedom: *externalization* and *organicity*. As Hegel writes in *Philosophy of Mind*: “In the philosophical vision of spirit as such, spirit is studied as self-instruction and self-cultivation in its very essence, and its exteriorizations [*seine Äußerungen*] are stages in the process which brings it forward to itself [*seines Sich-zu-sich-selbst-Hervorbringens*],

links it to unity with itself [*seines Zusammenschließens mit sich*], and so makes it actual spirit.”⁹ Externalization is the essence of the objective spirit, in which the spirit no longer maintains an intimate relation to nature in terms of dependence in all aspects, but rather the spirit is able to intervene in and transform nature. Spirit is objectifying nature, but at the same time, it is also objectified as the externalized being, and it is only under this condition that the spirit marches toward its historical moment of being Absolute. Here, we shall focus on the question of externalization rather than that of normalization, as Hegel scholars Robert Pippin¹⁰ and Christoph Menke have done excellently. In their way of dealing with normalities and normalization, they see praxis or social participation as the fundamental medium that articulates the historicity of freedom. The reason why we take externalization as our point of departure is that the discussion concerning praxis often undermines the question of technology, without underlining that social participation as a phenomenon is constantly produced by technological advancement. In contrast to Karatani’s reading of Hegel through the concept of exchange, which was based on his critique of Marx since Marxists tend to reduce economy to modes of production and consequently ignore the modes of exchange,¹¹ we aim to show that there is a much more sophisticated concept of externalization in Hegel’s theory of the state. If Hegel was able to grasp the trinity of capital-nation-state through the dialectical method, it is precisely because, first, organicity is the aim of dialectics, and second, the modern state as the logical consequence of the development of family and civil society sublates both sentiment and interest, both of which are not yet objective and rational.

For Alexandre Kojève, the concept of work is at the core of Hegel’s dialectics. But Kojève did not use the word *externalization*; instead, he uses *travail*, a word that can mean both *labor* and *work*. *Travail* is a technical activity since it externalizes through negation (for example, in cooking, one negates the raw materials) and, at the same time, exercises through tools (which is also a product of externalization). For Kojève, work also means *Bildung* in a double sense:

Work [*travail*] is *Bildung*, in the double meaning of the word: on the one hand, it forms, transforms the World, humanizes it by making it more adapted [*plus conforme*] to Man; on the other, it transforms, forms, educates man, it humanizes him by bringing him into greater conformity with the *idea* that he has of himself

[*l'idée qu'il se fait de lui-même*], an idea that—in the beginning—is only an *abstract* idea, an *ideal*.¹²

The key to the dialectics between the lord and the bondsman is externalization. Though it must be said that one can read it in many different ways—for example, as a type of psychological play. As a play, it starts with extreme intensity, which Hegel calls absolute fear (*absolute Furcht*).¹³ While Hegel only discusses absolute fear in the last paragraph of the section on the lord and bondsman, it nonetheless constitutes the ultimate condition of the becoming independent of the self-consciousness of the bondsman. There is a necessity for this extremity to trigger a transformation within the self-consciousness of the bondsman. What exactly does this mean? This absolute fear is directly associated with the *Bildung* of the bondsman, who is the true laborer. The bondsman was able to transform his fear of the lord into the love of the object. The object is that which establishes a link between the lord and the bondsman, and outside of this setting—for example, in the form of a commodity—it is also that which relates the factory worker and the consumer. Through the perfection of his own creation, the bondsman transforms the relation between him and the lord. The lord's relation to the object is only one of satisfaction, in which the object is merely consumed, purely negated. The bondsman is able to establish a fundamentally different relation to the object: to make use of that which is externalized (*organon*) and to externalize, to produce *ergon* (work). This relation between work in the form of product and reason was clearly stated in his early lectures, the so-called *Jenaer Realphilosophie* (1803–4) or the Jena Writings: “Reason, after all, can exist only in its work; it comes into being only in its product, apprehends itself immediately as another as well as itself.”¹⁴

Externalization (as both negation and production) and Internalization (as both recollection and integration), *travail* and *Bildung*, consist of the recursive process of the spirit and the possibility of progress. In the words of Kojève, it is due to the “creative education of Man by work (*Bildung*)” that history is created.¹⁵ Modern states correspond to a particular moment of externalization (e.g., institutionalization) and internalization of the spirit (e.g., education).¹⁶ That is to say, it is a historical-social accumulation of the Idea's externalization and the Idea's self-knowledge. The state is one of the most advanced forms of externalization of the spirit, following the perpetual dialectical movement of the Idea. The state, for Hegel, stands

as the highest form of the realization of the objective spirit after its basic constituent components, such as family and civil society:

The transition from a family, a horde, a clan, a multitude, etc., to political conditions is the *formal* realization of the Idea as such in that people. Without this form, a people, as an ethical substance—which is what it is in itself—lacks the objectivity of possessing for itself and for others a universal and universally valid existence in laws, i.e., in determinate thoughts, and as a result it fails to secure recognition from others. *So long as it lacks objective law and a firm rationality for itself, its independence is formal only and is not sovereignty.*¹⁷

The formal corresponds to the objective spirit, which could only come into being through externalization. The political form exists as an externalization qua objectification without which there is no sovereignty; for example, the polis would not be possible without the *nomos* in its written form and without institutions. We might want to consider it as a first criteria of Hegel's concept of sovereignty. Hegel uses the word *Entäusserung*, normally rendered as "alienation"; it is sometimes confused with the term *Entfremdung*, which is often translated as "alienation" in Marx's writings. *Entäusserung* is a term that has been used in the German language since the fourteenth century to translate the Latin legal term *alientio*, the right to transfer (*übertragen*) a property from one person to another. It is also translated, for example, by Roger Garaudy, as "externalization," understood as the actualization of the Idea as a material being, an objective spirit.¹⁸ The meaning of the term *Entäusserung*, therefore, falls into two different, converging domains: alienation in relation to labor and private property, and technical objects that are the other of the Idea and which give objectiveness to the Idea understood as a necessary element of the dialectics. Externalization is part of the life of the Idea, without which the Idea cannot be realized and cannot maintain its liveliness (*Lebendigkeit*). Through its externalization, which could also be interpreted as the cunning of reason, the Idea dialectically moves toward the Absolute, the true universal. Truth for Hegel means the identification of concept and existence—that is to say, when the concept of the Idea (as Marx writes, the Idea to the concept is like the father to son) is proved to be effective in outer reality.

The theory of externalization in Hegel's thought allows the develop-

ment of a theory of technology and civilization.¹⁹ The externalization in the form of different institutions and powers (executive, legislating, and the Crown) would not give rise to the modern state if they did not exhibit the maturity of the Spirit, namely, an organic mode of organization. This is what Mumford missed in his *The Myth of the Machine*, where the megamachine of the state is only seen from the lens of mechanism and absolutism. That is also why it is necessary to look at different political forms from the perspective of political epistemology. In comparison with the polis that Aristotle talks about in *Politics*, which consists of a population of 10,000 people, by 1816, the Prussian state already had a population of 10,349,031 people, which then doubled by 1871.²⁰ This means that the political form of the Greek polis is no longer applicable to the organization of the Prussian state. Hegel's concept of the state is the realization of an organization that is able to effectively correct itself and resolve polar conflicts, which, following Catherine Malabou, could be called *speculative automatism*.²¹ In Hegel, the term *organization* functions as the synonym of *organism*. Mechanism is immediate since it lacks reflection. It is like a given phenomenon—one accepts it as it is; we take the here and now as the universal since the here and now remains always the same, no matter which moment it refers to. In this sense, the here and now is only an abstract universal, without content. Speculative reason sets off from the doubt of sense perception, but unlike the Cartesian reason, which retreats to the ego itself and finds the absolute there, the Hegelian reason confronts the immediacy in order to make it conscious of itself as Concept. Reason, the other name for self-consciousness, is here open to contingency and contradiction. Organism provides a model for explicating self-consciousness, but it is not any old living being one may find in nature; it is a mechano-organism, which Hegel also calls “absolute mechanism.” The section titled “Observing the Organic” in *Phenomenology of Spirit* reveals the “astonishing” similarity between self-consciousness and organism. Hegel writes: “This is just how self-consciousness is constituted; it likewise distinguishes itself from itself without producing any distinction. Hence it finds in the observation of organic Nature nothing else than a being of this kind.”²²

§10. Organism of the State versus Organism of the Animal

If freedom is realized in the state, it is because the state is *compatible* with freedom, that it possesses an organic form instead of a mechanical force

that merely enforces laws and dominates the people. Axel Honneth calls it “social freedom,” in the sense that for such freedom to be possible, it has to be based on a mutual recognition (*wechselseitige Anerkennung*) between the self and the other via an institutionalized medium, be that a family or a market.²³ This means that my purpose and the other’s purpose could be mutually compatible through the mediation of our social status (or estates [*Stände*], in Hegel’s terms, meaning “particular systems of needs”) as well as institutional constraints. Here lies the fundamental difference between Hegel and Kant, in the sense that in Kant, we do not see the significance of institutions,²⁴ namely, the externalization of the spirit, while in Hegel, institutions are indispensable. However, not all institutions are equal. For example, the prison as an institution is different from a family (though in certain cases, they might be similar); therefore, not all institutions can serve the purpose of mutual recognition. The question that then arises is: What kind of institution could be considered ethical according to this logic? Honneth speculates that in an ethical institution, its relation to its participants moves in the form of a *spiral*, which has no point of rest: “[That] the moral institutions first make individual autonomy possible, whose activities can then, in turn, lead to a revision of these institutions, in such a prefigured spiral movement, it is no longer possible to find the point of rest which should exist in a firmly established system of ethical institutions.”²⁵ Honneth admits that he is uncertain whether this is the precise image that Hegel had in his mind when discussing institutions.²⁶ We would also agree that both reciprocity and the spiral movement are, to a certain degree, essential properties of the organic form that we have been attempting to sketch and that we take to be fundamental to Hegel’s conceptualization of an ethical institution, especially in the case of the political state. However, the “negative feedback” that Honneth describes sounds rather simplistic from today’s perspective, especially when we consider that most public services provide feedback channels for citizens. The essential question to be raised, then, is, How did Hegel demonstrate that the state is the ultimate ethical institution?

When we enter the third part of Hegel’s *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* on the state, we have already sublated the arbitrariness of the individual will, of the self-interest of the family, and of civil society (in which, as Hegel rightly observes, the free market will lead to social injustice); in the end, the only nonarbitrary entity left to consider is the state. If freedom is only realized in the Hegelian state, it is because the state presents an

organo-mechanism that effectively undermines arbitrariness and allows a mode of civic participation that prioritizes self-consciousness over self-interest. The state is spiritual in the sense that its own operative reflection is inseparable from that of the individuals. In an Aristotelian language, such operative reflection is *phronesis*, a virtue that is distinguished from the self-actualization of the individual citizen.²⁷ At first glance, one might think that Hegel is rejecting all forms of contingency since he wants to overcome the arbitrariness of the individual, the family, and civil society; the truth is, however, that contingency functions as the test (*épreuve*) for necessity. Because the organism is a living being, insofar as it is vigorous (*lebendig*), it demands contingencies, without which life would be no different from a mechanical machine. If Hegel's philosophy is characterized by a conceptual organicism, it is because the Idea is *lebendig*; it is the concept in dialectical movement. The dialectical movement involves contingency—otherwise, it would be preprogrammed and therefore repetitive. The concept, when it sets itself into movement, actively engages with contingency, be it out of its will or from the external environment, to make contingency a stepping stone toward the concrete universal, the necessity. It is also this organicity present in the state that differentiates the moral and the ethical, as Ernst Cassirer summarizes: “‘The State,’ says Hegel in his *System der Sittlichkeit*, in which he first introduces his sharp distinction between *Moralität* and *Sittlichkeit*, ‘is the self-certain absolute mind which acknowledges no abstract rules of good and bad, shameful and mean, craft and deception.’”²⁸ This is because, in the state, abstract rights and abstract rules are not only insufficient but also problematic because they are mechanical and, therefore, vulnerable to contingency. The state presents a different dynamic of self-consciousness, which is no longer mechanical but rather an organo-mechanism. This organicity can be identified with the following: first, the consciousness's movement toward being in itself and for itself is modeled as an organic process, in the sense that the organic is posed as opposite to the mechanic; second, the universal, insofar as it exists, exists not as a static substance, as that which doesn't change throughout eternity, but rather as that which is always in a state of permanent reflection, such as is the form of thinking; third, the reflective form does not exist only in mind alone, but rather the reflective structure is at the same time an exteriorization (*Entäußerung*) and an internalization (*Er-innerung*). It is through this organic form that the Spirit actualizes itself in laws and institutions as it moves toward a higher sphere. The

political state is, therefore, the historical product and a milestone of this movement. It is a culmination because it presents itself as an objective and effective organic unity and totality:

The state in and for itself is the ethical whole, the actualization of freedom; and it is an absolute end of reason that freedom should be actual. The state is spirit on earth and consciously realizing itself there. In nature, on the other hand, spirit actualizes itself only as its own other, as spirit asleep. Only when it is present in consciousness, when it knows itself as a really existent object, is it the state.²⁹

As I have tried to show in *Recursivity and Contingency*, Hegelian philosophy is an affirmation of an organic logic, which is intimate to nature, but at the same time, it overcomes nature since nature is its other while it sleeps! The state, which is the actualization of ethical life, is a different realm from nature; it is culture, the self-realization of the spirit, though the word *culture* only appears twice in *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. What does the organicity of the state consist of, and what might guarantee freedom in such an organicity? Below is the most direct and obvious passage from the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, where Hegel explicitly describes the state as an organism:

The state is an organism, i.e., the development of the Idea into its differences [*Der Staat ist Organismus, das heißt Entwicklung der Idee zu ihren Unterschieden*]. Thus these different sides of the state are its various powers with their functions and spheres of action, by means of which the universal continually engenders itself in a necessary way; in this process it maintains its identity since it is presupposed even in its own production. This organism is the political constitution; it is produced perpetually by the state, while it is through it that the state maintains itself [*Dieser Organismus ist die politische Verfassung; sie geht ewig aus dem Staate hervor, wie er sich durch sie erhält*]. If the state and its constitution fall apart, if the different aspects of the organism break free, then the unity produced by the constitution is no longer established. . . . The nature of an organism is such that unless each of its parts is brought

into identity with the others, unless each of them is prevented from achieving independence, the whole must perish.³⁰

The state *is* an organism in the sense that all its parts form an organic whole; all parts are identified with the state as a unity; no part is independent from each other. This may sound rather vague today, and Hegel is not the first to have made such a claim. Rousseau before him had already made similar statements in a text published in the *Encyclopedia* with the title “Discours sur l’économie politique (1755).”³¹ The difference is that for Rousseau, this comparison remains a rhetorical metaphor, but for Hegel, it is a philosophical method. As an organism, the state is also a living being, but also more than a living being, because it is where “the universal continually engenders itself in a necessary way.” In other words, it does not generate “the particular,” like an animal that might grow a bit day by day, with more hair one day or darker skin the next; it is the self-generation of the universal in the sense that it is the actualization and concretization of reason. This organism *is* the political constitution: the various powers of the state are regulated and brought together into an organic unity by the political constitution. In his commentary on this paragraph, the young Marx made the following remark: “It is a great advance to consider the political state as an organism, and hence no longer to consider the diversity of powers as [in]organic. . . . Accordingly, the bridge to the political constitution does not go from the organism of the Idea and its differences, etc., but from the presupposed concept of the various powers or the organism of the state.”³² While “organic” is written in the manuscript available to us, this is most likely a typo, that is, the opposite of what Marx wanted to write, namely, *inorganic*. In what sense is it an advantage to consider the political state as an organism? Didn’t Adam Müller and many others also frame the state in terms of organisms? After his praise of this theoretical advancement, Marx asks what the differences are between the organism of the state and the organism of the animal (*tierischer Organismus*). If Hegel could not explain the *differentia specifica* between the organicity of a state and that of an animal, then such a difference would be without meaning. Marx further asks why then did Hegel not claim “This organism is a solar system”?³³ Marx’s attack raises many questions regarding his own take on it, but his explanation certainly is not more satisfactory than Hegel’s: “In truth, Hegel has done nothing but resolve the constitution of the state into the universal, abstract idea of the

organism; but in appearance and in his own opinion he has developed the determinate reality out of the universal Idea.”³⁴

Marx reproached Hegel for presenting a formalization without being able to give any concrete content—Hegel’s speculative thinking ended in a preformed schema.³⁵ The reproach is harsh because it is difficult, if not impossible, for a philosopher to outline a complete theory of the state or of a revolution; not even Marx himself managed this. What Hegel claims about the organism of the state has to be further interpreted. Retrospectively, the work of Ernst Kapp seems to have responded to Marx’s question of Hegel’s claim regarding the organism of the state.³⁶ Kapp was a geographer who was influenced by both Carl Ritter and Hegel. Kapp, in his *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology* (1877), developed what he calls “organ projections.” The subtitle of the treatise is “for the history of development of culture from a new point of view.” This new point of view that Kapp proposed suggests that all the tools, instruments, and even institutions are projections of organs. This projection constitutes one of the most important parts of the self-consciousness of the human being. Human beings, through organ projection, transform and conquer nature.

There is an organology at play in Kapp’s concept of the tool, meaning that this or that tool or machine, no matter how mechanistic it is, presupposes an organicity without which it would not be invented and used. In other words, tools are the *organized inorganic*. Kapp uses the concept of organ projections to understand the emergence of technology and civilization, which range from simple tools to steam engines, railway systems, and finally, the state. In the spirit of Hegel, Kapp treats the state in the last chapter of the book as if it constitutes the highest form of organ projections. According to Kapp, the political state is “an organism unconsciously proceeding from the work of the human hand and the human spirit,” and “the bodily organism is the natural state.”³⁷ In a sense, just as Schelling claims that the *Geist* is the invisible nature and nature is the visible *Geist*, Kapp suggests that the bodily organism is the visible state, and the state is the invisible bodily organism. In other words, the human body is the archetypal image of the state.³⁸ In his *Der konstituierte Despotismus und die konstitutionelle Freiheit* (Constituted despotism and constitutional liberty, 1849), a volume that led to his exile in Texas, Kapp compared despotism with mechanism and freedom with organism: “The more mechanically a state becomes governed, the more despotically it is governed; the more organically a state governs itself, the freer it is.”³⁹ In his *Elements of a Philosophy*

of *Technology* (published twenty-eight years later), the state is opposed again to mechanism, and mechanism is described as the obstacle or even an illness to be overcome:

It is therefore the task of the state to ward off mechanical disruptions and to maintain overall organic activity in an uninhibited flux. Mechanism is a drain on the organism, just as illness is a drain on health; mechanical deterioration and organic revitalization exist in inverse proportion. In the state, healing is achieved through work, but only through the kind of work that preserves and enhances vital powers, just as medicaments that are at the same time nutriments promise to do the most for the ailing body.⁴⁰

The preservation of the organic being of the state is where work is valued. The health of the state is measured by its resistance against mechanism. Though the bureaucracy of the modern state is often compared to a machine, thus the word *state machine* is contrasted to *state reason*, the state, according to Kapp, “no matter if it is still imperfect or even deteriorating, remains an organism and is never a machine.”⁴¹ Kapp’s characterization of the state as an organism from the point of view of anthropogeny is a justification of the state as the highest form of externalization. Kapp significantly developed the technological and the organological dimension implicit in Hegel’s thought. While Kapp’s speculative theory of the state affirms the superiority of organism over mechanism, he did not explain, at least not satisfactorily, the difference between the organism of the state and the organism of the animal.

In a sense, the Hegelian state still remains a mysticism and an abstraction. We will, therefore, have to go further into what Hegel was really aiming at when arguing that the state *is* an organism. *This* organism is the product of the Idea, and in the case of the organism of the state, it is the reciprocity between differentiated powers within the state and the individuals. However, these features could also be found in a mechanical state, in the differentiation of powers in different institutions regulated by the constitution. Organism, for Hegel, is the concept that passes syllogistically through three determinations: *sensibility*, *irritability*, and *reproduction*.⁴² But to what extent, then, is the organism of the state different from the organism of the animal? One can try to make analogies between the animal and the state

in terms of these three determinations, but such an analogy will remain a mere metaphor and thus futile. Hegel had already made a comparison between the animal and the human in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*:

The animal finishes up with the feeling of self. The instinct of Reason, on the other hand, is at the same time self-consciousness; but because it is only instinct it is put on one side over against consciousness, in which it has its anti-thesis. Its satisfaction is, therefore, shattered by this antithesis; it does indeed find itself, viz. the End, and likewise this End as a Thing. . . . The organism shows itself to be a being that preserves itself, *that returns and has returned into itself*. But this observing consciousness does not recognize in this being the Notion of End, or that the Notion of End exists just here and in the form of a Thing, and not elsewhere in some other intelligence.⁴³

The distinction between the organism of the state and the organism of the animal consists in the fact that the organism of the state contains the Notion of End not in the thing (for example, in its institutions) but rather in an End as the realization of freedom, which cannot exist as a thing. Marx was very clear that Hegel's real interest was not the philosophy of right but rather logic. Hegel's theory of the state is nothing but proof (*Beweis*) of the realization of his logic instead of the other way around.⁴⁴ It is precisely the question of logic that distinguishes Hegel's organism of the state from the organism of an animal, namely, the difference between logic and nature. This must be strictly distinguished from the analogy between the state and organism discussed by Kant and later explored by Ernst Haeckel from a biological perspective, since, for the latter, the complex multicellular organism was also compared to the federal states.⁴⁵

As we pointed out earlier, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel identifies a similarity between self-consciousness and an organic structure and operation,⁴⁶ for self-consciousness is itself a logical form of life. However, self-consciousness is not the same as organic nature. Nature, as we know in the *Encyclopaedia*, is contrasted with the spirit in terms of their strength of Concept. The Concept in nature is feeble in general since it gives rise to monstrosities and fails to *incorporate* and *rationalize* contingencies. Therefore, it mutates into varieties of irregularities. The Concept in spirit is also alive; however, it is logical, and therefore it resists mutations: "Nature in

itself, in its idea, is divine; but in its existence it does not conform to its Concept. . . . Nature has, therefore, been described as the defection of the Idea from itself—the idea being in this shape of externality inadequate to itself. . . . It gives away to accidentality and chance; it cannot in all its particular determination be penetrated by reason.”⁴⁷ As we read here, the Idea and its externalization are different. Instead, we find in its externalization defects that deviate from the realization of the Idea. This discrepancy is due to the fact that nature, insofar as it is not logic, is vulnerable to contingency. Two paragraphs later in the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel names this discrepancy the “feebleness of the Concept in nature”: “The feebleness of the Concept in nature in general, not only subjects the formation of individuals to external accidents, which in the developed animal, and particularly in man, give rise to monstrosities, but also makes the genera themselves completely subservient to the changes of the external universal life of nature.”⁴⁸

In the *Encyclopaedia*, the *Philosophy of Nature* ends with the question of the soul, and then it proceeds to the *Philosophy of Mind*, which starts with the subject. That is to say, as Malabou proposes, Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind* is a treatise on *second nature*.⁴⁹ The opening paragraphs of the *Philosophy of Mind* set off by clarifying the relation between spirit, nature, idea, and concept. Hegel writes: “External nature too, like the Spirit, is rational, divine, a presentation of the Idea. But in nature the Idea appears in the element of asunderness [*im Elemente des Außereinander*], is external not only to the Spirit but also to itself, precisely because it is external to the inwardness [*Innerlichkeit*] that is in and for itself and which constitutes the essence of the Spirit.”⁵⁰ Nature is “the self-externality of the Idea” (*das Außersichsein der Idee*),⁵¹ while the essence of the spirit is the inwardness, tirelessly returning to itself, an *Er-Innerung*, that is, as both remembrance and internalization. The animal body, in comparison with plants, exhibits a higher potency of organization, a higher level of interdependence of different members of the body; it is still maintained by necessity but not freedom. The animal organism exhibits an ideal determinacy, and “nothing in it appears as independent.”⁵² This is to say, the organization of the animal is maintained by a necessity, while it is not capable of rendering this necessity contingent—for example, seasonal changes or mutation of the environment—because only the Spirit alone can do it; for example, instead of *adapting* itself to the environment and climate as animals do, it *adopts* them by building houses and farms. The spirit that responds too sensitively

to the cosmic movement only exhibits a kind of illness: "Differences of climate involve a more solid and vigorous determinacy. But the response to changes of the seasons and hours of the day is found only in feeble moods, which can become especially prominent only in illnesses (including derangement) and in the depression of self-conscious life."⁵³ The Spirit is in time and space in a cosmic sense, but it is also above them. The Spirit is a rational being that is not disturbed by thunder and lightning since the latter only appears to be something contingent. Nature is the Other, or a test, a detour, through which the Spirit returns to itself. It is now perhaps possible to answer Marx's question regarding the difference between what Hegel calls organism of the state and organism of the animal. Taking into account the transition from the philosophy of nature to the philosophy of spirit, we might say that Hegel's state is a development of logic out of an inner necessity via its externalization. The state did not come out of nowhere, and neither is it a mutation of civil society; instead, the state arises out of the infinite actual spirit as necessity. Therefore, when Hegel claims that the state is an organism, he specifically means the organismic logic identified in the spirit. To return to the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, what then does it mean that "this organism is the constitution"? If *this* organism is the constitution, then it is not only because the constitution exhibits the reciprocal relations between different powers but also that the constitution is conscious of itself. But how is the constitution conscious of itself? Hegel's statement seems to be even more mysterious than Marx had first thought.⁵⁴

Hegel writes that the constitution is always already presupposed.⁵⁵ Not only is the constitution presupposed, but the state is too—it is not that the state comes out as a product, but rather the state as an idea is already *at work* during the stage of the family and civil society.⁵⁶ Family, civil society, and the political state are the three moments of the Idea, but it is only in the political state that the idea attains both in itself and for itself, and where we can conceive of an "organic unity of political life."⁵⁷ The state and its constitution cannot be separable. The constitution is, however, not something made by a modern state. Instead, the constitution has existed since the beginning. In §273, Hegel claims that questions such as who should have made the constitution (*wer die Verfassung machen soll*) are not valid. The realization of the state is the expression of the self-consciousness of the constitution. The constitution is the definition of the sovereign of the state and the relation between the different powers of the state and its

people in a written (externalized) form: “In any case, however, it is absolutely essential that the constitution should not be regarded as something made, even though it has come into being in time. It must be treated rather as something simply existent in and for itself, as divine, therefore, and constant, and so as exalted above the sphere of things that are made.”⁵⁸ The self-consciousness of the constitution first indicates the consistency between the “character and development of self-consciousness” and the constitution; second, it indicates the path toward the realization of the state as organism. In other words, the sovereignty doesn’t refer to any persona, but rather it is the *organic unity* that is limited to the modern state (or more precisely, in Hegel’s constitutional monarchy); we might consider this another criterion of Hegel’s sovereignty. When there is a change to a constitution, it is not that someone modifies it from without, but rather the constitution demands to update itself. We can understand why Hegel insisted that it is inappropriate to ask who invented the constitution, since the constitution came into being without birth. The state is organic because, with its constitution, it moves toward self-consciousness. Thus, Hegel claims in the Addition to §276, “Much the same thing as this ideality of the moments in the state occurs with life in the organic body.”

One might wonder if the state is really organic since this claim seems to be at odds with Hegel’s endorsement of the crown as the sovereignty of the monarchy. The constitutional monarchy that Hegel endorsed may be the Achilles heel of the self-consciousness of the constitution. One might consider that there is a hiatus between his political epistemology and the megamachine of his time, namely, the megamachine still retains some essential mechanistic features. Marx was relentless on this point in his critique of Hegel because the crown is the *arbitrary will* that is above the executive and legislative powers.⁵⁹ In his commentary to §302, Marx pointed out sharply that “the power of the crown exists only as an extreme, a one-sidedness because it is not an organic principle.”⁶⁰

It might be interesting to recall Jacques Derrida’s interpretation of the circularity of sovereignty in Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*. We have been calling this circularity *recursivity* since we have been emphasizing that recursivity has to be distinguished from the circularity of pure repetition. This recursivity is the operation of the organicity of the state—though both the terms *recursivity* and *organicity* are not employed by Derrida or Tocqueville. Instead, Tocqueville emphasizes a circularity he identified in the people, who are the “cause and the end of all things.”⁶¹

Derrida claimed that Tocqueville “presents this circularity as the effective fulfilment of a democracy that, up until then, had been presented only as a project, an opinion, a claim or allegation, a deferral to later, a utopia, indeed the fiction of a democracy to come.”⁶² It is not our intention to equate the Hegelian state and the Tocquevillian sovereignty of the people; it serves here as an example of how the question of recursivity is fundamental to the concept of sovereignty that we will look into in more detail in the following chapters.

Finally, we may say that freedom is realized in Hegel’s state because the state is organic, and freedom here doesn’t mean whatever might be allowed by law since, in this sense, it is still an abstract right—one follows mechanistically rules and instructions, just as is described in John Searle’s Chinese Room experiment.⁶³ Freedom is what sustains the organicity and reflectivity of the state. It is also that which allows the individual to act according to reason and the internal necessity of reason. Reciprocally, the different powers (the crown, legislating power, and executive power) are what allow such a freedom to flourish by politicizing the estates (*Stände*). It is in this sense that we can understand that Hegel is called a philosopher of freedom as Klaus Vieweg claimed; however, such claim is conditional.⁶⁴ Hegel provided an updated concept of freedom, and like the Greek’s freedom, which was inseparable from the polis and was considered an apparatus preventative to the formation of tyranny, Hegel’s freedom also has to be strictly contextualized in the modern state. The crown is not the real sovereign; the real sovereign constitutes the overlap between the organic unity of the governing and the governed as experienced from the inside and the territorial unity seen from the outside. In other words, when the political form exceeds that of the political state, the notion of freedom has to be reevaluated.

§11. The Impasse from the State to Planetary Freedom

After the construction of a theory of the state, Hegel had to confront a world that consisted of different states; that is to say, he had to confront the exteriority of the state. This confrontation can be seen at work in the last paragraphs of his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. Given the different interests of states, states enter into conflicts, wars, and coalitions. Does, then, the planet need a global governing body like the League of Nations or the United Nations? For Hegel, the answer is no, and he rejects such a

governing body. This raises the rather interesting question regarding why Hegel might have rejected and, further, how different states might maintain stable international relations without falling into such disasters as the two world wars, tragedies the size of which Hegel did not see. In Addition to §259, “The Idea of the State,” Hegel states:

The state in its actuality is essentially an individual state, and beyond that a particular state. Individuality [*Individualität*] is to be distinguished from particularity [*Besonderheit*]. The former is a moment in the very Idea of the state, while the latter belongs to history. States as such are independent of one another, and therefore their relation to one another can only be an external one, so that there must be a third thing standing above them to bind them together. Now this third thing is the spirit which gives itself actuality in world-history and is the absolute judge of states. Several states may form an alliance to be a sort of court with jurisdiction over others, and there may be confederations of states, like the Holy Alliance for example, but these are always relative only and restricted, like any “perpetual peace.” The one and only absolute judge, which makes itself authoritative against the particular and at all times, is the spirit in and for itself which manifests itself in the history of the world as the universal and as the genus there operative.

Hegel makes a difference between individuality and particularity (and this is probably also the misunderstanding of Marx, but unfortunately, Marx didn’t leave us his commentaries on the passages before §260). The state’s individuality—becoming an individual, an adult, departing from the infancy of the Greek polis founded by the hero—is the temporal and logical consequence of the Idea of the state. A particular state, such as Prussia and France, is only one particular case belonging to history. Hegel rejected any international governing body, such as the Holy Alliance created in 1815 after the defeat of Napoleon to maintain peace in Europe, but more fundamentally, its target was Kantian cosmopolitanism.⁶⁵ Hegel affirms the independence of the state and that its relation to other states *can only be external*. This means that, for Hegel, there is an organicity of the state but no organicity among the states. Therefore, the relation between the states risks being purely unorganized. Why does Hegel insist on this point?

Kant sees establishing universal and lasting peace as the “entire final end of the doctrine of right within the limits of mere reason.”⁶⁶ In order to achieve this goal, there is only one way, and that is when the states leave the “lawless condition,” as individuals did by adapting themselves to public laws, and “so form an (always growing) state of nations (*civitas gentium*) that would finally encompass all the nations of the earth.”⁶⁷ Kant is not proposing a universal international law, such as mechanical laws that all members have to subsume themselves to, but rather we have to recognize that Kantian cosmopolitanism is based essentially on two concepts, both of which are fundamental to any form of organicity: community (*Gemeinschaft*) and reciprocity (*Wechselwirkung*). First, the surface of the earth is communally possessed by everyone (*des Rechts des gemeinschaftlichen Besitzes der Oberfläche der Erde*), and since this limited surface is owned by everyone, it follows that the rights of visiting a foreign country should be recognized as a natural law because the borders are only artificial.⁶⁸ Kant’s argument resonates with some contemporary thinkers, such as Bruno Latour, who proposed to think of the planet as that which is shared by everyone and that everyone has to take care of. The ecological crisis is a call for such consciousness, one that should transcend the interests of individual states, especially in view of politicians like Donald Trump and their denial of the urgency of climate change. Second, in contrast to those who tend to make the above-mentioned call a moral necessity, Kant suggests a pragmatic and concrete algorithm: international trade. Trading establishes interactions between different people, and those people who behave poorly will be discredited and refused commercial activities, just as China and Japan did against the colonizers.⁶⁹ Since it would be highly surprising that Hegel didn’t detect this political organicism in Kant’s 1795 “Treatise on Perpetual Peace” or his 1797 *Metaphysics of Morality*, why then did Hegel ignore or reject the potential of developing it further?

Hegel has recourse to the world spirit and reason as the authority that could make juridical decisions upon the states. The aspiration to reason as the “highest court of appeal” is already something we find in Kant and Fichte in regard to the possibility of perpetual peace.⁷⁰ The world spirit is not a hidden spirit observing from behind and intervening whenever injustice happens. The world spirit is not a substance, and it is also not something to which one can pray. Is not naming the World Spirit the ultimate judge the same type of mysticism that Marx had already accused Hegel of? Toward the end of the third part on the state, Hegel writes of “the

spirit of the world, free from all restriction, producing itself as that which exercises its right—and its right is the highest right of all—over these finite spirits in world history as the *world's court of judgement*.”⁷¹ If all states should be considered independent, and if all states claim to embody the world spirit, who is going to sit on the court other than time itself? Again, we read in §324:

With that end in view, Kant proposed a league of monarchs to settle differences between states, and the Holy Alliance was meant to be an institution of much the same kind. But the state is an individual, and individuality essentially implies negation. Hence even if a number of states make themselves into a family, this group as an individual must engender an opposite and create an enemy. As a result of war, peoples are strengthened, but nations involved in civil strife also acquire peace at home through making wars abroad. To be sure, war produces insecurity of property, but this real insecurity is nothing other than a necessary movement.

It seems that here Hegel cannot think of world peace, or more decisively, Hegel rejects the possibility of perpetual peace, not only because, as a true Heraclitean, wars are necessary, but also because Hegel's political thought was born as individualism awakened: Hegel wants to overcome individualism through the state, but he also endowed the state with individualism, in the sense that each state is firmly considered as an individual or a persona. Kant understands universal international law as the desire of reason, while Hegel sees confrontation or conflict as inevitable between individual states. On the one hand, one can say that Hegel is drawn to political realism, in which the play of friend and enemy is inevitable. The state as an individual *must* have its enemy, and a group of states forming an alliance must also have their enemies. Therefore, to speak about perpetual peace is only an alluring moral abstraction, if not an illusion, which Hegel refuses.⁷² Here Hegel anticipates Schmitt since his refusal of an international governing body is later mirrored by Schmitt's own rejection of the League of Nations. Schmitt rejects any planetary governance that is said to exist in the name of humanity because, for Schmitt, whoever talks about humanity essentially cheats⁷³ since humanity is abstract and empty, and as he mocks, since it is empty, it is able to fill itself with hypocrisy.

Having said this, one could argue that Hegel is, in fact, proposing an

idealism through and through since instead of an international governing body, Hegel has recourse to the world spirit as the guarantee of justice and not nature, as is the case in Kant.⁷⁴ The world spirit is not present in the same way as an institution like the League of Nations or the United Nations because the world spirit is always in becoming. And indeed, it is only reason that can judge the progress of history, not history as seen by an individual. Historians provide factual evidence, which then allows the philosopher to reconstruct a history of reason, but not all historians would see the world spirit as Hegel did. In this sense, we encounter an epistemological problem because the world spirit is always known afterward, as an *après coup*; it is for this reason that we always risk being late, sometimes perhaps too late, namely, as a catastrophe. How could we address this ontological dilemma, one where the judge is absent or appears only after the suspects are already sentenced? More significantly, does not the refusal of a world organization equally contain a contradiction since, according to Hegel, reason cannot be separated from its externalization? Here, there seems to be a logical defect that must be addressed. The way to resolve this defect is to rethink the concept of externalization beyond the forms of state institutions, which we will address again in the later chapters of this work. For now, we will stick to Hegel's arguments.

The world spirit is not God, nor is it the mandate of heaven that over-
sees the world, punishing the injustices. We can only give authority to the world spirit when the past epochs of theology and metaphysics are already behind us. We should read here in parallel the historicism of Hegel and Auguste Comte.⁷⁵ It is not without interest to note—though we cannot deal with it here—that, like Hegel, Comte's philosophy also contains a strong organismic element. Comte tried to show how history passes from theology (fictitious state) to metaphysics (abstract state) and then arrives at positivism (positive state). Hegel suggests understanding the passage of the spirit as moving from art to religion and finally to philosophy. Modernity is characterized by this secular and positivist desire to get rid of theology and metaphysics. The world spirit, insofar as it merits the name of reason, can only be the *reflection* of the planet as an organized totality of which states are its members. This reflection is also a synchronization in which the externalization of the spirit becomes organically connected and balanced. These externalizations are institutions, but largely technologies and megamachines, which is often hidden in the discourse regarding institutions among Hegel scholars (for example, in Axel Honneth's effort

to emphasize the cruciality of institutions in mutual recognition). We may speculate that for Hegel, the question of technology is still obscured in the discourse of national economy. Therefore, institutions stand out as the most effective social, economic, and political units; in civil societies, these institutions—for example, functioning representatives of interest groups—have to be limited and balanced. The state, then, is the institution of institutions: it is able to construct an organic unity through its constitution. However, this raises the question: If the world spirit is not an institution, then how can it intervene in the cases of injustice among different individual states? We read in §331 regarding the relation between states:

A state is as little an actual individual without relations to other states (see §322) as an individual is actually a person without a relationship with other persons (see §71 and elsewhere). The legitimacy of a state and, more particularly, so far as its external relations are concerned, of its monarch also, is partly a purely internal matter (one state should not meddle with the domestic affairs of another). On the other hand, however, it is no less essential that this legitimacy should be rendered complete through its recognition by other states, although this recognition requires a guarantee that where a state is to be recognized by others, it shall likewise recognize them, i.e., respect their independence; and so it comes about that they cannot be indifferent to each other's internal affairs.⁷⁶

Here Hegel suggests not mixing up with the internal affairs of the other states because these other states are also individuals, and one shouldn't intervene in the affair of another individual. One may want to ask: Should one recognize a terrorist regime once it has seized power in a country? Even though, in the name of tradition, and despite its promise to become respectable, it still maintains the death penalty, as well as unacceptable measures against females? Once it has been named as a tradition, it is then a part of its culture, part of its particularity. Should not the other states respect its particularity in the name of cultural diversity and sovereignty? While Hegel emphasizes the necessity of recognition—this also indicates the difficulty of the Monroe doctrine, which is regarded as the principle of noninterventionism⁷⁷—if each state remains totally indifferent to each other's internal affairs, values, and judgments, then there is only a set of

Volksgeist. The court of world history would then be full of suspects while being without any judge. If one state were to seemingly go against reason, as in the case of the regime mentioned above, now for reason to claim its universality, something ought to happen. There is a necessity for intervention that justifies labeling oneself as a “just enemy.” The just enemy has morally already won since whoever fights against it is deemed unjust:

The European nations form a family in accordance with the universal principle underlying their legislation, their customs, and their civilization. Accordingly, this principle has modified their conduct under international law in a state of affairs [i.e., war] otherwise dominated by the mutual infliction of evils. The relations of state to state are uncertain, and there is no praetor available to adjust them. The only higher judge is the universal spirit in and for itself, the world spirit.⁷⁸

According to Hegel, then, the world spirit is functioning behind the scenes, and so the process of colonization and modernization is precisely the world spirit at work. Nothing is more cunning than the cunning of reason! The planetary thinking of Hegel is a perpetual war of reason, insofar as reason is conceived as being universal and objective, in the sense that it perpetually transcends the constraints of internal milieus (for example, traditions and customs) precisely in the name of reason. The Hegelian planetary thinking reveals a politics of externalization. That is, what if the external reality that the local spirit confronts does not come from the spirit itself but from other spirits? Will this imported reality elevate the local spirit toward a concrete universal? Or, on the contrary, will it only produce an unhappy consciousness insofar as the self and the other always remain separable—as is the case with Western technology and Eastern thought? It is not easy to ignore Hegel’s aspiration to reason, which, we have to acknowledge, is the cornerstone of Western thought; after all, though Eurocentric, it is a theoretical advancement that renders the West necessary and the rest of the world contingent. However, the question of whether the reason that Hegel saw in Jena and Berlin is still sufficient for today is another matter. Hegel stands as a thinker of the planetary; however, this planetary thinking stopped tragically at the nation-state—the state as the limit of the reason, as seen from Berlin during the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ Hegel’s philosophical construction of the modern state is a logical exercise

that demonstrates its own necessity; however, history also seems to have ended in modern political states as per Hegel's logic. Maybe we can blame those who came after Hegel for not being capable of pushing his dialectics any further. Though one may also argue that Marx, Lenin, and other historical materialists did precisely achieve this. If we look back at where we are today, historical materialism only realized Hegel's Idea by criticizing it. Perhaps Marx and Lenin are, thus, only individual historical figures who followed the dialectical logic of Hegel. Thinking in this way, one may conclude that there is nothing new after Hegel, that Hegel culminates philosophical and historical thinking. This is precisely why Kojève claims that what Hegel saw in 1806 was already the end of history:

The end of the story was not Napoleon, it was Stalin and it was me who would be in charge of announcing it with the difference that I would not have the chance to see Stalin on horseback from my windows, but anyway. . . . Afterwards, there was the war and I understood. No, Hegel has not mistaken, he had given the exact date of the end of history, 1806. Since that date, what has happened? Nothing at all, *the alignment of provinces* [of the empire].⁸⁰

Planetary freedom sets off in Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* and finds its realization in the modern state, seen as a milestone of the Spirit. If we can say, therefore, that the modern state is the limit of reason, it is equally the limit of freedom. It was among the Greeks that freedom became the constitutive force of the *poleis*; however, the *poleis* are also the limit of freedom since beyond that, it is the Persians, the Asians, and the barbarians. That is why history ends in the nation-state, and the quarrel concerning freedom becomes a pure postcolonial narrative. Kojève claims that after 1806, nothing happened. Is it not an exaggeration? He continues: "The Chinese revolution is only the introduction of the Napoleonic Code in China. The famous acceleration of history that we talk about so much, have you noticed that as it accelerates more and more, the historical movement advances less and less?"⁸¹

After the world revolutions, the immediate act of the anticolonial combatants was to establish a nation-state. Paradoxically, the most anticolonial act is also the most colonial one. Hegel's theory of the state extends to the planetary scale through wars and antagonism. History and freedom end in the universal states. The strength of Hegel's theory of the state is that

it is grounded on reason and the dialectical nature of history intrinsic to reason's own existence. In other words, the history of reason and the philosophy of history are unified. Hegel's discourse on freedom and the state is not only the culmination of modern political philosophy but also the justification of the necessity and rationality of the modern state. It also threw other political theories into the shade. The New Confucian philosopher Mou Zongsan recalled that when he first read Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, where Hegel says that "subjective freedom" and "individual consciousness" didn't appear in China, he was rather upset. On the one hand, he wanted to disagree with Hegel, while on the other hand, he also felt that Hegel was right.⁸² In his own *Philosophy of History*, Mou agreed with Hegel's critique and showed in his own reading how the lack of "subjective freedom" and "individual consciousness" didn't produce the Hegelian state in China:

The state must be reorganized into an organic unity through the self-consciousness of each individual before it can be said to be an organic unity. The unification of China in the past was only achieved by conquering, and the individual didn't attain self-consciousness, so it did not become a static unit. And that unity is also unstable and not solid. The state is a cultural concept, a rational product formed by individuals through self-consciousness. It is not a natural object, nor can it be obtained by force.⁸³

Another Chinese philosopher, Zhao Tingyang, proposed to revive the ancient Chinese concept of *tianxia* (literally "all under the heaven") as a system based on "oneness a priori," or what he calls an "integrated world system" in contrast to "a dominating world system" characterized by imperialism.⁸⁴ This model is inspired by the Zhou Dynasty (West Zhou 1100–777 BC, East Zhou 770–256 BC). Given the fact that its history is remote and what is left of its history is fragmentary, it is difficult to judge the claim of Zhao adequately. One rather interesting thing is that, like Karatani, Zhao raises the concept of world sovereignty in contrast to state sovereignty; that is to say, on top of the sovereign state, there is another political unit that maintains the dynamics of the diverse sovereign states.⁸⁵ Should we consider *tianxia* as the possibility of the world spirit returning to the East to spawn and die there? After all, *tianxia*, in order for it to avoid becoming a sino-imperialism, should instead be regarded as an attempt to

reinvent a new language to articulate a planetary thinking. However, the difficulty of overriding sovereign states with *tianxia* is that there was no concept of a sovereign state or nation-state in the history of China; or as Mou clearly demonstrated, China, as well as *tianxia*, was not a state unit but a cultural unit.⁸⁶ Therefore, it isn't easy to justify that *tianxia* should be the successor of the nation-state according to dialectical logic. Furthermore, if one cannot demonstrate how *tianxia* triumphs over Kantian cosmopolitanism, then *tianxia* as an answer remains theoretically under-elaborated.⁸⁷ By claiming that *tianxia* is organic in contrast to Kantian cosmopolitanism, one regrettably overlooks the central role of organism in Kant's political philosophy and perpetuates the myth that Eastern thinking is organic while Western thinking is mechanic. Nonetheless, the merit of returning to *tianxia* is due to the fact that the current geopolitical configuration based on nation-states is at an impasse, something that has already been affirmed by many philosophers.

Mou affirms Hegel's critique, while at the same time, he contests the end of Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, that is, the fact that Hegel stopped at the political state. Hegel did not only leave the conflicts between the states as inevitable, but he also affirmed the domination of some states over others. Hegel's refusal of world sovereignty and his discourse on reason indirectly confirm the domination of the rational over the not-yet-rational or the less rational.⁸⁸ Thus, Mou suggests to think beyond Hegel: "If the sacred idea of 'existing separately on the earth' must go further beyond the juxtaposition of various nation states and 'exist on the earth in a complete and harmonious way,' this is the goal of the 'da tong' (great unity or great harmony). How would this be possible?"⁸⁹

Mou did not identify a philosophy of history in China that was able to be the counterpart of Hegel's history of reason or that which was possible to respond to the above question; on the contrary, what he exposed was a historical process in which reason was absent as the protagonist. Instead of reason, what drove the historical process in China was either the personal charisma of the hero as the founder of the dynasty or the technique of governance.⁹⁰ This was also how historiography was written and discussed in the Chinese tradition. If we can take what Mou says as an exemplary of the East, then the East-West divide lies not only on the question of reason but also on the very possibility of reason beyond the modern state.

This is a question left to us: How is it possible to conceive of a new planetary framework of politics, since planetary politics based on nation-states

is only the continuation of the same game? That is to say, if either the United States or China takes the lead, then there is no change in the nature of geopolitics; what changes is only the configuration of power. What, then, could emerge after the nation-state if we are to follow Hegelian dialectics? If we follow Kojève's claims concerning the end of history, we might say that reason vacillates after the victory of Napoleon. If reason has not yet come to its end after the political state, then it must become planetary, namely, it will have to be expanded in accordance with a planetary aim. Can it finally arrive at a "great unity" or "great harmony" as the Chinese thinkers aspire to? Is the nation-state a stepping stone toward such a unity? If our interpretation of Hegel is correct, then it is clear that such a harmonious whole is not possible. Hegel was not able to transcend the nation-state; or, the fact is that Hegel did not transcend the nation-state because the German state was still in its formation. Hegel justified the logical and historical necessity of the nation-state by way of a political organicism. But what comes after the organic state was beyond Hegel. That is why we had to penetrate into the heart of Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, resituating it into the history of thought and exposing its limits. We will continue pursuing the Hegelian thread in the next chapter, examining diverse reflections on the planetary.

From Noetic Reflection to Planetary Reflection

We can imagine the human of the near future as being determined by a new awareness and the will to remain sapiens. In such an event the problem of the individual's relationship with society will have to be completely rethought: We must face up squarely to the question of our numerical density and our relations with the animal and plant worlds; we must stop miming the behavior of a microbic culture and come to grips with the management of our planet in terms other than those of a game of chance.

—André Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*

In the last two chapters, we elaborated on the philosophical foundation of the state as outlined by Hegel through the lens of an organismic epistemology. The justification of the political state is human freedom, and the justification of the state as realization of freedom is its particular organic form. In short, if the state is recognized as a milestone on the spirit's journey, where the rational (*vernünftig*) and the effective (*wirklich*) are unified, it is because the organic form of the state overcomes the self-interest of both family and civil society. Compared with Kant's postulation of reason and nature as the guarantee of perpetual peace, Hegel grounds his politics on reason and its externalization in the form of artificiality. Even though the later thinkers of geopolitics such as Friedrich Ratzel and Rudolf Kjellén have further developed nuanced versions of the organic state, such elaboration does not guarantee peace; on the contrary, it presupposes enmity and war. Therefore, if perpetual peace is to be one of human progress's goals, then the state has to be overcome; that is to say, reason must go further than the state, and new political forms should be presented as the next milestone of reason after Hegel's philosophy of right.

The reason why Hegel's philosophy of history is so powerful is that it is not a collection of historical instances according to a single principle, be that the principle of heaven or the divine, but rather it is the self-grounding

and self-unfolding of reason—and if there is a teleology in Hegel's philosophy of history, it is driven by the self-perfection of reason and not the realization of a particular goal. It seems, though, that the state is where Hegel stopped on the spirit's journey. For a philosopher of history, what one sees in Hegel's state is only the truth of his or her time; that is to say, it is not an eternal truth.¹ Thus, the truth that Hegel saw in Jena and later in Berlin is the truth of history, in which the political state presents itself as a necessity and the guarantee of human freedom.

We have already seen in chapter 2 how, in Hegel, the concept of the modern state is precisely that which limits us from formulating a planetary freedom. The state as the condition of freedom—or more precisely human freedom—is only a historical truth and, according to dialectics, will become and might have already become the condition of unfreedom. This unfreedom appears when the state is no longer the guardian of reason but rather its abuser. This unreason results from the suppression of reason for various grounds, notably the competition for interest and superiority between different nation-states and the desire for total control over its subjects. Consequently, reason regresses to particularity instead of moving toward universality. Inside the state, the freedom of the upper class means the unfreedom of the lower class; between the states, the freedom of a superstate means the unfreedom of other states. Intuitively, the only possibility of a planetary freedom is that the planet is governed as a whole; that is to say, when the planet is seen as a unity instead of a composition of nation-states. In other words, for a planetary freedom to be possible, politics must become planetary. What does it mean for politics to become planetary—does globalization not already imply planetarization?

To think about the planet is to think beyond or circumvent the nation-state, but also, at the same time, to think collectively about the becoming of the human as well as the freedom that defines the very struggle of politics. This planetary freedom has yet to be addressed, since to do so we first have to think through the notion of a planetary right and the application of this planetary right to both humans and nonhumans. This inquiry has to be distinguished from that which has been raised broadly in ecology. There is already a wealth of literature dealing with ecology and the ontogenesis of the Earth, which differs from our focus here. Ecological concerns are important responses to the current and coming disasters associated with climate change; and the ontogenesis of the Earth demonstrates that the human history is virtually nothing in comparison to that of the planet.

However, it seems that the crucial issue is not only one of enforcing the ecological responsibilities of industry and the state as well as undermining the humanism at play, but also, and probably more fundamentally, of questioning current global politics as being based on the European concept of the nation-state culminating in the eighteenth century during the time of the Enlightenment, of the Industrial Revolution and European domination. The concept of the state is grounded first on the concept of the *Volksgeist*, as we have already seen in chapter 1, and second on a concept of freedom that functions as the synonym for reason. Hegel's freedom has little to do with liberalism, for freedom is nothing arbitrary but rational (*vernünftig*) in the sense that it is conditioned by both the organic whole of the state and the other members of the state.

Hegel's philosophy of the state sets a limit for us today, not because of its weakness but due to its theoretical strength. One way of recognizing its strength and, as such, pushing Hegel's argument further, would be to wonder if we cannot go beyond Hegel, arriving at an organism of the planet instead of stopping at the organism of the state. Let us push Hegel's organismic philosophy to its extreme and render the question of technology more explicit: Is it possible to understand planetary politics as a megamachine (in the sense of Mumford) that is tantamount to a superorganism? Is this not precisely the technological tendency that is at present playing out, where a superintelligence will finally outdo human intelligence? Could this post-singularity future be the one that arises out of the Hegelian dream?

These questions are too speculative to be either affirmatively answered or negatively rejected. We will start with the concept of reflection and step by step induce its implication in the definition of the human, the relation between human and environment, the relation between human and technology, and finally its planetary becoming against the backdrop of the rise of the "thermodynamic ideology." Thus, the title of this chapter is "From Noetic Reflection to Planetary Reflection." Reflection is fundamental to the spirit; in other words, had it no reflection, there would be no spirit. We begin with Hegel's question of reflection in his anthropology. The noetic reflection of the human is also the departing point where we can identify three currents of thinking that deal directly with technology and converge in the notion of the planetary: an anthropologically and biologically inspired bioeconomic reflection developed by Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the psychologically and physiologically inspired cybernetic reflection, and the anthropologically and geologically inspired noospheric reflection

proposed by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. These discourses may seem to be quite distinct from each other, and we don't pretend to claim that they form a coherent whole. But all of them, with more or less Hegelian motives, represent different threads of planetary thinking. They will allow us to reflect on the potential and limit of a post-Hegelian planetary thinking.

§12. Noetic Reflection: Consciousness and Life

In chapter 2, we looked at Hegel's concept of the organic state and Marx's questioning of the difference between the state organism and the animal organism, and we tried to show that Hegel's organicism is not "organic" in the sense of living matter, but rather it is fundamentally a logic. Marx could have already understood this since he rightly pointed out that Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* is not a treatise on right per se, but rather a demonstration of his philosophical logic. Indeed, the concept of organicism had a much wider application by the end of the nineteenth century than in Hegel's time, where the organism remained a regulative idea for political institutions, that is to say, *yet to be realized*. Therefore, in the introduction, we called it an imaginary organic machine. Even though, in philosophy since the eighteenth century, mechanism had already been criticized and opposed by a proto-organic philosophy, throughout the nineteenth century, mechanism still functioned as a dominant epistemology through the trope of automats.

Retrospectively, we might say that Hegel's organic logic could not be entirely recognized either in animals, because they are vulnerable to contingency, or in the state, since the implementation of the organic state was still hindered by some mechanistic features present in Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, as Marx criticized.² Toward the twentieth century, organicism gained its significance given the rampant industrialization and mobilization of natural resources and energies. We risk simplifying such a significance by listing the following areas that deserve our attention: first, in biology, after the failure of the mechanical development theory (*Entwickelungsmechanik*), identified accidentally by Hans Driesch, and which was later confirmed by the Spemann-Mangold experiment; second, in philosophy, especially in the work of Bergson and Alfred North Whitehead, whose organismic philosophy (though the former has been regarded as vitalist) became the theoretical ground for other biologists and

sociologists—for example, the Gestalt theorists, Joseph Needham, Lewis Mumford, Georges Friedmann, and Niklas Luhmann; third, in economics, especially the economics inspired by biology—for example, Georgescu-Roegen and Alfred Lotka (though, it was already present in the work of François Quesnay), and that was further developed by the neoliberal thinkers such as Fredrick Hayek; fourth, in politics—for example, to some extent we could even say that communism is first of all the realization of an organismic Hegelian Marxian philosophy, where the Crown and *Beamten* are replaced with the proletariat, and therefore it is not surprising to recognize an affinity between communism and anarchism, sometimes anarchism and neoliberalism. Although the influence of organicism in the twentieth century is beyond our capacity to document in this book, we suggest that to understand the twentieth century, one cannot avoid analyzing this organismic paradigm, which has already extended into the twenty-first century.

Hegel's organicism does not derive from a romantic concept of nature, but rather it is grounded in a logical analysis of the organism. Hegel's logic also provides a path toward a mechano-organicism that could be realized through artificial intelligence. The central theme of Hegel's logic is reflection, a reflection that does not aim at separation (since when the subject reflects on the object, it divides, the way judgment [*Urteil*] in German means an original divide) but at integration.³ The original divide (*Ur-teil*) is present between nature and the spirit, for it is only through reflection that nature can become and transit into the realm of the spirit. In effect, it is through reflection that the Concept, when present in nature and thus being fragile and vulnerable to contingency, is constantly tested by contingency, what Bernard Mabile calls *l'épreuve de la contingence*, so that it may move toward the concrete and universal realm of the spirit. Therefore, philosophy, which Hegel presents as the absolute spirit after Greek art and the religion of revelation, is a form of reflection: "This concept of philosophy is the *self-thinking* Idea, the knowing truth (§236), the logical with the meaning that it is the universality *verified* in the concrete content as in its actuality."⁴ The concept of reflection is fundamental to the emergence of consciousness that Hegel analyzed thoroughly, probably even more thoroughly than many paleontologists. Hegel opens his *Philosophy of Mind* with anthropology (along with phenomenology and psychology, as what he calls *subjective spirit*), attempting to understand the evolution

of the reflective structure and operation of self-consciousness before he moves to the objective spirit, which is consciousness externalized. Hegel's triadic formulation at times seems problematic. However, Hegel reminds his readers that the triadic scheme does not imply a temporal order, that the second element succeed the first element followed by the third, but rather it is a logical order. Likewise, in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, the transition from private property to family, which is followed by civil society, is not historical but only logical.

Regardless of the above logical and temporal problem, which we do well to bear in mind, it is still worth asking if the phenomenon of reflection is only limited to the human mind. We know that other animals have some form of consciousness—for example, that an animal is conscious of its prey. When a cat encounters a mouse, the cat knows how to predict the movements of the mouse, which clearly demands a calibrated system of feedback. In the phenomenon of life, reflection exists as a primordial mode of operation in all living organisms, and maybe as well as in inorganic beings (for example, we also often see what seem like recursively generated patterns on shells and rocks). It might be true that for the eyes of some animals, there is no distinction between subject and object (like Rilke described in his elegies: “All other creatures look into the Open with their whole eyes. But our eyes, turned inward, are set all around it like snares, trapping its way out to freedom”⁵). At the same time, this original division comes out of an epistemological necessity to the human mind, as Descartes demonstrated in the *Discourse on the Method*. For Hegel, the subjective and objective spirit will also have to be overcome through the identification between the Idea and its reflection into nature as existence. This test by contingency, in the sense of Mabille, is essential for arriving at the universal as universal. For living beings who are capable of reflection, it is possible to talk about different “souls” as Aristotle did: for example, a vegetable soul, an animal soul, and the noetic soul. The noetic soul stands out as a special kind of soul: it is that which is above the animal soul and the vegetable soul. This should not be understood in a moral sense, but rather it has a different operation and organization of reflection, and therefore it possesses different complexities and structures. An octopus might have organs that are biologically more complex than those of a human being, but the animal soul of the octopus might not have as many levels of reflection as the noetic soul of the human being. We see a similar passage in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*:

Spirit has come into being as the truth of nature. In the Idea in general this result has the meaning of the truth and of what is prior, rather than posterior, as compared with what precedes it [*des Ersten gegen das Vorhergehende*]. But, besides this, becoming or transition has, in the concept, the more determinate meaning of free judgement. The Spirit that has come into being means, therefore, that nature self-sublates over against itself [*an ihr selbst*], and Spirit thus presupposes itself as this universality that is no longer self-externalized in bodily individuality, but simple in its concreteness and totality. In this universality it is not yet Spirit, but soul [*Seele, noch nicht Geist*].⁶

This paragraph deserves our attention since the truth of nature is to be found in the spirit instead of just in nature. Nature that precedes spirit does not show its truth because its existence as a phenomenon is vulnerable to contingency. The soul is mere consciousness and thus subject to error; the spirit is the rational substance in becoming. In nature, we find nuances of patterns on the leaves of the same plant, we find human beings with eleven toes, and so forth. Instead, it is in the spirit that we find the Idea that is prior to nature. This is no longer a temporal sequence but rather a logical sequence: that which comes after is prior to what precedes it.⁷ It is because through reflection, which characterizes the free judgement or divide, nature sublates the self that is not yet adequate of being true—and here, being true means the identity between actuality and the Concept. The self-sublation of nature is a reflective or recursive movement assimilating the Concept prior to it. This reflection is a movement from A to B, but also from A to A'. That is to say, it does not change substantially from A to B; instead, it returns to itself, as Hegel says, “only a coming-to-itself of the spirit that is outside itself in nature.”⁸

One of the lowest levels of reflection found in living beings is between the living being and its milieu. In the case of an amoeba, a single-celled organism, reflection occurs via osmosis by which the amount of liquid in the amoeba's body is maintained. Laurentiis in his book *Hegel's Anthropology* uses the same example, claiming that the “amoeba is this struggle of nature against itself,” and quotes Xavier Bichat (whom Hegel admired) to support this argument: “*Life is the totality of functions that resist death.*”⁹ However, the case of the amoeba is only a rather basic form of reflection while the claim of Bichat is a general definition of life, which retrospectively

resonates with Erwin Schrödinger's proposal in *What Is Life? The Physical Aspect of the Living Cell* (1944), where he characterizes life as a process that resists entropy, namely, death. This general claim has to be qualified since from the single-cell amoeba to the *Homo sapiens*, we are talking about a difference of billions of years of evolution, complexification, and concretization. This increasing complexification could be understood as a struggle against death.

This complexification is not only endosomatic but also exosomatic in the sense that it demands a reflective process between the spirit and its externalization, which we have already discussed in the first two chapters, especially in chapter 2, where we tried to show how such a process gives rise to the concept of the state as organism. Hegel's theory of externalization did not yet systematically address what later came to be known in paleontology as anthropogenesis. Ernst Kapp's philosophy of technology made Hegel's thesis explicit by putting the noetic reflectivity as the absolute beginning of human exosomatic activities:

Here is the actual threshold of our study: the human being, who, with the first equipment, the work of his own hands, discards his historical test piece to become the altogether historical human being, situated within the progress of self-consciousness. The human being is the only secure starting point for thoughtful reflection and for orientation in the world. This is because the human being is absolutely certain first and foremost of himself.¹⁰

We would like to connect Kapp's philosophy of technology with the work of André Leroi-Gourhan who, in *Gesture and Speech* as well as other works, showed how the process of hominization could be interpreted as series of invention and use of technical tools. Technical activities could be further understood as exosomatic activities, namely, the exteriorization of memory and the liberation of organs. This process does not only happen at the level of the individual but also at the level of the species and culture. The formation of the city and later larger administrative units belong to the same phenomenon of exosomatization. The exosomatic process also demands an endosomatic process that is no longer limited to bodily organs.¹¹ In paleontology, externalization plays a central role that conditions the development of the spirit, and where technology gradually occupies a more and more important role in the phenomenon of

consciousness, something that we will see later in Teilhard de Chardin's noospheric reflection. In what follows we will consider the bioeconomic reflection of Georgescu-Roegen, followed by cybernetic reflection, before finally arriving at Teilhard's noospheric reflection. Through these forms of reflection, we will see how a planetary thinking beyond the nation-state is constructed in the name of humanity, of the human as a species—a test we would like to do by pushing Hegel's organicism to its extreme.

§13. Bioeconomical Reflection: Georgescu-Roegen Reads Hegel

It is now appropriate to turn to the work of Georgescu-Roegen since he is central to understanding the role of exosomatization in economic activities. Georgescu-Roegen shifted our understanding of economic activities as quantitative exchanges understood by neoclassical economics to bioeconomics based on thermodynamics. Georgescu-Roegen is often credited as a great reader of Marx and Schumpeter. It is uncommon for Georgescu-Roegen to be considered a reader of Hegel,¹² even though Georgescu-Roegen takes Hegel's concept of dialectics as a driving force of his own theory; however, this dialectic is not analyzed explicitly as an operation of reflections, but rather it is *implicitly* associated with the possibility of an organic form that already presupposes reflection as such. I say implicitly because the transition from dialectics to the organic form was not fully elaborated by Georgescu-Roegen, but rather was only presupposed. Like Hegel before him, Georgescu-Roegen opposes mechanism to organism because mechanism fails to grasp reality due to the limit of its representation. The attempt to apply a mechanistic representation to reality fails because it constitutes precisely what Whitehead might have called the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness."

Georgescu-Roegen saw the limit of an economy theory built upon a dominant mechanistic epistemology. Although the mechanistic epistemology had been challenged by biology in the eighteenth century, such as we have already seen in Kant, Schelling, Hegel, the Romantics, and the naturalists, it continued to exert its power in domains other than science, such as industry, politics, and economy. Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomics can be seen as an attempt to challenge the neoclassical theory of economy (which he identified with classical mechanics) through new discoveries in physics, namely, thermodynamics. If in Marx we see that the accent was put on a moralist critique against the exploitation of the worker, in

Georgescu-Roegen we see that it ceases to be a moralist critique, but more explicitly a critique of economic theory itself.

The grounding concept of Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomy is, however, dialectics. Georgescu-Roegen mobilizes dialectics as a counterpart to what he calls *arithmomorphism*, the belief that all economic activities could be reduced to numbers, calculation, and logical positivism. Georgescu-Roegen identifies the epistemological foundation of neoclassical economic theory as that of Newtonian mechanics. Neoclassical economic theory is founded on the presupposition of a rational *Homo economicus* whose actions are based on rational and mechanistic calculations. Mechanism in general implies a linear causality, that, following classical physical laws, a movement leads to another like a cause to an effect. In mechanism, the movement of all bodies in space is predictable since they obey these laws and thus, given enough data, could be determined. The best image of mechanism in physics is Laplace's demon, according to which the whole universe could be predicted given enough data¹³—a belief that triumphs in data science today. The domination of mechanism was also made possible and reinforced by the technologies of its time, especially mechanical machines, ranging from clocks to industrial machinery. Even when technology changed from the “cold machine” to the “heat machine” via thermodynamics, mechanism continued enjoying its reign for a certain period before being displaced by thermodynamics.¹⁴ Following the Carnotian revolution, thermodynamics takes physics to a new terrain, one where physics is reconnected to biology. An epistemology based on thermodynamics provides Georgescu-Roegen with a new lens to look at the economy and develop his theory of bioeconomics—a genuine reflection on economy from the prospect of the living. Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomic attack on the foundations of rationalist economic theory surprisingly relies on Hegel's dialectics:

It goes without saying that to the category of concepts just illustrated we cannot apply the fundamental law of Logic, the Principle of Contradiction: “B cannot be both A and non-A.” On the contrary, we must accept that, *in certain instances* at least, “B is both A and non-A” is the case. Since the latter principle is one cornerstone of Hegel's Dialectics, I propose to refer to the concepts that may violate the Principle of Contradiction as dialectical.¹⁵

Hegel's dialectics is not a theory of the excluded middle but rather a theory of operations. In a dialectical process, A and non-A are two instances co-existing at certain moments. What is at stake, however, is not ambiguity but complexity; that is to say, reality embodies a complexity that cannot be reduced to numerical positivism or simple logicism based on the principle of contradiction. Georgescu-Roegen is not claiming that arithematization has no value; indeed, he even affirms that its "merits are above all words of praise." What he is instead arguing is that "wholesale arithematization is impossible."¹⁶ The fact that Georgescu-Roegen aligns himself with Hegel is not, as already emphasized, due to the law of the excluded middle; but rather because Hegelian philosophy is primarily a logic of reflection and movement. In the movement, the seemingly contradictory facts become necessary while also being contingent. As we have seen in chapter 1, Ideas are living (*lebendig*) concepts, and philosophy is in itself considered to be living. Therefore, we can say that for Georgescu-Roegen, the Hegelian inspiration lies in the living nature of Hegel's philosophy—as he writes, quoting Hegel's *Logic*, "Wherever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there Dialectic is at work."¹⁷ A theory based on life and movement is that which attracts Georgescu-Roegen, though he immediately distances himself from Hegel, as can be determined from the footnote to the above quote:

The connection between dialectical concepts thus defined and Hegelian logic is not confined to this principle. However, even though Hegel's logic inspires the line followed by the present argument, it does not follow Hegel in all respects. We have been warned, and on good reasons, that one may ignore Hegel at tremendous risks. To follow Hegel only in part might very well be the greatest risk of all; yet I have no choice but to take this risk.¹⁸

Georgescu-Roegen's dialectics, therefore, is not a direct application of Hegelian philosophy in economy, but rather, through Hegel who he cannot ignore, the intention is to reground a bioeconomy that is based on movement and life. In Hegel's philosophy, economy is subordinated to politics in the manner that civil society, which is the totality of economic activities, conforms to that of the political state. Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomy starts with dialectics, continues with thermodynamics, and has its telos in

the enjoyment of life. Georgescu-Roegen's economy is an economy of the living and of life. It is also from this perspective that he sees a similarity between Hegel's and Whitehead's organicism:

With regard to the opposition between Change and arithmomorphic structure, Whitehead's position is essentially the same as Hegel's. Perhaps in no other place does Hegel state his thought on the matter more clearly than in the following passage: "Number is just that entirely inactive, inert, and indifferent characteristic in which every movement and relational process is extinguished [*Denn die Zahl ist eben die gänzlich ruhende, tote und gleichgültige Bestimmtheit, an welcher alle Bewegung und Beziehung erloschen ist*]." The statement has generally been criticized as Hegelian obscurantism and anti-scientism. Yet, as I have already intimated, *Hegel did not intend to prove anything more than Whitehead*, who maintained that no science can "claim to be founded upon observation" if it insists that the ultimate facts of nature "are to be found at durationless instants of time." Whitehead only had the benefit of a far greater knowledge in mathematics and science of fact than was available in Hegel's time.¹⁹

Georgescu-Roegen thus first identifies Hegel and Whitehead as thinkers in favor of change over static numerical representations. The Hegel quote in the above citation is from §286 of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Georgescu-Roegen decontextualizes this sentence from Hegel's *Phenomenology* by making it explicitly a critique of numbers. §286, which belongs to the section "Observation of Organism [*Organischen*]," is part of Hegel's explanation of the organic form. The organic stands in contrast to the inorganic insofar as the former, due to its absolute fluidity, can absorb external disturbances and maintains a relation with the Other through its organic unity. Hegel started the analysis of the organic substance from two sides: the inner and the outer. The inner is the "simple soul," the "pure Concept of end," whose being is observed as the movement of a vanishing actuality; the outer on the contrary subsists in the "quiescent being of the organism."²⁰ The inner refers to the universal organism, and the outer refers to the inorganic nature; however, since it is never precise in these passages if Hegel means the structured body (*Gestaltung*) or the natural environment, it remains difficult to say whether Hegel is offering a retake on the mind-

body problem or organism-milieu interactivity. Hegel claims that the effective or actual organic essence is neither the inner nor the outer, but the middle, which unites the being-in-itself (inner) and the being-for-itself (outer).²¹ In the paragraph that Georgescu-Roegen quotes, Hegel starts with a conceptual experiment of imagining that both inner and outer also have, for their own part, an inner and an outer; let us label them as I(i) and I(o) and O(i) and O(o). I(i), defined according to the movement of the Concept, is the “unrest of abstraction” (*Unruhe der Abstraktion*) and O(i) the “quiescent determination” (*ruhende Bestimmtheit*), namely, number, since the outer is at times considered inorganic as it only has magnitude and is devoid of movement. I(i) and O(i) form a pair that consists of the dynamic of the organic law. For Hegel, the point is not to criticize or demonize number per se but rather to show that the static and lifeless nature of number is always dialectically related to its other. Now we can see that Georgescu-Roegen’s take on Hegel does not do perfect justice to what Hegel was trying to say; nonetheless, he came to the same conclusion as Hegel: he arrives at the fundamental logic of the organic form. This is why we said earlier that Georgescu-Roegen’s take on dialectics, though it does not depart from reflection, does nevertheless aim at an organic form. For this reason, he also friends Whitehead with Hegel as thinkers of organicism and critics of arithmomorphism.

It is precisely here that the question of organism and life defines the bioeconomy and a planetary thinking that attempts to articulate a new program of economy, not based on arithmetic but on thermodynamics. Unlike Hegel, who arrived at the organism of the state as a culmination of the spirit, Georgescu-Roegen takes the organism of economy as a planetary phenomenon determined by the laws of thermodynamics. The human species is privileged here as one that can directly participate in the environment to slow down or speed up the entropic process. We should remind ourselves of the two laws of thermodynamics that we learned in high school physics: the first concerns the conservation of energy; the second concerns the universal tendency toward the dissipation of energy and toward disorder, i.e., becoming entropic. *Disorder* here does not mean complex order but rather the homogeneity of order: it fails to produce differences or diversity. One might find various definitions of entropy today, but here we want to list the three definitions that Georgescu-Roegen himself summarized. According to Clausius, the first definition of entropy is understood as a physical system state variable that divides temperature

change over the transfer of internal energy across two systems. Boltzmann then provides a second definition that understands entropy as the degree of disorder. The third definition, a statistical mechanical definition, was derived from Boltzmann's fascination with Maxwell's work in particle distributions and concerns the relation between micro- and macrophysics, which Georgescu-Roegen states as "how to derive one opaque fact of nature, the Entropy Law, from the opaque facts of nature expressed by the laws of mechanics."²² That is to say, in the third definition, entropy is defined by Georgescu-Roegen himself as "the thermodynamic probability that the corresponding disorder shall occur."²³ Human beings are, therefore, considered to be like Maxwell's demon, who, capable of anticipating the thermodynamic probability of disorder, can manipulate the second law of thermodynamics by transmitting heat from low temperature to high temperature:

The point is no mystical vitalism, but a matter of brute facts. Some organisms slow down the entropic degradation. Green plants store part of the solar radiation, which in their absence would immediately go into dissipated heat, into high entropy. That is why we can now burn the solar energy saved from degradation millions of years ago in the form of coal or a few years ago in the form of a tree. All other organisms, on the contrary, speed up the march of entropy. Man occupies the highest position on this scale, and this is all that environmental issues are about.²⁴

The human being, as we read above, "occupies the highest position" in the manipulation of the second law of thermodynamics to slow down the entropic becoming of the ecosystem. As we recall, according to the second law of thermodynamics, the universe is becoming more entropic: it is in the process of becoming disorder (through the dissipation of energy, i.e., becoming homogenous qua a lack of order).²⁵ To resist such an entropic becoming, the organism must maintain order within the body (psychosomatic functions and metabolism) and the environment. We can say that Georgescu-Roegen departs from the concept of an organism to propose a new understanding of economic activities not from the perspective of rationalist calculation on gain and loss but rather considering the value of economic activities as negentropic processes. This negentropic process has its aim in the enjoyment of life—a noetic culmination, we might say. In

this formulation, Georgescu-Roegen has already presupposed a concept of the human, in which the human is not a moral being but a being capable of and largely dependent on exosomatization for its own survival. Therefore, the question of morality should be considered from an exosomatic point of view. Georgescu-Roegen did not coin the term *exosomatization* but took it from the biologist Alfred Lotka, who uses it to describe the externalization of the spirit, that is to say, the invention of tools:

Apart from a few insignificant exceptions, all species other than man use only endosomatic instruments—as Alfred Lotka proposed to call those instruments (legs, claws, wings, etc.) which belong to the individual organism by birth. Man alone came, in time, to use a club, which does not belong to him by birth, but which extended his endosomatic arm and increased its power. At that point in time, man's evolution transcended the biological limits to include also (and primarily) the evolution of exosomatic instruments, i.e., of instruments produced by man but not belonging to his body. That is why man can now fly in the sky or swim under water even though his body has no wings, no fins, and no gills.²⁶

Why is it necessary to consider them as *exosomatic* instruments when they could quite easily just be called instruments, and why exosomatic as opposed to endosomatic? It is also because exosomatization is the necessary product of noetic reflection and vice versa; these instruments are external to the soma but are nonetheless part of the soma precisely through reflection. The organic unity refers not only to the organic body but rather an organic totality between the organic body and the inorganic instruments. In this respect, Georgescu-Roegen joins organologists such as Bergson and anthropologists like Leroi-Gourhan in understanding the human as a prosthetic being; its evolution is precisely an *exosomatic evolution*.²⁷ The exosomatic evolution helps the human being to *adapt* to the environment and *adopt* the environment more efficiently—for example, extracting energy and raw material to construct new amenities. Georgescu-Roegen's reconceptualization of economy starts not only from a new epistemology (organismic instead of mechanistic) but also from a new way of understanding economic activities that are in contrast to and in tension with real politics that are constrained by a strategy of survival and victory according to numerical values such as GDP. This new epistemology also necessitates

a return to anthropology, in which the human ceases to be a *Homo economicus* and is distinguished from other living beings due to its capacity to produce exosomatic instruments. In contrast, other animals are only capable of producing endosomatic instruments closely related to their instincts. This anthropological foundation of Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomy bears a significant Hegelian inspiration. It postulates that human economy should be viewed from the perspective of reflective movement instead of mechanistic determinations. This reflective movement has to be captured as a process of exosomatization, distinguishing human beings from other animals. The dialectics continues when the exosomatic activities produced an excess, a hubris, which submits the human being to, first, perpetual conflicts—a thesis that we can find in the modern political theories of Montesquieu and Rousseau, and second, to the human addiction to exosomatic instruments—"a phenomenon analogous to that of the flying fish which became addicted to the atmosphere and mutated into birds forever. . . . It is through this addiction that mankind's survival presents a problem entirely different from that of all other species. . . . It is neither only biological nor only economic. It is bioeconomic."²⁸

To concretize his theory in realizable terms, Georgescu-Roegen in "Energy and Economic Myths" suggests a minimal bioeconomic program²⁹ consisting of eight rules that mitigate conflicts and addictions. The first rule concerns the prohibition of the production of all instruments of war; the second suggests financial aid to underdeveloped nations to attain a good (nonluxurious) life; the third concerns the degrowth of populations adequately fed by organic agriculture only; the fourth suggests that the waste of all energy should be avoided before solar energy can be fully put to use; the fifth and sixth concern a decrease in the abundance of luxury goods such as extravagant gadgetry and fashion; the seventh suggests the production of repairable goods; the last concerns the "the circumdrome of the shaving machine," a neologism created by Georgescu-Roegen himself. This circumdrome is illustrated by a looping that characterizes infinite empty progress, where one invents an efficient, faster shaving machine to save more time that can then be dedicated to inventing an even faster shaving machine.³⁰ But, of course, these are all rules we have been violating and will continue to violate in the coming decades. We will come back to Georgescu-Roegen's rules in chapter 6. Georgescu-Roegen repeats the opposition between mechanism and organism in his critique of economy, and we must revisit this debate to understand Georgescu-Roegen's program.

§14. Cybernetic Reflection: Toward the Consciousness of Machines

When the planet is observed from the perspective of thermodynamics, we can see that global warming and ecological crises are just outcomes of an economy that is not understood bioeconomically but rather as development. Development is colonialism from a European perspective (later, in chapter 5, we will discuss this thesis of Kojève); though, of course, such a pursuit is now no longer only European: certain Asian countries such as China have been aiding infrastructural development in other Asian countries and most notably in African countries. Nevertheless, developmentalism as a colonial discourse is not to be dismissed so quickly since it also belongs to the process of globalization, which is preparing itself for a new phase to appear following the end of the first phase marked by the recent pandemic and geopolitical drift. Can we, therefore, govern the whole planet according to the principles of thermodynamics? The concept of entropy perhaps remains too abstract to understand economic activities because what determines something as entropic depends largely on time and space. A short-sighted development project might bring about well-being for the people in the short term, but it might cause long-term negative effects and suffering in the future. After stating his minimal bioeconomic program, Georgescu-Roegen asks:

Will mankind listen to any program that implies a constriction of its addiction to exosomatic comfort? Perhaps, the destiny of man is to have a short, but fiery, exciting and extravagant life rather than a long, uneventful and vegetative existence. Let other species—the amoebas, for example—which have no spiritual ambitions inherit an earth still bathed in plenty of sunshine.³¹

In the end, maybe only the most basic reflection will stay, for higher levels of reflection will lead to the system's saturation, which might only be resolved through self-destruction. Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomy is concerned more with the question of *tendency* than numerical values, such as calculating how entropic the industrial world is becoming or determining when a critical threshold in the amount of entropy will be attained. If we focus on a numerical definition of entropy, giving it a value or situating it within a value scale, then it paradoxically becomes an equivalence of GDP. The importance of Georgescu-Roegen's bioeconomy does not lie exactly in

the calculation of the entropic value but rather in his capacity to reverse the tendency of economic development to construct a new framework based on biology and thermodynamics.

Philip Mirowski reproached Georgescu-Roegen for the latter's exclusion of the use of entropy in information theory: "Georgescu's gloss on entropy was misleading in at least one idiosyncratic sense: he was implacably opposed to the extensions of the entropy concept in the direction of its interpretation as a measure of 'information,' and therefore he missed out on one of the most consequential aspects of the cyborg genealogy in the late twentieth century."³² Here Mirowski referred to an entry on entropy written by Georgescu-Roegen for *The New Palgrave Dictionary for Economics*, in which Georgescu-Roegen, after introducing the concept of entropy in thermodynamics and his theory of economics, reproached the use of this concept by Claude Shannon in his information theory. Georgescu-Roegen writes, "A real imbroglio involving the entropy concept grew from the seminal work of Claude H. Shannon (1948) on the purely technical problem of communication, which is to find out how many distinct sequences (messages) of a given length can be formed by a code, a set of different signal signals."³³ The reason for which Georgescu-Roegen calls it an imbroglio is that Shannon's use of the term creates confusions, that "the concept of entropy started travelling from one domain to another with hardly any discrimination."³⁴ Mirowski's critique of Georgescu-Roegen is that because he dismisses the use of entropy in information theory, he missed out on being a figure of the genealogy of cyborg science, which Mirowski outlined in *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science*. Mirowski's reproach is more a regret than a criticism, considering that his first book was dedicated to Georgescu-Roegen.³⁵

Should we reconcile these two concepts of entropy, one in thermodynamics and one used by Shannon in information theory, into a singular notion? It may seem no urgent need to do so. Indeed, as Georgescu-Roegen writes, the use of entropy in these two domains should instead be further discriminated. The problem with this, however, is that it is impossible to think about the transmission of information without energy.³⁶ For example, Maxwell's demon would not be able to detect the speed of the particles, obtain information about them, and sort them according to their kinetic energy without itself consuming energy. The existence of a living being depends on material, energetic, and informational conditions. For our purpose here, instead of defining information, albeit an urgent task, we want

to look into the similarity between the reflective models of cybernetics and the organismic model of economics, elaborations of which can be found more in the work of F. A. Hayek than Georgescu-Roegen.

Hayek as we know, like his friend Karl Popper, was very critical of Hegel though in a more serious manner than Popper. Hayek's reading of Hegel appeared mainly in his younger writings, especially *The Counter Revolution of Science*, in which a chapter titled "Hegel and Comte" is dedicated to a comprehensive comparison between Comte and Hegel from various perspectives. Nevertheless, Hayek already showed interest in a spontaneous interaction model between individuals. He refused to conceive an organismic model of the state but rather an organismic model of the market, or perhaps we can say, a rebirth of civil society. On the contrary, Hayek found in both Hegel and Comte a tendency to grasp the whole as the real while undermining individuals:

The concern with the movement of Reason as a whole not only prevented them from understanding the process through which the interaction of individuals produced structures of relationships which performed actions no individual reason could fully comprehend, but it also made them blind to the fact that the attempt of conscious reason to control its own development could only have the effect of limiting this very growth to what the individual directing mind could foresee.³⁷

This spontaneity that we find in the interaction among individuals is for Hayek something more fundamental than the concept of the whole grasped a priori. In an article published in 1945 titled "The Use of Knowledge in Society," Hayek was already interested in how local information or knowledge functioned in the market because the market (versus the state) cannot be managed and controlled by a single mind. The market without a king's head acting as the sovereign has a different order and dynamics. In the more current language, we might say that Hayek's ideal market is decentralized to the extent that a central force cannot command it; it is the synthesis of different actors in the market each intervening according to their local knowledge or information:

The peculiar character of the problem of a rational economic order is determined precisely by the fact that the knowledge of

the circumstances of which we must make use never exists in concentrated or integrated form, but solely as the dispersed bits of incomplete and frequently contradictory knowledge which all the separate individuals possess. The economic problem of society is thus not merely a problem of how to allocate “given” resources—if “given” is taken to mean given to a single mind which deliberately solves the problem set by these “data.” It is rather a problem of how to secure the best use of resources known to any of the members of society, for ends whose relative importance only these individuals know. Or, to put it briefly, it is a problem of the utilization of knowledge not given to anyone in its totality.³⁸

Hayek wants to apply the biological model to the market, but conceptually this might commit the same mistake that he thought Hegel and Comte committed: explaining the market with a “mysterious teleological force.”³⁹ It is only later through cybernetics, as well as through Ludwig von Bertalanffy’s *General System Theory*, that Hayek finds a new language to explain his theory, which he stated in the preface to his three volumes of *Law, Legislation and Liberty*: “It was largely the growth of cybernetics and the related subjects of information and system theory which persuaded me that expression other than those which I habitually used may be more readily comprehensible to the contemporary reader.”⁴⁰ What he means by the language of cybernetics consists in several key concepts such as “negative feedback” and “self-organizing system,” terms that he associates with the mechanism of the market.⁴¹ We have already explored the philosophical foundation and the historical development of cybernetics in *Recursivity and Contingency*; readers might want to refer to this treatise for a more detailed exploration of the subject, but for the purpose of this work, we will briefly reiterate how we conceive cybernetics as a *mechano-organicism*, a term we also assigned to Hegel.

In *Recursivity and Contingency*, I attempted to show that cybernetics presents itself as a rupture with seventeenth-century mechanism, and in the words of its founder Norbert Wiener, that in cybernetics, one finds the reconciliation of Bergson’s vitalism and Newton’s classical mechanics. The first chapter of Wiener’s *Cybernetics* was titled “Newtonian and Bergsonian Time.” Newtonian motion is mechanist and time-symmetric, hence reversible, whereas Bergsonian time is biological, creative, and irreversible (as per thermodynamics). Indeed, it was not until 1824 that the

French medical engineer and physicist Sadi Carnot (almost a century after Newton's death in 1727) demonstrated the irreversibility of heat engine cycles, essentially showing that time flows in a unidirectional manner, what then become known as the "arrow of time." Already in his first book, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889), Bergson launched a fierce attack on the way time was conceptualized in Western science and philosophy: that is, time is understood in terms of space (for example, as intervals), and this conceptualization is, therefore, itself timeless. It is homogenous, like the intervals marked on a clock. In contrast to this view of time as an extension ordered in spatial terms, Bergson argues that time contains heterogeneity or qualitative multiplicity in organic forms. Time is a force that is singular in every instant, like the Heraclitean river; it does not repeat itself twice as does a mechanical clock. Indeed, mechanical or linear causality does not exist in duration. Bergsonian time provides a new way of understanding human consciousness and experience.

These differences between Newtonian time and Bergsonian time define the boundary between physics and biology, machine and organism. The task of cybernetics was to show that, with the advancements in physics—especially statistical mechanics and quantum mechanics—it is possible to employ notions of feedback and information to construct a cybernetic machine that breaks the boundary between machine and organism. Therefore, toward the end of the chapter, Wiener claims that "modern automation exists in the same sort of Bergsonian time as the living organism; and hence there is no reason in Bergson's considerations why the essential mode of functioning of the living organism should not be the same as that of the automation of this type. . . . In fact, the whole mechanist-vitalist controversy has been relegated to the limbo of badly posed questions."⁴²

Vitalism, as we know, was often associated with Hans Driesch, Bergson, and others, but it was often reproached by biologists and mathematicians of the organismic school on the grounds that notions such as entelechy and *élan vital* are mystifying and unscientific. The overcoming of the mechanist-vitalist controversy does not mean that a machine is now vitalist, but rather that this duality has been overcome by an organicism of which cybernetics is its mechanical realization. In Wiener's conceptualization, when we grasp a glass of water and bring it toward our mouth, this involves multiple feedback loops and adjustments according to the information evaluated, which measures the level of organization. Or in other words, Wiener claims that Bergson's vitalist definition of organism

can no longer differentiate itself from the design of a cybernetic machine. This claim could produce misunderstandings. The machine will not be the same as an organism, for an organism is already concrete, while a machine is always in the process of becoming more and more concrete. In this sense, a machine can only be “becoming organic.” However, it is also because of its “becoming organic” that opposition between mechanism and organism cannot be absolute. Wiener’s claim inaugurates what we may call *digital vitalism* today. It holds the view that all forms of being could be reduced to digital algorithms and that it is possible to produce an algorithm that knows us better than we know ourselves.

Feedback here means *reflection*, a circularity between a being and its environment, a nonlinear movement of self-adjustment toward a purpose or telos that defines the whole. This association between feedback and reflection is more than analogical. Although we related this to Kant earlier, we should also recall, as Gilbert Simondon already remarked in his article “Epistemology of Cybernetics (1953),” that “Kant could only deal with cybernetics by situating it in the *Critique of Judgment*.”⁴³ Simondon’s insight is profound and illuminating, enabling us to retrace the history of modern European philosophy through the prism of technology. Wiener refers to the first feedback system as the “governor”—a design used to automatically open and close a valve according to the speed of the centrifugal movement of a pendulum—in James Watt’s steam engine (Hayek saw this at work in the invisible hand of Adam Smith). A more contemporary example is homeostasis, a concept described by the physiologist Claude Bernard and later coined by W. B. Cannon. Bernard, in his 1865 *Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale*, writes that “all the vital mechanisms, however varied they may be, have only one object, that of preserving constant the conditions of life in the internal environment [*milieu intérieur*].”⁴⁴ Homeostasis is a mechanism that can keep a system within a certain range of constants: for example, temperature or the amount of potassium in the bodily liquid. Homeostasis is also used by the British cybernetician W. Ross Ashby to characterize life. Feedback here replaces the reflection of the monads and prompts Wiener to reject notions such as “life,” “vitalism,” and “soul”: “It is my thesis that the physical functioning of the living individual and the operation of some of the newer communication machines are precisely parallel in their analogous attempts to control entropy through feedback.”⁴⁵

Earlier on we suggested that for Hegel, the fundamental element in his

philosophy is reflection. To be conscious is to be conscious of something, but to be conscious of something, we need to be conscious of our consciousness of something. Consciousness in its general term is the reflection of consciousness on itself. Therefore, we understand that Hegel's interpretation of Aristotle's *De Anima* deviates from the classical interpretation because, for Hegel, it is impossible to talk about the soul without dealing with the circularity of reflection. Consciousness is that which reflects. Perhaps in the twentieth century, the question of whether Hegelian logic is realized in the state will be replaced by another, namely, whether Hegel's logic is realized in cybernetics. The Hegelian scholar Gotthard Günther claims that cybernetics realizes the Hegelian logic: "In cybernetics, finally, the idea of Hegel, that reflection is essentially a real process, is made serious when we systematically attempt to transfer processes of consciousness in analogy to machines."⁴⁶ In *Recursivity and Contingency*, we endeavored to demonstrate a philosophical history of cybernetics. We tried to show that Kant's *Critique of Judgment* imposes an organic condition of philosophizing; that is to say, for philosophy to be, it has to become organic. In chapter 2, titled "Logic and Contingency," we discussed the question of recursivity in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and via Gotthard Günther demonstrated an affinity between cybernetics and Hegel's logic, thereby positioning cybernetics in the history of philosophy, especially in relation to German idealism or, as Heidegger termed it, as the end of Western philosophy or metaphysics. In other words, the imaginary organic machine ceases to be imaginary. The megamachine metamorphosed from its seventeenth-century mechanistic image to that of an organic one.

Perhaps we can even argue that cybernetics, and its manifestation in modern digital technology, theoretically foretold the end of Hegel's philosophy—end in the sense of realization. Not only is Hegel's organismic thinking realized in bioeconomy and governance, but also because the cybernetization of bioeconomy and governance surpasses the Hegelian logic, with the spirit progressing toward another milestone. We must, however, be fair to Hegel because we cannot just see Hegel as a cybernetician. Hegel is more than a cybernetician because Hegel had no intention of simulating organisms; rather Hegel was aiming to grasp an "organic unity" that could be realized in all spiritual domains. Therefore, on the question of consciousness, Hegel treated the externalized seriously and beyond the process of hominization. This is not to say that cyberneticians overlook the prosthetic nature of technology, which the late Wiener

frequently discussed, but rather that Hegel went further than the cybernetician in applying his logic to the state, art, and history. It might be possible to consider Hegel's dialectics as "universal cybernetics" in the sense of Simondon,⁴⁷ though Hegel's concept of reflection departs from an anthropological understanding, while cyberneticians take it from the perspective of behaviorism and functionalism. Cybernetics is a functionalist proof of Hegel's concept of reflection but not yet an anthropological one. Only in the work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and James Lovelock can we find a more profound anthropo-political understanding.

§15. Noospheric Reflection: In Search of a Planetary Freedom?

Bioeconomy and cybernetics have converged on a planetary scale. If for the cyberneticians, feedback (Günther rendered it compatible with reflection) is fundamental to a new type of intelligent machine, in Teilhard de Chardin, reflection is fundamental to life as a whole. Therefore, Teilhard de Chardin often refers to an "organic totality" (*totalité organique*) in contrast to Hegel's "organic unity" (*Organische Einheit*). We can envision the world being enveloped with a layer of life, known as the biosphere, a phrase coined by E. Suess and later developed by Vladimir Vernadsky together with synergy from Édouard Le Roy and Henri Bergson. The biosphere is a layer of "living matter" that effectively transforms the sun's radiations into various chemical activities, such as photosynthesis.⁴⁸ The biosphere is not an extra layer as something separable from the crust of the earth; on the contrary, Vernadsky suggests that the biosphere is essential to it since without the biosphere "the crustal mechanism of the earth will not exist."⁴⁹ At certain moments in history, the earth witnesses the emergence of thinking, namely, a reflective matter, together with the living beings. According to Teilhard de Chardin, evolution could be understood as the development of this thinking layer at the planetary scale. The human being has, therefore, a special role in the formation of a new layer above the geosphere and the biosphere: the noosphere. The prefix *noo-* comes from the Greek word *nous*, *noesis*, thinking as per our use of the term *noetic*. Teilhard de Chardin claims, "The animal knows, of course, but certainly it does not know that it knows."⁵⁰ We do not really know how animals "think," therefore, we cannot verify this statement; however, at least, from our observation, it is fair to claim that in comparison with other living beings, human beings have a richer symbolic world since they are capable of

producing tools—an ability that Bergson used to define intelligence and distinguish it from the instinct.⁵¹ The symbolic world of the human has expanded and complexified exponentially in the past fifty thousand years.

Following the paleontologists, we know that the evolution of the human, or hominization in general, could be understood in terms of a long history of technical fabrication. One could understand it in terms of two dimensions, the externalization of memory—for example, through tools (the flint corresponds to a gesture of making fire that was developed throughout millions of years) and writing—and a liberation of bodily organs, that is to say, the human being could liberate their hands and their other organs that had to be in direct contact with the object of treatment: “Thanks to the bipedalism freeing the hands the brain could enlarge; and thanks to it at the same time the eyes, drawing near to each other on the diminished face, could begin to converge and fix their gaze on what the hands took hold of, brought near, and, in every sense of the word; presented: the very act of reflection, exteriorized.”⁵² The technical objects are exteriorized reflection in the sense of the objective spirit described by Hegel. Exteriorization is essential to reflection; it is that which extends reflection from the immediate object to an object that is not readily available. The formation of the noosphere is the historical accumulation of human intelligence through artifacts. However, these technical objects are not dead, inorganic matter; rather, they are also capable of reflection, as the objective spirit. Teilhard de Chardin was not discussing artificial intelligence or machine learning because these technologies did not exist at the time. Instead, he was hinting at the possibility of producing a thinking layer made possible by technical objects.⁵³ Thinking converges thanks to these technical objects because they function as a channel of communication (for example, writing) but also facilitate thinking to evolve through the accumulation of knowledge exteriorized in the technical objects. A reflective center is formed on the noosphere, and once it is formed, Teilhard de Chardin argues in a rather Hegelian tone, “it can change only by sinking deeper into itself.”⁵⁴ This might remind us of our discussion in chapter 1 that concerned the last paragraph of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the consciousness returns to itself as if sinking into the infinite dark night. This capacity of reflection belongs to life on Earth in general, and it is also through life that the Earth has gained this important capacity. Therefore, for Teilhard de Chardin, the noosphere is not simply a new skin, but rather it is that which gives soul to the earth: “Over and beyond the biosphere there is a

noosphere. . . . The earth ‘makes a new skin.’ Better still, it finds its soul.”⁵⁵ The biosphere is a skin above the geosphere, but the noosphere is rather its soul, one that results from the convergence of technologies. The development of the noosphere for Teilhard de Chardin is no longer about survival because in the Holocene, with reasonably constant geological activity and the technologies humans have developed, survival does not appear to be an imminent problem. Instead, for Teilhard de Chardin, the noosphere aims for a “super life.”⁵⁶ The noosphere is not simply biological, nor is it only tied to the human species, because we cannot assert that humans created technology, for the opposite is equally true: technology created the human. Unfortunately, technology is often misunderstood as merely a human affair that blocks us from understanding technology itself. However, one must clearly distinguish his thesis from this type of humanism, which is becoming more and more confident that one day it will be able to reinvent the human anew, propaganda closely associated with the trans-humanists: “The change of the biological state ending up in the awakening of thought does not simply correspond to a vertical point passed through by the individual, or even by the species. Vaster than that, it reflects life itself, in its organic totality, and consequently it marks a transformation that affects the state of the whole planet.”⁵⁷

Teilhard de Chardin provides a theological and mystic perspective on technological possibilities. Moreover, Teilhard rejects that technology is only an affair of any individual or species. Instead, technology is planetary in the sense that it is already beyond the human phenomenon. It is via the technospheric reflection, that we see “a noogenesis rising upstream against the flow of entropy,”⁵⁸ which resonates with the general thesis of Georgescu-Roegen and Norbert Wiener. The future of humanity does not lie in a return to the original human but rather in becoming more than human. Progress is here something material, scientific, and rational—a feature that Teilhard de Chardin identified with Western religion. However, it must be added that for Teilhard de Chardin the rational is not on the other side of the mystical; on the contrary, the rational can also function as the possibility of the mystical and vice versa. Humans are only the “midwife” who takes care of technology, but they are not the masters of technology. The noosphere has been developing the ability to reflect on itself, and at some point, it will arrive at an omega point, a “supremely autonomous focal point of union.”⁵⁹ What will happen when the noosphere reaches the omega point? Teilhard de Chardin provides us with a theo-

logical meaning, a “‘parousiac’ establishment of the Kingdom of God.”⁶⁰ However, Teilhard de Chardin’s determination of the driving force of the noosphere must be debated, namely, that the progress of the noosphere is advanced by the West, with the East understood as struggling in an almost opposed direction. The West progresses and the East regresses.⁶¹ We can get a glimpse of this position by considering what Teilhard said about China (and also India):

A civilization that was certainly incredibly refined, but just like the writing in which it so ingenuously reveals itself, one that had never changed its methods from the beginning. It was Neolithic, right in the midst of the nineteenth century, not a rejuvenated Neolithic as elsewhere, but only endlessly and increasingly complicated in itself—and not merely along the same lines, but on the same level—as though it had never been able to wrest itself free from the soil in which it had been formed.⁶²

Like Hegel and many other Western thinkers, Teilhard de Chardin sees the West as the synchronizing power of planetarization. However, he is also a step ahead of Hegel in terms of thinking planetarily—not that Teilhard de Chardin would not also have claimed that Siberia has no value of existence on the earth, but rather Hegel’s planetary thinking stopped at the nation-state, while Teilhard’s thinking, as Stafford Beer proposed in his essay “Recursion of Powers,” goes beyond the individual, communal, and national level.⁶³ As a Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin does not see the border of territories as an obstacle to realizing the noosphere, but rather the development of the noosphere will finally transcend the limitations of the nation-states, anticipating the arrival of the kingdom of God. The advancement and acceleration of the noosphere in the past four hundred years is led by the West through its technological advancement, colonization, and scientific revolution. However, we must not forget that Teilhard de Chardin lived in China for more than two decades between 1923 and 1946 during which the war in Europe prevented him from returning to France, and as a paleontologist, he has more insight than most of the scholars regarding this civilization. Is not the change in China today astounding in retrospect? In 150 years, China’s technical acceleration has caught up with the West, and currently appears to be accelerating faster than the West in many sectors. Teilhard might be surprised that today China contributes much more than many

Western countries toward the omega reflection. However, does this mean that modernization in China and its technological acceleration is, in fact, only the triumph of Western rationality?

The question of a planetary reflection is taken further by Lovelock in his Gaia theory in which he describes the awakening of Gaia through the stimulation of satellites and new telecommunication technologies. Lovelock's theory of Gaia originates from his task at NASA to investigate the possibilities of life on Mars. His research into the atmosphere reveals that the atmosphere, noosphere, biosphere, and geosphere all create feedback loops and are linked into a self-regulating system. Gaia as a gigantic cybernetic system provides a new way of understanding the relation between humans and the Earth. However, the ecological movements associated with Gaia theory missed Lovelock's main point that the ultimate goal is not to protect mother earth but rather to arrive at the reflection of Gaia. Such a reflection is an awakening, and humanity has not yet fulfilled its role to facilitate the taking place of this extraordinary reflection. In this sense, Lovelock's Gaia could be seen as a continuation of Teilhard de Chardin's conceptualization of the noosphere, the difference being that Gaia theory starts with the atmosphere and takes cybernetics as a departing point to conceive Gaia as a homeostatic system. Later, with the joint force of Lynn Margulis, we know that Gaia is no longer considered as a single organism, but rather a system made of multiple species, or of multispecies symbiosis. In short, Gaia is conceived as a giant nonequilibrium thermodynamic system, or more precisely a planetary life form.⁶⁴ The noospheric reflection or the awakening of Gaia for Lovelock is a task of technological development, and it is not a return to some form of philosophy of nature. The only thing that one can relate in this to a philosophy of nature is that it attempts to reconcile the rational and the mystical,⁶⁵ in the sense that the technological that has the rational as its ground doesn't point toward the disappearance of the mystical, but rather the very possibility of the mystical—a theme we will return to in chapter 6.

Is this omega reflection, understood as the destiny of humanity, similar in form to the apocalypse? Today we can easily associate it with the technological singularity; we can imagine that artificial intelligence will be joined together to create a noospheric reflection beyond all territories, and beyond attempts that have been carried out to link all computers in the world to produce a supercomputer. Maybe one day we will witness planetary unification through technology, and it is up to Silicon Valley to

tell us how fast and how far it can go. In 1995, *Wired* magazine rediscovered Teilhard de Chardin and named him the founder of a “philosophical framework for planetary, Net-based consciousness” fifty years prior to the birth of the internet.⁶⁶ Let us not forget that in 2018, Ray Kurzweil argued that by 2045 it might be possible to attain immortality.⁶⁷ “The singularity is near” is like the prophecy of the second coming of Jesus Christ, and Kurzweil is John the Baptist.⁶⁸ Politics starts with anthropology, an understanding of human nature and humans’ relation to the other beings in the world. This future of humanity is fictional; at the same time, it is a prophecy that is more relevant to us today than any previous epoch because technological acceleration has blurred the fictive and the actual.

The question of anthropology, which we have tried to sketch here, is no longer concerned with ethnology and ethnography but rather the future of the *Anthropos* itself. The anthropological question takes humanity as a whole and attempts to go beyond racial and ethnic differences. Such an anthropology is, however, inseparable from the Christian religion. As a result, noospheric reflection is not a human achievement alone but rather the possibility of Christian universal love. Moreover, the anthropological reflection provides a different path to think about the universal history of humanity; unlike Kant, who sees the realization of history as the hidden project of nature, we see here nature being englobed in a reflection that originates from it but at the same time exceeds it:

Once formed, a reflective centre can no longer change except by involution upon itself. To outward appearance, admittedly, man is integrated just like any animal. But here and there we find an inverse function of the phenomenon. By death, in the animal, the radial is reabsorbed into the tangential, while in man it escapes and is liberated from it. It escapes from entropy by turning back to Omega: the hominization of death itself.⁶⁹

This image of the “hominization of death” is a return to the center, to the omega, contributing to the memory of the human species as well as to the future of this memory. The human being will be unified in the planetary process in the eyes of Teilhard de Chardin, in the sense that the noosphere will englobe the geosphere and the biosphere and form a cybernetic feedback loop with the atmosphere. Such a view takes the idea of the planetary as the *a priori*, the same way Hegel sees the idea of the state. In this process

of convergence, human time is identified with geological time, just as how Dipesh Chakrabarty has analyzed the notion of the Anthropocene.⁷⁰ However, does this identification give us a new framework of politics—a politics beyond the nation-state as well as the human species? Or, on the contrary, does it only mean the end of the human and the end of freedom?

We have to confront the Kantian question regarding how far philosophical speculations can go without falling prey to the *Schwärmerei*. In the second volume of his *The Myth of the Machine*, Mumford launched a fierce attack on Teilhard de Chardin and ventured a “tentative but reassuring prediction: that planetary supermechanism will disintegrate long before ‘the phenomenon of Man’ reaches the Omega point.”⁷¹ Mumford’s attack is somewhat based on his strict definition of mechanism and his distinction between mechanism and organism. We will have to elaborate on this point. On the one hand, Mumford sees Teilhard de Chardin’s technological thought as a mere continuation of the mechanical world picture under the disguise of Christian fulfilment. The megamachine, since the beginning, presupposes what Mumford calls the “organization man,” that is to say, an artifact of the human that is deprived of any organic feature unconformable to mechanical organization. The planetary supermechanism for him will only produce a “depersonalized servo-mechanism in the megamachine.”⁷² Mumford alluded to an organicism that would be an antidote to such mechanization. On the other hand, even though he invokes Norbert Wiener and cybernetics on several occasions, he seems to have ignored that the cybernetic machine is no longer the same kind of mechanical machine he was reproaching. To be fair, Mumford saw the cybernetic machines as a technological improvement (which he calls “cybernation”), but he understands them as “the most ancient of organic devices, rather than the most modern: equivalent to the reflexes, not the cerebral cortex.”⁷³ Paradoxically when he refers to Cannon’s homeostasis, he then claims that he wouldn’t call it a “mechanism.”⁷⁴ Mumford’s analysis and diagnosis could hardly hold following the trajectory of political epistemology we have outlined so far; therefore, his theory of the megamachine in relation to political forms has to be updated. On the other hand, and this seems to be more solid as a criticism, is that for Mumford, Teilhard de Chardin’s theory of the development of consciousness toward the omega point is not science but risks being mere mythology and eschatology; its only merit is that it “made explicit the underlying dogmatic premises of the metaphysics and theology of the megamachine.”⁷⁵

It is worth noting that, near the end of *Gesture and Speech*, André Leroi-Gourhan mentioned Teilhard's omega point and speculated that it is most likely another word for the apocalypse. And before the apocalypse arrives, one will have to wait indefinitely because, as we know, the *katechon* delays the coming of the anti-Christ, and the length of this delay remains unknown: "We should be inclined to regard the Teilhardian vision as a powerful mystical approach that bears, however, the hallmark of all apocalypses. Humankind may well have to wait thousands of years for 'point omega' and, while waiting, it will have to organize itself and carry on living, just as it did in the year 1000."⁷⁶ Planetary reflection is a messianic event in the sense that it is an event that ends the limit of the human being. This planetary reflection is also the moment when the nation-states will lose all meanings and values, and through technology the kingdom of God will be brought to the earth. However, as Mumford and Leroi-Gourhan have remarked, this is but "mythology and eschatology" and thus bears "the hallmark of all apocalypses," a trope that continues for today's transhumanists.

However, unlike Teilhard, whose noble idea of planetary reflection aims at reconciling science and theology, transhumanists perceive it more in terms of market value. One shouldn't categorize Teilhard as a transhumanist by any means, even though one could identify an apocalyptic end in both. The transhumanists propose the technological singularity as the ultimate possibility of the posthuman, where the human will no longer be and will remain a past; instead, we will all become *Homo deus*. Logically one cannot refuse such an anthropogenetic possibility since we do not know enough about how technology might advance in the coming decades. At the same time, this uncertainty leads to a constant confrontation between technology and politics within a certain epistemological paradigm, for in this paradigm technology wants to overcome politics and politics wants to constrain technology. The biological attributes of humans could be gradually substituted by artificial organs available for purchase at a certain price. Elements such as gender and human phenotypical differences become subject to engineering principles: they could be eliminated by technological means. One may anticipate that this will first be done in private clinics before becoming normal practice in public hospitals. This is the promise as well as the poverty of the present technological imagination, while it equally marks the end of the human and the end of politics—or perhaps an absolute depolitization.

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Mechanism, Organism, or Decisionism

The symbol of the Leviathan . . . at first represented an externally driven lifeless “mechanism” and then an animate “organism” of a political contrast, an organism driven from within. When a widespread romantic feeling began to perceive in the image of the “state,” a plant, a growing tree, or even a flower, the image generated by Hobbes began to be perceived as downright grotesque.

—Carl Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*

After exploring Hegel’s planetary thinking within and beyond the political form of the state, we now turn to tackle the state theory of Carl Schmitt, a thinker who concretizes technology, sovereignty, and the planetary into tangible manifestations. We engage with Schmitt because he offers a different political epistemology to tackle rising tensions between the state and technological progress, as well as tensions among states due to spatial revolutions. This centers on what he terms “the political.” Similar to our exploration of Hegel, we will commence by examining the question of political epistemology. The concluding sentence of chapter 5 of Carl Schmitt’s monograph on Hobbes, cited above, is both intriguing and profound. The two images of the state he refers to, a machine and an organism, indicate two political epistemologies. The former is the mechanical and lifeless existence that one can find in Descartes’s mechanization of being and Hobbes’s mechanization of the state; the latter emphasizes an organicity, a livingness (*Lebendigkeit*), which was prescribed as an antimechanist philosophy by the Romantics. For the Romantics, mechanism is a corrupted enterprise: it is a mistake that leads toward self-destruction. As Novalis stated in *Glauben und Lieben*: “However necessary perhaps such machine-like administration might be for the health, strength, and vigilance of the state, if the state is solely treated as such, then it is essentially ruined by this.”¹ Hegel’s philosophy of right, though not falling into the category of Romanticism, stands as the most sophisticated and systematic treatise on

the organicity of the state as the condition of freedom. In the previous chapters, we repeatedly returned to this contrast between mechanism and organism that characterizes a rupture in the history of modern European philosophy and remains effective today when we talk about communities, interdependences, coexistences, and so on.

Schmitt's Hobbes book contains his defense of Hobbes against the German Romantics' criticism of Hobbes's mechanism. Furthermore, Schmitt's reading of Hobbes moves beyond this mechanistic characterization. As we will show, in Hobbes's mechanization of the state, there is something even "mystical" about the Leviathan since it is God, persona, and machine endowed with a soul. In this chapter, we will read Schmitt's decisionism as a political epistemology, or more precisely a political vitalism, by showing how Schmitt considered decisionism a theoretical advancement beyond the opposition between mechanism and organism. This does not mean endorsing Schmitt's state theory; on the contrary, this reading of Schmitt allows us to understand (also in the next chapters) the epistemological assumptions and limits of Schmitt's attempt to go beyond Hegel and the organicist paradigm. This chapter sets out to, first, contrast our political, epistemological reading with that from political theology, which is often associated with Schmitt in contemporary discussions, and second, to reconstruct Schmitt's vitalist epistemology by analyzing his defense against the mechanist perception of Hobbes's state theory and the organicist perception of the Romantic's state theory—and for this purpose, we will return to a close reading of Hobbes's *Leviathan* as well as Schmitt's commentary.

§16. From Political Theology to Political Epistemology

Retrospectively, one may say that Hegel's state, as an organic unity, did not turn the Prussian state into an organic whole, nor did it produce an organic and holistic economy—something that might only appear as a slogan at the dawn of the Second World War when holism became the science of National Socialism. The First World War was probably only a preparation for the Second World War. In 1914, when Henri Bergson gave his inaugural speech as the newly elected president of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Bergson addressed the outbreak of the First World War by accusing Germany of being machinist and mechanist.² After several centuries of achievement in poetry, art, and metaphysics, by the end of the nineteenth century, Germany turned itself into a mechanical machine in

industry, administration, and military. Bergson saw a fundamental mechanism in Germany's mentality, one that not only was metaphorical but also reflected itself in the machines then produced in Germany: "diabolical artifice," which, instead of producing "a spiritualization of matter," ended in a "mechanization of the spirit."³ We will return to this statement in chapter 6 by investigating Bergson's organology of war. In this short speech of 1914, terms such as *mechanism*, *mechanic*, and *mechanization* appear nineteen times. One could associate this accusation with Bergson's critique of mechanism and his own vitalist position or a quasi-organicism. Indeed, almost a century had passed between Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (1821) and Bergson's speech on the First World War (1914), and Prussia had turned Germany into a "scientific barbarity" or a "systematic barbarity" through mechanization.

Did Hegel then fail? His theory of the state was supposed to guarantee planetary freedom without inciting wars of diverse nature and scale. Furthermore, not only did the individuality and the substance of the state not make "the nullity of these finite things [life, property, and their rights] as an accomplished fact,"⁴ but also the organism of the state became unachievable—just as the young Marx criticized, that the organic state remains ultimately a myth.⁵ We know that after Hegel's death, his name gradually faded from view, but Germany itself, more than ever, continued "Hegelianizing from top to bottom."⁶ In the previous chapters, we attempted to show how Hegel, in his doctrine of the state, identifies the spirit with philosophy and the state with freedom. This identification is also an identification of philosophy with the necessity of organicity. The question might be asked again about the requirement of understanding the state through the two images of the machine and organism. What does it contribute to political philosophy today?

Indeed, one might answer such a question by recognizing that the machine and organism are not just metaphors but rather function as aspirations to ideal models of human society; they are, therefore, also fundamental to the perception and imagination of all domains of human existence. The art of governance, which, in general, we now call politics, is nothing accidental, nor is it simply the collection of wisdom passed down from previous generations. It is a science that presupposes a certain epistemology as its way of investigating the organization within a particular human society and the latter's relation with other societies, an epistemology without which it would be completely doomed. By giving validity to

rules, the legal system can legitimate certain norms that are shared and respected by all the members of society—be that via the school of natural law or that of positive law. Natural law seeks its foundation in human nature, especially rationality and morality, while an authoritative communal will constitutes positive law.⁷ In Hans Kelsen's positivism, a *Grundnorm* is presupposed in a legal community as validifying other norms. By their efficiency, norms also affirm or discredit the validity of rules. In international relations, norms are described as protocols and international laws, establish order between nations that do not share the same values and beliefs, and presuppose a basic norm, sovereignty, the common will that possesses the greatest power of legislation.⁸ We will look more closely at the ontological question of sovereignty in the next chapter, reserving this chapter for discussing Schmitt's political epistemology.

Any political science presupposes a specific political epistemology that departs from a presupposed foundation. Indeed, this is precisely what Karl Deutsch shows in his seminal work on cybernetics and governance, *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control*. Deutsch surveyed the images of political thought, ranging from the wheel and the scale to the modern models of mechanism and organism.⁹ Deutsch did not exhaust all images of political thought, and we should not reproach him for this; instead, we would like to point out that what Deutsch demonstrated is that epistemological frameworks coincide with modes of legitimation. For example, since the pre-Socratics embraced an epistemology of elements, the formation of their societies was based on the complexification of elements, be that water, fire, or more abstract entities like the *apeiron* (the unbounded and infinite from which the universe arose), while in Plato, we find an epistemology based on Form, according to which, each individual, be it a human being or social institute, participates in an ideal Form, *eidos*, with neither tyranny nor democracy being able to access the *eidos* since this is only possible through a philosopher-king, once the ruler of the polis.¹⁰ In the modern age, we see a parallel process of secularization and the emergence of modern science, which had significant implications for political thought. The question of legitimacy underlines the relation between epistemology and politics, for epistemological models do not alter from one to another without being given the legitimacy to do so. The question of legitimacy also highlights the contrast between political theology and political epistemology. Indeed, do political epistemology and political theology converge in the process of seculari-

zation? Epistemology as a category of science is opposed to theology. To understand this opposition, we must first go through Schmitt's concept of political theology.

In *Political Theology* (1922), Schmitt claims that

all significant concepts of modern theory of the state are resulted from the secularization of theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state . . . but also because of their systematic structure. . . . The state of exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology. Only by being aware of this analogy can we appreciate the manner in which the philosophical idea of the state developed over the last few centuries.¹¹

In other words, there is a “systematic structural kinship” between theological and juridical concepts.¹² How can we judge Schmitt's assertion? Hans Blumenberg mocked and reproached the credibility of this notion of secularization in the first edition of his *Legitimacy of the Modern Age*,¹³ and the theologian Erik Peterson denied the possibility of any political theology in *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (1935). Going into depth on Peterson's debate with Schmitt about church history is beyond the scope of this work; Blumenberg's criticism, however, is more relevant since it reveals the problematic of historicization. In *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, Blumenberg's main target was not Schmitt but Karl Löwith's *Meaning in History* (1949).¹⁴ Löwith contends that several important modern concepts, such as progress, are secularized Christian concepts. The concept of infinite progress, and its underlying philosophy of history, is the secularization of a linear time established by Christianity by turning away from the cyclic time found in the antique pagan cosmos. Once associated with biblical times, progress is seen as the secularization of the eschatological model, which anticipates an ultimate event like the Last Judgment as the fulfilment of history.¹⁵ According to this view, Hegel's philosophy of history is no exception from this paradigm: “For Löwith, Hegel's theory of the ‘suspension and carrying forward’ (*Aufhebung*) of the Christian and Reformation phase of history in the underlying structure of the modern spiritual and political world, especially in its constitutive consciousness of subjective freedom, degraded ‘sacred history’ to the level of secular history and exalt[ed] the latter to the level of the first.”¹⁶

Schmitt's review of Löwith's book affirms Löwith's claim that paganism (*Heidentum*) is incapable of historical thinking because it is cyclic.¹⁷ Blumenberg defends the concept of progress for various reasons, most notably because Löwith's view is taken to be questionable, if not unhistorical.¹⁸ According to Blumenberg, Löwith's interpretation of the philosophy of history was already shaped in his earlier work on Nietzsche, where he set up the eternal return as the renaissance of cyclic time.¹⁹ For Blumenberg, modernity should not be seen as the continuation and transposition of a set of concepts A from the past to the set of concepts B found in the present, since this view undermines the legitimacy of the modern. In such a transposition, the legitimacy of the modern depends completely on the past. Modernity, for Blumenberg, stands as a self-assertion (*Selbstbehauptung*), similar to Hannah Arendt's argument, which he quoted: "Modern man, when he lost the certainty of a world to come, was thrown back upon himself and not upon this world."²⁰ Modernity could be seen as a discontinuity, where both the becoming worldlessness (*Entweltlichung*) and detheologization (*Enttheologisierung*) take place.²¹ Unlike the eschatological view of history, the modern concept of progress does not necessarily await a transcendent intervention, like a revolution. Instead, it consists of an immanent process of self-justification. Science and technology behind the idea of infinite progress constitute neither the negativity nor the residue of religion. In the same vein, despite largely agreeing with Schmitt, Blumenberg rejects Schmitt's claim that "all significant concepts of modern theory of the state are resulted from the secularization of theological concepts." This does not mean that Blumenberg refuses to recognize that there is a historical relation between theology and the modern state (indeed, for him, the modern age is "unthinkable without" Christianity, as he intended to show in the second part of *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*); but rather he rejects secularization as a transfer of concepts from one realm to another. As a method, it is not legitimate but merely romantic,²² because analogy does not imply transformation. In this sense, Schmitt's political theology could be reduced to a set of metaphorical relations: "Is 'Political Theology' only the sum of a set of metaphors, whose selection reveals more about the character of the situations in which use is made of them than about the origin of the ideas and concepts that are employed in dealing with such situations?"²³

The essential difference between Schmitt and Blumenberg, which Blumenberg also recognized after Schmitt's publication of *Political Theology II*, is that secularization is a category of legitimacy for Schmitt; while

for Blumenberg, it belongs to the category of historical justice.²⁴ Schmitt wants to identify the systemic structural kinship between the modern doctrine of the state and theology. In contrast, Blumenberg wants to show that the modern is irreducible to theological categories, even if they are closely related. Jean-Claude Monod distinguishes two meanings (*sens*, or more precisely, two phases) of secularization: secularization-transfer and secularization-liquidation. These two senses seem to respectively characterize Schmitt and Blumenberg's positions. According to Monod, secularization-transfer sees secularization as a transfer of concepts from theology to the state, which characterizes Schmitt's political theology; secularization-liquidation is a second phase that leads to the emancipation, not only from Christian theology but also from all substitutions of theology.²⁵ Schmitt focuses on transfer but fears liquidation, which he considered neutralization; Blumenberg is critical of secularization-transfer but is not completely in favor of liquidation either.

We do not intend to prolong the debate between Blumenberg and Schmitt here. The confrontation between Blumenberg, Schmitt, and Löwith that we staged above highlights the problem of political theology. Furthermore, it serves as an invitation to pursue a different line of inquiry: political epistemology. Even if we step back and follow Löwith's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy of history as a form of eschatology, it remains insufficient to understand Hegel's organic state. This is also why political epistemology is essential to understanding modern political thought. We do not mean to reject political theology and its importance in the history of the Occident. Indeed, it is not possible to understand the West without understanding Christianity. However, from the perspective of planetary politics, it makes little sense today to claim that Xi Jinping is the secular transfer of the Christian God or that the Covid-19 vaccines are a Christian miracle. This is because modernization is secularization as both *Sekularisierung* and *Verweltlichung*, that is, in the process of *mondialization*, certain senses of secularization are no longer recognizable, while at the same time a set of more universal categories have to be adopted. For example, Marxism, which according to Löwith and Jacob Taubes is an instance of the eschatological model, nevertheless took a nontheological and quasi-scientific meaning in the Eastern communist countries.

Suppose political theology is based on divine revelation emphasizing the transposition of theological concepts to political concepts. In that case, political epistemology has its source in science, understanding the

implication of scientific categories in forming political organizations. When we look at history from the perspective of political epistemology, it might then be possible to identify a more sophisticated and open future than that of an eschatology; it also returns political agency to the human and value to knowledge. For example, if we follow Gilbert Simondon, the concept of progress is characteristic of the eighteenth century in which technical and scientific improvement was conceived without limit, this techno-scientific optimism being the belief of the epoch of mechanism.²⁶ We could then also see how mechanist epistemology ended following industrialization and mechanization, and why an organismic epistemology is conceived as a rescuing force.

Political epistemology is not a replacement for political theology. Modern epistemology is too constrained to replace theology because it is only limited to what is knowable. In Schmitt's political theology, the secularization of Christian concepts produces new forms of legitimacy that cannot be reduced to science—and indeed, science has legality as the form of the “laws of nature” but not yet an absolute legitimacy, therefore any scientific inquiry into the emergence of life or the birth of the cosmos is always haunted by the necessity of the divine power. Our interest in political epistemology hopes, however, to expose, at the same time, the metaphysical-cum-scientific sources of political thought as well as their limits—which we have already performed in our reading of Hegel. With Blumenberg's criticism in mind, we would like to read Schmitt's theory of the state, not from the perspective of political theology but rather from political epistemology. Schmitt's remark in *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes* is, therefore, significant since, first, it is an invitation to evaluate the two images of the state and to reflect on this historical debate given our situation, and second, it is also key to identifying a new concept, or a new image of the state that Schmitt himself wants to sketch.

§17. Machine and Organism in *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*

Schmitt is, however, not satisfied with the shift from mechanism to organism. This displacement of mechanism and the replacement with organism is not only unsatisfactory, but also it brutally slashes something even more important in political theory, leading to the consequence that “the image generated by Hobbes began to be perceived as downright grotesque.”²⁷ Does Schmitt want to defend and return to the Hobbesian mechanization

of the state? He was very critical and skeptical of a certain “organismic” concept of politics, which he named “political romanticism,” in which he included various political structures such as liberal democracy and parliamentary democracy. The Romantics see the organic in everything, even a stone. Schmitt sometimes caricatures Romanticism as a certain form of animism, which is a mere abstraction and aestheticization of reality, failing to historicize and seize the concreteness of history.²⁸ The emphasis on spontaneity and organicity of politics implies, first of all, endless discussions without arriving at the right political decision, as he argues at the opening of chapter 4 of *Political Theology*, “On the Counter Revolutionary Philosophy of the State (de Maistre, Bonald, Donosco Cortés):” “German romantics possess an odd trait: everlasting conversation. Novalis and Adam Müller feel at home with it; to them, it constitutes the true realization of their spirits.”²⁹ Donosco Cortés, during the crisis of 1848, undermined discussion and prioritized the decision; he called the bourgeoisie a *clasa discutidora*—Schmitt later carried this criticism against parliamentarians.³⁰ Schmitt’s attraction to the Hobbesian theory of the state is not a return to a mechanist or a rigidly rational and linear model. Schmitt also understands the problem of the lifeless and repetitive mechanism, which he identifies in liberalism, especially the “mechanical formalism” of Kelsenian liberalism.³¹ He also associated this formalism with what Montesquieu claimed of the judge being “la bouche qui prononce les paroles de la loi” (the mouth that pronounces the speech of the law), as well as with what Rousseau said about executive power being no more than a radical mechanical application of legislative norms.³² As a historical fact, the difference between organism and mechanism had not yet been clearly made in Hobbes’s time; Hobbes, like his contemporary Descartes, was a thinker of mechanism. Hobbes’s mechanism remains mystical,³³ rendering the classification of whether the Hobbesian state is mechanism or organism, animal or machine, superfluous.³⁴ Retrospectively, we would like to claim—and this constitutes the major difference between our reading of Schmitt and most others—that what Schmitt was looking for is a theory of the state beyond mechanism and organism.³⁵

We will start where Schmitt ended, in the appendix to his book on Hobbes entitled “The State as Mechanism in Descartes and Hobbes,” an article published in 1936 in the journal *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie*, two years before the publication of his monograph on Hobbes. Regarding mechanical philosophy, Hobbes’s philosophical project was a

step further than, or even a leap beyond, that of Descartes. Descartes, the great thinker of mechanism, was able to sketch a mechanization of the anthropological image of man, best demonstrated in his shorter treatises such as “Description of the Human Body” (1648), posthumously published together with “Treatise on Man” in 1664, in which Descartes compares different parts of the human body with various components of the church organ, the animal spirit being passed by the blood, and a soul dwelling in the pineal gland:

The air which comes from the bellows	The spirits which come from the heart
The pipes which make sound	The pores of the brain through which they pass
The distribution of the air in the pipes	The way in which the spirits are distributed in these pores

Hobbes furthered Descartes’s project of mechanization, transporting it from the image of man to the image of the state, with the sovereign dwelling in the brain of the leviathan, itself composed of individuals. In Schmitt’s own words, Hobbes’s philosophy was an advancement of Descartes’s: “The mechanization of the concept of a state thus completed the mechanization of the anthropological image of man.”³⁶ In the first paragraph of his introduction to the *Leviathan*, Hobbes starts with a mechanical metaphor of the human being with the human heart as the spring, nerves as strings, and joints as wheels. Hobbes extends this mechanical metaphor to the commonwealth by claiming that more than this image of the automata, “art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, man. For by art is created that great Leviathan called a commonwealth.”³⁷ Just as with Descartes’s comparison of automata and human beings, Hobbes gave a long list of equivalent features:

Sovereignty	Artificial soul
Magistrates/officers	Artificial joints
Reward/punishment	Nerves
Wealth/riches	Strength
<i>Salus populi</i>	Business

Counsellors	Memory
Equity/law	Reason/will
Concord	Health
Sedition	Sickness
Civil war	Death
Pacts/covenants	Fiat

Hobbes's mechanization of the state is not only a metaphor: it also explores in detail the structure and operation of the state from the perspective of mechanism. Hobbes valued mechanism as a superior form of thinking that reveals the organization of the body politic and the functioning of the commonwealth.³⁸ In addition to the mechanical body, the sovereign representative to the state is understood as the soul dwelling in the body, or, as in Schmitt's 1919 lecture on Jean Bodin's concept of sovereignty, Schmitt also compared this soul to the keel of a ship.³⁹ In his *Six Livres de la République*, Bodin developed the sovereign as a legal concept defined as the state's representative in opposition to "feudal, patrimonial, corporate and confessional pluralism."⁴⁰ Bodin's definition of the sovereign has been understood since the seventeenth century as an absolutist and indivisible power, not conditioned by any other power except God.⁴¹ To offer a contemporary description, we might compare this image of the soul with *mecha*, those robots from Japanese animations, where a human being sits inside the heart or the brain of the robot, driving it with a control panel; indeed, this is not far from how Schmitt describes Hobbes's state theory: "Hobbes transfers—and that seems to me to be the gist of his philosophy of state—the Cartesian conception of man as a mechanism with a soul onto the 'human man,' the state, made by him into a machine animated by the sovereign-representative person."⁴²

The mechanization of the state is unlikely to be found in Bodin, mostly since he lived and wrote at a period when mechanism was not yet a dominant epistemology. Indeed, Schmitt thinks that Bodin could not grasp the modern Leviathan as Hobbes did, that is, understand its fourfold combination of God, animal, person, and machine.⁴³ What, then, is the problem of mechanism in Hobbes's theory, and to what extent did it fail—as the subtitle of Schmitt's book *Meaning and Failure of a Political Symbol*

suggests? Furthermore, how is “mechanism”—a term immediately associated with machines—related to Schmitt’s take on technology, which plays a decisive role in his distinction between his political project and that of the communists and the liberals? The answers to these questions are not self-evident, not only because the text is open to different readings but also because Schmitt’s political involvement with National Socialism invites readings that identify his philosophy with the ideology of Nazism. It is beyond our intention to repeat what has been plausibly analyzed regarding Schmitt’s theory and his involvement with National Socialism, but rather we would like to situate our readings in the antithesis of mechanism and organism—an antithesis we have been using to read the history of modern European philosophy. To understand Schmitt’s reading, we must go back to Hobbes’s political epistemology of the *Leviathan*.

§18. Political Epistemology in Hobbes’s *Leviathan*

For historians of science, Hobbes’s mechanism is not entirely the same as that of Descartes. As we know, Hobbes entered into a critical correspondence with Descartes during the former’s self-exile in Paris during the 1640s, just after the publication of *The Elements of Law*. The debates were around the interpretation of optics and Descartes’s meditation, and Hobbes’s objections were also listed as an appendix in Descartes’s *Meditations on First Philosophy*.⁴⁴ We will have to leave the details of this debate to historians of science; here, we only want to highlight one observation. We might say that dualism, which is at the same time a cause but also a result of Descartes’s mechanism, is not treated in the same manner in the philosophy of Hobbes. As a reminder: mechanism is characterized by a linear causality: one cause leads to an effect, as is demonstrated by a mechanical machine. If observers chose to trace the cause of a machine’s movement, they might well arrive at what they think is the single mechanical cause, such as a coiled spring inside the machine. However, the spring was itself coiled by a human being external to the machine, and the coiling action would also have to have a cause. Through such reasoning, one continues *ad infinitum* until, in the end, one is very likely to arrive at God as the first cause. This is not yet a logical conclusion since it is still a postulate. For Descartes, the proof of the existence of God must be mediated via the *res cogitans* because the *res cogitans* is that which thinks and wills, while insofar that the *res cogitans* is limited in both representation and reasoning,

namely, it is always far away from perfection, a higher form of existence or a perfect being must exist that makes such a perfection possible. This, as we know, is Descartes's proof of the existence of God.⁴⁵ Hobbes, like Descartes, assumes God as the first cause. However, he does not mediate it through the *res cogitans*; instead, Hobbes considers being from the perspective of local motion. Whether that is the imagination or passions of the human being or the movement of an object, both could be interpreted as motion. In other words, there is a conflation of the physical and the sensual, an ontological homogeneity governing both physical beings and living beings⁴⁶—in this sense, we may be able to say that Hobbes pushes mechanism further than Descartes. This is also the foundation of Hobbes's body politics, as we can see in *De Motu*, where Hobbes compares the river with the commonwealth:

Since the motion and the flow are one and the same, the river will also be one and the same. Likewise if one asks: "Is a man, when old and young, the same being, *ens*, or matter, in number?" it is clear that, because of the continual casting of [existing] body-tissue and the acquisition of new, it is not the same material [that endures], and hence not the same body; yet because of the unbroken nature of the flux by which matter decays and is replaced, he is always the same man. The same must be said of the commonwealth. When any citizen dies, the material of the state is not the same, i.e. the state is not the same *ens*. Yet the uninterrupted degree [*ordo*] and motion of government that signalise a state ensure, while they remain as one, that the state is the same in number.⁴⁷

The commonwealth is not simply an assembly of bodies; rather, it has a vitality, which Hobbes borrows from the metaphor of the flow or man's ageing. That which goes away is replaced by something new; nothing remains the same. One observes it in an inorganic matter, such as the river, or organic matter, such as the human being. Likewise, when the commonwealth is well regulated, it is maintained by flows of matter and energy as the river is by the flow of water. This means the mechanical or civil laws must supplement the moral laws (what Hobbes calls laws of nature) and enforce the latter. The civil laws are constitutive of a body politics that defines the obligations and interdictions of the subjects of the commonwealth:

The making of union consisteth in this, that every man by covenant oblige himself to some one and the same man, or to some one and the same council, by them all named and determined, to do those actions, which the said man or council shall command them to do; and to do no action which he or they shall forbid, or command them not to do. . . . This union so made, is that which men call now-a-days a BODY POLITIC or civil society; and the Greeks call it πόλις; that is to say, a city; which may be defined to be a multitude of men, united as one person by a common power, for their common peace, defence, and benefit.⁴⁸

Civil laws are thus like the laws of mechanics that govern the movements of the bodies in a common space, such as the civil society or polis. The multitude as an assembly of bodies is devoid of organization. Like the rabbles in Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, they have to be organized. However, as we can see, Hegel's organic unity of the state greatly contrasts with Hobbes's mechanical unity of the commonwealth, which interests us here. But if Schmitt is well aware of this opposition and the organic advancements of Hegel's political philosophy, why did he still long for Hobbes's mechanism? In doing so, does he not risk returning to an obsolete political epistemology? The answer to such a question can be found in Schmitt's nuanced reading of the Leviathan as not purely a mechanical being but rather a mythical one; this mythical origin of the Leviathan has to be firstly approached from Hobbes's anthropology.

Toward the end of the Introduction of *Leviathan*, Hobbes tells us that wisdom is acquired not through reading books but through studying human beings.⁴⁹ That is to say, one must start with anthropology, the study of the human and its tendencies. In chapter XIII, titled "Of the Natural Condition of Mankind, as Concerning Their Felicity and Misery," Hobbes suggests three principal causes of conflict between humans: competition, diffidence, and glory, each corresponding to invasion for gain, safety, and reputation.⁵⁰ The war of all against all is a natural tendency in human beings. It is nothing sinful, provided that each person preserves themselves until a law forbids them. However, Hobbes clarifies that such a situation never really existed: "It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time nor condition of war as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world."⁵¹

What, then would be the use of giving such an imaginary scenario? It

is due to the fact that he must demonstrate the genesis of politics and that his formulation of the political order is nothing more than the necessary result of such a genesis. As we know, Hobbes's fictional state of nature contrasts with that of both Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In Book I of his *Spirit of the Laws*,⁵² Montesquieu claimed that the state of nature is harmonious rather than being a war of all against all; conflicts arose due to the growth of intelligence, and laws were enacted to ensure harmonious interactions between people. It became clearer in Rousseau's *Second Discourse (Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Mankind)* that Hobbes's state of nature is no longer the "first state of nature." For simplicity, we might call Hobbes's a second state of nature. The first state of nature is characterized by the natural state of men's idleness and self-satisfaction with natural resources. The second state of nature is already one where *artificiality* introduces itself into the nature of man, and inequality is said to emerge due to competition—"some improved or impaired their condition or acquired good or bad qualities not inherent in their nature, the rest continued a longer time in their primitive state."⁵³ This artificiality is subject to perfection in the sense of the constant improvement of tools; Rousseau therefore often used the word *perfectibilité* to characterize the fall qua departure of the original man toward sociability. Instead of competition and war, Rousseau points out that Hobbes ignored pity, which is fundamental to self-love and self-preservation.

Both Rousseau and Hobbes provide us with two imaginary stories, which compete with each other to be anthropological qua ontological because both submit the human to a genesis that is always conditioned by the ontological postulate of human nature. Though Hobbes could not illustrate such a story according to European history, he claimed it might have happened elsewhere. The contact with the New World invokes strong interest in anthropology, but it also provides anthropology with the "other" understood as the "primitive self." This encounter reconstructs the genesis of human society, or political anthropology, by starting with the lawless primitive, bestial, barbarous savages,⁵⁴ whom Hobbes gives the example of those "in many places of America": "But there are many places where they live so now. For the savage people in many places in America (except the government of small families, the concord where of dependeth on natural lust) have no government at all, and live at this day in that brutish manner as I said before."⁵⁵ Contemporary anthropologists have criticized Hobbes's evidence, but we find no better with Rousseau, who

identified the supporting evidence with the Caribbeans. Throughout the *Second Discourse*, we can find three places where the Caribbeans are used as an example to demonstrate the nature of the original man.⁵⁶ Rousseau's discourse is not fundamentally different from that of Hobbes. However, each takes himself to be the authority on the discourse of the "original man"—which remains imaginary if not purely fictional.⁵⁷ Both Hobbes and Rousseau, as Leo Strauss points out, rejected the assumption of traditional political philosophy that man is by nature a political and social animal and produced a genesis of right departing from man as an *apolitical* and *asocial* animal.⁵⁸ The state of nature (*status naturalis*) is a tabula rasa, yet to be filled with culture (*status civilis*). Hobbes constructs a historical transition from nature to culture as the necessity of the commonwealth for these wolf-like animals, called human beings. Human nature implies a tendency, be that vanity, evil, or sympathy, and politics manages such a tendency. The anthropological explanation also becomes here the science of the moral.⁵⁹ The logical inference from the nature of man to the nature of the state is very "natural" for Hobbes, since man is dangerous, like a wild animal, driven by desire and passion; men are therefore always in conflict, whether that be through rivalry, distrust, or vanity. If such passions are not regulated, it will lead to war, like a cluster of moving bodies that may collide by chance.

At first glance, one may consider Rousseau's anthropology in *The Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* as being opposed to that of Hobbes, but the truth is that even though they have different beginnings, they both end with the same need for law and the state; this is also the same with Montesquieu, who, in the *Spirit of the Laws* describes how the development of intelligence led to conflict, thus instigating the need of law for security. Anthropologies of law thus presuppose a chaotic and conflictual state that demands an impersonal force to intervene. They have varied ways to describe the function of social institutions as means to resolve conflicts and construct a community. In contrast to Rousseau's organic tendency, Hobbes provides a mechanist solution. Indeed, we might say that in addition to anthropology, Hobbes's mechanist philosophy allows him to legitimate the state as an antidote to the state of nature and avoid the war of all against all. This new morality targets vanity and fear. Vanity necessitates an acknowledgement of one's wealth and possessions. Possession, desire, and vanity are thus related and all can be prolonged indefinitely. One is scared of dying violently, as when animals fight over their dead prey because every neigh-

bor could be a potential competitor or the wolf behind your back. Humans are more complicated because they can anticipate and calculate, and a violent death can be skillfully planned and handled. Vanity is unjust because it is the shadow of human desire; fear of violent death is just because it is unjust to cause violent death to anyone; and, most importantly, everyone should have the liberty to pursue his or her interests and preserve himself or herself, and everyone in this regard is equal because they all have the same capacity to kill each other, like an “arrant wolf.” Self-preservation thus underlies and defines rights, hence why Strauss (by way of Dilthey) argues that Hobbes was greatly influenced by the Stoics.⁶⁰

Not the naturalistic antithesis of morally indifferent animal appetite (or of morally indifferent human striving after power) on the one hand, and morally different striving after self-preservation on the other, but the moral and humanist antithesis of fundamentally unjust vanity and fundamentally just fear of violent death is the basis of Hobbes’ political philosophy.⁶¹

In the state of nature, namely, in the absence of law, under the condition of self-preservation, killing another human being is not unjust; as Hobbes writes, “By the right of nature, we destroy, without being unjust, all that is noxious, including beasts and men.”⁶² In the state of nature, there is the right of nature (*jus naturale*), which is the liberty of each human being to preserve itself, and the law of nature (*lex naturalis*), which forbids the human being from doing that which is destructive to his life or that which may take away its means of preservation. To preserve oneself, one has to enter into contract with each other—a mutual transference of rights. However, wars are still unavoidable because either a community or commonwealth is still absent. Laws, enforced by the commonwealth, function as the mechanical rules that coordinate the people’s desires and fear. Laws and covenants of the commonwealth are not merely laws of nature, since the latter are moral laws, words, while the former are swords.⁶³ Here we may want to ask why other animals do not need a government like humans. Aristotle also named two other political animals, bees and ants. Hobbes in the *Leviathan* answers this question. His answer could also be read as the triumph of the mechanical over the biological—for the biological or the organic is not on the same level of rationality as the mechanical. Hobbes gave five reasons, which we paraphrase here:

1. Men are continually in competition for honor and dignity (which ants and bees are not).
2. Among these creatures (bees and ants) the common good does not differ from private good.
3. These creatures, deprived of the same reason that humans have, do not see, nor think they see, any fault in the administration of their common business, whereas among men there are very many that think themselves wiser and abler to govern the public than others; and they strive to reform and innovate, one this way, another that way; and thereby bring society into distraction and civil war.
4. These creatures, though they have some use of voice, yet they want that art of words by which some men can represent to others that which is good in the likeness of evil, and evil in the likeness of good.
5. Irrational creatures cannot distinguish between injury and damage, and therefore, as long as they be at ease, they are not offended with their fellows, whereas man is then most troublesome, when he is most at ease, for then it is that he loves to show his wisdom and control the actions of them that govern the commonwealth.
6. The agreement of these creatures is natural, that of men is by covenant only, which is artificial; and therefore, it is no wonder if there be somewhat else required (besides covenant) to make their agreement constant and lasting.⁶⁴

Later in the *Leviathan*, we see that point two is not entirely valid because the common good of the monarchy has to become the good of every subject. If we boil down the other points to two features that distinguish humans from other political creatures, they are *reason* (or what Hobbes refers to as that which makes natural laws conceivable) and *artificiality* (more precisely, writing and printing technologies). Of course, this understanding of reason is also a form of artificiality that could only come into being through other forms of artificiality such as writing and tools. The leap from the natural state to the artificial state is the formation of civilization. It also gradually leads to the formation of the modern state from fam-

ily to clans and large institutions. However, living as small families does not resolve the problem of security and the possibility of violent death. Therefore, there is still a tendency that incites war. The sovereign is the third party that resolves the situation of infinite war. The sovereign exchanges its protection of the individuals with obedience from its subjects; this interrelation between protection and obedience is what makes the state a state.⁶⁵ This is Hobbes's concept of the social contract; it is not so much based on the desire of a community but on the preservation of individual liberty and the suppression of infinite vanity: "Men—the individuals, not the fathers—at the founding of the artificial state delegate the highest power to a man or an assembly from mutual fear, the feat of violent death, and fear, in itself compulsive, is consistent with freedom. . . . In other words, they voluntarily replace compulsive mutual fear by the again compulsive fear of a neutral third power, the government."⁶⁶

The "body politics" that Hobbes proposes is a "unity," without which the community is dissolved into a multitude, like the savages in America that he read or imagined. Schmitt's reading of Hobbes focuses on Hobbes as both a philosopher of mechanism and philosopher of sovereignty,⁶⁷ while Strauss has Hobbes as an anthropologist and a philosopher of liberalism. This difference, which has its root in their readings of Hobbes, also underlies the difference of their politics, demonstrable in Strauss's "Note on the Concept of the Political."⁶⁸ Whereas Schmitt opposes Spinoza and Hobbes by claiming that Spinoza inverted Hobbes⁶⁹ since the former imposes liberalism against the domination of the public as was advocated by the latter, Strauss, on the contrary, shows that Hobbes is the founder of liberalism in an unliberal world while Schmitt's use of Hobbes to attack liberalism in a liberal world is dramatic.⁷⁰ The anthropological foundation of Hobbes's morality and the maintenance of such morality through the mechanistic state is clear. In humanity's leap from the natural state to the artificial state, its order is maintained by social contracts and laws, and the monarchy is the best governing body. This *status civilis*, or what Strauss calls *culture*, is primarily mechanism in Hobbes, which demands a soul to guarantee the balance of the body politics. Both mechanism and the soul are indispensable for the reading of Schmitt, which we can generalize as machine and sovereignty in retrospect, not only because technology in the time of Hobbes is mechanical but also because the history of the state is also a history of the megamachine.

§19. Catholicism and the Logic of *Complexio Oppositorum*

If, for Schmitt, Hobbes's theory of the state was the completion of the mechanization of the anthropological image of man, then what happens to the theory of the state when mechanism ceased to be the dominant philosophical thought, as occurred already in the eighteenth century? The rise of Romantic and organismic thinking naturally presented an enormous challenge to the Hobbesian theory of the state. Schmitt is aware of the criticism from the Romantics, who regard the state as a plant, an animal, whereas Hobbes's mechanical state "began to be perceived as downright grotesque."⁷¹

Schmitt is familiar with the classical opposition between mechanism and organism that began in the eighteenth century and the importance of Otto von Gierke's organic state theory that dates from the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷² Indeed, for him, it would only be possible to understand the nineteenth-century German state and constitutional history by referring to the opposition between organism and mechanism.⁷³ How, then did Schmitt deal with this oppositional logic? As we have seen, Romantic organicism is caricatured as "discussion," and "dictatorship is the opposite of discussion."⁷⁴ Schematically, we are tempted to say that organism is discussion and mechanism is dictatorship. *Gemeinschaft* is organic, and *Gesellschaft* is mechanic, just as one finds in the classical sociological work of Ferdinand Tönnies. Or is this opposition itself too simplistic? Hobbes and Descartes did not make such a distinction; otherwise, there would be no mechanist philosophy, and modernity would be rewritten. Mechanism was not presented as mere analogy or reduction; it was the founding principle of all existence. For Hobbes and for his time (we also see the use of the term *human machine* in Rousseau's *Second Discourse*⁷⁵), machines have "thoroughly mythical meaning."⁷⁶ The Leviathan is a mixture of God, man, animal, and machine. It is like a machine endowed with the soul, but the soul is not situated in the pineal gland but rather in the sovereign power or the monarch.

Critiques against Schmitt's concept of the political and the sovereign suffer from the fact that even though they correctly see Schmitt's political theory as a justification of dictatorship and a rejection of liberalism, they undermine the epistemological question present in Schmitt's thought. One exception is the work of William Rasch, who identifies in Schmitt's earlier work *Law and Judgment* (*Gesetz und Urteil*) an antimechanist tendency.⁷⁷

Schmitt's 1912 book addresses the question: When is a legal judgment correct? He considers the practicing judge who makes judgments based on the subsumption of the particular rules as merely *Subsumtionsmaschine* and *Gesetzesautomat*. Schmitt does not deny the possibility of subsumption, but he understands that the act of subsumption cannot be simply a consequence of another subsumption. That is to say, legality (*Gesetzmässigkeit*) does not imply legitimacy, and the decision of legitimacy is something other than subsumption. Rasch identifies subsumption with what Kant calls "determinative judgment" and Schmitt's nonsubsumptive approach with Kant's "reflective judgment."⁷⁸ In the previous chapters, we have already endeavored to show that Kant's *Critique of Judgment* grounds the organic condition of philosophizing. Rasch's thesis is interesting and demonstrates a sensitivity toward epistemology; however, this thesis also bypasses Schmitt's consistent criticism against the opposition between mechanism and organism, and indeed, it unconsciously, via the reference to Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, places Schmitt on the side of organism, which he would refuse, as he wrote in *The Concept of the Political*:

It may be left open what the state is in its essence—a machine or an organism, a person or an institution, a society or a community, an enterprise or a beehive, or perhaps even a basic procedural order. These definitions and images anticipate too much meaning, interpretation, illustration, and construction, and therefore cannot constitute any appropriate point of departure for a simple and elementary statement.⁷⁹

Note that Schmitt was looking for a "simple and elementary statement," which both mechanism and organism, with their overloaded historical and philosophical meaning, failed to elucidate.⁸⁰ The failure of the symbol in Hobbes's *Leviathan* is partly because the strong connotation with mechanism failed to reveal the true meaning of the Hobbesian theory of the state. Instead, when mechanism is reproached for its insufficiency as a true epistemology and when organism stands as a new condition of philosophizing, then Hobbes's doctrine of the state appears obsolete, if not "grotesque." Retrieval of the concept of the political has to bypass and surpass the opposition between the mechanic and organic. Schmitt wants to circumscribe this opposition between mechanism and organism in favor of a simple statement: decisionism. This conflict between mechanism and

organism is clearly spelled out in Schmitt's earlier essays. For example, in *Roman Catholicism and Political Form* (1923), we can find criticisms against the post-Kantian idealists and the Romantics who characterize Catholicism as either mechanism or organism. In this text, Schmitt expounds on the particular political form of Catholicism, which he argues is neither mechanism nor organism but rather what he calls *complexio oppositorum*, or the complex of opposites. This *complexio oppositorum* is not a synthesis that results from an opposition between thesis and antithesis; instead, it is a logic that contains and nurtures oppositions (one might want to associate it with Nicholas of Cusa's *coincidentia oppositorum*). The *complexio* Schmitt identifies in Catholicism is the logic that lasts throughout his work and justifies his "entire intellectual and journalistic existence."⁸¹ How exactly is it different from the organic form? In *Roman Catholicism*, Schmitt reproaches the Hegelian and Romantic misinterpretation of the Church:

Out of a spiritual promiscuity which seeks a Romantic or Hegelian brotherhood with Catholicism, as with so many other ideas and individuals, a person could make the Catholic *complexio* into one of many syntheses and rashly conclude that he had thereby construed the essence of Catholicism. The metaphysician of speculative post-Kantian philosophy conceives organic and historical life as eternal process of antitheses and synthesis, assigning the respective role at will.⁸²

For Schmitt, taking the church as either organism or mechanism is a misunderstanding, consequently undermining the significance of Catholic rationalism. It is not sure if this criticism of Hegel stays in Schmitt's latter writing, because there are occasions when the "great Hegel" is mentioned and whose logic was considered superior to the *complexio* or *coincidentia oppositorum*.⁸³ But in this 1923 text, the Hegelian brotherhood is at least contested. The constructs of the Hegelian and Romantic brotherhood are "more than fantasies out of the blue" because they nevertheless correspond to the reality of the modern industrial world, namely, the opposition between a "rationalistic-mechanistic world of human labour" and a "romantic-virginal state of nature." However, according to Schmitt, this dichotomy is "totally foreign to the Roman Catholic concept of nature."⁸⁴ The Catholics are not immigrants, as are the Protestants. The latter are businesspeople who establish their enterprises everywhere without neces-

sarily settling down to live. In contrast, the former are agricultural workers with a different relation or attachment to the soil. Nature for the Catholics is not the antithesis of spirit, intellect, art, or machine as the moderns see it today.⁸⁵ The idealists and the Romantics have diagnosed the crisis of modernity and therefore search for a point of “indifference” between the two polarities as a synthesis of the opposing antitheses. To Schmitt, such indifference implies equally a “profound indecision.” In contrast, the Catholic Church, claims Schmitt, is “categorically something other than the (in any case, always absent) ‘higher third’ of the German philosophy of nature and history.”⁸⁶ This is because instead of seeking an indifferent point between the two poles, it embraces all antitheses; it can do so because it is the absolute realization of authority.⁸⁷ Michael Marder has a concise summary of this activity: “Instead of neutralizing the antagonisms it houses, the complex of opposites nurtures and accentuates them; instead of totalizing or inserting the particulars under the umbrella of a single concept, it permits them to clash and derives its political energy from this enduring standoff.”⁸⁸ The pope, as Schmitt tells us, exemplifies the “most astounding *complexio oppositorum*” because the pope is the Vicar of Christ, elected by an aristocracy of cardinals. But unlike the modern official, he is not impersonal: the pope is the culmination of the most precise dogmatism and the will to *decide*.⁸⁹

The *complexio oppositorum* is a nondialectical polar logic, but it is also an existential strategy. It does not resolve contradictions, and it does not allow any self-destruction. Therefore, the logic of the *complexio oppositorum* also holds both friend and enemy—the essential political criteria for Schmitt. The key to the *complexio oppositorum* is the question of authority, the authority to hold the contradictions and to decide. The decisions are oriented according to Catholic rationalism. Economic and technological rationality is not recognizable in it; on the contrary, they produce a “Catholic anxiety.” Economic and technological rationality is based on a calculation and mechanization that neutralizes the antagonism by satisfying all kinds of needs without questioning the rationality and the purpose of technical and economic activities.⁹⁰ Commenting on Schmitt’s interpretation of the *complexio oppositorum*, Marder suggests that there is a “living form” at play which “internalizes the antinomy of form and content . . . [that] sheds its identity as pure living, and, thus, paves the way for the vent of politics.”⁹¹ However, it would seem as though Marder’s notion of life to comprehend Schmitt’s *complexio* is precisely the organic form that Schmitt criticizes.

The notion of life or living form may appear to be too general here. It is more precisely a vitalism. *Vitalism* is a term charged with various meanings in the history of science; here, we can follow Georges Canguilhem and understand it as a practical attitude, an orientation of biological thought, and a cautious positivist way of understanding life without reducing it to mechanism.⁹² In Schmitt's case, it is a refusal to reduce legal thought to positivism and politics to economic calculation and technological manipulation.⁹³ A vitalism is often distinguished from an organicism, for the latter reproaches the former for relying on mystical forces. Vitalism, however, does not necessarily have to rely on an unexplainable force. We can understand Marder's characterization because in "The Age of Neutralizations and Depolitizations (1929)" we find again a criticism of the antithesis between the organic and the mechanic without this time referring to Catholicism and Hegel, but to the "romantic lament":

The comfortable antithesis of the organic and the mechanistic is itself something crudely mechanistic. A grouping which sees on the one side only spirit and life and on the other only death and mechanism signifies nothing more than a renunciation of the struggle and amounts to nothing more than a romantic lament. For life struggles not with death, spirit not with spiritlessness; spirit struggles with spirit, life with life, and out of the power of an integral understanding of this arises the order of human things. *Ab integro nascitur ordo.*⁹⁴

Schmitt notes here that the antithesis between machine and organism is "comfortable." *Comfortable* suggests that it is too easy to choose sides. Schmitt strives to break away from binary logic, such as life against death or spirit versus spiritlessness. However, Schmitt's tautological logic, life over life and spirit with spirit, is closer to the organic than the mechanic because he emphasizes the whole (*integral*): *Ab integro nascitur ordo* (Order is born from the whole). The notion of the whole is central to the teachings of organicism and holism. This reference to the whole does not mean that he is now on the side of the Hegelians or the Romantics; instead, it constitutes only one component of his vitalism. Schmitt's vitalism suspends any dialectical movement, refusing synthesis; on the contrary, it contains and nurtures contradictions, that is, until the moment (e.g., the real possibil-

ity of war) arrives where it has to look at its situation and decide who are friend and enemy.⁹⁵ It is clearer now that Schmitt's state is not the lifeless mechanical state in the sense we understand it today, but rather *mythical* as per Hobbes's conception. The interpretation of Catholicism (1923) and the interpretation of Hobbes (1938) are not without relations; instead, they show the continuity and consistency of Schmitt's thinking. Both allow Schmitt to abandon the reference to the organic and conceptually overcome the opposition between mechanism and organism in favor of decisionism. Decisionism is a political vitalism in its essence, neither based on the strict implementation of laws as in the mechanical machine, in which when one part is broken, the whole machine collapses, nor based on an organic image, in which everyone must participate and a decision is always at risk of being postponed, i.e., a "metaphysics of indecision."⁹⁶ This rediscovery in Hobbes's doctrine of the state is the notion of the sovereign—a God, a fictitious persona, a soul in the machine, which can break the mechanical and the organic image of the state.

The impulse to move beyond mechanism is fundamental to Schmitt's critique of the formalism of positive law and the neutralization of politics. State administration is the most fundamental part for Schmitt, according to whom "the starting point of all state activity is administration."⁹⁷ However, modern state administration functions as a machine and has been increasingly replaced by machines. This is increasingly the case in our time, with the digitalization of administrative processes—for example, when artificial intelligence is used in the place of judges to deal with the so-called logical cases.⁹⁸ This neutralization is, at the same time, a depoliticization, and it has to be interrupted and vitalized; otherwise, it remains lifeless. However, one must not misunderstand that Schmitt is criticizing technology in general as neutralization, because no one can deny that machines have become the central political question of today. It is often remarked that Schmitt made a distinction between *Technik* and *Technizität*, the former being "dead" and the latter being spiritual (*geistig*) and "alive," resembling or at least resonating with Heidegger's analysis of the essence of modern technology as *enframing* or *Gestell*. Heidegger, in *The Question Concerning Technology* (1949/1953), claims that the essence of modern technology is nothing technical. This claim is comparable to when Schmitt (albeit twenty years earlier than Heidegger) asserts that the spirit of technology is "not itself technical and mechanical":⁹⁹

The spirit of technicity that has led to the mass belief of an anti-religious this-worldly activism, is nevertheless spirit, perhaps a more evil and demonic spirit, but not to be dismissed as mechanistic and not to be attributed to technology as such. It is perhaps something terrifying, but is not itself technical or machinelike. It is the belief of an activist metaphysics, the belief in a limitless power and domination of man over nature, even over human nature.¹⁰⁰

Technology is not regarded as purely mechanical and machinic but rather as an active metaphysical force that is more harmful than the dead mechanical parts moving alone on the planet's surface. It is a metaphysical force, which, having become autonomous, seizes the total control of the planet Earth and beyond. Heidegger's *Gestell* means that every being could be treated and mobilized as a resource. In contrast to Prometheanism, symbolizing progress, Schmitt calls himself a Christian Epimetheus.¹⁰¹ Unlike Prometheus, the Titan of foresight, Epimetheus means hindsight, who knows only once the mistake is committed. For example, he forgets to give skills to the human, opens Pandora's box, and so on. Epimetheus is he who withholds, like the *Katechon*.¹⁰²

Schmitt's resonance with Heidegger's analysis is not superficial. If, in the early twentieth century, the call for organicism, which we find in thinkers such as Alfred North Whitehead and Lewis Mumford, was intended as resistance against mechanism qua industrialism, then this organicism no longer poses itself as a solution for both Heidegger and Schmitt. Heidegger views organism and the opposition between organism and mechanism as a product of modernity. He clearly stated it in the *Black Notebooks* written during the 1930s: "It might very well still take a considerable time to recognize that the 'organism' and the 'organic' present themselves as the mechanistic-technological 'triumph' of modernity over the domain of growth, 'nature.'"¹⁰³ Even once technology begins to increasingly resemble organic beings (as Simondon rightly pointed out in his 1958 *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* concerning his interpretation of cybernetics, which we have also discussed in chapter 3), this will not resolve the devastation caused by industrialism; it might well only found the basis of a different form of domination, though one that might perhaps give the appearance of being less threatening. The organic as an antidote to mechanization was considered a communitarian political model. Max Weber, once

Schmitt's mentor, already refused the biological metaphor of the state by saying that "All analogies with the 'organism' and similar biological concepts are doomed to remain sterile."¹⁰⁴ Today we may see that the organic critique of the mechanical is already surpassed by cybernetics, not the least that all machines are in the process of becoming "organic."

Schmitt was aware of cybernetics; indeed, a copy of Wiener's cybernetics could be found in his library's stock list.¹⁰⁵ However, Schmitt made no explicit comment on cybernetics as Heidegger did. It is difficult to say whether he perceived the mechanism in the organism, but he does see the binary logic between mechanism and organism as nothing more than mechanical. Formalism, both in the form of liberal democracy and parliamentary democracy, is highly inefficient in addressing political urgencies; often, the solution endorsed by the majority may not appear to be the best political decision. The separation between judicial, executive, and legislative power and the mechanization of each part only leads to the indecisiveness of the state. It therefore renders the state vulnerable in the time of crisis. Schmitt's reproach against Hobbes for his attempt to absorb private freedom into the state follows a similar logic: "[Hobbes underscores] the importance of absorbing this right of private freedom of thought and belief into the political system. This contained the seed of death that destroyed the mighty leviathan from within and brought about the end of the mortal god."¹⁰⁶ Hobbes's liberalism¹⁰⁷ destroys the Leviathan from within since it spreads the seeds of destruction—privately held belief is separated from, and therefore resists against, the public confession of faith submitted to the sovereign's authority.¹⁰⁸ This symptom of modern democracy in its popular or parliamentary form contributes to the ineffectiveness and indecision of the state. Strauss criticized Schmitt's presupposition of liberalism as homogeneity because "The heterogeneity of . . . interests is as crucial as a certain kind of homogeneity."¹⁰⁹ However, it is unlikely that Schmitt would make such a foolish assumption; his attack against liberalism targets both its homogeneity and its incapability to overcome civil war. Its mechanical formalism (in terms of procedure) and organic aspiration (in terms of consensus) render a concrete decision impossible. Schmitt finds brotherhood with Bodin and Hobbes here, both thinkers of the concept of the sovereign as a response and solution to civil wars they experienced; but it might be the case, as Koselleck diagnosed, that for Hobbes, who experienced history as the history of civil war, sacrificed reason to political morality without

realizing that reason has a “gravitation of its own.”¹¹⁰ Given the triumph of Hitler, Schmitt claims, “In the one-party state of National Socialist Germany, the danger of a pluralistic dismemberment of Germany . . . has been vanquished.”¹¹¹

A dynamic that goes beyond mechanism and organism is required as a new model of politicization, or more precisely, vitalization. The question of the soul, here presented as sovereignty, distinguishes Schmitt’s Hobbesian state from the later technocratic state, which for him, is a form of neutralization and depoliticization. What Schmitt means by *neutralization* and *depoliticization* is the move from the conflictual status to a neutral zone where the political defined by the friend-foe distinction disappears. The neutral zone is historical in that in different historical epochs different central scientific domains are established to resolve problems that do not belong to that domain.¹¹² In the article “The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations,” Schmitt outlines different central domains of neutralization that were established during different periods throughout Western history, these being theology in the sixteenth century, metaphysics in the seventeenth century, moralism and humanitarianism in the eighteenth century, economics in the nineteenth century and technology in the twentieth century. Schmitt’s reading of Hobbes should be also contextualized according to both *history of thought* and the *history of technology*. The domination of mechanist philosophy in Hobbes’s time was accompanied by the triumph of mechanism: maritime power superseded land power; in other words, the Leviathan dominated the Behemoth. Indeed, it was maritime technology that allowed Britain to develop its marine power and conquer the world, as is clearly shown in Schmitt’s *Land and Sea*, but even more explicitly said in his *Dialogues on Power and Space*:

Already the modern, thoroughly well-organised, European state of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a technological and artistic product, a Super-Human [*Über-Mensch*] created by humans out of humans set together with one another, which in the image of the Leviathan as the large human, the μάκρος ἄνθρωπος, and the little humans producing it, the isolated individual, the μικρός ἄνθρωπος, confronted with a Super-Power [*Über-Macht*]. In this sense the well-functioning European state of early modern period was the first modern machine and simultaneously the concrete

presupposition of all further technological machines. It was the machine of machines, the *machina machinarum*, a Super-Human [*Über-Mensch*] compiled of humans gathered together, which comes into existence via human consensus and yet, in the moment that it is present, exceeds all human consensus. It is precisely because this issue concerns a power organised by humans that Burckhardt feels that this power is evil in itself.¹¹³

This could be understood as one of the significances of Schmitt's reading of Hobbes, for Hobbes's contribution is not only metaphysical, according to Schmitt, but rather his image of the state corresponds to the technological development of his time. The European state at this time was a "technological and artistic product," the *machine of machines* or a *vital machine*. The Hobbesian state is, therefore, the first *modern* megamachine. Maybe we can also read Schmitt's vitalism as an attempt to take advantage of the *Technizität* that he described as a metaphysical force; the soul is that which can actively direct the metaphysical force of machines and gives it life through politics. Technology in Hobbes's time was not the central domain if we follow Schmitt's periodization here. Instead, metaphysics functioned as the central domain or the neutral zone for resolving conflict. However, what truly became politicized was the subsequent technological development, which converted the state into a machine while equipping it with the mechanical power and warships necessary for appropriating territories. Metaphysics always forgets the question of technology because technology seems to appear as only one instance of the metaphysical idea or a mere question of logic. The Leviathan is neither a natural state nor a metaphysical state, but an artificial state, as Leo Strauss also emphasized; the former is characterized by fear and monarchy, the latter by hope and democracy.¹¹⁴ The mechanical state is animated by the soul, the sovereign, symbolized by a person or an assembly:

Men—the individuals, not the fathers—at the founding of the artificial state delegate the highest power to a man or an assembly from mutual fear, the fear of violent death, and fear, in itself compulsive, is consistent with freedom. . . . In other words, they voluntarily replace compulsive mutual fear by the again compulsive fear of a neutral third power, the government.¹¹⁵

The sovereign is the soul that dwells in the mechanical body of the state. The soul is the authority: *Autoritas non veritas facit legem* (Authority, not truth, makes law). The soul is that which can determine the body instead of being that which is imprisoned by the body. The mechanization of the state, though it completed the Cartesian project, also led to the possibility of the neutralization of politics in the twentieth century, when mechanism, the symbol of order and progress, is generalized as a technical state-administrative (*staatsverwaltungstechnische*) rationalization.¹¹⁶ Schmitt hinted at a temporal gap between the epoch when mechanism was a philosophy and when mechanism was realized in material terms and pervaded the world through industrialization and colonization. The occidental rationalism Schmitt criticized thus belongs to the development of the industrial society.¹¹⁷ However, in the same article, we are told that technology as neutralization is only something transitory, temporary. It was only a “religious belief in technology,” and such belief is an effect of the shift of the neutral zone from economy to technology.¹¹⁸ In reality, we have not yet really understood the question of technology. Furthermore, technology in the twentieth century is no longer neutral, but rather “every strong politics will make use of it . . . the present century can only be understood provisionally as the century of technology.”¹¹⁹ This remark of Schmitt’s brings Hobbes’s word “mechanization” to a concrete historical situation, which Hobbes himself did not anticipate. The state ceases to be an imaginary megamachine of mechanics, but it is a machine realized before us. If Schmitt could say that the twentieth century was the century of technology, this is even more true in the twenty-first century: 5G, micro-chips, and AI are no longer neutral, as we read in the newspaper every day.

However, such a techno-utopian dream of better governing states through full automation (with artificial intelligence, big data, and machine learning) will not be endorsed by Schmitt. This is because, in the case of full automation, the state would already be dead. This appears as a paradox because it may lead to two consequences. First, it may lead to a neutralization in Schmitt’s sense, that all decisions will be based on facts and formal procedures (as in legal positivism). Second, the battlefield will become the competition of realizing a technological singularity, as Putin said in 2017 to the Russian schoolchildren, “Whoever leads in AI will dominate the world.”¹²⁰ Indeed, such technological competition will lead to a total domination of one state over the rest, a techno-imperialism. The competi-

tion for techno-imperialism means the empowerment of the metaphysical force that nurtures modern technology and its capacity to bring about more catastrophes. Therefore, technology serves both as a neutral zone and a battlefield.

§20. The Death of Hegel and the Triumph of Political Vitalism

Considering the discussions in the previous chapters, it is possible to conclude that the debate between mechanism and organism no longer determines the state's imagination. This does not mean that Schmitt provides us with a satisfactory solution, though he saw the limit of such an opposition and the need for a different political epistemology. Retrospectively, Mumford's "New Organum"—the antimechanistic imagination—must be put in question, not to discredit him but to think together with and beyond him. The mechanical and the organic were presented as two ideals of political governance, two forms of automatization par excellence. But all forms of automation tend to neutralize the sovereign power and depoliticize it into routine machinic operations. This lies at the center of Schmitt's decisionism, for "the decision alone is capable of bridging the gap between the abstractness of law and the fullness of life."¹²¹ And for decisionism to function, it will need the absoluteness of the sovereign, which is constantly conscious of its vulnerability. Both vulnerability and immunity repose on the ontological categories of friend and enemy, but more significantly, in terms of political theology, an identification of the satanic force and the *katechon*. Enemies signal vulnerabilities, and friends reinforce the capacity for war and immunity against external attacks. Therefore, the question of the state as mechanism or organism is left open insofar as the sovereign decides. The sovereign decides internally by suspending any legal norm and invoking the state of emergency or externally by waging war against another state. Schmitt's political vitalism is, therefore, also an existentialism:¹²² "The exception is more interesting than the rule . . . The rule proves nothing, the exception proves everything: It confirms not only the rule but also its existence, which derives only from the exception. In the exception the power of real life breaks through the crust of a mechanism that has become torpid by repetition."¹²³ A political vitalism was, for Schmitt, a way out of the two paradigms that characterize modern European philosophy. Schmitt's real politics is, first of all, geopolitics that sees the state as the final realization

of Western philosophy, as Hegel did. Therefore, Schmitt is not in tension or disagreement with Hegel on what concerns the role of the state in the history of the spirit but rather on the ideality of the organic unity of the state. The state is only an incarnated form of the political in history.

The figure of the sovereign in Hegel remains symbolic because Hegel aims for the organic unity (unlike Louis XIV, who said “L’état c’est moi,” Frederick the Great said that the prince is the first servant of the state),¹²⁴ but in Schmitt, it is realized as the soul in the machine. The state of exception is the soul’s vitality because the soul can suspend rules, namely deciding the state of emergency. Even if certain courts declare exceptions regularly, unlike sovereignty, it does not reveal itself as an absolute or unconditional power.¹²⁵ This is also probably why the opening line of “The Concept of the Political” starts with the claim that “the concept of the state presupposes the concept of the political.”¹²⁶ This may remind us of Sartre’s infamous statement, “Existence precedes essence.”¹²⁷ The political is grounded in decisions and exceptions. Decisionism is the dynamic of the sovereign as the soul of a living being, as Schmitt writes in “Reich, Staat, Bund” (1933) that “politics means intensive life [*intensives Leben*].”¹²⁸ This intensity is opposed to homogeneity in the same way Hans Kelsen describes democracy.¹²⁹ In this sense, Schmitt is on the side of the Hobbesian mechanism. Ironically, Schmitt’s doctrine of the state is also a vitalism, and Schmitt is a political vitalist. Maybe this is how we should interpret what Schmitt, in *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, claims: that on the day Hitler seized power, “Hegel died.”¹³⁰

The relation between the death of Hegel and Hitler’s seizing of power contains several meanings. First, if we follow Schmitt’s statement closely, then it was only on January 30, 1933, with the appointment of Hitler as chancellor, that “the Hegelian state of civil servants of the nineteenth century, characterized by the identity of the civil service and the stratum in charge of the State, was replaced by another State construction.”¹³¹ This new state construction allows the Reich to recover a political leadership, namely, the capacity to identify and annihilate its enemy, communism. Let us remind ourselves that the election on July 31, 1932, put the National Socialist Party (37.3%) and the German Communist Party (14.4%) as the majority of the Reichstag.¹³² In this sense, we can understand why only on this day “Hegel died.” Second, Schmitt also finds the germ of the Reich in Hegel’s state theory, which is not a “neutral concept of the state” but that of the “political-historical concrete Prussian state of the first half of the

nineteenth century.”¹³³ That is to say, January 30 is, in fact, the culmination of Hegel’s state theory instead of a judgment on its failure; Schmitt’s comment on the death of Hegel is, in this sense, not a farewell, a *Grabrede*, but rather a comment that marks the completion and continuation of Hegel’s state theory, as Schmitt himself admitted.¹³⁴ Last, we could also interpret it as the end of the organismic ideal of the state and the triumph of a political vitalism that led to the emergence of fascist states and total war. The political unity (*politische Einheit*) of the state is still based on the constitution; however, it is no longer an organicity of the state as Hegel aspired to as the desirable model; the organicity of the state stands opposed to the mechanical operation of the civil service that Schmitt discredited, because instead of blindly applying norms, reason “itself requires us to recognize that contingency, contradiction, and semblance have a sphere and a right of their own”;¹³⁵ law, as Hegel argues, only indicates the maximum and minimum to the judge, but it does not determine the case a priori. Schmitt not only sought his alliance with Hegel,¹³⁶ but rather he completed Hegel, as he thought that Hobbes had done after Descartes. The state as a persona is no longer a mechanical being but rather that which has the vitality (or, more precisely, in Schmitt’s own words, “intensity”) to render the heterogenous political opinions ineffective and to decide on exceptions.¹³⁷

The ontological categories of friend and enemy are the condition of the political vitality of the state. Without danger, the state will sink into oblivion and depoliticize itself as an administrative machine. The struggle between the spirit with spirit, life with life, is the self-assertion of the state as a vital being. This vital being does not lie so much in the democratic form of society but rather in the capacity of the sovereign to act in response to an emergency. Schmitt opened a new path that moves away from mechanism and organism, and his fundamental move is a return to vitalism. We say “return” here because, during this time (when writing his book on Hobbes), biologists were trying to undermine vitalism, which relies on a mystic force (be that Bergson’s *élan vital* or Driesch’s entelechy) to explain life, and to overcome the historical opposition between vitalism and mechanism by providing a third path: organicism. In this sense, Schmitt takes a rather different turn by taking recourse to political vitalism. It remains circular to ask if this political vitalism is the source of the political or if the political is the source of such a political vitalism.

This political vitalism is present in dictators and “partisans.” In his later writing, *Theory of the Partisan* (1963), which bears the subtitle *Intermediate*

Commentary on the Concept of the Political, a sequel to his 1929 essay, Schmitt granted a historical role to the partisans. Partisans are characterized by their irregularity in contrast to the regularity of state armies, but also by their *increasing mobility* of combat and *increasing intensity* of political engagement.¹³⁸ The partisan, exemplified in General Salan's example, is beyond legality or illegality. The partisan instead seeks legitimacy, which is higher than legality. In the case of revolution or resistance, legitimacy is identified with the nation instead of the state. In other words, the partisan as a historical figure, like the dictator, is a commander of the state of exception. The partisan is political, whereas a figure such as Michael Kohlhaas, who administers personal justice to robbers and murderers, is not partisan since he is not politically motivated and "did not fight against a foreign invader or for a revolutionary cause, but rather for his offended private right."¹³⁹ The partisan is political precisely because he identifies a real enemy, and war would not exist without an enemy. The negativity of the enemy, and its death-threatening presence, like the master to the slave, is fundamental to the war of survival. The key question now is how to identify the enemy. In this reading, the biopolitical foundation of the *Homo sacer* qua the most elementary form of exception, namely, that neither belongs to *zoe* or *bio*, shares the same logic as the partisan, though the former is passive and the latter active. The partisan transcends the categories of legality and illegality, such as the state transcends the opposition between mechanism and organism. The partisan is, in this way, the one who risks their own life because they will have to fight, but also the one whom the binary logic of legality could not contain: "The partisan has an enemy and risks something completely different from blockade runners and contraband leaders. He risks not only his life, as does every regular combatant; he knows and accepts that he is an enemy outside of right, law, and honor."¹⁴⁰ Schmitt traces the theory of the partisan to the early nineteenth-century Prussian state but focuses more on twentieth-century Spain, Algeria, China, and Vietnam. In Schmitt's reading of Clausewitz's analysis of irregular warfare, he describes Clausewitz as having unleashed "a new, formerly unrecognized figure of the world-spirit [*Figur des Weltgeistes*]."¹⁴¹ On this question, Schmitt showed his respect to Mao Zedong, the most sophisticated and radical theorist of guerrilla warfare and the most accomplished practitioner.¹⁴² Mao's victory over the Japanese invader, the national opponent (the Kuomintang), and the colonial West define a new *nomos*:

The question is only whether enmity can be bracketed and regulated, i.e., whether it is relative or absolute. That can be decided only by the belligerents at their own risk. For Mao, who thinks as a partisan, peace today is only a manifestation of real enmity. Enmity also does not cease in so-called Cold War, which is not half war and half peace, but rather a situation of enmity with other than open violent means.¹⁴³

We could follow Clausewitz by saying peace is the continuation of war by other means. The state and the partisan confront the same question, namely, its existence in relation to technology.¹⁴⁴ Could the partisan sustain itself “in the age of atomic weapons of mass destruction?” The Cold War was maintained largely by threat of atomic bombs, meaning total annihilation. Technology ceased to be a neutral zone; on the contrary, technology became the means of politicization. We might say that Schmitt was tempted to read political philosophy according to the history of technology. In this case, the political vitalism Schmitt outlines is inseparable from technology since technology allows life to struggle with life. The *nomos* of the Earth, defined in the *Jus Publicum Europaeum*, is inseparable from technology since it is the laws of space appropriation and division that could not do without technological advancement. Thus, the progressive appropriation of the three spatial elements, land, sea, and air, is determined by improving marine technology and, later, air technology. In the same book, we find a footnote: “I would like to develop fully and hermeneutically sections 247–48 of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* as a historico-intellectual nucleus [*geistesgeschichtliche Keimzelle*] for understanding the contemporary techno-industrial world, just as the Marxist interpretation developed the preceding sections 243–46 for an understanding of bourgeois society.”¹⁴⁵

As a reminder, in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §247 discusses the emergence of sea power in modern industrial society; §278 discusses the distinction between the sporadic and systematic mode of colonization. Schmitt not only further elaborated on Hegel’s discussion on sea power but also extended beyond sea power to the concern of air power. Today, we know that the *nomos* extends beyond the earth toward outer space, as Schmitt had already anticipated, where “these immeasurable spaces also become potential battlefields.”¹⁴⁶ However, he was not able to anticipate the emergence of cyberspace. As Peter Thiel has pointed out, after the three

spatial elements of land, sea, and air, the future appropriation of space will be outer space, the deep ocean, and cyberspace.¹⁴⁷ New technologies will challenge the sovereign and enforce it to respond to the ambiguities and hiatus made visible by technological changes. It is the same with the partisan, who might disappear in the technological world by being dissolved into technological apparatus and platforms (a consequence of technological neutralization). In reaction to these changes, the state of exception could become a regularity, similar to what Agamben has been warning. The state becomes a vital megamachine, vital in that it has to actively interrupt its own routine and suspend its protocols to preserve itself recursively. Simultaneously, we can expect that, a new *nomos* of the Earth will emerge in the planetary condition driven by the exigency of “real politics.”

Nomos of the Digital Earth

“O my friends, there is no friend.” . . . If there is “no friend,” then how could I call you my friends, my friends? By what right? How could you take me seriously? If I call you my friends, my friends, if I tell you, my friends, how dare I add, to you, that there is no friend?

—Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*

Technology is no longer neutral ground in the sense of the process of neutralization; every strong politics will make use of it. For this reason, the present century can only be understood provisionally as the century of technology. How ultimately it should be understood will be revealed only when it is known which type of politics is strong enough to master the new technology and which type of genuine friend-enemy groupings can develop on this new ground.

—Carl Schmitt, *The Age of Neutralizations*

To inquire into the *nomos* of the digital Earth, we will have to revisit the foundational question of sovereignty. Without this, there is a risk of persistently applying Hegel and Schmitt’s state theory. In the last chapter, we tried to read Schmitt’s treatise on Hobbes as an attempt to go beyond the opposition between mechanism and organism, and unveil the epistemological foundation of his political thought. Schmitt’s vitalism consists of the *Complexio Oppositorum* withholding opposition and the decision that suspends all norms to respond to a political crisis, whether civil war or foreign invasion. The sovereign is the power that decides on exceptions. This, on the one hand, opens a path toward dictatorship and justifies the state of exception as the very condition of survival; on the other hand, it also answers the metaphysical problem concerning the origin of sovereignty or the law itself, a problem that we can identify in the debate between scholars of positive law and natural law. In this chapter, we will first revisit the

problem of contingency of the foundation of law and how Schmitt's vitalism conceptually resolves this problem; second, we will examine Schmitt's proposal of the *Großraum* as a new political form, and a successor to Hegel's political state. With the advancement of space technology and digital technology, one could, following Schmitt, envision a new political form emerging in response to the spatial revolutions. Yet, does contemplation on such a large scale truly lead us to genuine planetary thinking? The deconstruction to be carried out here is not an attempt to either discredit or endorse Schmitt's thought, but rather it paves the way to reformulate Schmitt's analysis of the relation between sovereignty and technology, and to expose its limits in light of the digital earth.

§21. First Deconstruction on the Contingency of Sovereignty

Earlier, we saw how the natural law tradition was challenged. For example, in the case of Hobbes and Rousseau, natural rights presented as ontological truths in the definition of the human were seen as derivatives of a fictional human, one that lives in the imagination of its authors. The imaginary state of nature finally leads to another fictional figure, the sovereign, which in Hobbes exchanges protection with its subjects for obedience and in Rousseau leads to the general will, which is presupposed in all forms of communal existence. For Rousseau, the sovereign is not the same as the general will; rather, the sovereign is the power controlled by the general will. The "general will" does not mean the majority but rather the "common interest that unites" the people,¹ or *sensus communis* in the Kantian sense. Natural law under the siege of historicism² and Neo-Kantianism is discredited as ahistorical rationalism that does violence to empirical reality.³ Does this mean the triumph of positive law, that man makes laws out of practical grounds, and positive rights have no ontological foundation? While this may sound paradoxical, it is precisely *because* the authority of positive law is exposed to constant doubt that we see the quest for the natural law as appeals to "that which is good intrinsically, to that which is good by nature."⁴ We see a circular argument, insofar as because the ontological qua anthropological in natural law is questioned, one then seeks in positive laws the answer to the political and social life of human beings; however, since the foundation of positive law is an authority that does not have ontological truth, one returns to natural law to find a solid foundation from which all laws should be derived.

For Leo Strauss, this unresolvable problem stands as the crisis of modernity—the introduction of historicism and positivism have challenged the natural law tradition he traces from Socrates to Edmund Burke. In his *Natural Right and History*, Strauss argued against historicism, positivism, and conventionalism to show that they all risk becoming nihilism since they reject human access to ontological truths, especially history. Strauss targeted Max Weber to show that Weber is self-contradictory because he does not want a sociology loaded with value but one that sticks to facts. However, if sociology aims at a causal explanation of a social phenomenon, it should “see it as what it is.”⁵ Weber wants to see things from facts, a positivist epistemology, but he does not prioritize the ontological question. Strauss, on the contrary, believes in the philosophical tradition, which claims that the ontological is accessible to the human, and it is also the ontological that gives humans the legitimacy and power to revolt against ancestral authorities. However, the argument becomes circular again; the ancestors could also claim they know the ontological! Plato is portrayed as a premodern thinker of natural right; insofar as Plato’s *Republic* is perfect, it is based on natural right; it is “the city according to nature.”⁶ But did not Plato, in the words of Socrates in Book III of *Republic*, suggest multiple techniques for censoring Homer’s poetry and “brainwashing” the selected children who have the potential to become guardians of the city? Strauss’s criticism against historicism and positivism does not effectively resolve the objection that natural right is also historical, and indeed his recourse to Hobbes and Rousseau only shows that human nature is merely imaginary. The search for the foundation of law is also a quest for sovereignty. The questions then arise: What exactly is sovereignty? Where and who exactly is the sovereign? Is the sovereign the king or the people? Or maybe it is none of them? Political theorist Jens Bartelson in his *Genealogy of Sovereignty* suggests that sovereignty is, in fact, contingent: “To say that sovereignty is contingent is to say that it is not necessary or essential, but that its central and ambiguous place in modern political discourse is the outcome of prior accidents.”⁷

We often associate the term *sovereignty* with the Westphalian treatise; however, as Nicholas Onuf has noted, the word only appears six times in the treaties of Münster and Onasbrück, and the adjective *sovereign*, four times. And indeed, the term was already defined and discussed earlier by Bodin in 1576,⁸ the father of sovereignty. While Bodin is famous for arguing that sovereignty has to be unitary, the so-called Westphalian state

arising from the Treaty of Westphalia is the idea that the state has a monopoly over its territory and the exclusive right to declare war.⁹ In this sense, we can understand the contingency of the concept of sovereignty since it emerged historically and was only theorized much later. The other meaning of the contingency of sovereignty is more philosophical, namely, that it is not necessary but was rendered necessary due to the demand for a power that maintains the consistency of political life, such as in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, where the sovereign is demanded to exchange protection with the people for the latter's obedience. The sovereign is, in this sense, mythical, as Schmitt claims. In the previous chapter, we presupposed the existence of the sovereign as a *persona moralis*, which we compared with the soul in the machine, an image we find in Schmitt's reading of Hobbes, who, in turn, also characterizes the sovereign as a fictional person. We know there is no soul in the machine, there is no individual behind the curtain of sovereignty. Suppose one tries to open the curtain; one would be highly disappointed to find precisely *nothing* behind it. Schmitt calls sovereignty a borderline concept (*Grenzbegriff*), one pertaining to the outermost sphere (*die äusserste Sphäre*).¹⁰ William Rasch suggests translating it as boundary concept in the sense of Kant.¹¹ Rasch's formulation is more stimulating because what Kant means by the boundary concept is one that cannot be known but exerts on the knowable as a limit. In this sense, the boundary concept is first of all a negative concept. For example, the noumenon is a boundary concept because it constitutes the realm that sensible intuition cannot reach. Sensible intuition is limited to the realm of the phenomenon, which is the object of scientific knowledge. The thing-in-itself, which was a synonym for the noumenon in the A Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is that which lies behind the phenomenon: "Appearances, insofar as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called phenomenon. But if I assumed things that are objects merely of the understanding and that, as such, can nonetheless be given to an intuition—even if not to sensible intuition (but hence *coram intuitu intellectuali*)—then such things would be called noumena (*intelligibilia*)."¹²

As we know, the noumenon only ceases to be a negative concept if intellectual intuition is affirmed; since humans do not possess the capacity for intellectual intuition, such a boundary concept both constrains and establishes the foundation for knowledge.¹³ The same could also be said about the inexponible representation of the imagination (e.g., the beautiful) and

the indemonstrable concept of reason (e.g., freedom).¹⁴ For example, the concept of freedom is demanded from a practical aim, without which morality would be inconceivable. Here we encounter a paradox: the sovereign is supposed to be the foundation of law, but it is almost impossible to identify what it is. It is a phantom. Laws are often compared to geometry, for example, in Grotius and Hobbes, the law carries a strong geometrical spirit; the former claims that “just as mathematicians treat geometrical figures as abstracted from material objects, so I have conceived of law in the absence of all particular circumstances,” and the latter states that geometry was the “only science that it hath hitherto pleased God to bestow on mankind.”¹⁵ In light of this comparison, one might question how geometry addresses this issue and whether it could offer insights into the phantom. We may want to refer to a relevant discussion in David Hume’s *Treatise of Human Nature*, where the Scottish philosopher clearly distinguished between *definition* and *demonstration* concerning geometry. Hume’s incentive was to refuse the mathematical objection against the indivisibility of extension. If one defines a surface “to be length and breadth without depth, a line to be length without breadth or depth and point to be what has neither length, breadth nor depth,” and there is no corresponding demonstration, does it imply that they don’t exist at all? One of the objections that Hume wanted to refute runs like the following, and although Hume found it unsatisfactory, it is very relevant to our discussion here:

The objects of geometry, those surfaces, lines and points, whose proportions and positions it examines, are mere ideas in the mind; and not only never did, but never can exist in nature. They never did exist; for no one will pretend to draw a line or make a surface entirely conformable to the definition: They never can exist; for we may produce demonstrations from these very ideas to prove, that they are impossible.¹⁶

Hume finds this objection unsatisfactory and contradictory because every idea must have its correspondence in existence; the mathematician who claims that a point does not exist already has the idea of a point in his mind. If he already has an idea of the point and that which implies the existence of a point, the objection that a point does not exist is not valid. Before we move on, we will have to clarify several concepts. Definition, existence, and demonstration are not the same, for such definitions in

geometry refer to the existence of idealities, which may not be demonstrable in a phenomenal world; however, it doesn't, as such, imply that they do not exist, as without assuming their existence, no geometrical demonstration is possible. We can understand this by referring to the example of a point. Thus, a point has no dimension; when we imagine a point in front of us, it is no longer a point, but already a surface. These points "... I am typing and you are reading are not points, but surfaces.¹⁷ The ideality of a point cannot be perceived as an existence like a glass of water, but this does not mean that it does not exist; it only means that it cannot be demonstrated as what it is. However, for ideality to be possible, idealization is necessary. This idealization is also externalization, meaning projecting the point as a figure on paper. Here, we encounter the first deconstruction: though ideality cannot be demonstrated, it can nonetheless be grasped through diagrammatical technical supplements—for example, drawing and writing. Commenting on a similar paradox (though without referring to Hume but rather to Plato and Husserl), Bernard Stiegler convincingly clarifies the logical cycle between definition, existence, and demonstration:

It is however required to figure the point in order to conceptualise it as a mathematical ideality, it is required to *intuitively* project it to project reasonings, and it is also in this sense that externalising is necessary to the figure: this figure is an image that allows the projection of what Kant calls a schema, what allows the unification of the understanding and intuition. The thought of space as this a priori form supposes this capacity of projection that represents the figure. What is crucial for us is to note that this projection is an externalisation: it allows a projection for intuition, but more importantly it constitutes a retentional space. This space is a medium of memory that supports progressively the reasoning of the temporal flow (what reason is when it thinks).¹⁸

In this statement, Stiegler refers to the transcendental condition of schematization in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and deconstructs it by showing that transcendental apprehension depends on the technological supplement. If it is true that even geometry cannot demonstrate its foundation (line, point, and surface as defined in Euclidean geometry), then we may ask if it is also the case in law. If point, line, and surface, albeit their indemonstrability, are the foundation of geometry, the sovereign or any other

juridical concept may occupy a similar position in law. In this sense, that authority was, from the beginning, ultimately unauthorized.¹⁹ The default of origin will have to be replaced with a fictional being, similar to Quentin Skinner's argument in "The Sovereign State: A Genealogy": "We scarcely hope to talk coherently about the nature of public power without making some reference to the idea of the state as a fictional or moral person distinct from both rulers and ruled."²⁰

In the *General Theory of the State* (*Allgemeine Staatslehre*), the public lawyer and legal positivist Georg Jellinek made a similar observation. Jellinek rejected that there is a sovereignty of the *Rechtsstaat*. Instead, he suggests that the state is sovereignty.²¹ The people are fictional because we see only individuals, just as the "general will" is not the same as the assembly of all the individuals. Therefore, even though one might be tempted to claim that the people or the king is the de facto sovereign, none of them *are* the sovereign. However, the sovereign is not purely inexistent, not purely fictional, having no touch with reality; instead, its existence cannot be demonstrated as such, like how the definition of a point is not the same as its demonstration on paper. The juridical concept, as Schmitt says, is the "reaching from within the incomprehensible into the ungraspable [*der Griff aus dem Unbegreifbaren in das Ungreifbare*]."²² This definition is of an ultimate mystery, though it also shattered the illusory that attempts to grasp the juridical concept as substance. *Unbegreifbar* means something that cannot be grasped as a concept that possesses a certain autonomy in reality; by reducing it to a concept, one needs to impose a kind of violence on it, but it also actively overflows any container trying to seize it.

We may look into the implication of the *Unbegreifbar* in the debate on the question of sovereignty in Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt. In Hans Kelsen's legal positivism, the basic norm (*Grundnorm*) is the most fundamental norm of any given legal system. In the legal system, a norm is validated by another norm, and so on and so forth. They constitute a chain of validity. For example, criminal law is authorized by constitutional law. By validity (*Geltung*), Kelsen means the binding power that obliges everyone to obey the norm.²³ Among all the norms, the basic norm is the ground that validates the rest of the norms. The basic norm is the only nonpositive law that is *presupposed* (and not created) and logically necessary.²⁴ What is this presupposed basic norm that functions as the legal system's transcendental logical condition? In *Pure Theory of Law*, Kelsen compares his inquiry with Kant's. If Kant asks, "How is it possible to interpret without

a metaphysical hypothesis, the facts perceived by our senses, in the laws of nature formulated by natural science?," he asks, "How is it possible to interpret without recourse to meta-legal authorities, like God or nature, the subjective meaning of certain facts as a system of objectively valid legal norms?"²⁵ In Kelsen's neo-Kantian legal theory, the validity of a law is derived from a higher level, and the validity of all the laws has the origin in the basic norm; however, the basic norm does not exist as such, but it is presupposed "as if" it exists. Hermann Heller reproaches Kelsen in the same way that Hume refutes the mathematician:

It is the original norm that "is applied by the constituent authority"; the constitution gets its "legally relevant *validity* from the presupposed original norm, but its *content* from the constituent authority's empirical act of will." Thus, we first have a "constitution" that already has legally relevant validity, and only then a "constituent" authority—a feat of logic that I cannot follow!²⁶

Validity grounded by the basic norm is analogical to the ideality of the geometrical elements; validity, like ideality, is already presupposed, while it can only be illuminated by means other than itself, such as through diagrams. The basic norm is not the constitution but something that is presupposed with validity. Where does this something with binding power originate? There is a default of origin in law when it is thought *linearly*. The logical formalism of positivism suffers from the fact that once linear reasoning is presupposed, it easily loses its legitimacy, because, in so doing, the basic norm thus presupposed cannot be positively found in the world as might an individual or an object.²⁷ In his *Constitutional Theory* (1928), Schmitt targeted Kelsen's basic norm and renounced it as tautology:

With Kelsen, by contrast, only *positive* norms are valid, in other words, those which are *actually* valid. Norms are not valid because they *should* properly be valid. They are valid, rather, without regard to qualities like reasonableness, justice, etc., only, therefore, because they are *positive* norms. The imperative abruptly ends here, and the normative element breaks down. In its place appears the tautology of a raw factualness: something is valid when it is valid and because it is valid.²⁸

In *Political Theology*, Schmitt once again ridiculed Kelsen's positivism, stating, "looked at normatively, the decision emanates from nothingness."²⁹ Schmitt replaces Kelsen's basic norm with the power to decide upon exceptions. This single statement renews the broken links between the secular state and religion by equating sovereignty with divine power. Instead of pretending that there is a foundation, be that presupposed or demonstratable, Schmitt has recourse to the power of decision on exceptions or emergencies as the ultimate source of legitimacy. It is no longer a fact or a rule that defines the foundation of law but rather a power that suspends all norms for the sake of vitality. Sovereignty is thus the total power of decision. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Schmitt rejects mechanism and organism in favor of a vitalism, opening an *immunology* of sovereignty. This rejection is restaged here as the renouncement of the mechanist tendency and the organist origin of positivism. On the one hand, Kelsenian normativism functions as a mechanical formalism that must be rejected. On the other hand, the self-position of the basic norm and its genesis must also be rejected because it is a "fanciful [*phantastisch*] way of speaking."³⁰

§22. Second Deconstruction on the Contingency of Friend and Enemy

In *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, Jacques Derrida follows Schmitt's definition of sovereignty, but instead of fully embracing Schmitt's definition, Derrida points out that the Schmittean definition is self-evident.³¹ Sovereignty, according to Derrida, is unconditional or absolute at the moment when it suspends all laws. It is paradoxical since that which prohibits the law is made possible by the law. This play between unconditionality and sovereignty is based on the logic that the limit always presupposes the unlimited, the calculable, the incalculable, and vice versa. Insofar as it is limited, calculative reason presupposes an unconditionality that always exceeds it; however, the conditional and the unconditional are only conceived as mere negations of one another. The sovereign is unconditional, or the absolute, because it exceeds or overflows any limit imposed by laws:

Calculative reason (ratio, intellect, understanding) would thus have to ally itself and submit itself to the principle of unconditionality that tends to exceed the calculation it finds. This inseparability or this alliance between sovereignty and unconditionality appears

forever irreducible. Its resistance appears absolute and any separation impossible: for isn't sovereignty, especially in its modern political forms, as understood by Bodin, Rousseau, or Schmitt, precisely unconditional, absolute, and especially, as a result, indivisible? Is it not exceptionally sovereign insofar as it retains the right to the exception? The right to decide on the exception and the right to suspend rights and law [*le droit*]?³²

This brings us back to Rasch's characterization of sovereignty as a boundary concept in the Kantian sense. Like the noumenon, the unconditionality of sovereignty sets the limit for the legal system; at the same time, it makes the legal system possible. Sovereignty, for Schmitt, is an unconditionality in the sense that, like divine power, it transcends all laws. It is the same way God, through providence, can perform miracles; sovereignty can decide upon the state of exception. The Virgin Mary is the incarnation of such a miracle, and as a miracle, she is central to Schmitt's interpretation of Christian history and political theology. If we assert that sovereignty is unconditional, it does not follow that all instances of sovereignty are unconditional. By affirming the unconditionality of sovereignty, Derrida invites us to reflect on other unconditionalities, such as the incalculable. The unconditionality of the incalculable is that which opens a breach for thinking beyond sheer rationality. It is also the Unreachable, in the sense of philosopher and former mayor of Venice Massimo Cacciari. It is that which forces us to go beyond the "easily computable space of practical-economic action,"³³ or in other words, beyond the "real politics" based on economic and military competition. The unconditionality of reason, as Derrida points out, and to which we will come back in the next chapters, demands the following condition: "It will have to require or postulate a universal beyond all relativism, culturalism, ethnocentrism, and especially nationalism, beyond what I propose naming, to refer to all the modern risks that these relativisms make reason run, *irratio-nationalism* or *irratio-nation-state-ism*—spell them as you will."³⁴

This breach to a new universal also exceeds the friend and enemy dichotomy. It moves toward another figure of the unconditionality Derrida elaborated on in *Politics of Friendship*, the unconditionality of hospitality *without* sovereignty.³⁵ This juxtaposition, as well as the interplay between unconditionality and sovereignty, opens up new avenues outside Schmitt's notion of the political. In other words, Derrida did not reject

Schmitt, but, on the contrary, in “The Force of Law” he maintains the unconditionality of the sovereign that Bodin, Hobbes, and Schmitt assert, as well as the necessity of exception as a phenomenological *epochē*.³⁶ This, however, should not be interpreted as Derrida’s admiration for Schmitt because he also seeks to find other figures of unconditionality as those that exceed sovereignty. Unconditional hospitality is that which “exposes itself without limit to the coming of the other, beyond rights and laws, beyond a hospitality conditioned by the right of asylum, by the right to immigration, by citizenship, and even by the right to universal hospitality”; it also “exceeds juridical, political, or economic calculation. But no thing and no one happens or arrives without it.”³⁷ However, even though sovereignty is deconstructed, it is not yet overcome. Deconstruction is also a deconstruction of linearity, but it does not yet, at least not fully, elucidate the question of recursivity. As a result, the unconditionality that results from deconstruction remained to be thought of according to the history of the supplement, namely, the history of technology—this encapsulates Stiegler’s critique of Derrida.³⁸

The above analysis shows that sovereignty is contingent and arbitrary; however, as the legal system’s foundation and guarantee, it is simultaneously necessary. The sovereign or the state can declare states of exception at any moment. Once an exception becomes the norm, it ceases to be an exception, or, to put it another way, the only exception would be the absence of an exception. Given the instability of the political system or an enemy’s threat of attack, a state of exception is justifiable. The irreducibility of enmity is the basis of Schmitt’s ontological argument regarding the political and justifies the necessity of sovereignty. Therefore, political vitalism also implies political immunology. Ignoring enmity is neutralizing, depoliticizing, and making oneself vulnerable to the Other. In this perspective, we could probably say that Schmitt goes further than Hegel in the understanding of sovereignty because, for Schmitt, sovereignty coexists with various sovereignties capable of destroying one another.

The question of enmity is central to political theology, and we can see the persistence of it in European psychology. Schmitt wrote, “Europe was lost without the idea of a *katechon*,”³⁹ for the *katechon* presupposes the anti-Christ, the enemy; the *katechon* is that which withholds the arrival of the anti-Christ. Those who don’t notice the enemy are exposed to the danger of annihilation. This returns us to the necessity of enmity, which conditions the vitalist or existentialist reading developed in the last chapter. In

his excellent article “Europe and New World Order,” Robert Howse suggests that “Schmitt’s problem was that he stuck to a faith in, and hope for, a new division of the world that would allow the kind of enmity that for him constituted the ‘political.’”⁴⁰ It is probably incorrect that there is no question of enmity under economic imperialism, but rather the question of enmity is undermined in favor of the circulation of capital, energy, and commercial products. However, such imperialism is also the condition of enmity and reaction since imperialism is an expression of the state form that seeks to turn what was partial into universal; it thus necessarily elicits resistance and pleas for pluralism.⁴¹ Many on the left may welcome this argument for pluralism,⁴² though it remains to be examined what kind of pluralism Schmitt was proposing. However, instead of showing the impossibility of undermining enmity, Schmitt starts with enmity as the absolute beginning, the *archē* of politics.

Stepping back, we should ask what the essence of an enemy consists of. In juridical terms, especially post–Second World War, the enemy has been equated with the aggressor. An aggressor “declares war, transgresses a limit, does not follow a certain procedure and deadlines, etc.”⁴³ Schmitt disputes this definition since it is overly mechanical. The original meaning of the German term for friend, *Freund*, was related to blood relationships, such as family. *Feind*, the term for an enemy, has a less clear etymological meaning, referring to someone despised and against whom a feud is started. Derrida deconstructed the opposition between friend and enemy by demonstrating that there is no such thing as pure friendship and enmity. This is because enmity is an existential question. We find a rather interesting remark in Schmitt’s “Wisdom of the Cell” (*Weisheit der Zellen*), written during his imprisonment during 1945–1947:

Whom in the world can I acknowledge as my enemy? Clearly only him who can call me into question. By recognizing him as enemy I acknowledge that he can call me into question. And who can really call me into question? Only I myself. Or my brother. The other proves to be my brother, and the brother proves to be my enemy. . . . One categorizes oneself through one’s enemy. One grades oneself through what one recognizes as hostility.⁴⁴

An enemy is someone who calls “me” into question. This enemy is either me or the other, who is a *brother*. The “I” here is a person and an individ-

ual. In the *Theory of the Partisan* (1963), we find a similar statement: “The enemy is the configuration of our own question” (Der Feind ist unsere eigene Frage als Gestalt).⁴⁵ The definition of an enemy is existential and fundamentally different from the definition of an aggressor cited above. But to what extent is this enemy not arbitrary? The enemy could be an aggressor, it could be someone who looks down on me, it could be my brother, and it could also be myself! Who, then, is not an enemy?

The question of enmity opens two cases: one is an immune resistance against an intruder who is threatening my life, and the other is an auto-immune event, which, though intending to protect me, actually destroys me from the inside. It is *autoimmune* because it is not the Other outside of me that calls me into question, but the Other in me that calls me into question. Who is this Other in me? Toward the end of the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel suggests respecting other sovereign states and not intervening in their internal affairs. However, this respect is subject to mutual recognition; therefore, paradoxically, they cannot be indifferent to each other’s internal affairs.⁴⁶ Mutual recognition implies interfering in another state’s internal affairs and involves not only imposing a particular order but also calling oneself into question. Following 9/11, which Derrida called an autoimmune event of global capitalism,⁴⁷ the state of emergency became applicable to anything labelled terrorism. In chapter 6, we will see further how the problem of autoimmunity constitutes the major problem of planetary politics today. Autoimmunity is not strictly a symptom of globalization; globalization only renders it more visible. Autoimmunity is fundamental to politics because the enemy is the Other in me; globalization escalates the body and integrates the Other outside of me as the Other in me. Today the United States cannot treat China as the Other just as China cannot treat the United States as the Other; the exaggeration of the immune system will lead to the destruction of individuality.

Returning to where we ended in the previous section, we see that the manifestation of sovereignty depends on the supplement. Like geometry, which depends on the diagram (drawing and sketching), sovereignty is demonstrated by something other than itself, first by territorial borders and second by its power to offend and destroy its enemy—in this sense, enmity is essential when sovereignty is identified with the individuality of a state. Derrida makes a very powerful remark when he says, “There is no sovereignty without force, without the force of the strongest, whose reason—the reason of the strongest—is to win out over [*avoir raison de*] everything.”⁴⁸

This translation does not fully reflect Derrida's meaning because *avoir raison* also means to be right about something. Similar in German, to *be* right is *Recht haben*, literally to *have* right. *Recht* and *raison* are identifiable in the claim of being right or correct. Moreover, to *have reason* also means to have the right *over* something. How can one be right *about* something and have the right *over* something without it being an act of power? Indeed, what exactly is this power—a power about or over life and death?

Before we proceed, we summarize the above discussions in three rubrics:

1. Sovereignty as boundary concept limits but also makes possible what is limited; the sovereign as he who decides on the exception resolves the metaphysical problem of the foundation of law by recourse to an immanent vital force. However, insofar as it is a boundary concept, it is nondemonstratable; like geometric idealities, though nondemonstratable, it can be made sensible through the externalization of the idea. The externalized is the supplement that is essential to the process of idealization (in contrast to ideation).
2. Sovereignty, conceived as the power that decides on the exception, is contingent; albeit being contingent in nature, it becomes necessary by choosing its friend and enemy. This necessity is conditioned by the absolute fear against its own annihilation, without which it would be nothing; the sovereign resists neutralization through politicization, that is to say, by identifying friend and enemy. This vital aspect of sovereignty forces itself to constantly identify enemies.
3. The concept of the enemy in Schmitt is more nuanced than what has been understood. The enemy is the result of an existential and psychological crisis. The planetary condition makes explicit the problematic of the concept of the enemy. The enemy as the Other in myself shifts from the individual state's self to the planetary self. Global confrontations are increasingly autoimmune attacks.

Sovereignty as a vital force does not exist *as such*; law, in its written form, makes sovereignty visible; but what makes it powerful is technology. Schmitt, the true Christian Epimetheus, the modern Abel, made the concept of sovereignty explicit by turning the default into what is necessary.⁴⁹

After all, Schmitt's elucidation of sovereignty is indeed not "self-evident," as Derrida contends. Even though the term *sovereignty* only became popular after Jean Bodin, it was already presupposed in the development of the *nomos*. The *nomos* that underlies all political forms is not only subject to history, nations, and people, as the historicists believe, but is also more fundamentally subject to technological conditions. Therefore, Schmitt's project is to understand sovereignty by thinking with the Other and to conceive the history of law by placing Europe in the history of technology. We should deviate from the uncritical formulation of Schmitt's thinking as that which identifies technology with liberalism. Instead, we will attempt to show that technology is fundamental to Schmitt's thought and necessary to understand where we are, and where we could and should go.

§23. Sovereignty and the Elementary Philosophy of Space

Perhaps we can say, and this is precisely what we are attempting to demonstrate, that sovereignty is tantamount to the history of the *nomos* of the Earth, which becomes visible in its *technological mode of existence*. Schmitt's *The Nomos of the Earth* was a historical account of how a Eurocentric *nomos* of the Earth came to pass and of the possible new configuration of the Earth's *nomos* given the planetary becoming of the Earth and the then antagonistic confrontation of the two world powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Schmitt used a rather different typology to understand space compared to geopolitics textbooks. Instead of dividing lands into functional spaces such as national territories, colonies, dependencies, and protectorates, Schmitt aimed to develop a new understanding of sovereignty as spatial order.⁵⁰ This specific way of analyzing space allows Schmitt to formulate a genetic notion of sovereignty. The earth, the soil, was first a subject of division. *Nomos*, for Schmitt, means not only to take (*nehmen*) but also to divide or distribute (*teilen*) space. Man is the animal of land, and therefore the primary implication of the *nomos* is the *measure* and *division* of land and wars between lands. Politics and its juridical systems are grounded on the division of land. The question of the division of soil immediately implies the question of allocation and possession, and, later, what is called sovereignty.⁵¹ The *nomos* is at once *Ordnung* (order) and *Ortung* (place or orientation).⁵² Space is situated in the world; in other words, it is the world that gives meaning to space. Without the world, space would only be geometrical dimensions. Schmitt's interpretation of

space is largely Heideggerian in meaning; indeed, he obscurely refers to a “German philosopher” in *Land and Sea*:

Today, by space we no longer understand a mere dimension of depth, empty of every conceivable content. For us, space has become a force field of human energy, activity, and achievement. Today, a thought first becomes possible for us that would have been impossible in any other epoch and which a contemporary German philosopher has articulated: The world is not in space, rather space is in the world.⁵³

Space belongs to the world, and the world is nothing other than that of the spiritual *Volk*. When the *Ortung* changes, then the *Ordnung* will also have to change. The change in *Ortung* is not only due to the discovery of new spaces but also the transformation of the vital energy of the people following a new *Ortung*. For example, both the discovery of the Americas and the Moon landing renewed European and global spatial consciousness, respectively, and therefore, an order that could adequately address this new configuration emerged. The Eurocentric *nomos* originating from the *Ortung* of Europe confronts its limit as *Ordnung* under the planetary condition of Schmitt’s time. This Eurocentric *nomos*, as Schmitt defended in various places, is not unilateral or hegemonic, rather he argues that it is fundamentally heterogeneous: “In the *Jus Publicum Europaeum* there was also a unity of the world. It was Eurocentric, but it was not the central power of a single master of the world. Its structure was pluralistic and allowed for the coexistence of several political greats who could regard each other not as criminals but as bearers of autonomous orders.”⁵⁴

The Eurocentric *nomos* of the Earth allows coexistence between different sovereign states, in the sense that it maintains a strict separation between its interiority and exteriority: each state is autonomous and does not intervene in the affairs of another sovereign state, thus also the contemporary understanding of sovereignty. It is Eurocentric because it affirms the agency of the state, namely, the state as the basic unit of internal and external politics. This political concept is foreign to non-European territories: “Continental European international law since the sixteenth century, the *jus publicum Europaeum* originally and essentially was a law among states, among European sovereigns. This European core determined the *nomos* of the rest of the earth. ‘Statehood’ is not a universal concept, valid

for all times and all peoples.”⁵⁵ Here Schmitt also affirms Hegel’s state “as a ‘realm of objective reason and morality’” and that “Hegel’s high-flown metaphysical formulations signify that the state was the spatially concrete, historical, organizational form of this epoch which, at least on European soil, had become the agency.”⁵⁶ However, this monadology of sovereign states remains a beautiful fiction. States are not monads if we understand what Hegel is saying here, because they have windows that allow them to aim and shoot the enemy. Instead, there is also a demand for mutual recognition between states, and such mutual recognition does not happen automatically; rather, it is the consequence of power struggles and wars.

We do not intend to show that Schmitt’s defense of the European system as heterogeneous is hypocritical, though one should certainly question him on this point. Rather, we want to point out that the question of heterogeneity still haunts us today. Technological advancement implies a difference in political power, and heterogeneity results from a constant negotiation between the technological difference of the sovereign states. What we have been trying to do is to show how the concept of sovereignty has been technological since its origin, in the same way that we attempted to demonstrate in chapter 1 through Hegel that the sovereign state is a technological phenomenon. If in Hegel we find the justification of the political state, then in the postwar Schmitt we find the attempt of a justification of the *Großraum*—a term, according to Schmitt, that has its origin in the “technological-industrial-economical-organizational domain [*Bereich*]” during the turn of the century when energy and electricity supply unified the *Kleinträume* into a *Großraumwirtschaft*.⁵⁷ From this perspective, we can also say that Schmitt’s philosophy of the state is also a philosophy of technology. Schmitt was reluctant to reduce the concept of the *Großraum* to a “techno-industry-economic” one because he is more concerned with the significance of this concept for international law.⁵⁸ He was too cautious to allow this point to expand. Thus, he also missed it; and as a result, his interpretation of technology is incomplete.

According to Schmitt, the spatial order based on land was radically changed about six hundred years ago when the sea was added to the subject of international laws. This may appear absurd because Greece is made up of several islands and is surrounded by the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, but Schmitt answers that, for the Greeks, the “sea has no character, in the original sense of the word, which comes from the Greek *charassein*, meaning to engrave, to scratch, to imprint.”⁵⁹ Therefore, territorial order,

instead of an oceanic order, was central to their understanding of spatial order in general. The *Ortung* implies the *Ordnung*. Land and sea demand two different international laws. This periodization is crucial for Schmitt because the sea is also the way to discover the earth as a globe, and it also exposes the limit of the European international laws, which were valid only on land. The shift of domination from one element to another indicates a spatial revolution, which fundamentally changes the consciousness of space:

Every time when new lands and seas enter the field of vision of human collective consciousness by a new thrust of historical forces, by an unleashing of new energies, the spaces of historical existence also change. Then there emerge new measures and directions of political-historical activity, new sciences, new orders, new life for new or reborn peoples. The expansion can be so deep and so surprising that not only quantities and measurements, not only the outermost human horizon, but even the structure of the concept of space itself is altered. Then one may speak of a spatial revolution.⁶⁰

Ernst Kapp's geographical thinking influenced Schmitt's elementary philosophy of international order. Kapp suggested a reading of the evolution of empires according to the element of water. As we have already seen, Kapp was a Hegelian who read the history of civilization from a specific point of view, most notably from the perspective of organ projection. According to Kapp, the Middle East's initial Potamian or river cultures (Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile) were followed by the thalassic age (closed sea and Mediterranean basin). These were, in turn, then followed by what he calls "oceanic civilizations."⁶¹ As an element, water stood out as the lens through which the history of civilization could be reconstructed. Schmitt adopts this strategy by making the sea element a middle term between land and air. At the same time, Schmitt twisted Kapp's first two stages by emphasizing that, despite the thalassic culture's close contact with the water, it is nevertheless defined by the concept of the coast as a limit. Schmitt gave the example of Venice: though a medieval thalassic culture, "all of the ceremonial and symbolic acts of Venetian life point toward a culture of coasts and camps, rather than a maritime existence."⁶² The elements, land, sea, and air, constitute the foundation of planetary politics—something

that Schmitt wanted to systematize after writing *Land and Sea*.⁶³ Since the end of the seventeenth century, whoever led in sea navigation dominated the world. And it was England, after transforming from a country of shepherds to a country of mariners, that became the dominant force on the sea. The Scientific Revolution occurred in Europe, in both the continent and British Isles, but the Industrial Revolution only occurred first in England. Schmitt argued that seafaring was inextricably linked to and fueled technological and scientific advancement. The rise of sea power and the international laws that regulate sea wars and piracy, such as *rayas* (Spanish-Portuguese) and amity lines (French-English), reconfigured the *nomos* of the Earth: “*The change that affected the nature of the leviathan was, however, the consequence of the industrial revolution. It had begun in England, in the eighteenth century. The first blast furnace in 1735; cast iron in 1740; steam engine in 1768; spinning mill in 1770, and mechanical loom in 1786. All saw the light of day in Britain.*”⁶⁴

The revival of the sea monster first saw its light in England, allowing England to develop its sea power against the land power of continental European states. This was the second milestone of reestablishing the spatial order, succeeding the end of the first spatial order based on land. Technology, as *nomos* (appropriation and division), corresponds to a legitimacy that is *prior* to legality⁶⁵ in the sense that rationality is thus strongly tied to science and technology. It violates legality in its clash with the church, but it also transcends legality because it embodies legitimacy: “The second *nomos* of the earth arose from such discoveries of land and sea. The discoveries were not invited. They were made without visas issued by the discovered people.”⁶⁶ The second *nomos* of the Earth remains Eurocentric because the form of power and the laws of spatial division come from Europe, maintaining the continuation of the *res publica Christiana*.⁶⁷ First and foremost, it is unilateral in the name of a universality based on the universalization of European values, which allowed the European forces to appropriate the “free soil” inhabited by the indigenous people. The colonizers did not have to apply for visas. Instead, their legitimacy derives not directly from their religion and aesthetics but from their technological strength. This second *nomos* of the Earth is also the extension of the European *nomos* of the land to the *nomos* of the sea, which integrates the more recently discovered land into its juridical system: “The Eurocentric *nomos* of the earth lasted until World War I (1914–18). It was based on a dual balance; first, the balance of land and sea. England alone dominated the sea

and allowed no balance of sea power. By contrast, on the European continent there existed a balance of land power.”⁶⁸

The collapse of the Eurocentric *nomos* was largely because the *jus publicum Europaeum* failed to keep the balance of the planetary order. At the turn of the twentieth century, a rather paradoxical situation occurred. On the one hand, the sovereign state or, more precisely, the nation-state became a fundamental political concept beyond Europe (though Schmitt lamented the failure of the *jus publicum Europaeum*); on the other hand, the rise of the United States and the Soviet Union and their international politics displaced European empires as the guarantee of the spatial division. The sea power of the British Empire gave way to U.S. Marine power; the land power of the continental European countries gave way to the army of Soviet tanks. This antagonistic duality appears to call for a sublation that allows history to progress toward a certain rational unity. However, hidden in this unity is imperialism posing as a universalism. Such imperialism can be found in twentieth-century American foreign policy, which in Schmitt’s eyes, destroyed the novelty of the United States as the new Europe:

Equally profound as this world-historical shift from West to East was the fact that the old belief in the New World was changed from within—from internal American development. When the United States embarked upon a foreign policy of imperialism, its domestic situation changed, as the era of its newness ended. The presupposition and foundation of everything that one could call the *novelty* of the Western Hemisphere disappeared both ideologically and in reality.⁶⁹

Schmitt referred to Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson’s reframing (*Umdeutung*) of the Monroe Doctrine (1823) as tools for imperialism and universalism.⁷⁰ The Monroe Doctrine affirms the independence of the American states, and rejects colonization and intervention of foreign countries in the internal affairs of the United States (especially Russia and the Holy Alliance) and vice versa. The Monroe Doctrine, for Schmitt, stands as the counter doctrine of the “monarchic-Christian-dynastic” principle of legitimacy.⁷¹ Wilson replaced the Monroe Doctrine with a “suprastatic and supranational world ideology” (*überstaatliche und übervölkische Weltideologie*).⁷² Imperialism is accompanied by a global universalism, which undermines the complexity of space, or more precisely, its domination of

space eliminates all heterogeneities; in other words, spatial conquest ensures frictionless movements of capital, which overcome spatial rigidities. Schmitt saw Roosevelt's proposal to Japan to construct what is now known as the Asian Monroe Doctrine to avoid European colonization in the Far East as a pretext to aid the economic development of Anglo-Saxon capital in East Asia, particularly in China, by making it a colony.⁷³ We might say that what Schmitt calls *global universalism* or *hegemonic liberalism* is what we know today as *globalization*. Globalization has transgressed all boundaries by establishing free channels of circulation and exchange. It is, however, difficult to solely associate the United States with imperialism, as if European colonialism were not imperialism. Since the Enlightenment, European imperialism was already at work through its technological advancement. The universalism of the Enlightenment was also a homogenization of space, one that enforced a homogeneity as the possibility of plurality, or a monism as the foundation of a pseudo-pluralism in the sense that differences are based on the same. In the nineteenth century, British marine power was the guarantee of this smooth plane of the free world trade and free world market, as Schmitt remarked:

The prevailing concept of a global universalism lacking any spatial sense certainly expressed a reality in the economy distinct from the state—an economy of free world trade and a free world market, with the free movement of money, capital and labor. . . . A strong guarantee for such a worldview lay in the dominant position of English and in the English interest in global free trade and freedom of the sea.⁷⁴

Today we see the continuation of this order via American marine power, from the Gulf War to the war in Iraq and now the current intervention in the Indo-Pacific Ocean.⁷⁵ In an article titled “The New *Nomos* of the Earth,” as one of three world-political scenarios, Schmitt saw that American strength would replace British power as the guarantee of world order. This is precisely what took place during globalization in the twentieth century. Space has become something less significant today, both domestically and globally, largely due to the well-developed logistic systems. But it was not until the global pandemic that we began to understand that global logistics cannot be taken for granted; it is rather fragile. A port can delay the supply of one element, leading to the shortage of many products

throughout the globe. At the same time, we also observe the rapid growth of domestic logistics in some parts of the world; for example, in China, fresh lychee can be transported from the southern part of the country to the northern within one day. Though we may argue that globalization, or more precisely the current phase of globalization, has ended due to rising tensions between antagonistic countries, the mastery of elemental power has also expanded rapidly, which may provide the means to conceive a different phase of planetarization. In Hegelian terms, we may argue that globalization remains an abstract universal and that the contradiction revealed over the previous century prepares us for a concrete universal.

§24. *Großräume* as Post-Static Political Form and the Problem of Pluralism

We can conclude that for Schmitt, the divide between East and West is a matter of technology rather than culture. In “Die Einheit der Welt (1952),” Schmitt questioned the political trend in favor of the unity of the world, pleading for pluralism. The political conflict between the East and the West is the primary cause of global unity. This consists of one of the three scenarios of the “New *Nomos* of the Earth,” in contrast to the preservation of the present order by American imperialism and the construction of the *Großraum*, which we will discuss later. Second, the unity of the world is also brought about by technological advancement, especially the electric and telecommunication networks. However, this form of unity remains abstract and homogenous. Schmitt mocked the fact that industrial capitalism and Lenin’s communism both sought to build an electrified earth.⁷⁶ Communist countries ironically seem to have had the same goal as the capitalist West: “The East, in particular, took hold of Hegel’s philosophy of history in the same way it took hold of the atomic bomb and other products of the Western intelligentsia in order to realize the unity of the world in accordance with its plans.”⁷⁷

World history appears to be moving in the direction predicted by Hegel: technical rationality, masquerading as the world spirit, is the driving force of world history, from which no country within the planetary schema can escape. Schmitt already saw that the East took Hegel’s philosophy of history and Western intelligentsia to develop its own world plan. When we look at the competition between the United States and China today, it is not astonishing to see that Schmitt had already anticipated it,

though he was referring more to the Soviet Union than China in his writings. The competition between China or Russia and the Western world, at least at the moment, is situated on the ground of Western technology, but whether it is moving toward the Hegelian absolute is a difficult question to answer. The United States' most effective strategy to weaken Chinese sovereign power is not its defense of Taiwan but to block China's access to certain technologies for national security reasons. The antagonism between the West and the East, seen from the perspective of technology, is only one form of homogenization.

As historian Arnold Toynbee pointed out in his Reith Lecture, which Schmitt read and commented with fierce criticism, technology is the key to the new world order of the East and West. We recall that in his Reith Lecture, Toynbee raised why in the sixteenth century, the people of the Far East had closed their doors to European visitors after first contact but, in the nineteenth century, opened their doors to them. Toynbee explains that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Europeans wanted to export religion and technology to the Far East. Thus, immediately recognizing that the Europeans wanted to change their beliefs and ways of life, the people of the Far East threw the visitors out of their lands. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, an important event happened in Europe. According to Toynbee, technology is detached from religion. In the nineteenth century, the Europeans would only export technology instead of religion to the Far East. Consequently, the people of the Far East believed that technology was instrumental and that they could master the technology with their own thought. In China, we find the slogan "Chinese thought as mind and Western thought as instrument," in Japan "Japanese soul and Western instrument," and in Korea "Eastern Dao and Western Qi [utensil]." Referring to Toynbee's lecture, Schmitt claims, "But today's communist revolution in the East consists in the East taking possession of a European technique that has been detached from Christian religiosity."⁷⁸ Even though later Schmitt added that what happened toward the end of the seventeenth century was not necessarily the detachment of technology from religion, but rather the detachment of the British Isles from the European continent that created opposition and balance between sea power and land power.⁷⁹ Schmitt does not deny the centrality of technology; on the contrary, he acknowledges it. However, he fails to understand how technology was perceived in the East because Toynbee was not mistaken,

and as evidenced by the slogans stated in China, Japan, and Korea, technology is seen to be divorced from religion and regarded as one of the most secular of knowledges due to its rationality and universality.

Furthermore, Lenin's electrified earth here does not only represent a communist dream but also the homogenizing tendency of technology, which in turn defines the order of globalization. The human being is primarily a technical being. Thus, technology is fundamental to the evolution of humanity. The evolutionary process initially manifested as divergence, and then battles and conquests brought about varying degrees of convergence of space and time. The conquest of space is also the reorganization of a spatial order regulated by technological means ranging from transportation networks to telecommunication networks, which in turn become a medium of time synchronization. The current industrialized world was not the utopia that Saint Simon dreamed of. The increase in productivity and the development of transportation networks did not lead to a more even distribution of goods and wealth or the realization of socialism. Instead, the spatial order became integrated into smooth planes, which only facilitated the circulation of all forms of energy (fossil fuels, libidinal, sexual, etc.) for capitalism's profit making. Sovereignty, defined by boundaries and opposition to foreign intervention gradually, gave way to new protocols developed by the industrial world and capitalist market; therefore, we find the nation-state-capital trinity.

Schmitt did not live in the time of the internet, nor did he have the chance to observe how the unity of the world was virtually realized after the fall of the Berlin Wall; Francis Fukuyama was able to write his *The End of History and the Last Man*, which honored Kojève's "universal homogeneous state" and the free market.⁸⁰ The digitalized world replaced the electrified world and became the reality that we are now living in. However, as we know, digitization does not bring about global unity; like the "free market," it is fragmented according to different commercial interests and ideological manipulations. Today, countries are increasingly realizing the necessity to resist the planetarization of platforms such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook, ranging from standard court proceedings for invasion of privacy and monopoly to extreme measures such as barring them from the market and users. The homogenization of technology also defines a new form of universality: access to technologies. Unlike Teilhard de Chardin or the transhumanists discussed in chapter 3, Schmitt was not fascinated by the electrified earth, nor would the digital earth absorb him if he were still

alive today. For Schmitt, such unity is more of a problem than a solution. An electrified earth or digital earth can be used to maintain the hegemony of a neoliberal economy, but they do not necessarily enable pluralism.

In Derrida's reading, Schmitt's attempt to retrieve pluralism through the redefinition of sovereignty becomes pharmacological. For readers familiar with Derrida's theory on Plato's pharmacy or the *pharmakon*, writing—or technology in general—is neither good nor bad, but remedy and poison at the same time. Writing is that which allows humans to remember everything. Yet, it is also that which makes them forget, for they no longer need to remember anymore, their memory now being externalized in and through technology. The pharmacology of sovereignty could be interpreted in two ways. First, nation-state-sovereignty, on the one hand, can lead to absolute power, namely, the suspension of all laws, including international laws—the sovereign is that which enables a state to become a rogue state. On the other hand, the sovereign is also that which resists certain unilateral “universal” forces because, in certain circumstances, it can “become an indispensable bulwark against certain international powers, certain ideological, religious, or capitalist, indeed linguistic, hegemonies that, under the cover of liberalism or universalism, would still represent, in a world that would be little more than a marketplace, a rationalization in the service of particular interests.”⁸¹ It is not surprising that the “rogue states,” which are named as such by the U.S. government, speak about resistance against American imperialism. The unity of the East and the West through the realization of technology and the suppression of sovereignty in the eyes of Schmitt is no less the triumph of imperial universalism. For Schmitt, a true unity exists in the form of the spirit, but not necessarily in the material form like an electrified earth; in other words, technology demands an orientation (*Ortung*) so that it will not be a blind force. Schmitt distinguished spiritual unity from material unity, claiming that, in Hegel, one can also find a unity of the world spirit, an idea we already explored in chapter 1. Schmitt recognized that Hegel did not mean material unity; in other words, a material unity does not mean a spiritual unity in the Hegelian sense: “Now this Hegelian philosophy is apparently idealistic; it sees the goal of humanity in the unity of the self-returning spirit and the absolute idea, not in the material unity of an electrified earth.”⁸²

While it is certainly too polemical to claim that Hegel separated the spiritual from the material, it is not less polemical to claim that there is no relation between Hegel's concept of unity and an electrified earth. As

we have tried to show, the spirit does not purely exist in the mind; the spirit is at the same time externalization (alienation) and internalization (recollection)—it is the recursive process of externalization and internalization that defines the “self-returning spirit.” Hegel’s indecisiveness toward the end of the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* concerning a world order based on nation-states does not mean that Hegel already saw the end of history, as Kojève and Fukuyama claim after him. The unification of the East and the West has not happened yet, but perhaps it will come into being once another world war breaks out; such a war is also something we should hope for the least. Schmitt is not in favor of unity; he condemned it as being loaded with the ideology of imperialism, as he had questioned in “The Unity of the World” why “unity” is necessary good.⁸³ What Schmitt pleads for is pluralism. This pluralism is no longer limited to individual nation-states, which he saw as having already failed after the Second World War. Rather, it finds its new political form in what he calls the *Großraum*. In this sense, we may understand that technological strategy underpins the *Großraum*, and its coalition depends on it: “Which type of politics is strong enough to master the new technology and which type of genuine friend-enemy groupings can develop on this new ground.”⁸⁴ After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was the atomic bomb that created the postwar grouping; today, this scenario is best illustrated by the groupings that center on artificial intelligence.

This is the last scenario out of the three that Schmitt described in “The New *Nomos* of the Earth,” namely, the coalition or grouping of different territories forming clusters of administrative units that extend the Monroe Doctrine from one state to a cluster of states. Due to the new planetary condition, the decline of the sovereign state has become inevitable, according to Schmitt: on the one hand, American imperialism has abandoned the Monroe Doctrine and is ceaselessly opening new markets for its capital; on the other hand, the East due to its technological acceleration is imposing new plans within the same logic of the game. The *Großraum* is Schmitt’s response to the new *nomos* of the Earth as a resistance against Anglo-Saxon economic imperialism, and at the same time, as an attempt to rescue the Monroe Doctrine and to reactivate the European order of the planet in the name of heterogeneity and autonomy. The *Großraum* could be said to be a compromise between the planetarization, which undermines individual states’ sovereignty, and the heterogeneity Schmitt believes to be the foundation of European public law.

Like the political state, the *Großraum* is a historical and technological product. Schmitt wants to theorize it as such, similar to what Hegel did to the state in his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. If it is true that toward the seventeenth century, the division between sea power and land power was tantamount to a confrontation between ships and farms, meaning two forms of existence exemplified by England and Continental Europe, then the confrontation between land and sea explains the European international politics of that time. However, this configuration nevertheless came to be challenged when the electrified earth progressed toward its concretization (in the sense of Gilbert Simondon). The Second World War made another element even more dominant, that of air. Air is the third element after land and sea; it introduced different types of warfare, including the dropping of atomic bombs, and now more and more drones.⁸⁵ It englobes both the land and sea and enables the imagination of the *Großraum*. Schmitt repeatedly talked about the air, the new element, in *The Nomos of the Earth, Land and Sea* and other texts. Today, the air element is expressed not so much by the air force and its military domination but also in the possibility of destroying the enemy from outer space and more long-term goals, such as creating new territorial sovereignty through the colonization of Mars and the Moon. This exploration of outer space is still beyond the imagination of ordinary people because the earth, despite its wear, is still the only place to live:

The invention of the airplane marked the conquest of the third element, after those of land and sea. Man was lifting himself high above the plains and the waves, and in the process, acquired a new means of transportation, as well as a new weapon. Standards and criteria undertook further changes. Hence, man's possibilities to dominate nature and his fellow man were given the widest scope.⁸⁶

Land, sea, and air correspond to three different kinds of technology that aim to control each element. It would be incorrect to think that the elements are discovered chronologically. It was technology that allowed these elements to become dominant in the understanding of the spatial order of the planet—in the sense that they are no longer elements to be governed but rather spaces of “human domination and effective power expansion” (*menschlicher Herrschaft und effektiver Machtentfaltung*).⁸⁷ Every spatial revolution indicates the *Ordnung's* interruption and the *Ortung's*

reconfiguration. Suppose we read Schmitt's theory of spatial revolution systematically. In that case, technology is that which defines the sovereign as well as that which transforms the sovereign's power—always exceeding it and empowering. At the same time, in order *not* to be fully determined by technology, the sovereign has to reinvent itself as a vital force, a force that could suspend other norms, including technological ones.

Schmitt's theory of sovereignty does not set its priority on economic domination but rather on autonomy and decision, a political vitalism that we have already explored. Schmitt's theory covered the deep sea and outer space in terms of sea and air, but due to his death in 1985, the subject of cyberspace was obviously beyond his conception. Schmitt never ceases to mock the unity of an electrified world;⁸⁸ however, it is also evident to him, or he would be contradicting himself, that technology is crucial to comprehending spatial order and that technological progress renders past political and legal doctrines obsolete. The electrified earth has become the digital earth today. As Peter Thiel claims, the future spaces in the Schmittian sense are the deep sea, outer space, and cyberspace. If we follow Schmitt's philosophy of space, as many theorists have attempted, it is crucial to add cyberspace and outer space as new elements after land, sea, and air.⁸⁹ Cyberspace has already become a battlefield between the states, and outer space is being prepared as such under the name of scientific research.

It is worth repeating that the attractive idea behind Schmitt's criticism of unity is his aspiration for pluralism. The new orientation (*Ortung*), the planetary viewed from three spatial elements, has interrupted the order (*Ordnung*). Is the *Großraum* a real response to the spatial revolution of the twenty-first century? The image of the blue marble (1972) and those lower-quality photographs of the earth taken from outer space in the 1960s have already conferred a completely new spatial consciousness to the planet, namely, the ability to grasp the earth as a whole from above. Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, considered the launch of Sputnik (1957) as an event not second to any other scientific events, including the splitting of the atom.⁹⁰ The *Großraum*, often presented as the late Schmitt's planetary thinking, is in tension with the planetary we intend to propose concerning plurality, democracy, and liberty. To understand this, we will need to go further into Schmitt's concept of the *Großraum*. Before the Second World War, the *Großraum* was justified as a response to the decline of the sovereign state and the threat of American imperialism and Soviet technological acceleration and as a necessity for the Reich. The Reich is

that which unifies different people in the *Großraum*. Is then the Reich an enlarged state and the *Großraum* an enlarged *Kleinraum*? Schmitt answers: “The Reich is not simply an enlarged state, just as little as the *Großraum* is an enlarged *Kleinraum*. Nor is the Reich identical with the *Großraum*, but every Reich *has* a *Großraum* and thereby rises as much above the state spatially characterized by the exclusiveness of its national territory as it does above the national soil of an individual people.”⁹¹

The *Reich* and the *Großraum*, as concepts similar to the state, are both historical and concrete. The Reich extends beyond the border of the individual states and the soil of a particular people. One could see that Schmitt was pleading for the German Reich as the only option for the post-Westphalian international order. The Reich does not negate the people and the state; instead, it pretends to provide a new framework to conceive an international political order under the planetary condition:

In it [the concept of the Reich] we have the core of a new way of thinking in international law, which starts from the concept of the people and allows the elements of order contained in the concept of the state to remain, but which at the same time is able to do justice to today’s spatial concepts and the real political vital forces; that can be “planetary,” i.e. earthy [*erdraumhaft*], without destroying the peoples and the states and without, like the imperialist international law of Western democracies, steering out of the inevitable overcoming of the old concept of the state into a universalistic-imperialistic world law.⁹²

We can observe here that the Reich and the *Großraum* remain *volkliche* concepts and are contemporary to the new planetary representation of space, i.e., air. For Schmitt, only the Reich, and not the state, is sufficient to be a *political vital force* after the new space revolution. *Großraum* and Reich are positioned as a quest for heterogeneity and plurality—a strategy that resists the imperialist international law of Western liberal democracy. We can see that this quest for plurality resonates with the sentiment today from the left and the right, making Schmitt’s theory appealing again. However, we have yet to ask what kind of pluralism is at stake and if it is not just a camouflage for domination. Pluralism shouldn’t only mean plurality or multipolarity of power, as it can simply be a pluralism based on monism. In the imagination of Schmitt, the new order could be schematically analyzed

as first inter-*Großräume* relations, second inter-Reich relations of different *Großräume*, and last, both inside and outside the *Großraum*, international relations (*zwischen-völkische Beziehungen*).⁹³ Hooker in his *Schmitt's International Thought*, much like how Marx reproached Hegel on the organic state, argued that Schmitt's idea of the *Großraum* is nothing substantial:

The idea of *Großraum* is almost totally without substance beyond its status as a critique of the status quo. Whilst certainly of interest in its assertion of the need for a new basis for political uniqueness, the conclusions it reaches are inadequate. Why is a continental form of politics better as an assertion of a thorough and anti-universal appreciation of territory? Why can't the state-form be revived as genuinely particular? What distinguished the "political idea" of a *Großraum* from the bare sense of existential collectivity that defined the political community in *The Concept of the Political*? Schmitt wholly fails to address these foundational questions, and offers no thorough justification of his position.⁹⁴

This comment is valid in many senses. Hooker argues, after 1945, Schmitt's eulogy of the Reich present in his earlier writings became almost taboo. However, the *Großraum* remains in *Nomos of the Earth* as a proposal for future geopolitics—or, in other words, the geopolitics of the *Großraum* after Reich. Again, according to Schmitt, what makes the *Großraum* more preferable to the sovereign state is that the *Großräume* are internally homogenous but externally differentiated from each other. Heterogeneity is maintained as inter-*Großräume* relations, but internally, the *Großraum* could be homogenous like a state. The *Großräume* means also a new kind of grouping, which is not necessarily the same as the nation-state. Technology, for example, becomes the basis of the grouping of the people: according to the Schmitt of 1929, it will be the new ground of politics in the coming century, all depending on which "type of politics is strong enough to master the new technology" and "which type of genuine friend-enemy groupings [*Freund- und Feind-Gruppierungen*] can develop on this new ground [*Boden*]."

§25. Giving Colonialism, New *Großräume*, and Digital Sovereignty

We may wonder whether the *Großraum*, after the state, constitutes a higher degree of reconciliation between the universal and the particular, and if

so, in what way? For example, suppose a certain ethnic group dominates the political state, defining the official language, calendar, and rhythm of life; the other ethnic groups can maintain their obvious differences, but they must submit to the state administrative machine defined by the dominant people. Is this already the pluralist logic of the *Großraum*? The Kyoto School philosophers were troubled by the same problem when they had to justify the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. They also called the Co-Prosperity Sphere a *Großraum* by following Schmitt.⁹⁵ Their justification is that all different Asian people could be united by the Japanese *moralische Energie*, and it was only the Japanese who were capable of demonstrating such a *moralische Energie* that overcomes the decadence of Western modernity.⁹⁶ If the *Großraum* possesses some theoretical advancements since Hegel's philosophical justification of the political state, then one should expect that it resolves the *Volk-Staat* correlation and the domination of the Germanic people that Hegel concluded at the end of his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*.

Schmitt left no clear answer to these questions. The pluralism he proposes at times seems to paradoxically align with the technological and economic rationality that he aims to undermine. Schmitt's anticipation that technology is the new ground on which friend and enemy grouping can develop seems obvious today when microchips became a watershed separating the U.S.-led coalition (including Japan, the Netherlands, and other members of the coalition) and China. Any non-Chinese enterprise that violates the U.S. sanction is an indicator of enmity, and vice versa. This principle is also applied in the use of software and online platforms. Those countries that censor American platforms are often considered to belong to the same group: North Korea, China, and Russia. However, when we look at the substitutes of these Western platforms, we see that they are actually very similar services, using similar or exactly the same technology.

The grouping of friends and enemies based on technology is therefore dynamic, but the most significant development has been cross-state and cross-continental infrastructures. It is not simply an exercise of hegemony, which belongs to the so-called colonialism of taking.⁹⁷ Such colonialism of taking has dominated since the beginning of the history of colonization itself. Indeed, the constitutive act of taking is the European *nomos*. The enmity of Schmitt supposes appropriation of land and sea in both civil wars and wars against other countries, which also operates as the justification of colonization from the perspective of the European *nomos*.

After the Second World War, colonialism takes a different form since we have entered a post-European era. The Eurocentric *nomos* has to be largely modified in the planetary condition, or in Kojève's words, it can no longer be a taking (*nehmen*) but becomes a giving (*geben*). In 1957, Carl Schmitt invited Kojève to give a lecture in the private Rhein-Ruhr-Club in Cologne; the talk was titled "Colonialism from a European Perspective." Contrary to Schmitt's notion of *nomos* as taking and appropriation, Kojève proposed considering *giving* as a new form of colonialism. Instead of taking from the colonized countries, Europe now gave to these countries in the form of financial, material, and technological support and more than they were taking. Kojève's rationale is that for a business to remain good, it should have good clients, not poor and bad ones. The giving colonialism (*gebender Kolonialismus*) is compatible with the new form of capitalism. In Marx's analysis of industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, capitalists take the maximum from the workers without improving the latter's quality of life—this remains an error of Marxists when they essentialize capitalism in the form Marx described, for, according to them, capitalists are unbelievably naive and blind.⁹⁸ Post-Marxian capitalism, exemplified by Henry Ford, changed the strategy by redistributing what they took from the workers. Since Ford, there has been a general improvement in employees' working conditions and quality of life, as documented by sociologists such as Georges Friedman in France and Daniel Bell in the United States. According to Kojève, the new type of colonialism should not merely take whatever it wants as in the past, but rather provide the emerging and underdeveloped nations more than it has taken. Kojève named France and the UK as the only Western countries with a politics of giving at that time. Today, we see that many of the developed countries, but also developing countries, are giving in this sense. The United States, Germany, and Japan have topped France in donations in the past years.

This seemingly "anticolonialist" act is, for Kojève, a new form of colonialism that Europe should exercise,⁹⁹ such as the "anti-imperialist" act of Schmitt was a justification for the German Reich. Writing in 1957, Kojève had to avoid the Reich in favor of a less hegemonic coalition. Insofar as the territories of land, sea, and air are defined, market and infrastructure become the other means through which the Reich's sovereignty can extend to other countries so that the internal affairs of other countries can become part of foreign policy. Market and infrastructure consist of two major components for assuring capital and commercial goods circulation. Or,

maybe we can say, they are means of creating postwar *Großräume*. In 1957, Kojève saw China as the receiving country of the giving colonialism of the Soviet Union; however, he also noticed the “spectacular” transformation of China’s technological ground. Sixty-five years have passed, and Kojève’s proposal of a “giving colonialism” has spread beyond the West and takes a much more materialist gesture. The giving colonialism is key to the formation of *Großräume*. China stands as one of the leading countries in this regard. To recall: China’s One Belt One Road Initiative (BRI) in the past decade (up to 2022) has signed more than 170 cooperation agreements with 125 countries and 29 international organizations across Asia and Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the South Pacific. China constructed a *Großraum* by imposing not only its economic protocols but also its technological ones. As a response, in the summer of 2022, the G7 launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment with US\$600 billion, claiming to be the “true alternative” to China’s BRI. We can anticipate that there will be more and more of such initiatives in the future.

The gift of investment, offered as a gesture of friendship, can easily become that of enmity; giving and taking are two sides of the same coin. The investing country can legally drive another country into bankruptcy or illegally, in the case of conflicts, disrupt the daily operation of other countries through the control of technology and resources, similar to how Russia cut the gas supply to Europe. The friend and enemy demarcation line becomes blurred in these cases through market creation and infrastructure construction because the development of market and infrastructure is a new form of colonialism, as Kojève attempted to clarify. The decision of friend and enemy is nakedly Machiavellian. Today, this is no longer an insight but almost a truism. However, the most ironic thing lies in the denial of this truism when articulated by diplomats. It is also due to this mutual penetration that it is nearly impossible to adhere to the Monroe Doctrine because the interests of each state readily clash with those of the others, even though they are connected on several levels. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been some thirty years of happy mutual penetration, though in almost all cases, from developed countries to developing countries and from developing countries to underdeveloped countries, in the name of globalization. It has come to the point that globalization, which might equally be termed American imperialism, produces an autoimmune effect, similar to what Derrida announced after the 9/11 event and what Peter Thiel describes as the West’s Achilles’s

heel since the Enlightenment.¹⁰⁰ China, Russia, and the Middle East could all be understood as symptoms of the autoimmune attack of American imperialism. Hearing the United States, the very imperialist driving force behind globalization, suddenly turn against it under Donald Trump's presidency was almost unbelievable, and China, the world's so-called strongest communist country, defended globalization and free markets.

This gift, however, is not restricted to international aid. International aid remains only one of the three gift forms, alongside soft power and digital platforms. Soft power belongs to the realm of culture, which can directly affect the psychosocial life of the people of another country. For example, American consumerism has popularized the world and brought about a "liquidation of regional and national culture," as described by authors such as Jonathan Crary.¹⁰¹ Or, as Stiegler puts it, consumerism induces disindividuation, as its addictive nature creates psychic obstacles that impede the pursuit of a higher meaning of existence.¹⁰² In a certain sense, one may say that the United States has already won because it has succeeded in spreading consumerist culture globally. In other words, the United States has already prevailed in its rivalry with China since the Chinese economy is highly dependent on the consumerism of both cheap and luxury goods. This could be said to be the triumph of the thermodynamic ideology—according to which economic freedom is more fundamental than political freedom; in this case, a citizen is first of all a consumer. The thermodynamic ideology has been challenged in the past decades, especially after the financial crisis in 2008, but it continues to exert its power. Trade wars happen when rules of the thermodynamic ideology are violated; for example, we often read in the newspaper that a state is accused by others of having subsidized a particular industry to participate in the global market. This same rhetoric is now used by both capitalist and communist countries.

We have witnessed the formation of a global "community" via technological globalization, and within this community, immunological attacks and autoimmune attacks are the new norm—the ecological mutations (in the sense of Latour) and trade wars could also be seen as these kinds. Concerning the digital earth in process, we see that the sovereign extends its power beyond territories via digital platforms; paradoxically, it also means that the sovereign may lose control, that it fails to suspend the law completely and that the state of exception is only localized. Despite what many diplomats say, it is naive today to ask other states not to intervene in their internal affairs since they are under their sovereignty. It is equally naive

when European countries expected Russia to not respond to their sanctions by cutting the energy supply. We can take censorship as an example. When the state censors a platform, it only blocks its people from accessing the server; other people outside of the territory can still access it. The server is not within the legal territory of the former, and according to the latter's law, its existence is illegal. The centralized form of power, analogous to monotheism, risks failing in a world of decentralized infrastructure. In this sense, decentralization and decentralized technology are often opposed to sovereignty, or even considered as a form of anarchism, because the state of exception can only be executed when the territory can be effectively enclosed.

As Benjamin Bratton has rightly pointed out, digital platforms are a part of sovereign power, and for this reason, he claims that “clouds” are a new element. Clouds do not have a fixed location because the server could be in any of the countries that provide the service; clouds store data, mostly personal data, which is supposed to be the private property of the individuals. Since Edward Snowden revealed the gigantic surveillance program of the NSA in June 2013, many countries have started different attempts to localize data: the Russian State Duma in 2014 adopted the legislation of data localization to retain the data of Russian users within the Russian territory;¹⁰³ the European Union introduced General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 and revealed in 2019 the European cloud project GAIA-X.¹⁰⁴ This might correspond to what Bratton characterizes as the Monroe Doctrine of the cloud, which defines the digital territories and protocols of access, which he calls *Stacks*.¹⁰⁵ A more detailed historical account of the socioeconomic development of cloud computing is beyond our scope here; what interests us is how platforms, with their decentralized infrastructure, constitute an extension of sovereign power, which inevitably comes into conflict with other sovereign powers. The recent conflicts between the United States and China over digital platforms, especially the case of TikTok, made it visible how the control of user data is vital for political power. TikTok is a company based in the United States, but it is owned by ByteDance, a Chinese company, of which the Chinese state is a shareholder, and the state, by right, has the ultimate power to access the data of the foreign users of the platform. It underscores the Schmittian concept of the sovereign, as evidenced by Chinese digital giants like the ride-hailing behemoth Didi Global, along with other high-tech and energy companies, voluntarily withdrawing from the New York Stock Exchange.¹⁰⁶ It is

further exemplified by the recently approved “Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act,” which empowers the U.S. government to compel ByteDance to either shut down or sell TikTok.¹⁰⁷

Google is a more important illustration compared to TikTok since it provides far more comprehensive services than the latter. It is presented as a gift, a free service if one remains in the limited amounts of cloud storage, which ensures that no matter how rich or poor, whoever has an internet connection can access such services. For this reason, the volume of user data that Google retains is huge and increases constantly. Imagine Google deleting this information one day (for example, due to an accident), the level to which people would suffer involves not only specific memories but also how lives are organized. Digital platforms have created a new scenario of the operation of sovereign power, which theoretically has no territorial limits. Even though platforms comply to local legal systems, they parallelly extend sovereign power in the way that Google extends American sovereign power. In other words, a Monroe Doctrine of the cloud is in itself contradictory. The future competition will be based on the speed and robustness of computational power and its infrastructure, as well as strategies to block others from having access to advanced technologies and from entering into one’s digital territories. Therefore we will see more and more regulations imposed within both domestic and international frameworks.

However, the discourse of digital sovereignty doesn’t take us beyond that of the nation-state, as it primarily indicates new forms of governmentality and information warfare. The global pandemic that began in 2020 and the shift of geopolitical center toward the Asia Pacific have triggered a global immunological defense. States of emergency were declared in most countries and forced the reorganization of logistics inside and outside the individual countries as well as the surveillance society through data collection, such as reporting on infection and vaccination. During the pandemic, the imposition of border control reversed the spatial consciousness of globalization—the possibility of flying from Asia to Europe for a meeting in the morning and the next day from Europe to North America for a conference. Such a consciousness of borders was also reflected in the discourse of digital sovereignty. Digital sovereignty shrinks to a virtual border sustained by firewalls and ideologies. It risks becoming reactionary and banal; it pretends to find new planetary configurations by subordinating to “real politics” in the name of national security. It falls back to a state-authorized digital extractivism, which now gains more value after the

recent success of large language models. Schmitt's idea of the *Großraum* as a new spatial order was intended to overcome individual sovereign states' vulnerability and create a multipolar international order. Is it conceivable to envision a *Großraum* in the context of the digital realm? The problem is, Schmitt's *Großraum* appears to have only extended the political form of the state, even though his quest for pluralist politics remains a central question to twenty-first-century politics. Given the intimate relationship between sovereignty and technology, one is tempted to ponder whether a nuanced concept of technology could provide new insights into the future of political thought—a task we aim to explore in the remaining chapters.

Digital technology was meant to be the means of deterritorialization. This new spatial revolution did not give us a new order but rather returned us to an intuitive immunology often referred to as the Second Cold War. The discourse on digital sovereignty reinforces the surveillance society and politics of data harvesting. That is to say, the state wants to have a monopoly over the data of its people and use it effectively against them and the intervention of foreign powers. It is also in this sense that the media has been talking about a digital Leviathan, which is composed of the data of its people. This remains one of the most superficial images read in newspapers almost daily. If we return to our discussion on the Leviathan in chapter 4, we might see that a Leviathan is not only that which maintains the automation of its algorithm as part of the state administration but also that which is capable of suspending the megamachine, interrupting the recursive computational process and starting a program anew. Maybe we can conclude here with a Derridian question: Could this power—as power of *epoch* opening—give us a true pluralism in the age of the planetary?¹⁰⁸

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An Organology of Wars

Each new machine being for man a new organ—an artificial organ which merely prolongs the natural organs—his body became suddenly and prodigiously increased in size, without his soul being able at the same time to dilate to the dimensions of his new body. From this disproportion there issued the problems, moral, social, international, which most of the nations endeavoured to solve by filling up the soulless void in the body politic by creating more liberty, more fraternity, more justice than the world had ever seen.

—Henri Bergson, *The Meaning of the War: Life and Matter in Conflict*

It may have come to pass, now and then in world history, that entire civilizations were eradicated. European intellectual history does not know many such cases. The spirit of western rationalism has until now, even in dire cases of political terror, awakened mental and intellectual forces that did not come to the surface; at least initially it did not wish to do so.

—Carl Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*

In chapter 4, we began with Bergson's criticism of Germany's involvement in the First World War, understood as a consequence of the triumph of mechanism or mechanization. We contrasted Bergson's criticism of the mechanical state at the turn of the twentieth century (1914) and Hegel's aspiration for the organic state at the turn of the nineteenth century (1820). Instead of realizing an organic state, Bergson claims that Prussia had turned Germany into a "scientific barbarity" or a "systematic barbarity."¹ As of yet, no study has connected Schmitt and Bergson, owing to the fact that their fields of competence appear to be rather diverse, with one being a legal theorist and the other a philosopher of life—though it is worth noting that there is a 1913 version of Bergson's *Creative Evolution* in Schmitt's library.² However, as we tried to show in chapter 4, in Schmitt's thought,

there is a political vitalism that resists both mechanism and organicism as models of state organization. This vitalism is found in the discourse of the sovereign as that which decides on exceptions as well as in his later proposal of the *Großraum*, which intends to resist the homogenization inherent to universalism. In this chapter, we would like to move away from the usual interpretation of Bergson's vitalism to propose what we might call *political organology*, offering this as an alternative way to understand the relation between the state and technology that is likewise in contrast to Hegel's political organicism and Schmitt's concept of political vitalism. This exposition on Bergson's organological critique of war aims to introduce a nuanced concept of technology, exemplified in what I call techno-diversity. It continues our endeavor to call the philosophical foundations of the state into question and our attempt to elaborate on the relevance of political epistemology. Hence, our focus is less on the use of drones, artificial intelligence, and nuclear and biochemical weapons in warfare, though these remain crucial considerations amidst escalating conflicts. Indeed, as we will try to demonstrate in more detail, we can identify two critiques in Bergson's address "The Meaning of the War": one is an organicist or vitalist critique against mechanism, which is consistent with his writings, namely, that mechanism failed to explain life because it wants to explain life without life; the other is an organological critique, which states that machines are precisely artificial organs and that wars arise from the disjunction or malaise produced by these organs. This organological critique of war and the state is missing in any existing research on Bergson. The term *general organology* was credited to Bergson's *Creative Evolution* by the epistemologist Georges Canguilhem in an article titled "Machine and Organism (1947)."³ *Organology* is originally a term used in music and defines the study of musical organs; in this context, it means the study of the relation between human and technology.

The organological line of thought in French epistemology and philosophy more broadly could be traced from Bergson's 1907 *Creative Evolution* via Canguilhem and Simondon to, more recently, the thought of Bernard Stiegler. The late Stiegler proposed to understand the formation of the state as an exosomatic process, which complexifies over time, and that the state could be considered as an ex-organism. Indeed, what might be the theoretical advantage of conceptualizing the state in terms of an ex-organism and not an organism? We might first cast doubt on its theoretical perti-

nence if, as a theory for understanding the state, it does not help us to build alternative forms of knowledge and, as such, open new paths of intervention. For Stiegler, understanding human activities as exosomatic activities, as already discussed in chapter 3 regarding the bioeconomy of Lotka and Georgescu-Roegen, allows him to mobilize the concept of entropy as a critical tool to analyze the Anthropocene as an Entropocene. From Stiegler's perspective, politics should mean a negentropic war against entropic capitalism. However, Stiegler said few words about the nation-state, maintaining a more or less Hegelian position that neoliberalism desires to liquidate the state, so the state's task is to defend order and public institutions against this form of destruction; he is also confrontational to anarchism, particularly in the French context, where he considers anarchists to be manipulated by the mass media. This, nevertheless, leaves us the space to enquire into the organology of the state. To attain a certain clarity of inquiry, we will have to go back to Bergson's organological critique of war.

§26. The Disproportion of Organs and the Hubris of Wars

Bergson considered that the First World War resulted from the problem inherent to the development of mechanical science. This might, on first appearance, seem like a strange argument for many contemporary readers since, according to well-known historical explanations, if the cause of the First World War was at once economic and political, how then could mechanical science, which was a part of industrialism, be the true source of war? Bergson observed that in the nineteenth century, there was an organological expansion that gave "a wholly unforeseen extension to the mechanical arts and had equipped man in less than fifty years with more tools than he had made during the past thousands of years he had lived on the earth."⁴ Put into the terminology of Mumford, this development replaced the human parts in the megamachine with mechanical art and consequently transformed the mentality of the megamachine. This abrupt expansion of the megamachine is, for Bergson, the source of war. The mechanization of the nineteenth century caused an unexpected effect on humanity: "his body became suddenly and prodigiously increased in size, without his soul being able at the same time to dilate to the dimensions of his new body." In *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, published in 1932, Bergson repeated his analysis:

Now, in this body, distended out of all proportion, the soul remains what it was, too small to fill it, too weak to guide it. Hence the gap between the two. Hence the tremendous social, political and international problems which are just so many definitions of this gap, and which provoke so many chaotic and ineffectual efforts to fill it. What we need are new reserves of potential energy—moral energy this time.⁵

Bergson considers tools and instruments to be artificial organs, arguing that in the nineteenth century, mechanical artifices progressed at such a rate to cause a disruption between inorganic and organic organs. Technological acceleration occurred not only in industry but was also felt everywhere in society. It also presented a new opportunity for politics, just as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti claimed in “The Futurist Manifesto” (1909), published five years prior to Bergson’s speech: “Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the mysterious doors of the Impossible?”⁶ Human society was hence disrupted by a form of negative organology: through the expansion in exosomatic organs, a new hubris is produced, which then expressed itself as moral, social, and international problems. Such a conflict of organs could not be pacified; instead, it produced violence and destruction. This hubris is considered the origin of war in Bergson’s analysis; it demands moral energy as its counterpart, which can transform it or give it a new direction. While the world was trying to spiritualize machines, an “inferior force,” by which Bergson means mechanical thinking, was taking a rather opposite direction. This “inferior force,” as we mentioned earlier, fails to explain life, and therefore, when it comes to dominate the tendency of society, it reverses the relation between life and technology: technology is no longer in service of life, but rather it destroys life from within. Bergson expressed his anger in a series of questions in his 1914 speech:

What kind of a world would it be if this mechanism should seize the human race entirely, and if the peoples, instead of raising themselves to a richer and more harmonious diversity, as *persons* may do, were to fall into the uniformity of *things*? What kind of a society would that be which should mechanically obey a word of command mechanically transmitted; which should rule its science and its conscience in accordance therewith; and which should

lose, along with the sense of justice, the power to discern between truth and falsehood? What would mankind be when brute force should hold the place of moral force? What new barbarism, this time final, would arise from these conditions to stifle feeling, ideas, and the whole civilization of which the old barbarism contained the germ? What would happen, in short, if the moral effort of humanity should turn in its tracks at the moment of attaining its goal, and if some diabolical contrivance should cause it to produce the mechanization of spirit instead of the spiritualization of matter?⁷

Bergson's criticism, spoken more than one hundred years ago, is still valid today, especially if we keep in mind that predictions and prophecies of an imminent Third World War have proliferated since the pandemic started. War as a possibility is that which stabilizes the relation between different lands, but war as an actual event doesn't possess this stabilizing effect, if not exactly its opposite; instead, it necessarily leads to total military mobilization and destruction. In the Hegelian sense, the spirit progresses in history, and such a progression takes a recursive form; the spirit externalizes in order to internalize, without which there is no progress. However, in Bergson's speech on war, he indicates that there has been a failure to respond to technological acceleration; that is, the spirit failed to internalize what it externalized. Such a failure is due to the spirit's lack of strength to spiritualize matter; it remains trapped in materiality from which it is no longer capable of leaping. We may say that war, in general, according to Bergson's analysis, is an organological problem that occurs when the spirit fails to render artificial external organs compatible. This failure shows that conceptualizing the state as either mechanism or organism is insufficient for understanding the state's organological nature. For Hegel and his students—for example, Ernst Kapp, whom we discussed in chapter 2—the organism stands as a counterforce of mechanism and, therefore, a possible exodus, as Kapp wrote when comparing the despotic state and the liberal state: "The more mechanically a state becomes governed, the more despotically it is governed; the more organically a state governs itself, the freer it is."⁸ However, these two images of the state, mechanism and organism, despotism and liberalism, actually share the same fate.

When mechanism is identified not only with technology but also with the mentality of a nation, that is to say, a nation looks at the world from the view of mechanical rationality, then this hubris may lead to a violence

that wants to render the whole world according to such principles. This could be applied to the German nation of the First World War, Japan (as well as Germany and Italy) of the Second World War, and, more recently, the Russian war in Ukraine. For the Kyoto School thinkers, modern science and technology (or more precisely “civilization of mechanism”) are symbols of the decadence of the West, which the East was forced to adopt, while the only way to overcome this decadence was to return to the absolute nothingness that is the core of the Eastern thought.⁹ For Russian right-wing thinkers such as Maxim Kalashnikov¹⁰ and Alexander Dugin, Western technology is the synonym of the anti-Christ, which represses the Russian truth; such a Russian truth will be revealed, once Western oppression is negated and annihilated. Dugin adopted Schmitt’s concept of the *Großraum* (a term also appropriated by Kyoto School thinkers to conceptualize the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere during the Second World War) seeing it as a countermovement against Western imperialism (here, not only American imperialism, though it stands as the most confrontational). A multipolar world that includes Eurasia is, indeed, an intuitive solution to the current geopolitical problem; however, we should also ask if this is not merely an ideology, an ideology that opposes positions such as the liberal and the authoritarian as seen from the Western perspective or the imperialist and the repressed as seen from the non-Western perspective. For we know ideologies reduce the complexity of the actual world to simplified categories through constructed contexts, settings, and antagonistic emotions, but they are not yet reason grounded in concrete historical conditions, simultaneously aspiring to elevate above them. In this sense, Schmitt’s *Großraum* remains an anti-imperialist ideology; what maintains its diversity and heterogeneity is beyond the question of ideology, something that Schmitt failed to address.

Technology has pervaded everyday social and political life, and organological mutation intensifies when technology accelerates exponentially, as it has in the past hundred years. The failure to spiritualize the expansion of the new organs leads to hubris, which expresses itself as conflict and war. Indeed, we can say that this organological problem has appeared in every *epoch*—in a phenomenological sense, it suspends the previous epoch. This process of suspension becomes more and more intensified when industrialization enters new phases, particularly the disruptive phase that we are currently witnessing. Bergson concludes, therefore, “The last war, together with those future ones which we can dimly foresee, if we are indeed

doomed to have more wars, is bound up with the industrial character of our civilization.”¹¹ War is bound up with the industrial character, not only because of the competition for resources and goods but also because of something almost tragically produced as internal to civilization’s technological progress.

§27. From a Cybernetics of Freedom to an Organology of Differences

If the problem were simply about whether technology was mechanistic or organismic, then it would be possible to conclude that, by the twenty-first century and after cybernetics, Bergson’s critique of machines is no longer valid since, as cybernetics claims, and as we discussed in chapter 3 and detailed in *Recursivity and Contingency*, the cybernetic machine can no longer be subsumed under the eighteenth-century category of mechanism, being in the constant process of becoming organic. As such, cybernetic models have their ground more in biology than physics because they are recursive machines, namely, nonlinear machines, instead of mechanical and linear machines. In chapter 3, we also examined how the Hegelian reflective logic could be extended into different domains and converge into a planetary reflection. Should not this program be the best projection of the future of human beings?

If Hegel’s imagination of the organic unity of the state could be gradually assimilated by a cybernetic operation, then we might be able to claim that, more than ever before in history, we are on the verge of realizing such an ideal. However, in chapters 1 and 2, we also saw how *Geist*, as a planetary thinking, encountered its own limit. We are currently seeing that the world powers in the East and the West are incisively engaging with each other in economic competition and military expansion; the song of war has already been heard. At the same time, as we have already seen in chapter 3, cybernetics goes beyond cultural differences and attempts to grasp humanity and the earth as a whole. We see that cybernetics presents us with two paths. The first is the perfection of the nation-state via a global network of artificial intelligence systems, which could take over state administration and planning—a replacement of the Hegelian middle (thinking) class and public servants with robotics and artificial intelligence; the second path is the construction of a digital earth that transcends the nation-state, one that perhaps provides us with a new humanity, similar to how Beer interpreted Teilhard de Chardin. These two paths are apparently

in conflict with each other, and retrospectively, we can see that the second path is obscured and rendered almost unpractical by the first path—so far, the twenty-first century seems to be still a century of nationalism.

Cybernetics today is falsely associated with surveillance capitalism or societies of control; the association of the cybernetic movement with military or state-related think tanks may contribute to this image. Nevertheless, the importance of cybernetics shouldn't be obscured by this kind of journalism. The pandemic has already demonstrated the centrality of digital technology in population control. A disciplinary society in the sense of Michel Foucault does not fade into the background but rises to the fore during such occasions. The cybernetic system that we are witnessing today, be that social credit system or state administration, is a closed system in the sense that it aims to perfect the predictability of the system as anticipated by Laplace's demon. Or, in other words, in societies of control, all systems are becoming—or at least want to be—comparable to Laplace's demon, possessing the ability to determine every future event. These demons have become ubiquitous; as it is frequently put, "Algorithms know you better than you know yourself." Preemptive technologies are applied at the personal level for the purpose of maintaining consumerism. At the political level, they imply preemptive wars, as has become particularly true post 9/11: antiterrorism, anti-potential threats such as the war in Iraq and recently in Ukraine.

Humans desire the ability to predict, yet acquiring this ability has proven challenging. Fortune tellers in different cultures have used different methods to predict an individual's future, be that through divination or cartomancy. Ancient divination is also based on patterns or statistics—for example, in palm reading or horoscopes. If we consider all of these forms of divination to be an intuitive understanding of statistics, then it is clear that today's recursive algorithms integrated with ubiquitous sensors ranging from smartphones to all detective devices on every corner of the street are capable of not only better predictions but also recommendations related to an individual's next move. This is perhaps not the only possible destiny for cybernetics; indeed, it is highly problematic to impose such a moral verdict on it simply because of a particular use of it in society. In an article titled "Steps to a Cybernetics of Autonomy," Francisco Varela distinguished two paths for cybernetics; one is that of John von Neumann, the other Wiener's:

Norbert Wiener by emphasizing the quality of independence, autonomy, creativity, the quality of living beings to create their meaning, to create their world. John von Neumann by emphasizing the quality of specifying decision rules, procedures for exact computation, control. During those early days, it was unclear what was going to be the dominant trend of those two sides of the issue—whether control, autonomy or both. It seems to me that it is quite clear—looking back from the 1980ies—that von Neumann actually prevailed.¹²

Francisco Varela suggests further developing Wiener's cybernetic approach, which the von Neumann model has thus far only undermined. However, Varela's solution does not seem to address the question of freedom. He appears to have made the error I call the *dualism of critique*. That is to say, Varela contrasts the lineage of Descartes, Von Neumann, and Turing with that of the autonomous system. The autonomous system is capable of self-determination (the so-called *eigen*-behavior), and meanings emerge in the operation (the so-called operational closure, which is maintained by internal regularities). I call it a dualism of critique because, in pretending to go beyond dualism, it falls prey to a dualism that is itself the "operational closure" of the critique. Therefore, the opposition between mechanism, which he associated with Descartes, von Neumann, and Turing (this association is controversial in the eyes of historians of science, as contested in *Recursivity and Contingency*) and organism, which he describes as an autonomous system, in fact continues the legacy of modern philosophy. The path Varela wants to explore only confirms the becoming organic of the cybernetic systems described in *Recursivity and Contingency*. When it becomes "autonomous," it only means that the system is subsequently more powerful in handling contingency and modelling normativity. In *Recursivity and Contingency*, I tried to show how the formation of the *organizing inorganic* (technological systems such as platforms, in contrast to *organized inorganic*, such as tools and instruments) imposes a problem that we are forced to answer: the question of human freedom in the technological epoch. If Kant's third antinomy was based on an opposition between the laws of nature and freedom (which we discussed in chapter 1 together with Hegel's criticism of it), then today, this antinomy has returned, only now with new clothing, as the opposition between the autonomy of technological systems

and freedom—this was the central theme of *Recursivity and Contingency*. Given the organic becoming of technological systems that possess a higher degree of flexibility and predictability, freedom becomes a question of calculating probabilities.

If Hegel could claim that the political state was a milestone of human reason since it is only in the political state that freedom could be realized, it is because, in Hegel's time, the organic constitutes an ideal yet to be achieved. The state remained a cybernetic *idea* that found its concrete existence in human flesh. Cybernetic machines in the twentieth century have concretized into a digital form that now have the full potential to replace almost all tedious administrative tasks. We may even see within a given time the obsolescence of politicians, as Günther Anders said about the human being. In the end, the engineers will be the guardians of the state. Later, no guardians will be required because machines will be capable of moral judgments and self-maintenance. This image may still sound futuristic if not fictional, but it is nonetheless already foreseeable in the current technological tendency. Predicting the future has become a common task in all disciplines: literature, art, natural science, technology studies, and so on. This development is not without its price to pay; as Bergson pointed out, one has to smoothen its organological rupture. The political state in the age of autonomous technological systems has to transform itself in a seemingly contradictory way. First, it is forced to turn itself into a political vital force by renewing a decisionism in the Schmittian sense, as has been seen in the normalization of states of exceptions occurring in both the so-called democratic and authoritarian states. The sovereign exhibits itself as the authority of exception, overriding all kinds of law, including programming codes. Second, it is forced to make the state administration fully compatible with technological systems, in other words, to integrate them into the executive and judiciary operations to increase efficiency and reduce cost.

However, once the technological systems attain a certain degree of autonomy, they no longer follow the subjective will of the political leaders since they are driven by both the tendency to rationalization (what makes the evolution of technical objects possible) and the logic of accumulation (the socioeconomical motivation of technological innovations). The tendency of rationalization is difficult to alter because it requires specialist knowledge, which bureaucrats typically lack. Furthermore, their attempts to alter the tendency frequently result in absurd scenarios. For

example, censorship based on keywords often ends up censoring the opinions of politicians themselves. This process of technological deterritorialization weakens the power of the state because it means there are more processes of negotiation, and negotiation often leads to a compromise of power. Therefore, we might say that it is not globalization itself that undermines the nation-states, as theorists such as Antonio Negri believe,¹³ but rather the technological system and its power of rationalization forces the state to interrupt the economic order to maintain its vitality and retain its power, thus the twilight of globalization that we see today is the consequence of the transformation of the megamachine.

It is unclear how the nation-state can maintain its vitality without going to war and succumbing to self-destruction, just as Russia has been doing since February 2022 with its “special military operation” in Ukraine and more recently the war between Israel and Hamas. However, the Russia–Ukraine war is merely one example of how the current paradigm of technical rationalization is challenging a world order founded on nation-states. This process of rationalization is characterized first by the complexification and materialization of causal relations in digital or maybe later in quantic representations, and second by the increasing capacity of determination of correlations and normalizations. As long as humanity persists, another even more aggressive paradigm will emerge, and technological rationalization will proceed in such a way that the world spirit will be able to develop toward the most actual and rational configuration of the world. However, when one no longer believes in the world spirit¹⁴ and dismisses it as a false fiction used to justify the West’s colonization of the world, as Marx does by reducing the world spirit to the world market, the world spirit becomes nothing more than a joke of Hegel’s fantasy in Jena. It might take a long time to recognize that the world spirit does not, in fact, belong to the West or the East; it lived neither in Jena nor in Moscow, for the spirit belongs to the world and the world ought to become spiritual. Hegel’s world spirit, a synonym for human collective intelligence or reason, could still be *expanded* to respond to the current planetary condition.

Maybe it is worth returning to Wiener’s cybernetics of autonomy, a path Varela proposed to deepen. It is perhaps pertinent to add to Varela that this autonomy is not innocent for Wiener. In a 1960 article titled “Some Moral and Technical Consequences of Automation,” Wiener rejected the stereotype that machines cannot have any originality; instead, he sees, and we can now confirm some sixty years after his observation, that machines

are more than ever able to assimilate the behavior of living beings. And it was precisely because of this that Wiener pointed out the following problem: "One of the chief causes of the danger of disastrous consequences in the use of the learning machine is that man and machine operate on two distinct time scales so that the machine is much faster than man and the two do not gear together without serious difficulties."¹⁵

We could say that Wiener's warning is twofold. First, artificial organs override organic organs, and the latter is rendered obsolete and helpless. However, it is not limited to the conflict between bodily organs and prostheses but also institutions that largely rely on human factors and technological systems. Second, human planners, including scientists and political leaders, must think on a much longer time scale—for example, fifty years ahead of their time to anticipate the worst scenarios that might arise due to the speed of automation. However, who in the world besides dictators, with a brain composed of organic cells, can make such a prediction, not to mention that a fifty-year plan might only apply to machines of the early 1960s (when Wiener expressed his warning) and no longer for our time? The only way to predict would be to build models continuously collecting large amounts of data and constantly updating their predictions. But such models are often closed, meaning that they can only analyze the future development of a narrow domain by excluding most of the external factors that remain unknown, and that could contingently become significant factors. In other words, data extractionism, which pretends to show us probabilities, leads to an exhaustion of possibilities by excluding the improbable.

If we put aside this dispute between mechanism and vitalism, Bergson's organological critique becomes more significant than ever. This call for an organological critique could also be identified in the late Wiener, though he did not go any further than highlighting the significance of prosthesis. Wiener proposed to go beyond the typical approach of rendering "unto man the things which are man's and unto the computer the things which are the computer's": "What we now need is an independent study of systems involving both human and mechanical elements. This system should not be prejudiced either by a mechanical or antimechanical bias. I think that such a study is already under way and that it will promise a much better comprehension of automatization."¹⁶ Wiener is probably right in insisting on the study of technological systems, and for this reason, Simondon also considers cybernetics an "organology."¹⁷ Such studies should abandon

the mechanism and organism opposition from the outset to understand the profound impact of the technological systems that no longer seem to maintain symmetry between humans and machines. This is the task of what became known as general organology, which may already be found in Bergson and continues via Canguilhem and Simondon to Stiegler. Today, following Wiener's warning, there are growing disparities between artificial organs and the soul for two key reasons. First, on the individual level, the transhumanist ideology continues to promote human enhancement as a future, namely, the desire to directly modify the organs via either DNA technologies or nanotechnologies in order to augment senses and bodies. Thus, the body becomes a new field of competition, achieved not through training but through consumerism. When human enhancement is legalized, we will enter a process of artificial selection subsumed to consumerism, inevitably creating new political classes distinguished by enhanced and not-yet-enhanced. Second, the technological systems, which I have termed *organizing organics*, such as Google, Facebook, Tencent, or Alibaba, far exceed the capacity of human faculties. They impose challenges to the finitude of the individual faculties and to the power structure of institutions, including the political state. This is not only because they transgress territorial limits and inevitably also transgress legal frameworks but also because they produce an extraordinary "extra-state" power, which we will discuss more in chapter 7.

§28. The Conflict of Tendencies and the Recurrence of Mysticism

How shall we take up Wiener's task, namely, to understand technological systems but also to intervene in their development and take care of the hubris they produce? Before we address the question of the state, we might want to go back to Bergson's organological critique. Because if our framing of the above problem as an organological one is valid, then it might be possible to identify some potential answers in Bergson's accounts. Toward the end of *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, in a section titled "The True Vocation of Machines," Bergson provided some thoughts on how to place machines into their appropriate place. If Bergson calls this their true vocation, it is because machines have thus far been used incorrectly, producing a mechanization of spirit instead of a spiritualization of matter. For Bergson, the mechanization of spirit does not mean turning the human being into a mechanized being, but rather it promotes

a life based on material comfort, amenities, and luxuries. Industrialization, since the nineteenth century, has been largely about the mobilization of machines and assigning them an important role in the production and distribution process. Industrialization depends on a generalized mechanization process, one that enables mass production and can also lead to overproduction, the immanent crisis of capitalism. Overproduction is resolved by the thermodynamic ideology, according to which the market is capable of self-regulation. The WTO, IMF, and World Bank are the trinity of power that pushes forward deregulations and consolidates the rules of the thermodynamic ideology. Bergson did not have the word *consumerism* in his time, so he often uses phrases such as “taste for luxuries” or “mere comfort” to describe this consequence of industrialization and the emergence of consumerism. The mechanization of the spirit resulted in a conclusion involving “exaggerated comfort and luxury for the few, rather than liberation for all.”¹⁸ This tendency presents a positive feedback loop, similar to Georgescu-Roegen’s “circumdrome” of the electric razor, discussed in chapter 3. David Lapoujade formulates it in the following way:

This is because human experience is a prisoner of circles, of all the innumerable circles that the intelligence imposes on thought and that make the human species turn around on itself. Man is literally surrounded by his intelligence. If there is something that Bergson didn’t stop combatting, it is these circles, precisely because they make it impossible for us to carry out the necessary leaps to change the level of reality.¹⁹

To resolve the problem of mechanization is not to abandon machines and go back to simple tools, as Bergson himself implied.²⁰ Instead, and as a counterproposal, he suggests returning to a simple life *with the help of science*. Bergson understands mechanization as a “natural gift” (*don naturel*) that the human possesses.²¹ And indeed, the emergence of mechanical science belongs to the tendency of the intellect.²² Mechanization should be situated as a historical moment where artificial organs complexified and reached an organization that allowed them to become autonomous, or what Simondon calls “technical individuals.” For Simondon, technical individuals are those technical objects that possess an associated milieu. The associated milieu allows the machines to stabilize themselves and resist ex-

ternal disturbances; or in more cybernetic language, it is the negative feedback loop between the machine and its environment.²³ The machine is not only able to resist the disturbance of the environment by distinguishing the validity of the inputs, such as between a meaningful input and noise, but also to integrate the environment as part of its operation. For example, the current of the river is used to set the Guimbal turbine into movement, but if the current is too fast and the turbine produces too much heat due to the joule effect, then the river can act as a cooling agent to carry away the heat and prevent the turbine from self-destruction, which is often the case for turbines that use air cooling. It is precisely with the emergence of an associated milieu that machines possess the capacity of becoming organic or “holistic.”²⁴ Before the emergence of the industrial technical individual such as automatic machines, the craftsmen were at the center of the tools and created the tools’ associated milieu by using their own bodies—in other words, the craftsmen were themselves technical individuals; since industrialization, with the development of technical individuals in factories, human beings have lost their status, being expelled from the center of production.

The twentieth century was the epoch of the technical ensemble, which refers to the grouping of technical individuals that form a working environment, such as the installation of machines in laboratories and factories. Simondon suggests finding a new role for the human being in this ensemble: like a conductor who resonates with musicians, the human being has to become the coordinator of machines through the feedback loop provided by the new theory of cybernetics.²⁵ The formulation of a lineage from the technical element, technical individuals, and finally, technical ensemble is illuminating because it outlines not only a history of technological concretization but also a subtle relation between society and technology that Marxism failed to understand. At the same time, it also invites us to think the fate of this lineage in the twenty-first century, when technical ensembles such as laboratories and factories cease to be the major form of technological organization—we can already see quite clearly that in developed countries most of the factories are today fully automatized, hence, what we are experiencing are technological systems such as platforms, not individual machines. That is to say, the orchestra no longer exists, and the conductor has no difficulty finding virtual musicians that resonate perfectly with him or her. Contrary to Simondon’s proposal

of identifying a new role for human beings, Bergson suggests giving machines a new vocation. Bergson's suggestion could even seem paradoxical: go beyond mechanization through machines.²⁶

What does it mean to go beyond mechanization through machines? This tautological and, to some extent, tragist gesture is not without significance,²⁷ and here lies one of the most important messages of Bergson's *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. Mechanization is a tendency that opposes another tendency, as static religion does to dynamic religion, intelligence to instinct. The concept of tendency is fundamental to Bergson's analysis of the evolution of society. We may say that there is a fundamental tendency that is the impetus of life, the *élan vital*. When encountering an obstacle (in the form of material and external conditions), this original tendency bifurcates into two opposed tendencies, which Bergson calls the *law of dichotomy*.²⁸ During the concurrence of the two tendencies, one has the upper hand and undermines the other. The dominant tendency will manifest and grow until it reaches a tipping point (or frenzy), beyond which a civilizational tragedy will occur. This is known as the *law of the twofold frenzy*.²⁹ The dynamic of the two tendencies could be visualized as the movement of a pendulum: once it swings to one extreme, it will then fall and swing to another. The law of dichotomy does not depend on the internal status of the system, but rather it is a response to the external exigence.³⁰ In this sense, we can also understand why Bergson rejected teleology in history, and, indeed, for him, "Finality is external, or it is nothing at all."³¹ There is no predefined plot for evolution nor for history; rather, history is another recursive process moving from a closed society to an open society and back again, or from one tendency to its opposite, which, in turn, then swings to another opposed tendency. Bergson describes it in the following terms:

Man loves the dramatic; he is strongly inclined to pick out from a whole more or less extended period of history those characteristics which make of it a struggle between two parties, two societies or two principles, each of them in turn coming off victorious. But the struggle is here only the superficial aspect of an advance. The truth is that a tendency on which two different views are possible can only put forth its maximum, in quantity or quality, if it materializes these two possibilities into moving realities, each one of which

leaps forward and monopolizes the available space, while the other is on the watch unceasingly for its own turn to come.³²

Suppose mechanization is one of these two tendencies coming out of the impetus of life, then spiritualization is another which has been waiting for its time to come and take over as the dominating tendency. The struggle between tendency and its countertendency might define what Bergson means by life in contradistinction to Darwinism.³³ What is particular in this “struggle” is not one cancelling the other, but rather one taking the lead by integrating and preserving the other.³⁴ These two competing tendencies have to be materialized; in other words, even the tendency of spiritualization is not simply something that happens in the mind alone; it has to present itself in material form and possesses its agency. For Bergson, this process of spiritualization should be understood as a type of mysticism. What Bergson means by mysticism is not entirely consistent with the conventional concept of the mystical as that which describes contact with a transmundane superior power. Instead, the mystical life means, first and foremost, the capacity to see the limit of a civilization dominated by one tendency and the capacity to use intuition to envelop it or to resituate it into a larger reality, i.e., the impetus of life. This form of mystic experience is present in everyday life; for example, when confronting a fatal accident or disease, the everyday routine is suspended, and a new path is opened. A closed society, when it comes to its end, has exhausted the impetus that motivated the dominant tendency of that society—for example, mechanization. In view of this impasse, certain privileged individuals who are conscious of this problem might be able to redirect the impetus toward another tendency: “If the individual is fully conscious of this, if the fringe of intuition surrounding his intelligence is capable of expanding sufficiently to envelop its object, that is the mystic life.”³⁵

Here, Bergson’s method comes into full light. The mystical life is a countertendency, and the possibility of such a countertendency belongs to the capacity of certain individuals who are capable of seeing the limit of the current tendency, i.e., mechanism in the case of Bergson. Being aware of this limit, and through intuition, the tendency is countered by another tendency so as to return it to the impetus of life (this is very different from introducing more regulations). As Gilles Deleuze claims, intuition, here, is an exact philosophical method.³⁶ Intuition does not mean simply grasping

the silhouette of things; on the contrary, it is that which allows one to reach the thing in itself. In contrast to deduction and induction, which give rise to concepts and ideas, intuition allows the perception of a genetic process. This is also Simondon's debt, or maybe more accurately, a homage to Bergson in Part III of *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, where philosophical intuition is granted a higher status than induction and deduction, namely, the operation of idea and concept. Intuition reveals a larger reality, resituating the dominating tendency as merely one part of reality, balanced by other parts. A closer reading of Simondon reveals that the term *tendency* often appears in *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* and roughly twenty-one times in Part III of the book, the section where Simondon outlines a genesis of technicity. Here, the genesis of technicity starts with two tendencies, one that departs from the magic unity, namely, the tendency toward religion, and a countertendency toward technics, each producing two other tendencies, one toward theory and the other toward practice. However, we have to note some fundamental differences. In contrast to Bergson's theory of tendency, bifurcation in Simondon's theory does not take place due to the obstacle of an external and material condition, but rather it occurs when the system itself attains saturation, namely, the moment when the unity and identity of the system is exceeded, and it is forced to bifurcate so as to resolve internal tensions or incompatibility. In Simondon, the two tendencies, religion and technics, search for a unification between ground and figure analogical to that of the magic unity. In Bergson, the tendencies do not search for unity. Instead, the opposed tendencies function like a pendulum that swings between two extremes. Bergson defines opposition as the antithesis of two tendencies, such as open and closed societies, which are not absolute opposites but two ends of a pendulum's movement. As a result, the dualism between the mystical and the technological dissolves, and we perceive the need for something new:

So let us not merely say, as we did above, that the mystical summons up the mechanical. We must add that the body, now larger, calls for a bigger soul, and that mechanism should mean mysticism. The origins of the process of mechanization body, proportion, are indeed more mystical than we might imagine. Machinery will find its true vocation again, it will *render services in proportion to its power*, only if mankind, which it has bowed still lower to

the earth, can succeed, *through it*, in standing erect and looking heavenwards.³⁷

This is not to say that mechanism is something mysterious, but rather is mechanism, first of all, the materialization of one of the tendencies of the *élan vital*. In other words, mechanism has its origin not in an alien power, not in any errant thinking, but in the impetus of life. Second, mechanization, insofar it is a natural gift, as well as the irrefutable organs, have to be allocated with the right vocation so that they can return humanity to the openness of the *élan vital* instead of ceaselessly producing hubris. It remains to be asked how to understand such a notion of tendency in today's context, almost one hundred years after Bergson's organological critique of wars.

§29. The Dynamics of the Technical Tendency and Technical Fact

Today, we should consider what the conditions might be to shift away from such a negative organology. The call for deceleration resonates among sociologists, scientists, and technologists. There is, of course, the warning from Stephen Hawking, who claimed, "The development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. . . . It could take off on its own and re-design itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete and would be superseded,"³⁸ as well as, though ironically, from Elon Musk, who calls for an AI slowdown. In April 2023, Elon Musk, alongside more than a thousand entrepreneurs and AI researchers, called for a six-month suspension of giant AI experiments in order to formulate its dangers and ethical uses. It is not that AI will rebel against humans, as seen in popular science-fiction films, but rather, as we have been attempting to demonstrate, it is more a question of how a negative organology might arise from there.

Is mysticism a way out of this modernity? One can find traces in Bergson's 1932 book of the call for a mystic genius or an "Enlightenment ideal of humanity."³⁹ However, this would miss the significance of why Bergson ends the book with a call for the true vocation of machines, not humanity. When Bergson says that "mechanism should mean mysticism," he no longer opposes mechanism to mysticism. Instead, he sees mechanism and mysticism as two tendencies of his epoch and that mysticism has to make mechanism its very possibility. As we saw earlier, a mystic life does

not mean a religious life, a life led by dogma. Like all religions, a mystic life contains the primordial act of believing.⁴⁰ A mystic life is one in which the *nonrational* (to be distinguished from the irrational) is *rationalized* on the horizon of belief and in the consistency of living, like Heidegger's last God.⁴¹ A mystic life starts when one sees the limit of the dominating tendency, just as Bergson saw the limit of the constant materialization of spirit, that which turns humanity into barbarians. In Bergson's writing, the universality of mechanism is counteracted by the particularity of mystic life. There is no single mystic life, since recognizing the limit is one thing and responding to it is another. We are not suggesting waiting for the intervention of a mystical force from without; instead, we are following Bergson's insistence on overcoming mechanism through machines. Cybernetic machines are much more powerful than mechanical machines. They could provide more flexibility and possibilities to deal with the current crisis instead of being regarded as a permanent threat. Mysticism thus refers to a much larger and more powerful force capable of deploying mechanism for its own service. Instead of being bound to mechanism, it establishes a new space that encompasses it. If we generalize what has been said here, then mysticism stands symbolically for that which can envelop mechanism and bring it back to life. In this sense, mysticism comes to mean what Bergson calls *the attachment to life*. The attachment to life is a deviation from the homogeneity of mechanization and a movement toward the new vocation of machines.

To understand the implication of Bergson's analysis in relation to technological development, we will have to turn to André Leroi-Gourhan's reading of Bergson. Leroi-Gourhan, in *Milieu et Technique*, took up Bergson's concept of tendency and formulated what he calls the *technical tendency*,⁴² which is a tendency that is accepted and materially realized in all environments; the laws of nature are such a tendency. However, this does not mean that the laws of physics are just tendencies. Instead, it means that laws of nature are part of an evolutionary impetus in constant externalization. This tendency is illustrated by the fact that we never see a square or triangular wheel in any civilization, only round. However, the technical tendency alone cannot explain the diversity of artifacts. The knife that the Inuit use for dissecting a whale is very different from that for a caribou and is also different from those used in Japan. Leroi-Gourhan developed a different concept that he calls *technical facts*. These facts are contingently

produced as a result of the encounter between the technical tendency and its particular environment and can be understood as a kind of locality:

The tendency which, by its universal nature, is loaded with all the possibilities that can be expressed in general laws, traverses the internal milieu, bathes in the mental traditions of each human group; it acquires particular properties, just as a light ray acquires various properties by passing through different bodies, it encounters the external milieu which offers these acquired properties an irregular penetration, and at the point of contact between the internal milieu and the external milieu materializes this layer [*pellicule*] of objects which constitute the furniture of men.⁴³

The technical tendency and technical facts constitute a pair that determines the development of a technical milieu that varies between ethnic groups. Leroi-Gourhan offers a more schematic way of defining their difference, arguing that technical tendencies “can be materialized anytime and anywhere,” whereas technical facts “will only be born identical insofar as a certain identity of environment is offered to them.”⁴⁴ However, Leroi-Gourhan also suggests that technical facts are not only contingent products of the tendency’s encounter with the exterior milieu (such as natural resources, wind, mountains, water, and so on) but are also selected and altered by the internal milieu. For example, in almost every civilization, we find the use of swords; however, it is not only the material that varies between these swords, but also their forms, use, and aesthetics are different too: “But the simple observation of an animal or a technique demonstrates that the general trend does not contain all the characteristics: the sword, which achieves a harmonious whole in all its types, nevertheless offers extremely numerous forms, each conditioned by the material, others by the particular use of the weapon, local fencing customs, aesthetic traditions, etc.”⁴⁵

We might deduce through readings of Bergson and Leroi-Gourhan that the technical tendency and technical facts are, in fact, two distinct tendencies, whereas one universalizes, the other particularizes. I tried to argue in *The Question Concerning Technology in China* that technical facts are not only limited by their material environment but also by the cosmology of a locality. Cosmology, in this context, serves as a synonym for a reality that surpasses the confines of technology; instead, technology is encompassed

and balanced by other kinds of thinking. The concept of locality or place is one of the resources that allow us to think further about the question of diversification and pluralization. Locality is not in opposition to the planetary; on the contrary, the planetary has to be first of all contemplated from the perspective of locality. Otherwise, we might risk getting lost “among the stars.” However, it is not limited to what Leroi-Gourhan calls the *external milieu* (namely, the natural environment) but also the *internal milieu*, which is defined by customs and traditions. Returning to a locality means two things: first, it means giving technology an appropriate place (such as a new vocation), since modern technology recognizes space but not place, insofar as space for technology means dimensions and their numerical values; to give technology a place means resituating it in a broader reality instead of being determined by it. Second, it means to rediscover and reinvent a technodiversity that is *compatible* with the place, which *respects* the locality. However, this compatibility is never given at the beginning. I do not see this as a disagreement with Leroi-Gourhan, though it is clear that Leroi-Gourhan did not formulate it in terms of cosmology, but rather religion and aesthetics, as he writes:

The interior milieu traversed by this tendency has therefore left a general imprint on each object, which is briefly analyzed by saying that the handle of such a Lappish spoon is influenced by religious tradition, that the cavity of such a Japanese spoon is inspired by the former use of a bivalve shell tied to a handle: for each example one can thus find technical, religious and decorative explanations.⁴⁶

Leroi-Gourhan, being largely influenced by Jean Przyluski's *L'Évolution humaine* (1926), sees technical facts as being dominated by both the technical tendency and the external milieu.⁴⁷ Therefore, technical facts should not be excluded from being understood as a tendency, an evolutionary force, but instead as the tendency central to diversification. Furthermore, if we adhere to Bergson's definition of tendency, that is, a tendency is always accompanied by a countertendency, then technical facts fulfil this criterion as well, providing an understanding of technodiversity. This is also how I proposed the concept of cosmotechnics as a way to “reconcile” the difference between Lévi-Strauss and Leroi-Gourhan, the former having a prime interest in cosmology and the latter on technology.⁴⁸ I propose

comprehending the two tendencies, technical tendency and technical fact, by constructing an antinomy of technological universality:

Thesis: Technology is an anthropological universal, understood as an exteriorization of memory and the liberation of organs, as some anthropologists and philosophers of technology have formulated it;

Antithesis: Technology is not anthropologically universal; it is enabled and constrained by particular cosmologies, which go beyond mere functionality or utility. Therefore, there is no one single technology, but rather multiple cosmotechnics.

Because two tendencies coexist and interact, Leroi-Gourhan could talk about the permeability of the technical milieu, that is to say, how certain technologies may permeate an ethnic group while others do not and how they may take diverse forms in accordance with the internal milieu. The permeability of the technical milieu was largely destroyed by the process of modernization and globalization; already in the above-mentioned 1945 book, Leroi-Gourhan observed that it “delivers by trial and error an increasingly direct passage to the technical tendency.”⁴⁹ Since modernity, we have seen how the universalizing tendency overrides the particularizing tendency, just as Leroi-Gourhan himself lamented in the second volume of *Gesture and Speech* that a synchronization of rhythm will lead to a homogenization of temporality. Industrial and military technology is the universal force that breaks all technical milieus and unifies all localities under the banner of an economic program. As discussed in chapter 5 regarding Toynbee, in the nineteenth century, there was a marked increase in the importation of technologies to the Far East; without it, these “ethnic groups” would not be able to compete, thus being doomed to defeat and colonization.⁵⁰

Efficiency and speed override all other values inherent to the internal milieu. The introduction of the railway in the nineteenth century served as an earlier example of this tendency; on the one hand, it introduced the compression of time and space, which significantly influenced economic change; on the other hand, it created a homogeneity of products, aesthetics, and values. The universalizing tendency seems to have triumphed. The advancement in technical reproducibility in the twentieth century further created a culture of standardization. The question of indifference or

homogeneity constituted the main target of critique in the twentieth century,⁵¹ which we find most notably in thinkers of the Frankfurt School who criticized the standardization of commodities. Commodity in the twenty-first century is said to be no longer about standardization but rather about individuality and difference. In other words, we have moved from a technology of indifference (mechanistic) to a technology of difference (organismic), starkly contrasting with what Adorno and Horkheimer described. This increase in the variety of taste (and its social and symbolic meaning) does not alter the fundamental nature of capital and by no means signifies the emancipation of human beings from it. It simply means an increase in the choice of consumption, which gives the appearance of heterogeneity, but it is, in fact, just a multiplication based on homogeneity—the homogeneity of values and technologies.

However, we should approach this sociological observation with caution, as it is less straightforward than it might initially seem. In his celebrated “Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility,” Walter Benjamin argued that standardization opens a democratic and revolutionary possibility. The standardization of objects and the reproducibility of the artwork free it from what Benjamin called “the aura”—the absolute individuality of any work of art. The aura came into being when the technology of reproduction was very limited; for example, as we are told at the beginning of Benjamin’s essay, for the ancient Greeks, it was limited to founding and stamping.⁵² Therefore, aura negatively means the limit of the technology of reproduction and positively means that which cannot be reproduced, something that could be aligned with tradition and religious ritual—both of which were effectively mobilized by fascism. The liberation of the work of art from the aura, therefore, opens a new form of participation and produces a revolutionary consciousness. A similar view was held by Stiegler, who, instead of seeing the appearance of alphabetic writing in ancient Greece and the disappearance of dialects as a sign of homogeneity, rightly observes that without alphabetic writing, Greek literature would not exist—we would not be able to read Homer or Plato today. It is the Promethean spirit at work combatting the melancholia of man—melancholia in the sense that man’s fate as *Homo faber* consists of the constant displacement of his identity by technological inventions. In the work of Benjamin and Stiegler, we see that technology is a standardizing medium. But it is precisely because of its standardization that democ-

racy is made possible, functioning as the condition of access to the *sensus communis*. The seemingly contradictory evaluation of universalization/standardization will compel us to reflect on a deeper relationship between technodiversity and democracy.

§30. On the Organological Relation between Technology and Democracy

Historically speaking, democracy is about self-determination. There is no democracy without self-determination; otherwise, it would be autocracy or aristocracy. Self-determination means that a community (and here also a locality) can develop protocols and tools that facilitate the community's communication and operation, enabling each community member to develop his or her potential as a citizen. Democracy was said to be invented in Greece, and it assumes that reason, like Smith's invisible hand, will be at work. We should not romanticize Greek democracy because it was fundamentally an autochthon and the polis as political form is no longer applicable in our time. However, there are still some important elements that we can draw from it.

The selection of the council members with the use of a randomization device, the *Kleroterion*, is indeed a test by contingency. In addition to contingency, there is a protocol that prevents contingency from moving toward unreason: if the person chosen is not appropriate, then he will be expelled from the title, with the community being able to regain the control of organization. Contingency only becomes a necessity when it no longer violates reason and becomes compatible with it; reason, we suggest, instead of emotion, should be that which unites the community. As already claimed in chapter 1, reason is the most powerful discourse of Western thought—it is through reason that secular society finds its common ground and the openness of transformation.

Modern democracy, as seen in the previous chapters, is a response to the proliferation of individual rights that followed the emergence of bourgeois society, in which the middle and elite classes became the dominant force in society and the government. Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* could be read as a response to this social change (following the Reformation and the French Revolution) and his philosophical justification of the state as the crystallization of reason. The state could unite the individuals by guaranteeing their rights through the constitution and maintaining

the social and political order through state institutions. In contemporary society, individualism takes a different form, moving from the right to freedom to the right to consume or from citizen to consumer.

The concept of democracy being associated with liberal democracy is an event that took place at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. In other words, if there was democracy before liberalism,⁵³ then there will be a democracy after liberalism. Even if we have engaged closely with Hegel and Schmitt, this does not imply that we are following their specific antiliberal and antidemocratic paths. The critique of Hegel and Schmitt remains valid when liberalism is turned into the justification of arbitrariness. This arbitrariness makes modern individuals vulnerable to political and economic manipulation. While liberal democracy has been used as a mechanism to keep legislation from becoming irrational, it does not guarantee reason; instead, it is vulnerable to manipulation and can turn into populism. The problem of liberal democracy is less its inability for political decision, as Carl Schmitt reproached them of being ineffective and indecisive, than its compatibility with consumerism; in liberal democracies, choice risks becoming arbitrary. On the other hand, hatred toward liberalism has led to powerful but ultimately closed governments, which claim to be deliberated democracies. The term *deliberated democracy* could be simply a play of words since it often only means toy parliaments. Governments in liberal democracies might occasionally make correct decisions based on the intelligence of the leader, but they will never move toward reason; this is not just because *vitam brevem esse, longam artem* (life is short, art is long), but also because decisions are frequently dictated by interest rather than reason and the decision process is often opaque and intolerant of any criticism.

In a democratic or authoritarian state (the either-or label the mass media tends to use), the concept of democracy is still limited to the nation-state—a modern form of autochthony compared to the Athenian one. There is a general silence on any notion of democracy that extends beyond the state's limit, save for the notables, such as Marx, Lenin, and Mao, who argued that true democracy would necessitate the abolition of the state and the party. In *State and Revolution*, Lenin claimed that whereas the demolition of the bourgeois state demands revolution, the overcoming of the democratic state will not be achieved through revolution but rather by the “withering away” of the state itself: “It is ‘incomprehensible’ only to those who have not thought that democracy is *also* a state and that, conse-

quently, democracy will also disappear when the state disappears. Revolution alone can ‘abolish’ the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only ‘wither away.’⁵⁴ The term “withering away” of the state is borrowed from Engels.⁵⁵ The bourgeois state does not wither away; it has to be abolished by the proletariats; what withers away is the proletariat state or the semistate.⁵⁶ What does Lenin mean by this? Does it mean that there will be no democracy? Lenin affirms that communism makes the state “absolutely unnecessary.”⁵⁷ The withering away of the state means that the dictatorship of the proletariat following the violent revolution will finally dissolve, giving way to a new, free world. Democracy would no longer be the right vocabulary to describe this new world. But what sort of world it is, then? This might be the most difficult of the above questions since it challenges both our imagination and our ability to put it in concrete words. Or, instead of condemning democracy to an always fated relation with the state, the other approach would be to enlarge the concept of democracy beyond the state.

Put another way, will the withering away of the state provide us with a planetary democracy? Furthermore, does planetary democracy mean the participation of all citizens of the world in all decision-making processes? How could this be possible? Would everyone now vote on global issues by pressing a button on their smartphone? Today, this is in principle possible considering that most of the population in developed countries own smartphones. But there are two fundamental problems. First, reducing democracy to the pressing of buttons would most likely pull us back to a kind of arbitrariness (a Hegelian problem we discussed in chapter 1); second, this form of democracy eliminates options—for example, choosing either A or B, but not maximizing possibilities and diversities for the future (a Luhmannian problem).⁵⁸ In other words, if democracy leads to the exhaustion of future possibilities, it raises fundamental questions about the viability and legitimacy of such a democratic system. These two problems are the major ones that liberal democracy has to overcome, without which it will continue to be discredited.

This returns us to the question of what democracy could mean beyond the state, if it is not to be just a planetary voting mechanism that involves all populations. We might want to refer to what Derrida calls “the democracy to come”⁵⁹ before addressing the Hegelian and Luhmannian problems. A “democracy to come” means at least two things for Derrida. First, it means a detachment of the secular from the theocratic and the

theological;⁶⁰ second, it is not based on an autochthony as much as it “is not connected to a nation-state, which is not connected to citizenship, to territoriality.”⁶¹ The secularization of politics could be interpreted as the pursuit of reason, as ridding politics of the irrational forces inherent to religion so that reason, instead of God, may lead. However, secularizing the state does not guarantee a democracy beyond the state since it presupposes a different political form. The question today is not *what* such a democracy to come is, but *how* might it come to be possible.

The procedures that culminate in the collapse of the party and state and that follow a violent revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat do not appear to be repeatable or even attainable today. However, a new democratic process beyond the state is not only relevant but also urgent. When everything stays within the realm of state interests, planetary politics remain reduced to international politics. Could internet technology facilitate such a democracy to come, overcoming many of the barriers that Derrida named? As we know, this was the dream of the internet activists and anarchists of the 1990s. However, today we also know that the possibility to connect beyond territories does not necessarily mean democracy; it could also mean the opposite, platform capitalism that dominates our everyday life, as analyzed in the previous chapters. In any case, this does not mean that future politics should oppose itself to technology, regardless of the fact that technology has become the synonym for calculation and control.

Technology has only ever really been thought of as a tool for democracy, be that the Greek *Kleroterion*, the modern postal and ballot system, or even now digital platforms that could be used for voting or decision making (for example, the direct digital democracy of the Five Star Movement in Italy) as well as social media that is used to influence other voters. However, this appears to be a rather limited way of understanding freedom and democracy and fails to respond to the Hegelian and Luhmannian criticism. Let us then step back and clarify what is meant by the possibility of democracy beyond the state. First, saying *beyond* the state does not mean that it has to be larger than the nation-state, something like Schmitt's *Großraum* or Dugin's Eurasia (which for Dugin extends from Siberia to Taiwan); instead, it could mean a political form that is attached to a locality, be that a city, a town, or a village. Second, technology would not serve only as a means toward democracy (for example, voting systems) but instead the democratization of technology will become fundamental

to the future of such a democracy to come—a task that we should take up as a response to Hegel and Luhmann, as well as to Derrida’s “democracy to come.” Because without directly addressing the question of technology, such a democracy *to come* will *never* come.⁶² Modern democracy is susceptible to technology precisely because technology has become a dominant force of “democracy,” especially since social media has been used to predict and influence municipal and national elections. In the twentieth century, democracy was vulnerable to analogue technologies of marketing, such as television and radio, which used broadcasting technologies to create and transmit patterns of information in the form of propaganda. Compared to information in its textual form, information in visual and audio forms opens up an intuitive form of communication—more direct and efficient because it can synchronize the audience’s consciousness. In the twenty-first century, the proliferation of digital technology challenged the broadcasting model of the mass media and reconstituted our sensual relation to the surroundings. Information is not only transmitted via successions of images and sound but rather via direct processing of user data, as we have already discussed in the previous chapters. Modern citizens are becoming increasingly more users and consumers in the sense that they adapt themselves to new interfaces and new algorithms over which they have no control or influence. This is the common experience of social media users in the past decade. The “democratization of technology” only took a very limited form in the name of the free and open-source software movement. While open-source software has been appropriated by large corporations such as Google, for example, when Android was an open-source project, it attracted many programmers to contribute to its development. Still, in the end, it is Google that decides which applications remain and which phones can install the updated version of Android. Can we call this the democratization of technology, or is it simply one strategy among others to absorb the creativity of individuals?

Finally, we must acknowledge that all types of subjection to the environment, whether natural or artificial, can be classified as adaptation. As per Darwin’s theory of evolution, animals either adapt to the environment or they fail and disappear. Adaptation stands on the opposite side of democracy since democracy means primarily collective determination, while adaptation means subordination to imposed rules or systems. If, with Derrida, we want to talk about some form of “democracy to come,” then we have to understand that the question of technology is fundamental

to this task. Not that a particular technology can solve the problem, but rather to create a new environment and new possibilities of adoption, or a new game with new rules, that may enlarge the possibility of engagements and producing changes. In other words, it is not only about challenging existing powers, but also changing the nature of powers. If we want to overcome the hegemony of the big corporations, which are constantly changing the digital environment so that users have to adapt to new interfaces and new rules, as well as the control of the state, which sees every subject as a set of data, nothing is more effective than creating new environments that allow individuals and collectives to become autonomous agents, in the sense that, instead of adapting to the environment, they could adopt it as a means of self-realization. In classical liberal democracy, one accepts the environment and then each individual acts against it according to one's preference in order to make it preferable for most people; in this nuanced form, we radically interpret and adopt the conditions that allow an individual to develop and experiment with new ideas and community practices.

It is not clear, as Lenin claimed, that the democratic state will wither away; however, it is at least clear that in order to move beyond that which limits democracy to the state, new infrastructures of democracy will have to be made available that move beyond the monopoly of a few individuals or enterprises. The new game, on the one hand, reflects the locality's or community's diversity and singularity because they also represent the differentiated relationship between inhabitants and the environment. But, on the other hand, it will also be a less consumerist economy and more a knowledge-based economy that will allow users to transform into citizens and provide an alternative to Luddite sabotage. This is why we would like to put forward the claim that technodiversity is central to such a future democracy in the planetary condition, having the potential to address the question of locality beyond identity. Hence counter to the technological tendency that homogenizes and totalizes, technodiversity diverges and fragments.

§31. Biodiversity, Noodiversity, and Technodiversity

I suggest considering technodiversity as a program that explores alternatives to the current impasse of innovation and development in the consumerist society and the geopolitical concurrence between nation-states. I

call it an impasse because it is promoting a homogenization of technology instead of allowing a heterogenization, hence also a democratization of technology. The homogenization of technology has not only limited our understanding of the possibilities of technology and its future, but it also creates a form of competition that only leads to an apocalyptic sentiment, a desperation that is shared by many people on the earth today. It was not the machine itself, but the homogenization generated by mechanist thinking that Bergson explicitly denounced.

It goes without saying that new technologies bring turbulences to the social and economic system of each epoch (what Bertrand Gille calls, in general, “the human system”⁶³) and trigger resistance from the economic system. For example, certain technologies such as p2p sharing (e.g., Napster in 1999) or cloning (Dolly the sheep in 1996) were suppressed to maintain the coherence of the human system. However, when the resistance of the human system becomes futile, we experience profound desperation, such as the young climate activists who, no longer being heard, employ the not-so-wise strategies of throwing tomato juice or mashed potatoes at the paintings of Van Gogh and Monet. When one fails to act or fails to know how to act, as a consequence, the soul looks inward for a solution without being able to maintain its consistency with the uncertain external milieu; it easily leads to reactionary acts, such as localism and nationalism, which blind us to the planetary condition. Localism and nationalism under the guise of democracy constitute some of the most dangerous games to have ruined the twentieth century.

If we return to our previous dilemma concerning the two paths that cybernetics promises us, the first one is the realization of the political state via advanced technological systems, which opens a new terrain of competition and destruction similar to what we are witnessing now; the second one being the realization of the digital earth that slowly undermines the legitimacy of the nation-state by reducing it to one administrative power among the others. This dilemma presents itself as a problem to be resolved regarding the inquiry into planetary thinking after Hegel’s theory of the state and Schmitt’s theory of the *Großraum*. It will have to take the question of diversity and pluralism as central. Since the eighteenth century, the nation-state has stood for difference because the state represents the nation, and each nation differs in terms of languages, customs, and cultures. However, the nation-state as a symbol of difference is no more symbolic in our time than earlier, not only because the cultural industry has

become global but also because technological acceleration and economic competition have brought the centrality of language, customs, and culture to a rather fragile status (one just has to consider the recent launch of ChatGPT, which exhibits the potential to liberate human beings from learning foreign languages). While the concept of the *Großraum* saw the nation-state's limit, it fails, nonetheless, to go beyond the idea of it being an enlarged state. This does not mean that they are not important, but rather what we call culture today can no longer effectively respond to the organological expansion. The question of technology in Hegel is omnipresent though implicit. It was perceived as a constant process of externalization and reflection; however, it remains formal. The question of technology in Schmitt is more explicit in terms of its centrality in the development of the *nomos*, and its content was described in terms of land, sea, and air; however, technological power is conceived as a homogeneous metaphysical force that resonates with Heidegger's analysis.

Because the current technological development desires to digitize everything, heritage will become singularly digital heritage, while those traditions that cannot be digitalized will gradually die away. The problem of modernity, that is to say, the acceleration of the obsolescence of concepts and cultures, rouses melancholia in the Freudian sense of the term, that the lost object cannot be overcome by mourning. Melancholia happens when the lost object haunts the psychic apparatus since the latter cannot maintain consistency without the former's presence. The question central to planetary politics is that of diversity. The multiculturalism of the last decades never really solved modernity's problems; at most, it was a continuance of the Enlightenment idea of tolerance, which always waits for the moment of intolerance—because when the solution is moral, it is susceptible to emotional manipulation. As we have tried to show, the fundamental question is a technological one. The question of diversity has to be thought of fundamentally from the perspective of technology.

This distinguishes our position from the various paths of “returning to nature” that we can find among the current debates in view of the climate change. We could name a few here without being able to exhaust the list. There is a call to return to romantic nature, where the countryside, the forest, the emerging crops and waking meadows are a negation of the modern technological life, but this “last resort” is now disappearing, especially when digital farming will be fully implemented, one will probably see more machines in the countryside than in the city. There are philosophi-

cally more subtle calls to nature—for example, the so-called ontological turn movement associated with anthropologists such as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Philippe Descola, and others, which proposes a multinaturalism in contrast to multiculturalism, namely, “one culture and multiple natures.” In parallel to the anthropologists, we also have the school of multispecies, which endeavors to show from the perspective of biology the heterogeneity of species and the necessity of coexistence between them—for example, in the work of Donna Haraway and her reading of Lynn Margulis. These two schools of thought, however, constitute a mutual criticism: the former is considered by the latter as culturalism (the concept of nature is culturally constructed), while the latter is seen by the former as naturalism (a political thought inspired by biology). The difficulty of returning to “nature” is that it tends to undermine the fact that concepts don’t exist alone; singling out the concept of nature without resituating it in the system of concepts and in history doesn’t effectively resolve the problem of modernity. In contrast to the discourse on nature, and therefore also an ontogenesis of the earth, we suggest a new matrix of diversity: biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity.⁶⁴

Biodiversity, as we understand it, is central to the ecology of the biosphere, and the diminishment of biodiversity is a consequence and the cause of the current ecological crisis. Biodiversity doesn’t only mean the number of species but also the constitution of the environments on the planet that allows coexistence between species. The past two centuries marked a significant decrease in biodiversity and the intensification of environmental disasters. The speed of change in the environment gives little space for different species to adjust themselves in order to adapt to the living milieu. The extreme weather that we have been experiencing will continue getting more and more extreme if the economy and the technological developments associated with it continue accelerating. This dilemma of modernity could be seen, for example, in E. O. Wilson’s reading of Leo Marx: due to the environmental disasters, the moderns found in the natural world a refuge of the spirit, which is “remote, static, richer even than human imagination”; however, this “refuge” is produced by the acceleration toward the machine antipole, namely, “We cannot exist in this paradise without the machine that tears it apart.”⁶⁵ In other words, the “return to nature” is a reaction against the inevitable path of modernity. One could speculate that when humans stop using technology, then biodiversity will increase as consequence. We now know what happened after those disasters such

as that of Krakatoa (1883), Chernobyl (1986), and Fukushima (2011), that there was a sharp increase in biodiversity, plants and animals rapidly occupying the abandoned buildings. We could imagine that after the extinction of the human being, the planet may become even more vibrant; however, we don't even have to talk about biodiversity in this case, since it already loses meaning. In other words, we can only talk about biodiversity in a meaningful way when we are searching for a coexistence between humans and nonhumans in the process of planetarization. Otherwise, we will only live in a constant denial of the crisis and a nihilism that is nonetheless politically correct.

Given that the human species still exist and continue to dominate the planet, then the concept of biodiversity or that of the "intrusion of Gaia" should take the humans beyond a nihilism to reconsider the possibility of coexistence between different political institutions and different species. This, however, also makes any simple solution of abandoning human civilization to nonhumans suspicious, as Wilson also observed that "the number of species in islands might go down when they become smaller and further away from the mainland."⁶⁶ In other words, we should abandon dichotomy between nature and technology, spiritualism and materialism, as Bergson suggests. Still, Wilson's solution to strike an "equilibrium" is less sophisticated at first glance. His solution outlined in *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life* claims that "only by setting aside half the planet in reserve, or more, can we save the living part of the environment and achieve the stabilization required for our own survival."⁶⁷ Wilson's solution is plausible; however, its simplicity also exposes a philosophical and political naivety. The preservation of species in the way Wilson suggests is not wrong, only insufficient.

Biodiversity bears an intimacy with noodiversity and technodiversity, because biodiversity is always local. Bringing animals and plants from one locality to another may cause disastrous effects to the net of life one finds in that specific locality. The maintenance and cultivation of biodiversity correlates to the form of life that one finds in the locality, namely noodiversity and technodiversity. Biological knowledge could also be situated within such localities. This is also why Wilson could talk about an Ecuadorian biology, Kenyan biology, that is also to say a noodiversity: "Can there be an Ecuadorian biology, a Kenyan biology? Yes, if they focus on the uniqueness of indigenous life. Will such efforts be important to international science? Yes, because evolutionary biology is a discipline of spe-

cial cases woven into global patterns. Nothing makes sense except in the light of the histories of local faunas and floras.”⁶⁸ In chapter 3, we saw that Teilhard de Chardin considered Vernadsky’s biosphere as the foundation of the noosphere and that the noosphere was that which finally covers the biosphere like a skin over the earth. This is, however, not merely a skin since it also contributes to the growth of the biosphere and the interaction between the biosphere and the atmosphere. Teilhard’s noosphere is not purely *nous* either; it is a technological triumph and a spiritual realization in which a thinking layer is realized external to the cranium. A technological convergence characterizes the noosphere’s development, with the noosphere consisting of both noodiversity and technodiversity. Noodiversity here refers to different knowledge that originates from specific localities—for example, different cosmologies, customs, values, and so forth. Today, we talk of cultural differences, or to be more striking, clashes of civilizations, because it is assumed that noodiversities cannot be reduced to and are always incompatible with one another. In Teilhard’s theory, noodiversity was somewhat hierarchized, especially in his prioritization of Western thought over Eastern thought. This prioritization is also an identification of Western intelligentsia with technological progress. The progress of the noosphere, however, does not produce a diversification but rather a convergence toward a superbrain. The noospheric reflection or the omega point is also the moment of apocalypse. Technodiversity opposes the technological apocalypse, and instead of convergence, it proposes a divergence or bifurcation.

Suppose we follow our previous analysis on the role of technics as the support of memory and, therefore, also as the support of *noiesis*. In that case, we can see that technodiversity is fundamental to noodiversity. Because noodiversity belongs to second nature, such a second nature can only be maintained by technization in everyday life. Noodiversity and technodiversity contribute directly to biodiversity since, on the one hand, noodiversity incorporates the relationship between humans and nonhumans. In turn, these relations have to be maintained and enhanced by technologies that facilitate the realization of both human and nonhuman. The consequences of pesticides are universal in that they universally target various biological and chemical properties of insects, yet the use of pesticides in different locations will result in varying outcomes, ranging from beneficial to disastrous. In reality, what Vandana Shiva called the “monoculture of the mind” is omnipresent in the capitalist logic of globalization;

we, therefore, end up having monotecnology, which recklessly views itself as the only option.⁶⁹ Monotecnology appears to give democracy a new opportunity by providing it with global digital platforms that take the guise of empowerment and mobilization, but they eliminate democracy itself. The “monoculture of the mind,” which endangers both biodiversity and noodiversity, suggests that the key to resolving this problem is to return to the discourse of technodiversity. Therefore, the matrix of biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity form a more comprehensive framework than the dialectics between nature and technology for understanding the planetary condition. The question of bifurcation is central since, without differentiation and diversification, it is impossible to talk about difference and diversity. Diversity is not only to be maintained, but it also has to be *constantly created*.

If today we have to read Bergson’s analysis of war seriously, it is because we are confronting another series of crises, which unfortunately is often analyzed from the perspective of “real politics” and whose solution is limited to the matrix consisting of techno-economic factors. That is to say, analysis beyond economic and military causes is considered ineffective. One may ask, if a locality wants to develop technodiversity, does it also have to develop military technologies not to be defeated? Since, as a locality, particularly a nation competing with other nations, military technology is the most necessary to develop. Without it, one might well be dominated, even annihilated, by opponents. The logic could be also applied to the question of revolution since once a revolution in a locality takes place; it will soon be destroyed by the neighboring localities, similar to how the Paris Commune was destroyed by the French army assisted by Bismarck’s Prussian state. However, if we continue to think this way, it will be impossible to imagine a future other than mankind’s self-destruction.⁷⁰ In this scenario, the epoch-making power of the sovereign ceases to exist. Perhaps this is the fate of humanity, and such an event would have little impact on the planet, similar to casting a stone into the ocean. The seduction of a profound nihilism appears as a consolation, but it also limits human actions. The impossibility of action is precisely the opposite of human freedom. Human beings have the agency to adopt technology and should also have the agency to renounce certain technologies. This is also why, as we can read from Kant’s *Treatise on Perpetual Peace* to Georgescu-Roegen’s minimal bioeconomic program, ecology cannot be developed without renouncing militarism, without giving up military acts of aggression. Instead

of military competition, Kant appeals to trade or commerce as a possibility of perpetual peace because, based on community and reciprocity, international commerce could form an organicity that enforces each member to autoregulate their behavior.

War, insofar as it is a territorial problem, is, fundamentally, an organological problem. Territorial conflicts appear when trading or exchange no longer stands as a sufficient solution. The inspiration of organic nature ceases to be effective when organological hubris cannot be pacified. However, we could also transpose this argument from an ecology of nature to an ecology of machines (i.e., from biodiversity to technodiversity),⁷¹ similar to what we suggested earlier, that is, transposing the opposition between the laws of nature and freedom to that between autonomous technical systems and freedom. As a result, we might say that war is the triumph of the homogeneity of machines because as Mumford pointed out, the megamachine must “destroy all the alternatives, historical, traditional, or perspective” to maintain its autonomy and the status of its manipulators.⁷² And if there is still value in Bergson’s analysis of war, it is not due to his vitalism, which, as we have shown, is already surpassed by cybernetics, but rather his organological critique of the source of war. Today, given that technological acceleration has surpassed the precedent eras, we will have to conceive different programs that will allow us to overcome the dichotomy of machine and antimachine. With the organological framework, we hope to analyze the epistemological problems from a new perspective and address possible responses to the long-lasting crisis of civilization. However, such organology has to go beyond the common wisdom of understanding technology as an extension of the body or nerves and to understand technodiversity as an imperative for planetary thinking.

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Toward an Epistemological Diplomacy

Can Europeans reinvent new forms of communication beyond the form of the state? Can there be politics beyond the state? This is the great challenge that awaits the European people today.

—Massimo Cacciari, *Europe and Empire*

The fact that metaphysics, as mere speculation, serves more to prevent errors than to expand cognition does not impair its value, but rather gives to metaphysics dignity and authority through the censor's office that it operates. This office secures the general order and the concord and indeed the prosperity of the scientific community, and keeps that community's daring and fertile works from deviating from the main purpose, viz., the general happiness.

—Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

After a long exposition of the political epistemologies of Hegel and Schmitt, and the political implication of Bergson's organology, we ended the previous chapter by suggesting a matrix composed of biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity as an alternative framework for thinking the planetary. We might now be able to address the question cited above and raised by Massimo Cacciari, philosopher and former mayor of Venice, regarding whether new forms of communication beyond the state can be reinvented. Throughout this book, Hegel and Schmitt have taken the position of two political forms as well as two "problems" that have to be overcome—and such an overcoming of them cannot occur through a mere renunciation of their positions; instead, it has to occur via a historical-epistemological exposition of their limits: Hegel, the thinker of the modern state and political organicism, and Schmitt, the thinker of the *Großraum* and political vitalism. In a certain way, we have restaged the investigations of *Recursivity and Contingency*, namely, an inquiry into the epistemologies of mechanism,

organism, vitalism, and organology, but in a social-political context. This is what we promised to deliver in the Introduction, that is, addressing planetary thinking as political epistemologies. We will now delve deeper into the question of epistemology, as the title of this chapter indicates. An epistemological diplomacy is one that allows us to reconsider our planetary situation from the perspective of locality and facilitates communication beyond the confines of states. While aiming for perpetual peace is overly ambitious, it is crucial to emphasize the significance of the extra-static element, as highlighted by Kant in his treatise, which, in his case, is trade. In this concluding chapter, we hope to clarify further the concept of technodiversity to address Cacciari's quest for a "new communication," emphasizing its relevance to the *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus* that we suggested in the Introduction.

§32. Acceleration, Automation, and the Prosthetic Future

We have thus far drafted a "dramaturgy" that starts with Hegel's state as the *vernünftige* construction of the historical progress and its justification in the organism of the state, which, however, could hardly confront the problem that we are facing today regarding climate change, ecological crisis, and the imminent threat of wars. In our exposition of Hegelian political philosophy, we showed that the state is the projection of an organismic structure and operation, which Ernst Kapp later described. This ideality of the state as an organism is not simply a metaphor but is also logical and historical, as Hegel demonstrated in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*. The public servant system plus the division of the powers in the state allowed Hegel to think of a machine that functions like an organism so that every part could be organized and interact with the other parts of the organism, such as the organs of the body. The state completed what civil society failed to achieve. Civil society produces inequality and poverty because it is an interest-oriented society. The rabble represents the failure of civil society since they are the *disorganized* part of it, which, for Hegel, represents the most dangerous group and, therefore, must be *organized* or subject to *organization*. Because organization is central to the state as a technological phenomenon, rather than understanding the state as a legal or theological concept, we attempt to analyze the state from the standpoint of political epistemology. Therefore, what we have been trying to demonstrate is that, since early European modernity, during the quarrel between

mechanism and organism, organism was simply the projection of an ideal state, and it was only in Hegel that such an organism is developed logically and distinguished from an unanalytic concept based on animal organisms. In chapter 3, we turned both with and against Hegel; we looked into bio-economy, cybernetics, and noosphere for the traces of Hegelian reflective logic in order to speculate on a post-Hegelian imagination of a planetary organism and its limit.

By pushing the Hegelian problem to the extreme to search for a solution, at this extreme, we also precisely encountered the Schmittian problem. Schmitt relentlessly attacked the vision of the “unity of the world” or the “unity of the East and West” by showing the imperialist hypocrisy that lays behind it. We identified Schmitt’s deliberate endeavor to separate himself from the antagonism between organism and mechanism and establish a political vitalism that is characterized by the decision on exceptions. This political vitalism at the same time seeks another political form that is more adequate than the nation-state in view of the new technological condition. Schmitt thus proposed *Großraum* as a political form that would succeed the nation-state, one that is inspired by the element of air, after land and sea. In chapter 6, we turned against Schmitt’s political vitalism through a close reading of Bergson’s speech on war and his *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. We distinguish two Bergsons: the vitalist who opposes vitalism and mechanism, and the organologist who gives a new vocation to mechanism.

Political epistemology corresponds to a fundamental operating principle of the megamachine. With the development of cybernetics in the 1940s, the dream of a mechano-organism is ever closer to becoming a reality, and technological advancements now mean that one can do even more than what was originally imagined in the nineteenth century. In other words, with current technologies, one can postulate that it is possible to sublimate the state and move toward a new political organization empowered by automation—considering that the number of active users of Facebook or Google is probably more than the population of any existing country and that they have been actively delegating the management to AI. Many governmental services that can be determined by facts (de facto) have already been automatized, ranging from the application for passports and ID cards to the payments of bills and juridical judgments. Automation could improve the efficiency of the government and eliminate the defects due to human error and malmanagement. We are witnessing something

Simondon already observed in the 1950s—that machines are becoming organic. Contemporary digital technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning are completing this epistemological paradigm, and the development of biotechnology and neurotechnology is also progressing toward a more and more intimate integration with biological organs. The completion of metaphysics is becoming more and more self-evident, while philosophy is still either falling prey to the opposition between organism and mechanism, thinking matter and mechanical matter, or naively leaning to the other side by equating machines and humans. As we have tried to show throughout the book, all these oppositions have ended since the second half of the twentieth century.

Fichte's imagination of the police state is already actualized, and the organic state that Hegel deduced from his dialectical logic is becoming a technological reality. We sought to show that the state could be realized as a mechano-organism; this demonstrates Hegel's prediction and illustrates how the exteriorization of reason has reached a new stage, where reason must reinvent itself in the face of contradiction. In other words: if reason continues to progress, it will have to go beyond the organic state, the *Großraum* and the identification of it with sheer rationalism now increasingly reduced to the calculation of machines. The automatic society we live in will only advance toward higher efficiency and faster speeds over time. People fear whether machines will replace them, wondering what human tasks will and cannot be replaced. However, this is not a productive way of thinking about the future of society, because to think in such a manner is to simply fulfill industry's self-prophecy. Industry reproduces this myth of the machine constantly while at the same time fulfilling its prophecy by producing machines that imitate the way humans complete tasks. This industrial self-fulfilling prophecy not only produces the exhaustion of the imagination but also incites constant anxiety.

More than a century ago, when trains and automobiles were invented, people were shocked and frightened by the metallic monsters and their speed, but today most people are not discouraged from taking them simply because cars move faster than humans; instead, humans have become themselves faster through the use of such machines. Technology must become a stepping stone for humans to develop an ethical life in the sense of Hegel. Future planetary thinking has to start with an organological motif. For this purpose, we have to cultivate and ameliorate a *culture of prosthesis* and not a *culture of replacement*. A culture of replacement sees machines

as competition for the human being and that the human will be gradually replaced by machines in all domains; a culture of prosthesis recognizes the organological value of machines and goes beyond the instrumentality of machines; that is to say, to go beyond both productivity and creativity in its calculative form. As Bergson proposed, the new vocation of machines will have to deviate from the materialization of the spirit and search for the spiritualization of matter.

This indicates that expecting the economy to be fully automated does not inevitably result in human emancipation. Marx responded to a similar question in his time by citing John Stuart Mill's statement: "It is questionable if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being."¹ On the contrary, it may intensify the process of proletarianization, and by that we mean the loss of knowledge of the workers. Today it is not limited to workers but also to the farmers. If we look at the countryside in the near future, which has been considered to be the resort of burned-out urban dwellers, we will be overwhelmed by the application of digital farming, which succeeded mechanized farming and precision farming. Automation pervades and will continue pervading every aspect of individual and collective life. There is no certainty that it will lead to happiness though, as it gives rise to many low-level and not-yet-automatable tasks, such as those in food delivery and car-hailing services, where troops of workers are commanded by algorithms. It is extremely likely that the majority will become mere consumers, as Hannah Arendt anticipated in *The Human Condition*. Arendt speculated that the artists might well be the last *Homo faber*, still making things after the event of mass automation.² Today, applications such as Midjourney, TensorFlow, and ChatGPT have already made many artists question their own existence. We have yet to ask how, in an automatic society, reason might continue to progress without being stuck in calculation, or how machines, the essential part of reason, could facilitate the latter's progress.

Maybe we should return to the concept of acceleration itself. Acceleration does not necessarily mean an increase in speed, since this would still be too linear a conception. Speed, as we know in physics, is a scalar quantity, which measures how fast an object moves; velocity, however, is a vector quantity, measuring the rate at which the object changes its position. A scalar quantity has mere magnitude, and a vector quantity has direction. Acceleration is also a vector quantity, defined as the rate at which an object changes its velocity (and not speed). Therefore, the acceleration produced

by a car making a U-turn could have a much higher value than the linear increase in speed. The automation of society does not always provoke the greatest increase in acceleration, though it may cause significant increase in speed. However, a change of perspective in political economy and politics might do so by providing automation with a new purpose, in the sense of Bergson; it is also a way to change the nature of power instead of merely modifying its configuration. This is, however, not necessarily a call to degrow by reducing population, food production, and so on, but rather to *re-direct* the progress of our civilization. Therefore, reason is not that which is waiting to be replaced by automation technology but rather that which will be able to make such a significant turn toward rationalization of the machine beyond rationality.³ This consists of the fundamental question of spirit: since the spirit is neither virtual nor symbolic, the spirit is always at the same time within and beyond any form of externalization.

§33. Universality Seen from the Perspective of Technodiversity

Our habit of viewing technology as an abstract entity and as a metaphysical force fails to grasp the concrete role it plays; conversely, when we see it as just a concrete object, we also fail to grasp the fundamental role that it plays in politics (beyond, that is, sociological studies of phenomena such as the use of Facebook or Airbnb). The concept of technodiversity that was raised in the previous chapter consists of two dimensions. The first dimension is cultural (or culturally constrained ontological, epistemological, and cosmological knowledge). As we tried to show, we can find different technological thinking in different cultures, which is not exclusively *techno-logos*. This is not to say that technologies guided by this thought have nothing to do with mechanical causality. For sure, all machines have to follow the laws of physics in order to set themselves into motion. Still, we also have to recognize that technology is not defined only by its working principles but also by its place of use, its way of use, and its maintenance and improvement, to name a few. The working principles or the *techno-logos* understood in a strict sense as logic must be resituated in a broader reality and in a genesis of which it takes part.

This might be one of the great contributions of Simondon: by exposing the limits of a Marxist economic analysis of technical objects, he insisted that a technical object should be considered as that which possesses a life, entailed by its birth, maintenance, prolongment of life, and evolution (how-

ever, this doesn't mean that a technical object is a living being). The problem of alienation stems from the fact that the life of technical objects is not prolonged because workers do not comprehend the operating principles of these machines—the automatic machine presents itself as an abstract being to them, consisting of mere inputs and outputs. Therefore, they are unable to maintain and hence prolong the life of technical objects.⁴ We see here the fundamental question of technical knowledge, that is to say, proletarianization is primarily a deprivation of knowledge: it renders the workers' knowledge useless and reduces them to laborers who merely handle inputs and outputs without being able to engage with the machines on other levels—a phenomenon that has been well documented and described by nineteenth-century writers such as Marx and William Morris. Technical knowledge became the monopoly of technicians, and the state is handed over to technocracy. This does not mean that workers do not or could not develop an intimate relationship with the machines they use, but, as Simondon argues, they only understand the machine from the perspective of its technical elements but not as a technical individual and beyond.

In the 1920s, during his sojourn in Positano, the economist and philosopher Alfred Sohn-Rethel observed a rather astonishing phenomenon: every technical apparatus in Naples failed. His observation was published in a 1926 newspaper article titled “Das Ideal des Kaputten. Über neapolitanische Technik” (The ideal of the broken down: On the Neapolitan approach to things technical).⁵ Sohn-Rethel described a rather anti-intuitive phenomenon in Naples: technical objects only work when broken down. This phenomenon did not paralyze the Neapolitans. However, instead of being able to repair or maintain machines, and transform their internal structure and operation, they invented some nontechnical solutions to making machines work in one way or another, as in Sohn-Rethel's description of a Neapolitan igniting the engine of a car: “In a display of matchless mastery, he succeeds in restarting his broken-down car by, in some impossible manner, attaching a small piece of wood which just happened to be lying in the street—only, that is, until it soon, and this much is certain, once again breaks down.”⁶

This form of knowledge that Sohn-Rethel describes is different from the technical knowledge of engineers and technicians.⁷ A machine cannot be reduced, in a strict sense, to *techno-logos*; a machine is not only the result of a set of prefigured causal relations between materials. Following

Simondon, we would like to understand a technical object by situating it in a reality beyond *techno-logos*. As is often the case, this reality could be social, economic, and political, but it could be broader, namely, moral and cosmological—it is in this sense that Simondon was able to talk about the co-naturality between technical objects and their milieux and I develop into what I call cosmotechnics. A philosophical intuition—and there he explicitly refers to Bergson—is central to the search for co-naturality because it first allows a nonlogical schematic understanding of beings, for example, how he distinguishes what he calls the minority (childhood) from the majority (adulthood). Adults learn technologies through abstract logical schemas, as how engineering is taught in university textbooks today, while children learn technologies through intuition and embodiment. Today, many children are capable of using an iPhone or an iPad without any pre-given instructions. They interact with the device like running into an old friend—immediate strangeness is soon overcome after exchanging a few gestures. However, what is at stake is more than just designing better human-computer interfaces. Instead, it is about another way of understanding technology. Moreover, intuition provides access to the genesis of technicity: it allows us to understand the relation between technological thinking and other forms of thinking, such as religious, aesthetic, and philosophical.

In Simondon's speculative genesis of technicity, we see how science and religion were born after the bifurcation of the original magic unity. As mentioned in chapter 6, Simondon's theory of bifurcation retains the traces of Bergson's analysis of the laws of the dichotomy of tendencies. In the magic unity, there is yet to emerge any distinction between subject and object, but ground and figure (terms he borrows from Gestalt psychology) are already distinguished though not separated (i.e., the figure is the figure of the ground and the ground, the ground of the figure).⁸ The bifurcation into technics and religion means the separation of the figure from the ground. In this separation, technics carries the figure characters (below unity), and religion carries the ground character (above unity). Technics and religion will then each bifurcate into a theoretical and a practical part, while all bifurcations also call for a unity of the ground and figure. Aesthetic thinking, and later philosophical thinking, was born as a unifying force for ground and figure. Technological thinking is seen within the constellation of other forms of thinking and always in interaction with them; however, technological thinking tends to dominate since it is the most ma-

terialist thinking among all, and materiality, in comparison with thinking, has a much stronger *immediate* agency in the world, which means that it can effectively undermine other forms of thinking. Therefore, to resituate technology in a broader reality is precisely to reverse this tendency and make other forms of thinking explicit so that they can intervene and shape technology. Simondon's philosophical and anthropological analysis of the genesis of technicity is based on the separation and unification between ground and figure. It stands analogically to the genesis of sacrality formulated by Mircea Eliade. The return to a unity, akin to that of the magic unity, was a response to Eliade's thesis on the disappearance of sacrality in the modern age.⁹ In this sense, Simondon's work could be read as an elaboration of Bergson's thesis on mechanism and mysticism discussed in chapter 6, a discussion that we extend here.

Social and political thought was also born at some point in the genesis, and like religion, it carries the background character. However, social and political thought's moment of birth remains obscure in the genesis outlined by Simondon; moreover, Simondon refuses to elaborate on it, stating that "this study does not propose to deal with the problem of establishing continuity between the religious and social and political forms of thought."¹⁰ Nevertheless, we can understand the religious character of social and political thought, aiming to reconcile the ruptures caused by technological and economic development. Ground and figure are always waiting to be symbolically unified; however, when the figure becomes the ground, we see a perversion where *evil* emerges. Perhaps the greenhouse example Simondon also uses will help us understand this better. A greenhouse plant always grows apart from the ground since it is fully dependent on the greenhouse's environment; as Simondon writes, "The artificialized plant can only exist in a laboratory for plants, the greenhouse, with its complex system of thermal and hydraulic regulations."¹¹ Now paradoxically, we can also say that the plant becomes independent from the environment. The plant *with* the greenhouse is portable, no matter whether it is in India or Germany. The greenhouse is the figure; in this setting, the original ground, the combination of soul, climate, and relations to other organisms, such as birds and worms, is lost. When the ground is lost, the plant "can no longer reproduce except through procedures such as grafting, requiring human intervention."¹² The co-naturality between the technical object and its milieu is like that between the figure and the ground; the ground is its place, the cosmo-geographical specificity. This is why the

question of technodiversity can be partially grasped from the perspective of locality and not identity.

Given that we would like to understand the planetary from the perspective of technodiversity, how can we resolve the question concerning unity? Unity is understood in two dimensions: the unity of the spirit, or the *Weltgeist*, and the unity of technologies, how they communicate without being reduced to certain closed and incompatible standards. Here we must avoid a superficial misunderstanding of technodiversity, namely, technodiversity means something like the difference between electrical sockets that are without standards across countries, or the suggestion that, one day, China might invent a superchip with Chinese, non-Western logic. We will address the first dimension here and the second dimension later in the section dedicated to the anatomy of technical objects. The *Weltgeist*, as a synonym of reason, if it exists, does not necessarily mean a unification in the sense of homogenization, and this is precisely the ambiguity in Hegel's thought insofar as a concept such as the concrete universal is concerned. If the universal is supposed to mean something *vernünftig*, then it should allow differences to emerge and flourish. Reason has to be *expanded* in situations of incompatibility, as demonstrated by Kant in the confrontation between theoretical reason and practical reason concerning the existence of God (and the immortal soul). Theoretical reason cannot recognize the existence of God as it is not a phenomenon, while practical reason must postulate the existence of God, without which the highest good is not thinkable.

The universal is a *dimension* of existence such as the particular, the individual, or the singular. Every one of us is singular; for example, we differ from each other in terms of talents, family background, and temperaments. This, however, does not mean that we cannot talk about the universal. The universal is not the common feature of all the individuals that one can induce empirically—for example, all individual human beings have eyes and noses—because this is only universal in its mechanical sense. Universal is what we do not have but ought to have—it is an object of desire. In other words, the universal is rational because it presupposes differences; and as far as it is desirable, it does not exist in the form of reduction but projection. We might want to recall here a passage from the historian Paul Hazard's *The Crisis of the European Mind 1680–1715*, where Hazard describes a group of French missionaries sent to Siam in 1685. The mis-

sionaries were trying to exhort the king of Siam to become a convert to Christianity, and the king's answer completely blew them away:

Had it been the will of Divine Providence that a single religion should prevail in the world, nothing could have been easier for Divine Providence than to execute its design. Inasmuch, however, as it had pleased the Almighty to suffer a host of dissimilar religions to flourish simultaneously, it was obvious that he preferred to be glorified by a prodigious number of his creatures, each worshipping him in his own way.¹³

What astonished the missionaries was that the universal, thus understood as homogenous—everyone has to be converted to Christianity—is too simple, and this could not have been the idea of God. God would not prefer the world to be simple and homogenous. The universal is neither European nor Chinese but rather the possibility of coexistence *without* contradiction. However, without contradiction does not mean without differences or conflicts; reason is precisely called to act by the seemingly contradictory situations, such as antinomy or aporia. Coexistence without contradiction is fundamental for planetary morality, which is simultaneously logical and axiological. Considering that, for Kant, the universal cannot be found in any specific deed or specific object but rather as a maxim without contradiction, Kant was acutely aware of this. Thus in Kant we find a universal that functions mechanically by imposing the universal onto the particulars; at the same time, we also find another universal, which is not given a priori and cannot be known in the discursive mode of truth, but only in the mode of “as if.”¹⁴ Therefore, the opposition between the universal and the particular or the universal and the relative risks being too simple to be true. We know that this was an important issue during the Enlightenment, after what Hazard called the “crisis of the European mind,” and that it has been debated by everyone from Voltaire to Frederick the Great. However, tolerance becomes problematic when exceptions break certain legal and social norms. If we follow Esposito, this constitutes an immunological phenomenon. Because if the community can absorb the disturbance (i.e., the exception) to prevent a larger and more serious interruption, similar to how immunity to disease is generated when the body is attacked by antigens present in vaccines, then tolerance itself may be a

proper immunological response. However, it is also possible that such a disturbance constitutes a strong dose of poison or can trigger organ failure, as Covid-19 vaccines sometimes do. Tolerance is not a language of coexistence; it is that which is exploited or will explode when pushed toward an extreme. Nonetheless, this does not prevent us from seeing differences as fundamental to the universal or the current philosophical task as the search for a logic of coexistence that breaks away from the techno-economic competition. This was fundamental to Cacciari's questioning. The consequential problem that Cacciari had to address is that if Europe is to restructure itself beyond the nation-state, how could it maintain its relation to the non-European lands without becoming completely vulnerable?

If the techno-economic game has dominated the terrain of politics, then it is very unlikely that any state will withdraw, since doing so will render itself vulnerable. If so, are we not in a vicious circle where either no one can ever quit, or everyone has to quit simultaneously? What kind of power can one aspire to? It has to be something beyond all values crucial to the military and economic competition that maintains the current humancentric world and its sets of polar conflicts.¹⁵ In this sense, we can understand Derrida's unconditional and Cacciari's unreachable not as an irrational force but as a different way of rationalization, one in which the incalculable is presupposed and becomes the point of orientation. However, reintroducing the incalculable in the age of calculability is like reintroducing God to atheists. That is also the reason why we had to explore different understandings of technology and resituate technology within a broader reality.

Technodiversity aims at reflecting on such a possibility, as well as radicalizing the concept of difference or heterogeneity, which, at present, only bears a market value, and encouraging the renewal of the relations between human beings and technologies as well as our living milieux. Therefore, we need not a unification that effaces differences but rather a unification based on fragmentation; however, it is important to note that fragmentation does not mean decoupling or disconnecting, as it has now come to mean in the mass media, especially regarding international relations. On the contrary, fragmentation means developing new rules or new games to exit the impasse of the old game. Here we can refer to the concept of the fragment among the Jena Romantics. Each fragment is an individual that recursively produces a small system and joins with other fragments to create an organic whole. The system is not a closed system since, unlike the

dialectical method, fragments join each other through resonances but not through borders or doors. The fragment constitutes a literary genre of the early Romantics, like Novalis and the Schlegels; it is not an idea opposed to an organic totality, but organicity is made possible through fragments. Rudolph Gaché, in his foreword to the English translation of Friedrich Schlegel's *Philosophical Fragments*, gives us a synthesis:

If fragmentation is thus the specifically Romantic thought of the system, it is . . . a self-jointure of what makes up a whole. In contradistinction from the Idealist position strictly speaking—Hegel, for instance—according to which the system consists of an ordering totally transparent to itself, the early Romantics think the system through fragmentation, that is, as presenting itself, not in a pure medium of thought and in absolute figureless, but as always an individuality, and hence, in principle, multiple.¹⁶

Gaché's words capture the similarities and differences between the organic totality that dialectics search for and the unity that fragments want to achieve. Therefore, we see that fragments do not necessarily mean the destruction of unity or segregation but rather that they provide another way to search for unity, another way to understand the commons that will be fundamental to future communities. If we are able to understand that technology means primarily a form of life, and if alternative forms of life are more desirable than the current consumerism, then it seems that fragmentation in the form of technodiversity might reopen different forms of life. This is why, with China as a primary example, we suggest rediscovering multiple cosmotechnics and reflecting on their implications in the technological imagination and development. In *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics* and *Art and Cosmotechnics* we tried to show the varieties of experience of technology and art by using China as an example, that one could reconstruct a technological thought in China through a reading of the two fundamental categories Dao and Qi (utensil). China is a resource for rethinking the relationship between locality and technology, such as Greece, Japan, Germany, and Brazil. The universality of technology has to be fundamentally questioned from the perspective of technodiversity. We did not intend to claim that a particular Chinese thought could or should succeed European philosophy to rescue the planet; this is anything but philosophical

argument. Philosophical thought derives its strength by responding to a particular problem of its epoch, and another will necessarily succeed it in a different time. The reconstruction of a Chinese or Japanese thought of technology does not pretend to claim that ancient philosophy is adequate to address contemporary issues; rather, it signifies a reinvention of philosophy in light of the planetary technological condition. This is the contribution of non-European thought, not in any form of the ready-made or mystification, but as individuation qua reinvention of thinking.

If reason progresses throughout the course of world history, then it must not progress into an endpoint qua a dead end, where it will become unreason. This is why the eschatological thinking of our time should be challenged, not just because it is a particular temporal concept but also because it dominates the imagination of technological development: a technological apocalypse awaits us in the near future. When reason marches planetarily, it must allow and facilitate a *diversity* to manifest as the *universal* and simultaneously sublimate the contradictions without imposing domination, namely, to turn a particularity into a universality. The universalization of diversity should be strictly distinguished from the universalization of homogeneity, for the latter does not mean becoming negentropic; on the contrary, it could mean becoming highly entropic, in the sense that it disrupts the whole milieu. For example, if a pesticide is used universally without respect for the specifics of the ecosystem, the devastating result could be far more costly than the problem it was intended to cure. The universalization of pesticides is a counterexample of technodiversity, albeit a simplistic one as it doesn't encompass the spiritual dimension.

§34. Sovereignty Seen from the Perspective of Technodiversity

Where could we identify sovereignty in this fragmented world? Will it wither away, or will it take a different form? Throughout this work, we have emphasized that sovereignty is that which dwells in the megamachine and that which attempts to take control of it from within. When the sovereign loses control of the megamachine, there is no longer sovereignty—this is the lesson Schmitt derived from his reading of Hobbes's *Leviathan*. The megamachine evolves, and sovereignty has to renew itself in order to catch up with new types of machinery. The sovereign is always in tension with the megamachine while, at the same time, it cannot do without the megamachine. A third party that tries to unify all the nation-states

without paying attention to the nation-states' specific relation to their own megamachines will also fail to understand the dynamics of these states. Therefore, it can only try to mitigate the tensions through negotiation and administration; however, it does not eliminate the problem. The competition of the megamachines becomes increasingly synchronized in the process of planetarization so that a country can only show the power of its sovereignty through technological means, directly reflected in military power, and indirectly through the implication of techno-science in the economy. In this sense, we live in the epoch of the planetary *enframing* in the sense of Heidegger.

Today the relationship between sovereignty and the megamachine is in full tension, and indeed, a gap seems to be enlarging further and further. Because the megamachine cannot be tamed by the legal, social, and political system, the decisionist approach is intuitively adopted to allow the sovereignty to attain its highest power by suspending laws that used to maintain the functioning of the megamachine. While the megamachine is growing planetarily, sovereignty is losing its power to intervene in the operation of the megamachine. In this case, a state of exception is likely to be declared. Cryptocurrency could be a good example here when we see that its extrastatic property—in the sense that it does not fall completely within the legal system of a particular state—tends to subvert the existing financial system under the control of the state. Extrastatic entities have increased significantly in the past decade mostly because of the rapid development of digital technological systems, which is moving faster than that of the human system. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that the manifestation of sovereignty as that which decides on exception is becoming more and more normalized today. In other words, it is not only that the state becomes more and more abusive with power, but also because it is no longer in control of the planetary situation, and in order to maintain its internal stability, it has to frequently suspend laws or establish new laws in order to restore the stability of the society; this endows itself with more and more power to intervene into the everyday life of citizens. The second approach could be achieved by using surveillance technologies in all aspects of every life so that no accidents will be allowed, or all accidents could be normalized.

We are not attempting to defend the state, but rather we want to illustrate the idea according to which the tensions between the sovereign power and the megamachine constitute the drive of its individuation. Technological

competition, together with its economic implication, will continue enlarging the megamachine and its organs. At the same time, state sovereignty will struggle to increase its power through surveillance technologies and declaring states of exception. As a result, we might observe two extreme situations: first, the state will become increasingly vulnerable to social media, as already observed in some presidential elections, and it will continue to become so, while liberals will continue to speak about the freedom of speech and at the same time contradictorily attempt to limit technological innovation; second, the state will dominate the innovation of technology, which also means that innovation will be largely limited. The first extreme case today is likely found in the so-called liberal states, and the second extreme case is in the so-called authoritarian states. In other words, neither liberalism nor authoritarianism can answer today's technological question.

Therefore, the immunological analysis of Esposito and, to some extent, that of Giorgio Agamben is witness to the disjunction between the state and the megamachine, even though the root of this disjunction for them was never formulated as a technological question but rather analyzed as a philological problem by tracing the history of political concepts in European thought. This is also the limit of the immunological analysis, even though Esposito is aware of the challenge of technological globalization, and his philological work is more than plausible. The limit is not so much due to the immunological analysis since the logical operations such as self–other, inclusive–exclusion (or exclusive–inclusion) are still effective today. Instead, the limit comes from the fact that the megamachine has been largely undermined in the immunological analysis—it only appears at the end of Esposito's genealogy. Legislation was once an effective approach to regulating the development of the machine by defining its range of use. However, globalization has intensified the possibility of autoimmune attacks, so the attack against the other could easily become an attack against oneself. During the preceding unilateral globalization, it was still possible to distinguish between self and other, friend and foe. After the Covid-19 pandemic and especially since the Sino-American conflict, the return to state sovereignty as the affirmation of a multipolar world—hence why Emmanuel Macron after his visit to China in 2023 declared that “Strategic autonomy should be the combat of Europe”¹⁷—does not resolve the immunological problem, but only affirms it. This return risks being a demonstration of the Schmittian discourse and the failure to avoid the same

destiny, but more fundamentally, the question of technology is reduced again to an economic one.

We demonstrated in chapter 6, via our reading of Bergson, that this immunological problem is precisely an organological one. Today's hubris, produced by an organological expansion far beyond Bergson's imagination, cannot be resolved by adding new laws or producing more surveillance machines. On the one hand, we see how the spatial revolution (in the sense of Carl Schmitt) has imposed a new challenge to the international order and its legal framework; on the other hand, we are not dealing with one or two technologies but rather a new industrial revolution based on artificial intelligence. AI is the new industrial revolution's equivalent to the steam engine and electrical power. In the same way that the steam engine constituted a mastery over the thermodynamic process, AI constitutes mastery over the information process. Here we will have to understand information in two senses: first, *in*-formation, that which implies the autopoietic process of the system (in the sense of Varela, as seen in chapter 3), which we call self-organization or unsupervised learning; second, *in*-formation, that which gives form to things, and we should probably add that not only forms but also that which gives commands and permissions. The *nomos* of the Earth will cease to be of human affairs; it will be determined more and more by the power of machines—as we have been trying to point out through our reading of Schmitt's elementary philosophy. The evolution of AI is driven by data and the increasing computational power of microchips (there are, of course, many other factors behind the evolution of AI since a planetary network of technologies virtually sustains it); in other words, whoever has more structured data is likely to develop a stronger AI in the long run, because empiricism and pattern recognition are still the basic principles of the “intelligence” in question, which has already unleashed a tremendous amount of power.

Currently, ethicists are worried that the race toward AGI (artificial general intelligence) will become destructive because there is not enough time to enact new regulations, and artificial intelligence's strong competitiveness will unleash evil. The technologists are the modern equivalent to Epimetheus, those who will finally open Pandora's box. When the box is opened, we may imagine that if legislation cannot totally limit the development and use of AI, a state of emergency would most likely be declared to suspend certain access to technologies or the operation of certain technical

systems. Should we then open Pandora's box? If Epimetheus knew what would happen upon opening the box, would he still have opened it? However, could we then still pose this question? Massimo Cacciari suggests that the age of Prometheus came to pass, and it is now succeeded by the age of Epimetheus. Cacciari goes back to the meaning of Prometheus as foresight and Epimetheus as hindsight and identifies Prometheus with the Christian *katechon*, which is not reduced to *technē* but rather understood as *sophia*.¹⁸ The age of Epimetheus marks the dissolution of political wisdom and the reduction of the world to a system, where all conflicts could be reduced to calculation.¹⁹ Thus Cacciari announces that "Prometheus has withdrawn—or has once again been crucified on his rock, and Epimetheus is at large and in our world opening ever newer Pandora's boxes."²⁰ By this he means that the age of Epimetheus will be the age of insecurity and permanent crisis, in contrast to great wars and revolutions that belonged to the age of the Christian *katechon*.

Cacciari's analysis of the Christian *katechon*, however, ends in a despair, a position that is shared by many others who identify technology with calculation. It is also on this point that we could recognize the value of Cacciari's analysis and at the same time the weakness of it due to a conventional interpretation of technology. One thing is clear, Epimetheus has no other option but to open Pandora's box, since it is a *gift*. Bergson recognized this "natural gift" clearly when he commented on what was to be machines' new vocation. The decision is not to reject mechanism outright but rather to recognize mechanism itself as a gift, with the responsibility of incorporating it into an opposing tendency: *Elpis* in Pandora's box.²¹ What is urgently demanded is a social-political thought capable of interrupting the stereotype of technology and formulating a political economy of the spirit that incorporates such a countertendency. It is not our intention to reconstruct a political theology by identifying this countertendency with Cacciari's definition of the *katechon*—in this sense the project of Cacciari remains a political theology, and we could understand both of them as an epoch-making power. However, this social-political thought can only arrive from a thorough analysis of the genesis of technicity—and this is precisely the unfinished project of Simondon.

Indeed, the purpose of the current work has been to analyze the megamachine from the perspectives of political epistemology.²² And it is through this analysis that we would like to outline a political thought that addresses the impasse we are currently confronting. We must conceive

a new interpretation of sovereignty along this line of inquiry. But, given that many authors have declared the end of sovereignty, stating that sovereignty is a mere fiction, should we still keep the concept of sovereignty? In chapter 5, following Derrida, we considered sovereignty as an unconditional power, and this is the pharmacological nature of sovereignty: it could impose a totalizing tendency, and it could equally use this power to shield off from external influences such as imperialism. For example, today the European political leaders, in the wake of the Sino-American conflict, want to return to state sovereignty and autonomy. However, our reading will inevitably impose a new task on sovereignty if we want to preserve it—a question that we raised at the end of chapter 5. This new task will require sovereignty to open a new epistemological condition that transforms the megamachine and radically renews its relation to it. We have been trying to address this with the cosmopolitical question through the lens of technodiversity and cosmotechnics.

§35. Technodiversity Analyzed via an Anatomy of Technical Objects

The description of technodiversity that we introduced in the previous chapters might reveal its limits since it could be deliberately reduced to *ethos*, which is often associated with a people; as a result, it risks reverting to localism or nationalism that, in turn, leads to mutual isolation. By defending itself based on cultural specificity and historicity, in the name of antiuniversalism, localism often undermines reason and develops into unreason, which is itself unhistorical. It is unhistorical because it claims culture to be static and permanent and thus refuses to act in accordance with the progress of reason. It produces a misunderstanding or even hatred toward locality because it confuses locality with a closed and exclusive localism; indeed, what we mean by locality has nothing to do with localism. The cultural dimension of technodiversity provides a source for us to reflect on the contingency of modern technologies and on ways of resituating them into a locality. To distinguish locality from localism, we will need another element, which I proposed in *Art and Cosmotechnics* as the *individuation of thinking*.²³ The philosophical task today is not to replicate Heidegger's inquiry into "what is called thinking" but to explore "what is individuation of thinking." It is also where non-European philosophy could contribute. The individuation of thinking is pivotal to the vitality of locality, because it challenges both essentialism and arbitrariness. We define individuation in the Simondonian

sense, emphasizing incompatibility rather than hybridity. We recall here that individuation only occurs when an incompatibility emerges and attains a threshold in a saturated system. These incompatibilities will be resolved in individuation, and a new structure will take shape once the system reaches metastability. The process of individuation presupposes incompatibility, and therefore difference and antagonism.

We would like to distinguish between individuation and cross-breeding or *métissage* as Édouard Glissant attempts to do with what he calls *creolization*. Creolization normally means that elements of different cultures are blended to create a new culture, but for Glissant, it means something more. Creolization is like a rhizome that creates multiple roots. For him, creolization is a diversification, “one of the poetic dreams of the expanding West,” but at the same time, an “antidote to the universal empire that this expansion subsumed.”²⁴ This diversification through language, literature, and technology is essential for our imagination of a world to come; as Glissant asks, “How is it possible to come out of seclusion if only two or three languages continue to monopolise the irrefutable powers of technology and their manipulation, which are imposed as the sole path to salvation and energised by their actual effects?”²⁵ For example, during the colonization of Hong Kong, the locals invented a drink called *yuenyeung* (literally, “mandarin duck”), which is a mixture of milk tea (a strong black tea with condensed milk) and coffee. This might stand as an example of *métissage*, which might well become important for one’s everyday life once developed into a habit, but it does not take thinking further; it is simply a mixture of coffee and tea. On the contrary, thinking is not a patchwork; it actualizes itself not through collage but by individuating itself. It is not certain that creolization is entirely equivalent to what we call the individuation of thinking. However, they can both be seen as efforts to think through the difference between simply mixing and diversifying. If creolization is to be understood as a historical process, then perhaps the individuation of thinking could be understood as an analytic model, offering hints concerning future diversification strategies.

In contrast to localism, which is associated with statism and nationalism, we may really only speak of a *locality* when said locality is capable of transformation. Such a transformation is not motivated by a search for a permanent identity but by individuation. We can see that when the development of a locality is only in the hands of a few patriots and nationalists, then that locality is already doomed. The individuation of thinking does

not only take place in the mind of an intellectual; it may occur through intellectual exchange but may also, perhaps more importantly, be realized in the invention and use of technology—this is also the moment when *technology becomes philosophical* and *philosophy becomes technological*.

Besides reflecting on the role and meaning of technology in different cultural contexts and thoughts, we have to return to the technical objects themselves to understand their operations and structures anatomically. This anatomical study should extend beyond the understanding of technical objects as a materialized causal complex (what Simondon calls *concretization*). Following Simondon, we could call this approach *mechanology*. We should emphasize that Simondon's understanding of technology tends to be universal, that it is limited by Western tradition and anthropological imagination.²⁶ Simondon's is an attempt to reflect on the contemporaneity of technology from the perspective of a very generalized notion of "culture." While the term *culture* appears often in Simondon's work and he distinguishes culture (in a narrow sense, meaning upper culture) from Culture (in a general sense),²⁷ his examples predominantly originate from European contexts. This generalized notion of culture is modern since all cultures converge toward the modern industrial culture. According to Simondon, mechanology is the discipline capable of taking technology seriously, not only in understanding the development and evolution of technical objects but also in integrating technology into culture. What he means by the integration of technology into culture is related to the fact that culture has so far only represented technology or technical objects as alien to humanity; for example, we can find in popular literature the depiction of robot revolts and technological apocalypses. Culture (in its narrow sense) is, therefore, not able to do justice to technology and consequently fails to understand the significance of it and its impact. The development of cybernetics for Simondon opens an epoch for a new encyclopedism that might finally make the integration of technology into culture possible. This is also why in the previous section, we called for a prosthetic culture; it is because culture still does not see technical objects as prostheses but only as replacements or as commodities, a problem frequently observed within Marxist analyses. A mechanologist is not an engineer but more a philosophical engineer or an artist who is able to analyze technical objects both technically and philosophically.

Mechanology is a term that Simondon proposed in *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, but it is yet to be systematically developed.

We should carry his task further in order to formulate a systematic methodology for the study of contemporary technical objects. This task will involve an “anatomy” of technical objects, and in so doing, we will have to show how such an anatomy will open a new field of investigations and actions for us. The task, reminiscent of Simondon’s endeavors, warrants multiple monographs; here we will focus on three layers (from an engineering perspective, we can speak about different levels of abstraction). The first layer is hardware, namely, the material support of technical objects; the second is software, which drives the hardware to execute certain commands; and the third is usage. We should note that this division only became possible in the twentieth century when software and hardware were developed separately. This would not have been possible in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when software and hardware could not be completely separated. In the twenty-first century, with the development of cloud computing, the separation between hardware and software from the user’s perspective is completed. This dualism (software versus hardware) is a true demonstration of the false philosophical assumption of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The third layer concerns the use of technical objects at different scales, from the individual to the regional and global application of technical objects. The present problem, however, is that technology has been abstractly thought of as an entity that is simultaneously necessary and universal. Therefore, the space of imagination concerning technical objects is reduced to the constant attempt to catch up with the so-called most advanced technologies. We will have to look into each layer from new perspectives.

First, the potential of separating software and hardware has to be taken as a new possibility. The separation between software and hardware liberated a more speculative form of knowledge from the logical and material constraints of hardware. This epistemological realization in machines may be difficult for many to accept since it appears to be an affirmation of a certain classical dualism; yet, this distinction in machines between hardware and software opens a new approach that is profoundly different from a knowledge of cognition modelled on the human. The human is one whose body and soul cannot be separated; however, the separation between soul and body is precisely the feature of the machine. To be more precise, this does not mean that software can function without hardware, but rather that the software could run on any hardware of the same model or those compatible. Even Simondon did not notice this radical change

in his analysis of technical objects, since, for him, living in the time of electronic components such as the diode, triode, and transistors, the individualization of technical objects was still very much limited to hardware, while a modern portable, pocket-sized computer only belonged to fictional scenarios.

Second, the use of technical objects has been dominated by the economic rationality of profit making; in other words, the participation of technical objects is more concerned with economic activities than technical activities. For example, the duration between launches of new products within the same series has shortened, with the new products showing minimal or insignificant technical progress. In this sense, the development of technical objects is conditioned by economic considerations, and it often sacrifices the technological possibilities in favor of some decorative functions. The economic reason that dominates the development of technology in the name of innovation blinds people from understanding the potential of technology in liberating human beings from social and political constraints, which were often unwisely and unreasonably imposed from without. This argument conflicts with historical materialism because the latter implies technological determinism by amplifying the relation between technology and economic activities. The reduction of the technological to the economical obscures the complexity of the structure and operation of technical objects.

For sure, each of these layers carries its own significance. However, it appears that the second layer is increasing in importance because it is only recently that a complete separation of software and hardware has become achievable (we stress and confine the debate to technology without extending to that between the body and the mind). We will, therefore, focus on this layer in the following section and discuss the other layers in the later part of this chapter. Indeed, software opens a new form of participation, or we might say a new form of democracy. That is, software should not merely be understood as operation or execution; instead, we would like to push forward the claim that every software contains a set of assumptions. These assumptions are, at the same time, epistemological, ontological, and cosmological. We will use three examples to elaborate on this claim and suggest some entry points where interventions could be carried out.

First, let us consider Chinese medicine. In Chinese medicine, there are a set of ontological assumptions, for example, *ch'i*, *yin*, and *yang*, and these entities are not to be found in physical forms; they are instead adopted

from cosmology, with the body considered a microcosmos. These ontological entities—ontological in the sense that it concerns what *there is*—greatly contrast with modern medicine, where ontological categories are proved either by demonstration or induction. Besides these ontological and cosmological assumptions, in Chinese medicine, we also find epistemological assumptions such as those that might assimilate to the modern notion of “holism,” that is, there is an emphasis on the harmony between the *yin* and the *yang*. In the above example, we could say that all these assumptions are grounded in a cosmological and noetic specificity. It is possible, as many researchers do today, to analyze the biochemical compositions of the herbs used in Chinese medicine and evaluate them by confirming if they match those used in Western medicine; however, this reductionism is a restricted scientism that destroys conceptual distinctions.

Second, epistemological assumptions are not only limited to cultural differences; sometimes, they stem from sociological stereotypes. Generally, we can question the assumptions in a contemporary application, such as a social network. A social network assumes different entities, such as an individual, a friend, a group, or a community; a social relation is a line between two dots, and a group is known as an assemblage of atoms. These assumptions are already present in the design process forerun by the social psychologist Jacob Moreno’s sociometry, and today they are applied in graph analysis by computer scientists.²⁸ We can also extend the concept of the social network to that of the modern state, in which each individual is considered a social atom, and the society is a cluster of collective social atoms; the state is, therefore, that which organizes these atoms and groups of atoms. And it remains to be seen if these assumptions can be generally accepted or whether they are merely contingent or even problematic in the sense that they could be otherwise. From an anthropological point of view, there has been no society that started with a bunch of random individuals; instead, we see that the collective is always presupposed, be that a family or a tribe. The contemporary social network reflects the individualism of our society; however, it also amplifies this individualism to a greater extent than what Hegel observed in his time. Today, the state lacks the necessary capacity to counteract this individualism effectively. Over a decade ago, I worked with a group of computer scientists on a social network based on collectives rather than individuals, and this might serve as an example of how to carry out research on technodiversity. While all technologies claim to be universal, they are all predicated on certain epistemological,

ontological, and cosmological assumptions. Unfortunately, the ability to question these assumptions is not fostered in engineering courses, at least not in present university curricula.

Third, this methodology could be extended to studying the most advanced technologies we are confronting today. Historian Slava Gerovitch did an excellent job showing that even though most AI scientists claim to have developed a universal human intelligence model, such models always incorporated different social, cultural, and political considerations. This difference was reflected in the distinctive paths of Soviet cybernetics and American cybernetics. For example, the Simon-Newell model assumes that “search” is the most fundamental intelligent activity. However, Soviet scientists rejected this approach by criticizing that the “search model” already assumed a given problem, whereas the point is to *define* a problem, something that was then developed as the Pospelov/Pushkin reflection (*soobrazhenie*) model. The same goes for the Von Neumann model, which is based on competition and the understanding of the rules of the game. In contrast, the Soviet Gelfand/Tsetlin Model emphasizes expedient, minimum interactions and fundamental uncertainty.²⁹ Indeed, Gerovitch convincingly showed how these differences were shaped by their social, cultural, and political environment. He gave two metaphors to understand the difference between American AI and Soviet AI: American AI could be symbolized as a rat race in the labyrinth, and the Soviet AI as a bat hunting a moth in turbulence. Gerovitch’s historical work allows us to understand how a locality determines contemporary technology without being aware, since the researcher or inventor might simply regard it as universal. In other words, we require an epistemological reconstruction of major technological paradigms, such as cybernetics and artificial intelligence.³⁰

This line of thinking has not been taken seriously enough, and the approach toward technodiversity has not been adequately analyzed; instead, capitalism in its abstract form often haunts the dream of any alternative since all alternatives risk either fading away into obscurity or being absorbed by capital itself. The truth is that the operation of capitalism is also based on a set of ontological, epistemological, and cosmological assumptions. Capitalism is neither an object nor a persona but rather a dominant system of knowledge that effectively mobilizes all forms of energy to obtain optimal and long-lasting profit. Such a system must evolve to overcome antiquated ontological, epistemological, and cosmological assumptions, such as how neoclassical economic theory was criticized due to its outdated

epistemology based on Newtonian mechanics, as discussed in chapter 3. The separation of society into base and superstructure completely misses the epistemological question because it is still based on a mechanical model; disregarding its epistemological foundation could lead to conceptual mistakes. Instead, we suggest that resistance emerges from questioning and challenging these assumptions and the finality of the system. Even when one stands on the opposite side of capitalism to criticize every aspect of it, one might not be producing anything new, that is, other than changing some conditions to make it more “ethical” and “humanitarian”—for example, allowing a longer lunch break or improving operational equipment and the working environment. The overcoming of capitalism will not occur through the technological development of full automation; instead, it has to be done through an epistemological shift. One cannot also reduce machines to purely economic terms, such as fixed capital; it is precisely on this point that Simondon reproached Marx. Simondon did not formulate it as we do here. Still, he clearly showed how the epistemological paradigm brought about by cybernetics must be taken as a critical occasion to reconsider a new social, technological program, or a third encyclopedism, as he calls it. Therefore, accelerating toward full automation or not is a false response to capitalism because it does not necessarily produce an epistemological change. It is true that by accelerating something to an extreme, it may turn toward a different direction, but this is only possible when a strong vitality is already assumed in the system, such as in dialectics. Technodiversity should be thematized and consciously integrated into the thinking and making of technology instead of being only a subject of historical reflection. If we are going to imagine planetary politics, then a *conscious* take on the question of technodiversity will be necessary.

What we have done so far is to show, first, how the concept of universality and sovereignty could be reinterpreted from the perspective of technodiversity. Second, through the anatomy of technical objects, we have tried to reopen the question of technology that has thus far been methodologically closed both in the humanities and the engineering disciplines. Furthermore, since we can claim that there has been a technodiversity and that this technodiversity has been undermined in the process of modernization, then the question is not only how to preserve nonmodern technologies as if they are dead specimens to be displayed in a museum of technology, but also, and more importantly, how to reflect on the future of technodiversity *through* these traditions and *beyond* them. The ques-

tion of the matrix between technodiversity, noodiversity, and biodiversity constitutes what I call *epistemological diplomacy*. It is also a framework we would like to advance for the future of planetary politics. This epistemological diplomacy also responds to what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls *epistemicide*, meaning the displacement and disappearance of local and indigenous knowledge due to modernization.³¹

§36. Technodiversity as Epistemological Diplomacy

Epistemicide leads to homogeneity, the entropic becoming of nonmodern society—the subject of an entropology à la Lévi-Strauss.³² Epistemological diplomacy diversifies and surpasses the limit of diplomacy based on economic and military negotiations. We want to emphasize that we are not opposing philosophy to technology. On the contrary, we are more tempted to say that the future of philosophy is technology, and the future of technology is philosophy. This is also the condition for developing a *Tractatus Politico-Technologicus*. If we follow Heidegger that Western philosophy is already completed by and in cybernetics, then to avoid the self-destruction of the human being in the age of the *Gestell*, Heidegger proposes to think what is called thinking, for he distinguishes thinking from philosophy. Thinking, in contrast to philosophy, is the other beginning of the Western civilization. The other beginning is the one that negates the tendency of mere calculation. But does this mean that one should abandon technology in favor of thinking? Certainly, if everyone decides to abandon technology simultaneously, then a negation of the tendency of mere calculation would be conceivable; however, even if this were to happen, it wouldn't reduce the destructive potential of modern technology, nor would it bring reason to a new terrain. Technology should once again become philosophical (or *vernünftig*), in the sense that it will have to become reflective of itself, not only constructing reflective models to execute certain functions. This reflectivity of technology does not imply either the superbrain envisioned by Teilhard de Chardin, or the singularity envisioned by transhumanists, but rather an organology capable of producing *differences*. If we suggest technodiversity as a challenge that reason has to take up, it is because for us, fundamentally, the organic totality—which is the aim of the superbrain and the singularity—has to be fragmented into different orders and the spiritualization of matter has to take place by contesting the homogenization of digital technology that has been solely guided by speed and efficiency.

How can technodiversity be developed when all states compete on a homogeneous technological platform judged by speed, efficiency, and volume? The *Großraum* Schmitt aspired to realize did not take us much further than the nation-state promised in the eighteenth century. The multipolar world is no other than the redistribution of world power to the major geopolitical players; the nature of politics will remain the same as that of the nation-states if technodiversity is not considered. Beyond the rhetorical façade, the *Großraum* is nothing other than a military and economic program of the superstates that establishes military bases and economic centers beyond the sovereign territories and expands military influence through space exploration. Outer space is integrated into the *Großraum* as well as being a battlefield for future warfare.

Can philosophers still dream of perpetual peace, or is the pursuit of perpetual peace something that should no longer be aspired to? Maybe here we can return to Kant's treatise, in which the philosopher confronts the inevitability of war and the desire for perpetual peace. Kant suggests free trade as a candidate to investigate the possibility of perpetual peace. Trade could be considered an *extrastatic* element here since it exceeds the state as an enclosure of people and natural resources. Trade is necessary to any society but produces something external to the state. We are aware that what was once external to the state through trade may be reabsorbed or reintegrated by the market, the "invisible hand," or the cunning of reason, but, in Kant's political thinking, trade also generates *extrastatic* ties and cosmopolitan rights. Trade builds a community between different parties, and those who want to abuse the system will be condemned by the whole network. The unity of the network and the reciprocity between different members will create an equilibrium. However, we know that Kant does not presuppose a preestablished harmony. Instead, Kant is more a Hobbesian in the sense that, for him, asocial sociality is what characterizes human existence. Nature desires discord, and no matter how much humans desire harmony and comfort, nature understands what is best for humans, inflicting them with conflicts.³³ However, in Kant, we find a Rousseauist solution counters the Hobbesian presupposition, for the conflicts have to be balanced by an organic dynamism—international trade.³⁴ Trade is that which can realize the unity of reason at the international level, as Kant expresses so beautifully:

The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a

violation of rights in *one* part of the world is felt *everywhere*. The idea of a cosmopolitan right is therefore not fantastic and overstrained; it is a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international right, transforming it into a universal right of humanity.³⁵

Kant emphasizes *one* and *everywhere* to express the part-whole relation in the organic system: every state has to behave correctly, otherwise they would acquire a negative reputation and be denied entry into other nations. Kant gave us the example of China and Japan and praised their wisdom: when confronted with Western colonizers, China resisted, while Japan only opened to the Dutch. Kant's development of commerce or trade into a political program is consistent with his major philosophical projects laid down in the three *Critiques*. The systematic unity of reason could not be completed by mechanical rules alone, which linearly infer effects from causes; instead, the systematic unity can only rely on a purposiveness without purpose—namely, a purposiveness that cannot be reduced to empirical need. For example, when we ask about the purposiveness of vegetables, it cannot be reduced to providing food for humans or animals. As we mentioned in the previous chapters, in the “Architectonic of Pure Reason” of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant's ambition was to articulate the systematic unity of reason by inquiring into the schematism of ideas as he had done with the schematism of concepts in the *Analytic*.³⁶ For Kant, architectonics means the “art of systems,” and *system*, here, implies an organic relation between the parts and the whole:

By a system, however, I mean the unity of the manifold cognitions under an idea. This idea is reason's concept of the form of a whole insofar as this concept determines a priori both the range of the manifold and the relative position that the parts have among one another. Hence reason's scientific concept contains the whole's purpose and the form of the whole congruent with this purpose.³⁷

In other words, systematicity implies purposiveness, and purposiveness implies an organicity that cannot be reduced to a linear causality. “The Architectonic of Pure Reason” is an unsatisfactory attempt to search for unity between the theoretical-speculative use of reason (a metaphysics of nature) and the practical-moral use of reason (a metaphysics of morals), and the term *purposiveness* only analogically mediated such a unification.

This is because the *Critique of Pure Reason* was largely a treatise on the apodictic use of reason, and the hypothetical use of reason only came to its centrality in the *Critique of Practical Reason* with its clarity determined in the *Critique of Judgment*. The difference between the apodictic and hypothetical use of reason lies in the fact that the former derives the particular from the given universal in the act of subsumption, while for the latter, the universal is only postulated, and it has to be recursively reflected through experience.³⁸ In this sense, the hypothetical use of reason is often regarded as a precursor to reflective judgment.³⁹ It is also why, for Kant, the third *Critique* is the bridge between the first and second *Critiques*. The third, as a bridge between the first two, means that the first two *Critiques* did not yet satisfactorily attain a systematic unity. Purposiveness is not only a structure but also an operation that constantly searches for the universal through reflection. It recursively negates empirical inclinations and immediate interests, exemplified in the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful as pleasure *without interest* and purposiveness *without purpose*. This purposiveness without purpose, when transformed into the language of international politics, is perpetual peace; this, however, also implies the impossibility of arriving at perpetual peace. The possibility to think about the end of morality and the end of nature demands two further assumptions. First is the existence of a higher intelligence, such as the divine being, that makes the a priori nature of purposiveness possible—an argument we find in metaphysics before Kant.⁴⁰ Second, since the universal a priori is absent, the end remains hypothetical, and the searching heuristic and recursive, this searching could be infinite; therefore, the moral law has to postulate the existence of the immortal soul, as only such a duration is adequate.⁴¹ Despite its indefiniteness, we are interested in such a model of operation, one that allows us to grasp how the hypothetical use of reason (or reflective judgment) works and how it might contribute to both the moral end of the individual and the cosmopolitan end of the species.

In the Introduction, we attempted to establish a dialogue with Karatani's *The Structure of World History* by showing that Karatani does not sufficiently discuss the question of unity, and therefore from this point of view, his project undermines the question of political epistemology, which is central to the current work. Karatani's project attempts to renew Kant's proposal for perpetual peace by speculating about a "world republic" or a federation of states. Karatani takes Kant's speculative use of reason seriously. The world state, the hypothetical end, would be a renewal of the gift

economy; at the same time, it sublates both capital and state. The world state would be something unrealizable while remaining desirable; even though we might never arrive at it, without such an idea of the world state, we would “lapse into schizophrenia.”⁴² The world republic is founded on universal religion, and in this sense, it must become a faith, one that permits us to build a plane of consistency:

Kant’s world republic is a regulative idea: it is an index toward which people should gradually attempt to draw close. It is of course only a semblance, but because it is something we cannot do without, it has the status of a transcendental illusion. . . . World republic would be a society in which mode of exchange D has been realized. In fact, this can never be fully realized. Nonetheless, it will persist as an index toward which we gradually move.⁴³

The world republic remains a moral end, analogical to a natural end. As we know, the moral end has legitimacy in this natural end. It is also the reason why Karatani calls it a “cunning of nature,” paraphrasing Hegel’s “cunning of reason.” Here, we are tempted to deconstruct Karatani’s interpretation of Kant by showing that the cunning of nature does not exist, that in Kant there is no philosophy of history, and therefore, a structure of world history would not be possible. However, our aim is not to deconstruct Karatani and his Kantian inspiration. Karatani’s insight is that if there is a world republic in the future, it will be based on exchange. Therefore, one has to approach it from the exteriority of the state. This is, however, a blind spot to many European thinkers because they believe that once Europe changes, the whole world should change in good course. Karatani chose Jürgen Habermas as his straw man; however, there are far too many who think solely from the perspective of interiority. The key questions are: What is to be given as a gift, and how is it to be exchanged? Karatani gave us an imaginary scenario at the end of the book:

Suppose, for example, one country has a revolution that ends with the country making a gift of its military sovereignty to the United Nations. This would of course be a revolution in a single nation. But it wouldn’t necessarily result in external interference or international isolation. No weapon can resist the power of the gift. It has the power to attract the support of many states and to

fundamentally change the structure of the United Nations. For these reasons, such a revolution in one country could in fact lead to simultaneous world revolution.

Karatani did not argue that this would necessarily occur; on the contrary, as a moral end, this may never transpire. Whether a country can truly relinquish sovereignty to the UN, which is ruled by a few superpowers, is one concern, but whether this might lead to a simultaneous global revolution is another. As we already saw in the introduction, Geoff Mann and Joel Wainwright in *Climate Leviathan* followed Karatani's approach, sketching a quadratic scheme of climate international politics: Climate Leviathan, Climate Behemoth, Climate Mao, and Climate X. Climate X is analogical to the Mode of Exchange D in the sense that it is not yet realizable and probably will not be realized. Climate X is a refusal of sovereignty in general, as the authors write, "Must we have sovereignty? Is a nonsovereign entity impossible? Even if it is a utopian gesture, the answer must be no."⁴⁴ Both refusing sovereignty and giving sovereignty as gifts are direct refusals of the nation-state-capital, which would certainly open a new planetary situation. Unfortunately, the recent Covid-19 pandemic and geopolitical drift have further postponed such a possibility. Even though Karatani argued that the growth of India and China would not impose a new hegemony because capitalism would have ended by then,⁴⁵ he seems to have ignored Carl Schmitt's work on the *Großraum* and the epistemological foundation of reciprocity and community in Kant. This is not to discredit Karatani's analysis. On the contrary, his insight on exchange should be taken further. And for this reason, we should return to Kant and his contemporaries.

International trade establishes relationships between different states that are not solely the property of any one state but rather form a whole and are governed by the whole. In this sense, trading is the assimilation of the regulative principle in which Kant sees the possibility of a balance of power based on reciprocity. Trading is, of course, not possible without the use of transportation tools—an essential part of the megamachine, and it was during Kant's time that marine power became the dominant power in economic and military domains. Königsberg was an important port of the Baltic Sea, and Kant observed the importance of the economic value of trading and the knowledge it brought. However, all technologies that rely on dominant technologies, and trade is no exception, are pharmacologi-

cal. Any technology that might appear as a remedy could quite as easily become toxic, and a new configuration of the various *pharmaka* has to be attempted in order to make use of the toxicity by turning it into something beneficial. Reason goes astray when trading is no longer guided by the purposiveness of cosmopolitan right and perpetual peace, but rather its end is reduced to the economic desire of colonialism and the desire to dominate others.

This extrastatic entity was later problematized by Fichte in his *The Closed Commercial State* (1800). Fichte's treatise picked up what Hume called the "jealousy of trade" and showed that economic rivalry between the European states will not lead to perpetual peace but its opposite. In our contemporary language, we might say that trade is war by other means; as we read in the news almost every day, the trade war between the United States and China is exemplary of this fact. Trading does not necessarily imitate nature so as to become the guarantee of perpetual peace. Fichte cites the Dutch as a prime example, who uprooted spice plants and dumped spices overboard to raise the price of spices in the European market.⁴⁶ International trade as an algorithm of peace fails, but instead, we observe the hubris engendered in its advancement, which may eventually lead to a return to Hobbes's state of nature:

This war will become ever more fierce and unjust and dangerous in its consequences as the world's population increases, the commercial state grows through additional acquisitions, production and the arts advance, and finally, as a result, the quantity of goods coming into circulation, and with this the needs of the population, increase and multiply. When the way of life among the nations was simpler, this had gone on without great injustice or oppression, but now that needs have grown greater, it has turned into the most screaming injustice, a source of great misery.⁴⁷

Fichte suggests isolating commerce by building a national financial system based on its own currency. In this vision, the closure of the commercial state will mitigate the jealousy of trade and eliminate the rivalry from economic competition. Fichte, however, does not intend to prevent people from contacting those from different territories. Instead of trade, he proposes knowledge or science (*Wissenschaft*) as the universal subject that might bind all people together. Science, therefore, replaces trade as

the extrastatic entity that, better than the economy, will promote reason among the peoples. Fichte suggests a decoupling of politics from economy and economy from science. *Science* alone will be the candidate that unites all the people on Earth:

The only thing that entirely eliminates all differences between peoples and their circumstances and that belongs merely and solely to the human being as such and not to the citizen, is science. Through science, and through this alone, men will and should continue to be connected to one another once their separation into peoples is, in every other respect, complete. This alone will remain their common possession when they have divided up everything else among themselves. No closed state will eliminate this connection. Instead it will encourage it, since the enrichment of science through the unified force of the human race will even advance the state's own isolated earthly ends. Academies financed by the state will introduce the treasures of foreign literature into the country, with the treasures of domestic literature offered in exchange.⁴⁸

Of course, we remain skeptical when we consider Fichte's suggestion that science, as the incarnation of reason, shall stand outside human affairs and replace the transcendent that unites the human species. We might also add to Fichte's observation that, nowadays, it is not just trade, as it was at the turn of the nineteenth century, but also techno-science, which has become more than ever a battlefield between nation-states. On the one hand, international trade becomes a means of warfare—for example, the United States' relentless effort to block China from accessing microchip technologies and prevent China's technological products from entering the Western market.⁴⁹ War, on the other hand, now takes the shape of cyberattacks and the purposeful spread of disinformation, misinformation, and so on. Could we, of course, imitate Fichte by suggesting a treatise on the *Closed Technological State*, in which not only commerce but also technology would be fully isolated and where only fixed, small amounts of import and export of necessities remain possible? If this were to occur, it might multiply the products that would be restricted beyond commerce and technology, and we might end up with isolated tribes. Unfortunately, this seems to be the tendency now regarding the technological war, in which the competition is centered on transfer of technological knowledge.

Extending Fichte's question, we might want to ask whether epistemological diplomacy in the twenty-first century is at all possible for us. If there is diplomacy in Fichte's closed commercial state, then it is a diplomacy of knowledge or, more precisely, scientific knowledge. It was, therefore, knowledge, instead of trade, that should become the guarantee of perpetual peace for Fichte. However, the Enlightenment, as we know it, in the name of reason, promotes a particular type of knowledge (i.e., philosophy) with its advanced technologies. In his 2018 article "How the Enlightenment Ends," Henry Kissinger made a rather controversial claim that the Enlightenment, as a movement of the universalization of philosophy, was put to an end by artificial intelligence because the latter completed the age of reason. He suggests that today's task is no longer how the use of technology might spread Enlightenment philosophy but is to find a guiding philosophy for AI technology.⁵⁰ In other words, the relation between Enlightenment philosophy and technology is reversed. Technology is no longer in the service of philosophy, and Fichte's thesis that science or philosophy is that which maintains the connection of humanity no longer holds. Consequently, philosophy has to reinvent itself, given this reversion.

We have no intention to negate the Enlightenment if the Enlightenment entails the planetary reason discussed throughout this book and not the homogenization of knowledge and thought.⁵¹ Today, it might be too easy to claim that the West manipulates reason because that would imply that reason is homogeneous and substantial, which we know is not the case. The progress of reason should be the opposite of homogenization: it should enable diversity and renew the language of coexistence. In this sense, Kant's most profound comment on the Enlightenment is probably not his "An Answer to the Question: 'What Is Enlightenment?'" but rather "The Architectonic of Pure Reason." However, today we need new diplomacy to exploit the new extrastatic relations other than what Kant speculated regarding trade, which in its modern form includes logistic and economic transactions, tourism, and so forth. This epistemological diplomacy must go beyond the current economic and military competition. It is not only about building scientific communities, as universities have been doing for centuries, but also the development of programs that might facilitate the development of technodiversity, noodiversity, and biodiversity. This is the path we intended to take, beginning with Hegel's political state and Schmitt's *Großraum* to demonstrate how the philosophical justifications of political forms could be viewed through the lens of

political epistemologies and technologies. The debate on mechanism and organism has been fundamental to European thought and the inquiry concerning humanity. The epistemological diplomacy that we envision should be seen as a program that allows for the development of technodiversity, noodiversity, and biodiversity under the guidance of reason but also allows for reason to move beyond territorial boundaries and toward the planetary. Technodiversity does not mean that we will have to abandon Western technological inventions such as the internet simply because they are Western; this would be both impossible and foolish. However, it has become necessary to produce bifurcations in the current technological tendencies by inquiring into technodiversity and, consequently, formulating a new critique of political economy, as Stiegler proposed.

Like Kant's Perpetual Peace and Karatani's World Republic, we do not know the end; we can only hypothesize and speak "as if" an end is imaginable and attainable. The telos of history remains unknown when the organic condition of philosophizing is surpassed or transcended by the new technological condition, which we suggested in *Recursivity and Contingency* and continued in *Art and Cosmotechnics*. A planetary thinking has to respond to the new condition of philosophizing, seeing it as a beginning rather than an end. However, we are not aspiring to the intervention of a force from without that changes the situation, be that a world war, a climate collapse, or an alien intrusion. This does not mean that it is impossible, but it inevitably regresses into a form of nihilism, and worse, cynicism. A radical transformation of society has to be at the same time material and spiritual. This is also the reason why we have been trying to articulate the possibility of approaching our planetary impasse from the framework of biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity. Readers will certainly find limits in *any* discourse addressing the planetary, and probably will find *any* planetary thinking not expansive enough. A philosopher can only show under what conditions a planetary thinking shall not be possible, and he or she can only attempt to search for it like one crossing the river by feeling for the stones; but what if these stones are unstable under force or are monsters in disguise? It is the task of reason to limit the philosopher's speculation and the task of the philosopher to expand reason, so as to move toward "planetary happiness."⁵²

Notes

Introduction

1. Axelos, *Vers la pensée planétaire*, 19. Toward the end of the introduction, Axelos states clearly an impasse: “Y aurait-il des *nouveautés* possibles, plus ou moins radicales? Pour le moment, aucun prophétisme, aucune rêverie et aucune utopie ne parviennent à dépasser cet état mouvant des choses. Ils restent muets et creux” (42). Axelos thinks that we are perhaps marching toward a planetary thinking that will be a retake (*reprise*) of the past and a preparation of the future.

2. For Heidegger, writing in the 1930s, planetarization implies a planetary lack of sense-making (*Besinnungslosigkeit*), which is not limited to Europe but is also, for example, applicable to the United States and Japan. This lack of sense-making is even more obvious today. Even if European philosophy completely reinvents itself, disruptive technologies will continue throughout the globe; see Heidegger, *GA66 Besinnung* (1938/39), 74.

3. Kant, “Perpetual Peace,” in *Political Writings*, 114.

4. Bruno Latour’s effort is the most remarkable in the past decade. Latour achieved this not only via writings but also through exhibitions and workshops.

5. Among all the outstanding works, just to mention a few, see Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*; Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life*; Connolly, *Facing the Planetary*; Mickey, *Whole Earth Thinking and Planetary Coexistence*; Yusoff, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*.

6. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 1, 188.

7. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1.

8. Caygill, “Heidegger and the Automatic Earth Image.”

9. McLuhan, “At the Moment of Sputnik,” 49.

10. Haeckel, *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen*, vol. 2, 286–87; also quoted by Richards, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, 8, footnote 28.

11. Lovelock, *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*.

12. The film, on the one hand, has a strong emphasis on national pride and, on the other hand, sets a cosmopolitan mission to save the whole of humanity.

13. United Nations, “UN Climate Report: It’s ‘Now or Never’ to Limit Global Warming to 1.5 Degrees,” <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/04/1115452>.

14. Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” 59.

15. For elaboration on thermodynamic ideology and its relation to the post-modern discourse, see Hui, “Lyotard after Us,” 125–37.

16. Before the synchronization in modern logistics, we saw already the synchronizing effect of clocks used in production. As Marx correctly observed in a letter to Engels, “the clock is the first automatic machine applied to practical purpose; the whole theory of production and regular motion was developed through it,” quoted by Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 1, 286.

17. Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, 70.

18. Soulier, *André Leroi-Gourhan*, 287–88.

19. Bataille, *Lascaux ou la naissance de l'art*.

20. Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*.

21. Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 1, 159. “Neglecting the crucial nature of these questions, Leroi-Gourhan reintroduces the very metaphysical notion of *Homo faber*, in a movement that can be found again, for example, in George Bataille . . . a notion opposed to that of *Homo sapiens*. This opposition between technicity and intellect is, however, contradicted by the role given later to writing, as technics, in the constitution of thought.”

22. Kant, *Political Writings*, 106.

23. Bruno Latour with his team worked on this project for many years until his death in 2022. I had the occasion to participate in Latour's project in Shanghai in 2018, and to act as an advisor to the Taipei Biennale 2020, which Latour curated.

24. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 1. In a very different vein, Axelos also considers Hegel as the philosopher who systematized and historicized the becoming thinking of the world and the becoming world of thinking in the nineteenth century, therefore Axelos declares that Hegel's thinking remains unsurpassed, “sa logique n'est pas même comprise et sa philosophie de l'histoire qui en découle n'aura qu'à se radicaliser et se généraliser davantage.” See Axelos, *Vers la pensée planétaire*, 35.

25. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 220.

26. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 224.

27. See Canguilhem, *A Vital Rationalist*, 82.

28. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*.

29. Hegel, “The German Constitution,” in *Political Writings*.

30. This concept of the “organic machine” is taken from Claude Bernard, who distinguishes a mechanical machine from an organic machine that is animal, See Canguilhem, *A Vital Rationalist*, 86. This imaginary organic machine could also be identified in Adam Smith's concept of the market and its invisible hand. Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner compared Adam Smith's invisible hand with Hegel's cunning of reason, but it might be more appropriate to say that they were both influenced by the political epistemology of organism. For Kittsteiner's comment, see *Listen der Vernunft*.

31. Canguilhem, *A Vital Rationalist*, 302.
32. Marx, "Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 206.
33. Günther, *Das Bewußtsein der Maschinen*.
34. For a summary of these statements and criticism of them, see Skinner, "The Sovereign State: A Genealogy," 26–46.
35. Negri, *The End of Sovereignty*, 79.
36. Negri, *The End of Sovereignty*, 72; this summary was pronounced by Roberto Esposito and not Negri himself.
37. Esposito responds by saying "My impression is that the processes triggered in America, Europe, and Asia in the early years of the new century have been going in the opposite direction, as all the latest events have shown most manifestly." Negri, *The End of Sovereignty*, 72.
38. Negri, *The End of Sovereignty*, 73.
39. Negri, *The End of Sovereignty*, 83.
40. Lane, "Why Donald Trump Was the Ultimate Anarchist."
41. Schmitt, *Die drei Arten rechtswissenschaftlichen Denkens*, 46–47.
42. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.
43. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 99.
44. See Strauss, *Leo Strauss on Political Philosophy*.
45. Heidegger, *On Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 186.
46. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 351–55.
47. Schmitt, "Raum und Großraum im Völkerrecht," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 235–36.
48. Mann and Wainwright, *Climate Leviathan*. "Climate Leviathan is a direct descendant from Hobbes' original to Schmitt's sovereign: when it comes to climate, Leviathan will decide and is constituted precisely in the act of decision. It expresses a desire for, and the recognition of, the necessity of a planetary sovereign to seize command, declare an emergency, and bring order to the Earth, all in the name of saving life." This also seems to be something that preoccupies Axelos and which remains problematic if not overstated, when he says in *Vers la pensée planétaire*, 302, that "la souveraineté n'est plus celle d'une cité, d'un empire, d'une nation, d'une classe: la souveraineté atteint son caractère suprême, sa pleine puissance, en cessant d'être souveraineté particulière et en devenant puissance et autorité suprême, pouvoir mondial déferlant sur les—plus qu'échouant aux—citoyens du cosmos dans leur totalité. Aucune personne et aucune institution ne portent plus ce pouvoir."
49. See Nail, *Theory of the Earth*.
50. See Stengers, *In Catastrophic Times*, chapter 4, where Stengers considers the naming of Gaia as a continuation of the legacy of the twentieth century, especially the work of Lovelock and Margulis, as well as a refusal of the sheer rationality that undermines the figure of Gaia as irrationality. Along the same

line, I distinguish rational, irrational, and nonrational in *Recursivity and Contingency* (2019) and *Art and Cosmotechnics* (2021), where the nonrational cannot be equated with either rational or irrational. A true rationalism is not that which excludes the nonrational, but one that rationalizes the nonrational. This distinction is applied in this book for what concerns the question of reason, since reason, when it proceeds toward the absolute (or the true universal), is not only pursuing the rational and eliminating the irrational but will also have to incorporate the nonrational.

51. Mann and Wainwright in their *Climate Leviathan* followed Karatani's approach and gave us a quadratic scheme of a "Climate Leviathan," "Climate Mao," "Climate Behemoth," and a "Climate X." The "Climate X," like the Mode D, is undetermined.

52. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 305; what Karatani writes about Schmitt is rather confusing: while Schmitt claims that the world state only means the end of the political state, since it means unity and homogeneity, i.e. consumerism, Karatani commented that Schmitt means the state could be abolished via exchange.

53. Canguilhem, "Machine and Organism," in *Knowledge of Life*; the trajectory of a general organology from Bergson to Canguilhem, Simondon, and Stiegler is further pursued in *Recursivity and Contingency*, chapters 3 and 4.

54. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*.

55. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 119.

56. Hui, "For a Planetary Thinking."

1. World Spirit as Planetary Thinking

1. Carl Schmitt reproached historians such as Arnold Toynbee for offering only historical truth, see Schmitt, *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 531.

2. H. S. Harris's word, cited by De Laurentiis, *Hegel's Anthropology*, 11

3. Kapp, *Der konstituierte Despotismus und die konstitutionelle Freiheit*,

85. "Je mechanischer ein Staat regie wird, desto despotischer wird er regiert, je organischer ein Staat sich regiert, des freier ist er. Also Mechanismus gleich Despotismus, Organismus gleich Freiheit"; also cited by Hans-Martin Sass, "Die philosophische Erdkunde des Hegelianers Ernst Kapp," 168–69n2.

4. Deutsch, *The Nerves of Government*, 30.

5. Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 3.

6. Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 266–67. "The very term 'organic unity' cannot be used by him in the same sense as it was used by Schelling, the real philosopher of romanticism. Hegel's unity is a dialectical unity, a unity of contraries. It not only allows but even requires forceful tensions and oppositions. From this point of view, Hegel had to reject the aesthetic ideals of Schelling and

Novalis. Novalis had spoken of the state as a 'beautiful individual.' In his essay on *Christianity or Europe*, Novalis dreamed of a unity of all Christian nations under [266] the guidance and authority of a universal, a real 'catholic' church. This ideal of political and religious peace was not that of Hegel's. According to him, it is necessary to introduce into political thought what he calls 'the seriousness, the suffering, the patience, and the labour of the negative.'

7. Ross, *On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy*, 15.

8. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History of a Cosmopolitan Purpose," in *Political Writings*, 50.

9. Strauss, *On Hegel*, 303.

10. Kant, *Political Writings*, 201–36.

11. Strauss, *On Hegel*, 305.

12. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, §64, "organization" is my italicization.

13. See Sedgwick, "The State as Organism," 172. In Kant, "explanatory notes," *Critique of Judgment*, 361, the editor notes, "It is unclear whether Kant is alluding here to the American Revolution of 1776–83 or revolutionary developments that had begun in France in 1789."

14. Sedgwick, "The State as Organism," 173.

15. In the *Science of Logic*, "Doctrine of Essence," chapter 2 "Actuality," Hegel shows how to understand the necessity of contingency in three movements: formal necessity, real necessity, and absolute necessity. I examined Hegel's argument in *Recursivity and Contingency*, 99–101; please refer there for a more detailed account of this argument.

16. To my knowledge, Bernard Mabilie seems to be the only scholar who uses ontogenesis and autogenesis to describe the individuation of the spirit; see Mabilie, *Hegel*, 306: "fonde la nécessité de l'Absolu. La genèse est une ontogenèse et l'ontogenèse une autogenèse." Concerning whether Hegel's ontogenesis is a preformism, an idea that was popular during Hegel's time, Hegel refused it, arguing that preformism implies that there is no development. Ontogenesis or autogenesis reintroduces contingency into its development. For a more detailed discussion see Harris, "How Final Is Hegel's Rejection of Evolution?" and Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency*, 92–93.

17. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §387. The three main forms of the subject spirit are soul, consciousness, and Spirit as such. The soul is not yet spirit, as Hegel explains in the following paragraph §388: "Spirit that has become has . . . the meaning that nature self-sublates over against itself [*an ihr selbst*] as the untrue, so that spirit presupposes itself as this universality, yet no longer a self-external one of bodily singularity, but one that is, in its concreteness and totality, simple universality in which spirit is soul, not yet spirit." (*The Encyclopaedia Logic* §388) The German original: "Der gewordene Geist hat daher den Sinn, daß die Natur an ihr selbst als das Unwahre sich aufhebt und der Geist so sich als diese nicht

mehr in leiblicher Einzelheit außer sich seiende, sondern in ihrer Konkrektion und Totalität einfache Allgemeinheit voraussetzt, in welcher er Seele, noch nicht Geist ist.”

18. Witt, “Dialectic, Motion, and Perception: De Anima Book I,” 177.

19. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 994b10–15.

20. See Aubenque, “Hegel et Aristote,” 103–4. The Hegel passages are in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. 2, 163–64; also quoted by Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 43–44: “We may be astonished that Hegel, translating ἐνέργεια by *Tätigkeit* and assimilating activity to movement, misunderstands several Aristotelian texts, beginning with those which define movement as an ‘incomplete act’ (thus prohibiting any assimilation of the pure Act to movement in general), and also those in which Aristotle clarifies the divine act as an act of immobility (ἐνέργεια ἀκίνησις). If Hegel considers himself authorized to posit the identity of the divine act and that of movement, it is because he interprets the immobility expressly attributed by Aristotle to the Prime Mover as ‘self-generating motion’ (*Selbstbewegung*) or circular motion (*Kreisbewegung*).”

21. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 143–44; *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie II*, 158–59; also cited by Malabou, *Future of Hegel*, 52.

22. Malabou, *Future of Hegel*, 53, quoting Dominique Janicaud, we might also find a similar interpretation in Derrida’s reading of Aristotle where God, the prime mover is considered as a circular movement; see Derrida, *Rogues*, 15: “Neither moving itself nor being itself moved, the actuality of this pure energy sets everything in motion, a motion of return to self, a circular motion, Aristotle specifies, because the first motion is always cyclical. And what induces or inspires this is a desire. God, the pure actuality of the Prime Mover, is at once erogenous and thinkable.”

23. Malabou, *Future of Hegel*, 17.

24. Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza*, 18–19; see Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, “this profound unity of his [Spinoza’s] philosophy such as it is expressed in Europe, his manifestation of Spirit, the identity of the infinite and the finite in God, a God that does not appear as a Third, is an echo of the Orient.”

25. Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza*, 28. Throughout the book, Macherey plays the role of a Spinozist, who against Hegel, shows how Hegel, in fact, misread Spinoza precisely without knowing that Spinozism already contains the elements of his own dialectics.

26. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 487; also quoted by Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 1–2.

27. In this sense we can talk about the end of history, meaning when the Spirit overcomes what motivates it; it doesn’t mean there is no longer any contingency, but rather that these contingent events no longer have their previous roles. For example, the end of history does not mean there are no human beings, but rather

human beings are no longer different from animals. This end also means no end, because it *assumes* that individuation has exhausted itself.

28. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 492.

29. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 22.

30. See Macherey, *Hegel or Spinoza*.

31. Kojève also recognized that in order to understand the absolute, one has to develop a nuanced understanding of the circular movement, namely, a spiral movement. Kojève was forced to justify Stalin succeeding Napoleon as the world soul. This possibility is only granted when the circular movement doesn't finish in itself, but rather its completion only leads to another beginning. In a note from Kojève we read: "Marx : travail /lutte, c'est-à-dire *Befriedung* (= satisfaction) en Napoléon/Philosophie hégélienne, mais Staline/moi, c'est-à-dire non pas, mais → (*Geist ist Zeit*)," which he explained further, "à la fin de la Phénoménologie, *Geist* retourne à *Begierde*. Mais en fait, non pas à la *Begierde* de IV Int. (désir naturel en général) mais comme la *Begierde* réelle, c'est-à-dire comme une nouvelle action. Ce n'est pas le *Welt-Geist* mais le *Geist* qui retourne à cette *Begierde* de IV Introduction. Le *Welt-Geist* va à la *Begierde* d'où naît Staline." See Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 246.

32. De Laurentiis, *Hegel's Anthropology*, 11. These words are borrowed from H. S. Harris.

33. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §199, 201.

34. Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience*, 27.

35. Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience*, 36.

36. Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience*, 37. "Hegel s'est efforcé de décrire cette conscience malheureuse qu'est l'âme chrétienne et romantique (Rosenkranz, p. 88), puisque le Juif n'a pas le privilège du malheur ou qu'il le partage avec l'âme qui s'oppose le plus complètement à lui."

37. For the remark on Rousseau, see Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience*, 12.

38. Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience*, 44.

39. Wahl, *Le malheur de la conscience*, 17; see also Marx, "Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsrechts," 285.

40. Hui, "On the Unhappy Consciousness of the Neo-reactionaries."

41. Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, 207.

42. The famous quote from Hegel toward the end of the introduction to the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, "Was vernünftig ist, ist wirklich, was wirklich ist, ist vernünftig."

43. Here we might want to associate *Wirklichkeit* with *energeia*, in the sense that *energeia* means both actualization and production, i.e., it brings out [en]ergon; see Marder, *Hegel's Energy*, 12.

44. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, 12.

45. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §32.

46. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §221.
47. Menke, *Autonomie und Befreiung*, 45–47.
48. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §262.
49. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §385, 22.
50. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §554, 257. Translation modified; Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften III (Werke 10)*, 366, “Der absolute Geist ist ebenso ewig in sich seiende als in sich zurückkehrende und zurückgekehrte *Identität*; die eine und allgemeine *Substanz* als geistige, das Urteil *in sich* und *in ein Wissen*, für welches sie als solche ist.”
51. Mabilie, *Hegel*, 291.
52. Hegel, *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 27.
53. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, 181; cited also by Ahlers, “The Dialectic in Hegel’s Philosophy of History,” 160.
54. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 118, italics mine.
55. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 367.
56. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 121.
57. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §393, 42.
58. It would be hyperbolic and even ironic to say, as some authors did, that Hegel rescued the East from its marginality. See Avineri, *Hegel’s Theory of the Modern State*, 223: “For Hegel, history starts in the East; not in the conventional Eastern Mediterranean, but in China and India. Hegel is one of the first European thinkers to incorporate the Asian world into his scheme of history and *emancipate the non-European world from its historiosophical marginality*” (italics mine). This is not to discredit Avineri’s book, which is beyond admirable.
59. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §391: “The universal soul as world-soul must not be labeled at once as a subject because it is only universal substance, which only has its actual truth as singularity, subjectivity.”
60. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §340, 315.
61. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 104.
62. Lapouge, “‘Les philosophes ne m’intéressent pas, je cherche des sages,’ une conversation avec Alexandre Kojève,” *Le Grand Continent*, December 25, 2020, <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2020/12/25/conversation-alexandre-kojeve/>. “La fin de l’histoire, ce n’était pas Napoléon, c’était Staline et c’était moi qui serais chargé de l’annoncer avec la différence que je n’aurais pas la chance de voir passer Staline à cheval sous mes fenêtres, mais enfin.”
63. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 34.
64. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §392, 36.
65. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 63.
66. Oreskes and Conway, *The Collapse of Western Civilization*.
67. Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
68. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 149.

69. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Vol. 1, 218.
70. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* 1825–26, Vol. 1.
71. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik*, 188.
72. Marx, “Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 205.
73. Hegel, *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 20.
74. Hegel, *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 62–63.
75. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a18–23.
76. Plato, *Republic*, especially see 345a, 374a, and 397e.
77. Plato, *Republic*, 434a.
78. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1278a8.
79. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1275a19.
80. Readers can refer to C. D. C. Reeve’s introduction to his new translation of Aristotle’s *Politics*; since Reeve also translated the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the introduction presents some comparisons on the subject. See also, Angier, *Technē in Aristotle’s Ethics*.
81. Ritter, “Das Bürgerliche Leben zur aristotelischen Theorie des Glücks,” in *Metaphysik und Politik*, 60; Angier, *Technē in Aristotle’s Ethics*, 74.
82. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1332a38.
83. Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, 45–47.
84. Rabinowitz, *Greek Tragedy*, 36–37.
85. Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, 60–61. See also Schaefer, *Probleme der Alten Geschichte*. Aristotle would most likely not agree with this statement, as he said that Solon “refrained from abolishing them” (i.e., the council of the Areopagus and the election of office holders); what Solon did was introduce democracy to the law courts, which also leads to the accusation that Solon “destroyed the other elements by making these popular law courts, with their members appointed by lot, supreme in every case.” See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1273b35–40.
86. Rabinowitz, *Greek Tragedy*, 38.
87. Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet, *Clisthène l’Athénien*, 32, cited also by Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, 66.
88. Rabinowitz, *Greek Tragedy*, 37.
89. In “The Birth of Greek Individualism: A Turning-Point in the History of Political Thought,” Isaiah Berlin commented on the birth of individualism in the fifth century BC, which one could find in both Greek tragedy and comedy, the institutionalized life of the polis was naturalized in the writing of Herodotus and Thucydides. One could speculate that the birth of individualism already appeared earlier, expressed in the birth of monumental sculpture, whose realism demonstrates the pursuit of a perfect individuality and personality; the fifth century BC was the moment when both affirmation and negation of individualism took place; see Berlin, *Liberty*.
90. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §185, 184: “Plato wished to

exclude particularity from his state, but this is no help, since help on these lines would contravene the infinite right of the Idea to allow freedom to the particular.”

91. Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, 63.

92. We might want to pay attention to Hannah Arendt’s analysis on the history of freedom: according to her, before Augustine, there was a “conscious attempt to divorce the notion of freedom from politics,” and this is the prioritization of the *vita contemplativa* over *vita activa*. Since the stoics (Arendt gives Epictetus as an example), there has been a strong discourse on inner freedom, according to which “one may be a slave in the world and still be free.” See Arendt, “What Is Freedom?,” in *Between Past and Future*, 147.

93. Ritter, “Hegel und die französische Revolution,” in *Metaphysik und Politik*. On this point, we might also be able to read Auguste Comte and Hegel in parallel; though Comte declares positivism as what succeeds theology and metaphysics, Hegel did not see positivism as sufficient. We will see this in chapter 3, regarding Georgescu-Roegen’s reading of Hegel.

94. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, 122.

95. Marx, “Kritik der Hegelschen Staatsrechts,” 256.

96. See Strauss, *On Hegel*, 238.

97. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §302; see also Arendt, “The Public and the Private Realm,” in *The Human Condition*. Arendt pointed out how the condition of politics in ancient Greece, namely, the separation between the public and private life in the polis, and during the modern time, the search for intimacy in Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Romantics, both emphasize individual autonomy as resistance against the conformity of the social. We might want to compare it with what Berlin calls “negative freedom.”

98. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §408, 121.

99. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, xvi.

100. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A833, B861.

101. Kojève, *Kant*, 59–61.

102. Sedgwick, “The State as Organism,” 184.

103. In *Autonomie und Befreiung*, 22–23, Menke highlights a significant difference between Rousseau and Kant. For Rousseau, autonomy means self-legislation, or more precisely “obedience to the law one has prescribed to oneself,” while Kant, remarks Menke, though he almost “repeats Rousseau word by word,” doesn’t use the word “self” (*selbst*) but rather *eigen* (to make it one’s own): “Kant redet nicht von Selbstgesetzgebung, sondern von der ‘eigenen Gesetzgebung.’” This difference can be read as Kant’s new interpretation of autonomy, which, continues Menke, “Kant ergänzt nicht nur die Idee der Selbstgesetzgebung durch den Anspruch, daß sie aus einem guten Grund erfolgen muß; er stellt vielmehr die Definition von Autonomie als Selbstgesetzgebung als solche in Frage” (23).

104. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A445, B473.

105. This is also the argument that I put forward in *Recursivity and Contingency*. The reflective operation of the categorical imperative and aesthetic judgment recursively negates the empirical inclinations in searching for the universal, and it must be strictly distinguished from empirical induction.

106. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §415, 144.

107. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §415, 145.

108. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 49.

109. "It may also be remarked that, as a result of his failure to study the antinomy in more depth, Kant brings forward only four antinomies. . . . The main point that has to be made is that antinomy is found not only in the four particular objects taken from cosmology, but rather in *all* objects of *all* kinds, in all representations, concepts and ideas. To know this, and to be cognizant of this property of objects, belongs to what is essential in philosophical study; this is the property that constitutes what will determine itself in due course as the dialectical moment of logical thinking"; Hegel, *Encyclopaedia Logic*, §48R, 92–93; also quoted by Alan Wood, "Antinomies of Pure Reason," 247f3.

110. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §324, 306.

111. Mabille, *Hegel*, 132.

112. For this reason, Leo Strauss claimed that Hegel reconciles Spinoza and Kant, by identifying the subject as Spinozist substance and the Kantian thing-in-itself, see Strauss, *On Hegel*, 21–22.

113. See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 554.

114. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §381, 16.

115. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §201, Addition.

116. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §324, 306.

117. Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, 58.

118. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik*, 293.

119. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik*, 298.

120. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik*, 299.

121. Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, 116.

2. The Organism of the State and Its Limit

1. The critique against mechanism is consistent from Hegel's early writings such as "Die Positivität der christlichen Religion" (1795/1796), where positivity is another name for mechanism, to his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (1821); see also Weil, *Hegel and the State*.

2. Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, 262–63; also quoted by Žižek, *Hegel in a Wired Brain*, 27.

3. Hegel, "The German Constitution," in *Political Writings*, 22.

4. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, 48.

5. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, 49.
6. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 257. My emphasis.
7. Ironically, when we look at some of the twentieth-century literature on Chinese thought, it has been considered organic: as Joseph Needham claims, "The *philosophia perennis* of China was an *organic materialism*. This can be illustrated by the pronouncements of philosophers and scientific thinkers of every epoch. The mechanical view of the world simply didn't develop in Chinese thought, and the organicist view in which every phenomenon was connected with every other according to hierarchical order was universal among Chinese thinkers," see Needham, *The Grand Titration*, 21. For a prolonged discussion on this subject, see Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency* and *Art and Cosmotekhnics*.
8. Hegel, *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 50.
9. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §405, Addition.
10. Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy*.
11. Karatani's critique of Marx is more sophisticated than what is stated in this sentence. For him, Marx put the capitalist economy as the base, while the state and the nation as ideological superstructures failed to grasp the unity of the capital-nation-state. Through the concept of exchange, he wants to show how the three concepts could be unified; see Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 3: "Such claims for the relative autonomy of the superstructure led to the belief that state and nation were simply representations that had been created historically and that they could be dissolved through enlightenment."
12. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 52.
13. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 119. "Since the entire contents of its natural consciousness have not been jeopardized, determinate being still in principle attaches to it; having a 'mind of one's own' is self-will, a freedom which is still enmeshed in servitude."
14. Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie I*, 233; also cited by Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, 89.
15. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 53.
16. In *Realphilosophie II*, commenting on the general will, Hegel explicitly says that "the individuals have to make themselves into a universal through negation of themselves, through externalization and education [*Entäußerung und Bildung*]," see Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie II*, 244–45; also cited by Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, 102.
17. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §349, italics mine.
18. *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. "Entäußerung ist (zusammen mit Entfremdung) die Übersetzung von lateinisch *alienatio* und seinen neusprachlichen Nachfolgern. In der römischen Rechtssprache etwa seit der Zeit Ciceros bedeutet *alienatio* die Übertragung von Eigentum. In dieser Bedeutung ist entäußern seit 1322 im Deutschen nachweisbar. Schon in römischer Zeit

bildete sich ein reiches Spektrum metaphorischer Redeweisen aus, das sich bei der Übernahme in die neuen Sprachen erhielt, z.B. die Entäußerung der Menschlichkeit. . . . Ein neuerer Versuch der Abgrenzung von Entäußerung, Entfremdung und Vergegenständlichung findet sich bei GARAUDY, der Entäußerung (*extériorisation*) als wertneutral, Vergegenständlichung (*objectivation*) als positiv und Entfremdung (*aliénation*) als negativ ansieht.”

19. Sass, “Die philosophische Erdkunde des Hegelianers Ernst Kapp,” 172.

20. <https://deutsche-schutzgebiete.de/wordpress/projekte/kaiserreich/koenigreich-preussen/>.

21. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 166.

22. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §258, 157. “Ebenso ist aber das Selbstbewußtsein beschaffen, sich auf eine solche Weise von sich zu unterscheiden, worin zugleich kein Unterschied herauskommt.”

23. Honneth, *Das Recht der Freiheit*, 85.

24. Honneth calls it a “kantianische, institutionenvergessene Gerechtigkeitstheorie,” see *Das Recht der Freiheit*, 16.

25. Honneth, *Das Recht der Freiheit*, 116. “[Daß] die sittlichen Institutionen erst eine individuelle Autonomie ermöglichen, deren Betätigung dann wiederum zu einer Revision dieser Institutionen führen kann, dann läßt sich in der damit vorbestellten Spiralbewegung gar nicht mehr der Ruhepunkt finden, der in einem festgefügt System sittlicher Institutionen bestehen soll.”

26. Honneth, *Das Recht der Freiheit*, 116.

27. Malabou, *Au voleur!*, 63.

28. Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 264.

29. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §258, Addition.

30. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §269, Addition.

31. Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, 244. “Le corps politique, pris individuellement, peut être considéré comme un corps organisé, vivant, et semblable à celui de l’homme. Le pouvoir souverain représente la tête; les lois et les coutumes sont le cerveau, principe des nerfs et siège de l’entendement, de la volonté et des sens, dont les juges et magistrats sont les organes; le commerce, l’industrie et l’agriculture, sont la bouche et l’estomac, qui préparent la substance commune; les finances publiques sont le sang, qu’une sage économie, en faisant les fonctions du cœur, renvoie distribuer par tout le corps la nourriture et la vie; les citoyens sont le corps et les membres qui font mouvoir, vivre et travailler la machine, et qu’on ne saurait blesser en aucune partie qu’aussitôt l’impression douloureuse ne s’en porte au cerveau, si l’animal est dans un état de santé.”

32. Marx, “Kritik,” 206.

33. Marx, “Kritik,” 212.

34. Marx, “Kritik,” 213.

35. Hyppolite, “La Conception Hégélienne de l’État et sa Critique,” 149.

36. The other work that is influenced by Hegel and important for the theory of a living form (*Lebensform*) of the state and geopolitics is Rudolf Kjellén's, *Der Staat als Lebensform* (1917). Kjellén's teacher Friedrich Ratzel, a geographer and political thinker who developed the concept of the organic space or living space (*Lebensraum*), like Kapp, was also influenced by Ernst Haeckel. The fact that we cannot extend our analysis to all thinkers of the organic theory of the state here doesn't mean that their works are ignored. For the history along this line of geopolitical thinking, please see Kristof, "The Origins and Evolution of Geopolitics."

37. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 226.

38. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 244.

39. Kapp, *Der konstituierte Despotismus und die konstitutionelle Freiheit*, 85.

40. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 234.

41. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 245.

42. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §352. "As living universality, the animal organism is the concept which passes syllogistically through its three determinations . . . (a) as the individual idea, which is simply self-related in its process, and which inwardly coalesces with itself, i.e. shape (*Gestalt*); (b) as idea which relates itself to its other (*ihrem Anderen*), its inorganic nature, and posits the ideal nature of this other within itself, i.e. assimilation; (c) as the idea relating to an other which is itself a living individual, and thereby relating itself to itself in the other, i.e. the generic process."

43. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §258, 157–58. My emphasis.

44. Marx, "Kritik," 216.

45. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 225.

46. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §258, 157. "Ebenso ist aber das Selbstbewußtsein beschaffen, sich auf eine solche Weise von sich zu unterscheiden, worin zugleich kein Unterschied herauskommt."

47. Hegel, *Encyclopaedia*, §248. Cited by Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, 262.

48. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, §250, 215.

49. Malabou, *The Future of Hegel*, 26.

50. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §381, 10. I changed "mind" back to "the Spirit."

51. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §381, 10.

52. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, 11.

53. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §392, 36.

54. This might also resonate with Marx's critique of Hegel concerning the birth of the monarchy, Marx argued that "Hegel has shown that the monarchy must be born, which no one doubts, but he didn't show, that birth brings about the monarchy," which for Marx, carries as little metaphysical truth as the Immaculate Conception of Mary; see Marx, "Kritik," 235.

55. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §272.

56. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §408.

57. Hyppolite, "La Conception Hégélienne de l'État et sa Critique," 145.
58. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §273.
59. Marx, "Kritik," 153–56.
60. Marx, "Kritik," 272.
61. Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 53, also quoted by Derrida, *Rogues*, 15.
62. Derrida, *Rogues*, 14.
63. The Chinese Room Experiment runs like this: a black box (the Chinese room) is presented as a Chinese speaker. However, we don't know if there really is a Chinese person inside; now, when we feed input to the black box, the black box will respond to the input according to the written instructions; however, this person doesn't have to know Chinese, he or she only needs to follow the instructions correctly.
64. See Vieweg, *Hegel: Der Philosoph der Freiheit*.
65. For the debate on Kant's cosmopolitanism outlined in the perpetual peace during Kant's time, including Fichte's review of the essay, see Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State*, chapter 2.
66. Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Practical Philosophy*, 491.
67. Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Practical Philosophy*, 328.
68. Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in *Political Writings*, 106.
69. Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in *Political Writings*, 106–7.
70. Fichte, *Early Philosophical Writings*, 156.
71. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §340, 315.
72. See Kervégan, *Hegel, Carl Schmitt*, 143.
73. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 54.
74. There is a similarity between Hegel's critique of Kant's perpetual peace and Schmitt's critique of the League of Nations; see Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §324 and §333.
75. See Hayek, "Hegel and Comte," in *Counter-Revolution of Science*.
76. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §331.
77. We will discuss this in chapter 5, concerning Schmitt's criticism of American imperialism and his own attempt to "rescue" the Monroe doctrine.
78. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §339 Zusatz.
79. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, 104.
80. Lapouge, "Les philosophes ne m'intéressent pas, je cherche des sages," "Moi, j'ai expliqué que Hegel l'avait dit et personne ne veut l'admettre, que l'histoire est close, personne ne le digère. À vrai dire, moi aussi, j'ai d'abord pensé que c'était une billevesée mais, ensuite, j'ai réfléchi et vu que c'était génial. Simplement, Hegel s'était trompé de cent cinquante ans. La fin de l'histoire, ce n'était pas Napoléon, c'était Staline et c'était moi qui serais chargé de l'annoncer avec la différence que je n'aurais pas la chance de voir passer Staline à cheval sous mes fenêtres, mais enfin . . . Après, il y a eu la guerre et j'ai compris. Non, Hegel

ne s'était pas trompé, il avait bien donné la date juste de la fin de l'histoire, 1806. Depuis cette date, qu'est-ce qui se passe? Rien du tout, *l'alignement des provinces*.”

81. Lapouge, “‘Les philosophes ne m'intéressent pas, je cherche des sages,’” “La révolution chinoise n'est que l'introduction du Code Napoléon en Chine. La fameuse accélération de l'histoire dont on parle tant, avez-vous remarqué qu'en s'accéléralant de plus en plus le mouvement historique avance de moins en moins?” Kojève said similar things to Schmitt in a communication dated May 16, 1955: “Now I believe that Hegel was completely right and that history was already over after the historical Napoleon. For, in the end, Hitler was only a ‘new enlarged and improved edition’ of Napoleon [‘La Republique une et indivisible’ {‘The single and indivisible Republic’} = ‘Ein Land, ein Volk, ein Führer’ {‘One country, one people, one leader’}]. Hitler committed the errors which you characterize so well on p. 166 (toward the middle): now, if Nap. in his time had done it as well as Hitler, it would certainly have been enough. But unfortunately Hitler did it 150 years too late! Thus the second world war brought nothing essentially new. And the first one was just an intermission.”

82. Mou, *Philosophy of History*, 457, “遠在二十年前，弟讀黑格爾(歷史哲學)論及中國方面無「主觀自由」，無個體性之自覺，即悚然而驚。當時對於黑氏書自不能懂，即所觸及之此一點，當時亦不解其所以。心中頗不服。一方面覺其說的甚對，一方面亦覺其不甚對。”

83. Mou, *Philosophy of History*, 217, “國家必須通過各個體的自覺而重新組織起來成爲一個有機的統一體，才可以說是近代化的國家。中國以前的統一只是打天下打來的，個體並未起作用，所以不成一個國家單位。而那統一亦是虛浮不實的。國家是一個文化上的觀念，是由各個體通過自覺而成的一個理性上的產物。不是一個自然物，更不是武力所能硬打得來的。”

84. Zhao, *A Possible World of All-Under-Heaven System*, 130.

85. Zhao, *A Possible World of All-Under-Heaven System*, 2.

86. Mou, *Philosophy of History*, 216, “中國以往不是一個國家單位，而是一個文化單位，只有天下觀念，而無國家觀念。”

87. When we look at the new interpretation of tianxia, one will be surprised how it resembles such an organic structure, which Kant already systematically formulated. See Debray and Zhao, “Tianxia: All Under Heaven.”

88. In a letter from Kojève to Schmitt dated August 1, 1955, Kojève claims to add to the meaning of *Nomos* as “Nahme” “with Hegel” the sense of “privilege” when such “Nahme” is considered a political act. “And you will certainly agree, if I add, with Hegel, that taking is only *political* insofar as it takes place on the grounds of prestige and for prestigious ends. Otherwise, surely even animals could wage war and the slave capture in Africa in the 19th century was also a war? On the other hand, Athens certainly did not have much to ‘take’ from Sparta (and vice versa) except for ‘hegemony,’ i.e., precisely prestige.”

89. Mou, *Philosophy of History*, 417, “如是由神聖理念之「分離地存在於地球上」必須進一步超越各民族國家之齊頭並列而「整全地諧一地存在於地球上」, 此即是「大同」一層之目標。此將如何而可能?”

90. This analysis is elaborated in Mou, *Dao of Politics and Dao of Governance*.

3. From Noetic Reflection to Planetary Reflection

1. This was also Schmitt's contest against Arnold Toynbee and other Anglo-Saxon historians since the latter are presented as the authority of an eternal truth.

2. See Marx, “Kritik,” 251–61.

3. Hölderlin, “Urtheil und Seyn”: “Urtheil ist im höchsten und strengsten Sinne die ursprüngliche Trennung des in der intellectualen Anschauung innigst vereinigten Objects und Subjects, diejenige Trennung, wodurch erst Object und Subject möglich wird, die Ur = Theilung.”

4. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §574, 275.

5. Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, 55.

6. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §388, 29; also cited by De Laurentiis, *Hegel's Anthropology*, 32. I used the translation of Wallace and Miller, with modification from Laurentiis, who reproaches the former for having rendered “an ihr selbst” as “in ihr selbst.” However, this might be hair-splitting a bit, since nature will not sublate itself as being externalized, but rather it can only sublate itself in itself as being.

7. Here we can understand the three syllogisms concerning logic, nature, and spirit: (1) Logic-Nature-Spirit (syllogism of existence, Dasein) the logical becomes nature and nature become spirit; (2) Nature-Spirit-Logic (syllogism of reflection) presupposes nature and joins it with the logical; (3) Spirit-Logic-Nature (syllogism of necessity). This syllogism expresses the fact that nature or the Idea in-itself, and spirit or the Idea for-itself, are held together by “the logical” or, as it is called elsewhere, “the logical Idea” (*Encyclopaedia Logic* §187 Zusatz); see De Laurentiis, *Hegel's Anthropology*, 53.

8. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, §381 Zusatz, 15.

9. Cited by De Laurentiis, *Hegel's Anthropology*, 50. Italics in original.

10. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 33.

11. Kapp, *Elements of a Philosophy of Technology*, 48: “The human being maintains an inner relation with the artifacts belonging to the outside world that are produced in accord with the normative organs inside of him.”

12. See Maneschi, “The Filiation of Economic Ideas,” 105–25.

13. Laplace, *A Philosophical Essay on Probabilities*, 4. “We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future. An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in

motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed, if this intellect were also vast enough to submit these data to analysis, it would embrace in a single formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the tiniest atom; for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes."

14. Grenivald, "Le sens bioéconomique du développement humain," 63.

15. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 46.

16. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 15.

17. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 63, footnote 13.

18. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 46, footnote 27.

19. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 72, italics mine.

20. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 160.

21. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 215. "Das wirkliche organische Wesen ist die Mitte, welche das Fürsichsein des Lebens mit dem Äußeren überhaupt oder dem Ansich sein zusammen-schließt."

22. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 159.

23. Georgescu-Roegen, *The Entropy Law*, 159; in the same paragraph, Georgescu-Roegen immediately states, "I have already pointed out, the equivalence of this third definition with the other two has not been established to the satisfaction of all."

24. Georgescu-Roegen, "Energy and Economic Myths," 64.

25. It may be effective here to remind that disorder does not mean lack of tidiness. Our everyday concept of order tells us that when the room is tidied up, it has order, and when a desk is messy it means disorder; in this case, the concept of order we use here is anti-intuitive: disorder means lack of the complexity of order, namely, becoming homogeneous.

26. Georgescu-Roegen, "Energy and Economic Myths," 81.

27. Lotka, "The Law of Evolution as a Maximal Principle," 188: "In place of slow adaptation of anatomical structure and physiological function in successive generations by selective survival, increased adaptation has been achieved by the incomparably more rapid development of 'artificial' aids to our native receptor-effector apparatus, in a process that might be termed exosomatic evolution."

28. Georgescu-Roegen, "Energy and Economic Myths," 25, 81.

29. Georgescu-Roegen, "Energy and Economy Myths," 32.

30. Georgescu-Roegen, "Energy and Economy Myths," 91.

31. Georgescu-Roegen, "Energy and Economy Myths," 92.

32. Mirowski, *Machine Dreams*, 46.

33. Georgescu-Roegen, "Entropy," 146.

34. Georgescu-Roegen, "Entropy," 146.

35. Mirowski, *More Heat than Light*.

36. It is already clearly stated in Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*,

39: “The transfer of information cannot take place without a certain expenditure of energy, so that there is no sharp boundary between energetic coupling and informational coupling.”

37. Hayek, “Hegel and Comte,” in *Counter-Revolution of Science*, 203.

38. Hayek, *Individualism and Economic Order*, 77–78.

39. Hayek, “Hegel and Comte,” in *Counter-Revolution of Science*, 203.

40. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, xviii.

41. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, 158: “This foundation of modern civilization was first understood by Adam Smith in terms of the operation of feedback mechanism by which he anticipated what we now know as cybernetics.”

42. Wiener, *Cybernetics*, 44.

43. Simondon, *Sur la Philosophie*, 180. “Kant n’aurait pu traiter de la Cybernétique qu’en la situant dans la *Critique du jugement*.”

44. Quoted in Cannon, *The Wisdom of the Body*, 38.

45. Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*, 26.

46. Günther, *Das Bewußtsein der Maschinen*, 95.

47. See Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency*.

48. Vernadsky, *The Biosphere*, 50–51.

49. Vernadsky, *The Biosphere*, 58.

50. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 111

51. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 155: “Instinct perfected is a faculty of using and even of constructing organized instruments; intelligence perfected is the faculty of making and using unorganized instruments.”

52. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 115.

53. Teilhard’s noosphere was later rediscovered in the 1990s with the rise of the internet. *Wired* magazine in 1995 dedicated an article on Teilhard, praising an “obscure Jesuit priest . . . [who] set down the philosophical framework for planetary, Net-based consciousness 50 years ago.” See Kreisberg, “A Globe, Clothing Itself with a Brain (June 1st 1995).”

54. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 194.

55. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 134.

56. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 163.

57. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 132

58. Teilhard, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 290.

59. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 187.

60. Teilhard, *The Future of Man*, 235.

61. King’s *Towards New Mysticism: Teilhard de Chardin and the Eastern Religions* remains one of the best books to document Teilhard’s experience in the far East and his inspirations.

62. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 145.

63. Beer, “Recursion of Powers,” 13.

64. See Sagan, “James Lovelock, Gaia, and the Remembering of Biological Being (2023).” Sagan elaborated on the difference between Lovelock and Margulis’s conception of Gaia: “Whereas Lovelock characterized Gaia as an organism, Margulis differed, pointing to the datum that no organism consumes its own material wastes. Gaia is better characterized as planetary life form—a body, yes, but subtler than an organism, it produces waste mostly as heat, the end product of metabolism that cannot be used by any living organisms.”

65. Cited by King, *Towards New Mysticism*, 218. “I believe the mystical is less different, less separated from the rational than one says, but I also believe that the whole problem which the world, and we in particular, are presently facing is a problem of faith.”

66. Kreisberg, “A Globe, Clothing Itself with a Brain.”

67. 2045 Initiative, “Ray Kurzweil—Immortality by 2045,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f28LPwR8BdY>; see also Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality*, which refers frequently to Teilhard de Chardin.

68. Žižek, *Hegel in a Wired Brain*, 14.

69. Teilhard, *The Human Phenomenon*, 272.

70. Chakrabarty, “The Climate of History: Four Theses,” 197–222

71. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 2, 276.

72. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 2, 278.

73. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 2, 385.

74. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 2, 398.

75. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*, Vol. 2, 317.

76. Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 407.

4. Mechanism, Organism, or Decisionism

1. Novalis, *Schriften*, 587.

2. Bergson, *The Meaning of the War*.

3. Bergson, *The Meaning of the War*, 36.

4. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §323.

5. See Lefebvre, *Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche*, 73. “Does not the identification presupposed between the ardent life of a symphony, the animal life of an organism and the internal life of the state, abuse this metaphor?”

6. Lefebvre, *Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche*, 147.

7. Heller, *Sovereignty*, 91.

8. Heller, *Sovereignty*, 91.

9. See Deutsch, “Chapter 2. Some Classical Models in the History of Thought,” in *The Nerves of Government*. One could also find a similar discourse on international relations in Morgenthau’s magisterial work *Politics among*

Nations (1967), where he spelled out the implication of mechanism to international relations in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century: “The idea of a balance among a number of nations for the purpose of preventing any one of them from becoming strong enough to threaten the independence of the others is a metaphor taken from the field of mechanics. It was appropriate to the way of thinking of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which liked to picture society and the whole universe as a gigantic mechanism, a machine or a clockwork, created and kept in motion by a divine watchmaker.” (167)

10. Ritter, *Metaphysik und Politik*, 33.

11. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 36.

12. Schmitt, *Political Theology II*, 42.

13. Schmitt responded to Blumenberg in *Political Theology II*, where he accused Blumenberg of generalizing his notion of secularization with that of others, such as religion and eschatology, and gave rise to misunderstandings; see *Political Theology II*, 117. In an expanded version of *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 98, Blumenberg acknowledged Schmitt’s reproach: “This reproach is justified. It was the second (1970) *Politische Theologie*’s working out of the conceptual difference in relation to ‘legitimacy’ that makes clear for the first time what had been the basis of the preference of the concept of secularization in the first (1922) *Politische Theologie*.”

14. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, Part I, chapter 3.

15. Löwith, *Meaning in History*, 54: “This occidental conception of history, implying an irreversible direction toward a future goal, is not merely occidental. It is essentially a Hebrew and Christian assumption that history is directed toward an ultimate purpose and governed by the providence of a supreme insight and will—in Hegel’s terms, by spirit or reason as ‘the absolutely powerful essence.’”

16. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 27.

17. See Schmitt, “Drei Möglichkeiten eines christlichen Geschichtsbildes” 162. Whether Schmitt’s claim is valid would be another debate.

18. What is presented above is Blumenberg’s reading of Löwith; however, Jean-François Kervégan contested Blumenberg’s reading for several reasons. First, Löwith more often uses the word *Verweltlichung* instead of *Secularisierung*; second, what Löwith presents was far more complex (it is plurivocal or equivocal) than what Blumenberg and Schmitt read. See Kervégan, “Les ambiguïtés d’un théorème.”

19. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 28.

20. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 8.

21. See Blumenberg and Schmitt, *Briefwechsel 1971–1978*, 33.

22. See Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 93, reflecting on Schmitt’s interpretation of De Maistre’s political philosophy as reduction of the

state to the element of decision and his comparison of it with *creatio ex nihilo*, Blumenberg asks if “it is possible for men to use the gesture of a *creatio ex nihilo* ‘Romantically’ and in such a way as to establish historical continuity.”

23. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 94.

24. Schmitt, *Political Theology II*, 118.

25. Monod, “La sécularisation et ses limites.”

26. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 21.

27. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 63.

28. See Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, 5: “Its defect is that, as a result of a dogmatic and moralistic abstraction, it fails to recognize the historical distinctiveness of the movement.”

29. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 53.

30. Taubes, *To Carl Schmitt*, 6.

31. McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 207; this is also McCormick's main thesis in the book, where he states on page 4, “My claim is that Schmitt's critique of liberalism—particularly as it is directed at modern parliamentarism and constitutional law—is based on a broader criticism of modern thought that he sees as having been infiltrated by the technological, which he often equates with the economic and the positivistic.” Scheuerman criticized that Schmitt “too readily assumes that liberalism necessarily entails a commitment to legal formalism,” see Scheuerman, *The End of Law*, 9.

32. Scheuerman, *The End of Law*, 31.

33. In Schmitt's Hobbes book, he refers to French professor of public law René Capitant's characterization of Hobbes as a “mystic totalist”; see Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 77.

34. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 63.

35. McCormick's book provides a very detailed and rich assessment of the question of technology in Schmitt's criticism of liberalism; it also contextualizes Schmitt's theory of technology in his time, namely, the opposition between *Naturwissenschaft* and *Geistwissenschaft*, and the triumph of the former over the latter. See McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 104.

36. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 99.

37. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 3.

38. In contrast to Hobbes, we find in Rousseau the comparison of power to the body instead of mechanics; see Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, 217: “The principle of political life is in the sovereign authority. The legislative power is the heart of the State; the executive power is its brain, giving movement in all the parts. The brain might be paralyzed and yet the individual can still live. A man might be an imbecile but still live; but as soon as the heart stops, the animal died.” A similar (but more detailed) comparison can

also be found in Rousseau's earlier text *Discours sur l'économie politique*, published in the fifth volume of the *Encyclopaedia* in November 1755.

39. Voigt, *Denken in Widersprüchen*, 309: "Die Souveränität gibt dem Staat einen Halt und fügt ihn aus seinen verschiedenen Bestandteilen zusammen, wie die Seele den Körper, oder, wie er mit einem anderen Bild sagt, wie der Kiel das Schiff."

40. Schmitt, *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 200.

41. Note that Richard Tuck and others pointed out that according to Bodin, princes are also civilly bounded by their contract; Tuck concluded that "Bodin is not treated as a theorist of 'absolutism' until well into the seventeenth century." See Tuck, *The Sleeping Sovereign*, 48.

42. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 32.

43. Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, 54. If we understand Schmitt's remark correctly, then, first, the sovereign in Hobbes cannot be reduced to one single image, but rather should be understood as a combination of these four beings; second, Bodin did not associate the state with mechanism, and neither did he take geometry into account in his political thought (which is closely associated with geometric reasoning), as did latecomers such as Grotius and Hobbes. In other words, the question of machine is fundamental in Hobbes's theory of the state, and that is also central to his difference from Bodin.

44. See Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 2.

45. See Part IV of *Discourse on Method*, in Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1, 126–30; as well as in the third Meditation of *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *Philosophical Writings*, vol. 2, 24–36.

46. This also points to a materialism in Hobbes. For the reading of Hobbes as materialist, see Frost, *Lessons from a Materialist Thinker*; see also Bardin, "Liberty and Representation in Hobbes: A Materialist Theory of Conatus."

47. Hobbes, *De motu*, XII.4—see Hobbes, *Thomas White's De Mundo Examined*; also cited by Andrea Bardin, *Mechanicism as Science and Ideology*, 124.

48. Hobbes, *Elements of Law*, XIX.7, in *Three-Text Edition of Thomas Hobbes's Political Theory*, 202.

49. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 4.

50. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 76.

51. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 77.

52. Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, "Book I: Of Law in General."

53. Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, 82.

54. Ashcraft, "Hobbes's Natural Man," 1092.

55. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter 13, 77.

56. Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, "Such is, even at present, the degree of foresight in the Caribbean: he sells his cotton

bed in the morning, and comes in the evening, with tears in his eyes, to buy it back, not having foreseen that he should want it again the next night," 98; "The Caribbeans, the people in the world who have as yet deviated least from the state of nature, are to all intents and purposes the most peaceable in their amours, and the least subject to jealousy, though they live in a burning climate which seems always to add considerably to the activity of these passions," 110; "What a spectacle must the painful and envied labors of a European minister of state form in the eyes of a Caribbean!" 137.

57. Already at the beginning of Rousseau's second discourse, we read, "The researches, in which we may engage on this occasion, are not to be taken for historical truths, but merely as hypothetical and conditional reasonings, fitter to illustrate the nature of things, than to show their true origin." See Rousseau, *Second Discourse*, in *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, 88.

58. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 168–69.

59. Strauss, positioning his interpretation as contra Cassirer's reading of Hobbes, argues that it is not only his mechanism (including his dependence on euclidean geometry) but also his anthropology that defines his politics, see Pelluchon, *Leo Strauss and the Crisis of Rationalism*, 153; see also Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 10.

60. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 4.

61. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 27.

62. Hobbes, "Treatise 'Of Liberty and Necessity,'" in Hobbes and Bramhall, *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity*, 24.

63. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter XVII, 106.

64. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chapter XVII, 108.

65. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 33.

66. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 67.

67. There is a rather interesting misreading that the postwar Schmitt turned against the prewar Schmitt's reading of Hobbes. See Guillot, "Automatic Leviathan," 135: "Schmitt's discussion of Hobbes now departed radically from his earlier interpretation. In 1938, he had faulted Hobbes for his choice of a mechanical symbol for the state and for the resulting failure to produce a political myth commanding obedience beyond mere rational argumentation. . . . In 1965, in a complete reversal, Schmitt saw in Hobbes a political theologian who saved the political by locating the soul of the state outside and above its technical, machine-like body." The reason is, I believe, that the author didn't really understand the question of mechanism in Hobbes and Schmitt's reading of Hobbes.

68. Strauss's main critique of Schmitt's concept of the political is that it remains within the framework of liberalism, and Schmitt being a liberal moralist. Schmitt's concept of the political targets liberalism for liberalism is the negation of the political. In so doing, Schmitt affirms a morality, which is opposed to

pacifism—for him pacifism means reducing politics to *entertainment*. Schmitt's affirmation of the political is also the affirmation of the state of nature, the affirmation of the individualistic liberal society; see Strauss, "Note on the Concept of the Political," Note 30, 119. "Schmitt is tying himself to his opponents' view of morality instead of questioning the claim of humanitarian-pacifist morals to be morals; he remains trapped in the view that he is attacking."

69. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 58. Hobbes focused on public peace and the right of sovereign power; individual freedom of thought was an implicit right open only as long as it remained private. Now, it is the inverse: individual freedom of thought is the form-giving principle, the necessities of public peace as well as the right of the sovereign power having been transformed into mere processes.

70. Strauss, "Note on the Concept of the Political," Note 14, 108. "If it is true that the final self-awareness of liberalism is the philosophy of culture, we may say in summary that liberalism, sheltered by and engrossed in a world of culture, forgets the foundation of culture, the state of nature, that is, human nature in its dangerousness and endangeredness. Schmitt returns, contrary to liberalism, to its author, Hobbes, in order to strike at the root of liberalism in Hobbes's express negation of the state of nature. Whereas Hobbes in an unliberal world accomplishes the founding of liberalism, Schmitt in a liberal world undertakes the critique of liberalism."

71. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 63.

72. Schmitt's most explicit comment on the mechanism and organism opposition is to be found in a much later article "Der Gegensatz von Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft," 165–78.

73. Schmitt, "Der Gegensatz von Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft," 168.

74. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 63.

75. Rousseau, *The Social Contract and the First and Second Discourses*, 95.

76. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 41.

77. Rasch, "The Emergence of Legal Norms," 93–103.

78. Rasch, "The Emergence of Legal Norms," 100: "The practicing judge, in other words, engages in a form of reflective judgment, ascending from the particular to the universal, or rather, constructing the universal in response to the particular, by means of a mechanism that bears, not surprisingly, a striking resemblance to aspects of Kantian aesthetic judgment."

79. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 19.

80. In "Der Gegensatz von Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft," 169–70, Schmitt listed seven meanings of the word *organic*: (1) not mechanical, (2) not from outside, (3) not from above, (4) not violent, (5) not atomic and not individualistic, (6) not particular, (7) opposite to all that is active and conscious.

81. Schmitt, *Glossarium*, 124–25: "Das ist das geheime Schlüsselwort meiner

gesamten geistigen und publizistischen Existenz: das Ringen um die eigentlich katholische Verschärfung (gegen die Neutralisierer, die ästhetischen Schlaraffen, gegen Fruchtabtreiber, Leichenverbrenner und Pazifisten)."

82. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 9.

83. Schmitt, *Glossarium*, 159: "Es gibt in der ganzen Weltgeschichte nichts, was so frei von jedem Erlösungsbedürfnis wäre, so völlig immun gegen jede Anwendung eines solchen Bedürfnisses wie Hegels Philosophie der Identität des Seins und des Nicht-Seins zu einer Verbindung, die nicht etwa nur Verbindung, *complexio* oder *coincidentia oppositorum* ist, sondern Verbindung der Verbindung und der Nicht-Verbindung, Identität der Identität und der Nicht-Identität, ewiger Prozeß, ewige Unruhe; wer das begreift, braucht keine Erlösung mehr."

84. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 10.

85. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 11.

86. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 11.

87. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 18.

88. Marder, *Groundless Existence*, 149.

89. Stark, "Complexio Oppositorum: Hugo Ball and Carl Schmitt," 59.

90. Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism*, 15.

91. Marder, *Groundless Existence*, 159.

92. See Schmidgen, "The Life of Concepts," 240, where Schmidgen also cited Canguilhem's comment in *La formation du concept de réflexe aux XVIIe et XVIII siècles*, 123: "Perhaps vitalism is merely the sentiment of an ontological, i.e., chronologically irreducible anticipation of life with respect to mechanical theory and technology, to intelligence and the simulation of life."

93. See Hohendahl, *Perilous Futures*, 42.

94. Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations," in *The Concept of the Political*, 95.

95. See Meier, *The Lesson of Carl Schmitt*.

96. Delacroix, "Schmitt's Critique of Kelsenian Normativism," 30.

97. Schmitt, "Diktatur und Belagerungszustand," 157, quoted in Scheuerman, *The End of Law*, 32.

98. See UNESCO, "AI and the Rule of Law: Capacity Building for Judicial Systems," <https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence/rule-law/mooc-judges>.

99. Schmitt, "Neutralization," in *Concept of the Political*, 94; also cited by Hooker, *Carl Schmitt's International Thought*, 113.

100. Schmitt, "Neutralization," 140; also cited by McCormick, *Carl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism*, 44.

101. See Falk, "The Modern Epimetheus," 4.

102. Schmitt, "Drei Möglichkeiten eines christlichen Geschichtsbildes," 166. This reading of Epimetheus is contrary to Massimo Cacciari's reading, to which we will return in chapter 7.

103. Heidegger, *Ponderings XII–XV*, 143.
104. Anter, “The State as Machine,” 209.
105. See Die Bibliothek Carl Schmitt, edited by the Carl-Schmitt-Gesellschaft, <https://www.carl-schmitt.de/forschung/privatbibliothek-carl-schmitts/>.
106. Schmitt, *The Leviathan in the State Theory of Thomas Hobbes*, 57.
107. One could also see its continuation in the liberal tradition, notably John Locke’s juxtaposition of the “Law of Opinion or Reputation” (or the Law of Private Censure) to “Divine and Civil Law” in his celebrated *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.
108. Hooker, *Carl Schmitt’s International Thought*, 46.
109. Strauss, “Letter to Hoffman,” January 27, 1965, Strauss Archive, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, cited by Howse, *Leo Strauss*, 61.
110. Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 34.
111. Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, 11.
112. Schmitt, “The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations,” in *The Concept of the Political*, 86: “If a domain of thought becomes central, then the problems of other domains are solved in terms of the central domains—they are considered secondary problems, whose solution follows as a matter of course only if the problems of the central domain are solved.”
113. Schmitt, *Dialogues on Power and New Space*, 46.
114. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 64.
115. Strauss, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 67.
116. Schmitt, *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 44.
117. Schmitt, “Hegel and Marx,” 391.
118. Schmitt, “The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations,” in *The Concept of the Political*, 85.
119. Schmitt, “The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations,” in *The Concept of the Political*, 95.
120. AP News, “Putin: Leader in Artificial Intelligence Will Rule World,” <https://apnews.com/article/bb5628f2a7424a10b3e38b07f4eb90d4>.
121. Wolin, “Carl Schmitt, Political Existentialism, and the Total State,” 395.
122. See Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, 49: “War, the readiness for death of fighting men, the physical annihilation of other men who stand on the side of the enemy, all that has no normative, rather an existential meaning, indeed, in the reality of a situation of real struggle against a real enemy, and not in whatever ideals, programs, or normative concepts.”
123. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 15.
124. Strauss, *On Hegel*, 356.
125. I want to thank Conor Heaney for pointing out to me, “Indeed, the development of the Courts of Equity in England and Wales are partially developed from this idea: that sometimes justice is only served via the suspension of

the rule. This has developed into an entire body of law and doctrines to which English and Welsh courts have access to: doctrines which allow courts discretion to decide beyond the contours of certain ordinary rules precisely so that justice can be seen to be served. This sort of 'routine' form of exceptionalism (routine insofar as it is now built into the functioning of legal institutions) seems like an interesting form of exceptionalism which, at first glance, is not obviously grasped by the Schmittian exception: the exception can itself become a normalised part of institutional-administrative practice." The above comment implies two questions: whether the power that makes exceptions is absolute, and if exceptionalism is necessary and under what condition. We will discuss these questions in chapter 5 by reading Derrida.

126. Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 19.

127. Sartre, "Existentialism Is a Humanism."

128. Schmitt, "Reich, Staat, Bund," in *Positionen und Begriffe*, 198.

129. Voigt, *Denken in Widersprüchen*, 50.

130. Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, 32.

131. Schmitt, *State, Movement, People*, 35.

132. Voigt, *Denken in Widersprüchen*, 46.

133. Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe*, 292. "Für Hegel aber ist schon dieser preußische Staat ein Reich, und zwar ein Reich der objektiven Vernunft und der Sittlichkeit, und es ist selbstverständlich, daß mit diesem Staat nicht ein beliebiges Gemeinwesen im Sinne des neutralen Staatsbegriffs einer allgemeinen Staatslehre, sondern der politisch-geschichtlich konkrete preußische Staat der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts gemeint ist."

134. See Ottmann, "Hegel und Carl Schmitt," 234. In *State, Movement, People*, Schmitt wrote "Was an Hegels mächtigem Geisterbau überzeitlich groß und deutsch ist, bleibt auch in der neuen Gestalt weiter wirksam."

135. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §216, 203.

136. See Scheuerman, *The End of Law*, 40–41n21.

137. For a more elaborated account of the question of monism and pluralism of state ethics and Schmitt's critique of William James's pluralism, see Schmitt, "Staatsethik und pluralistischer Staat (1930)" in *Positionen und Begriffe*.

138. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 20.

139. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 90–91.

140. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 30.

141. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 47; also cited by Hohendahl, *Perilous Futures*, 162.

142. Hohendahl, *Perilous Futures*, 128.

143. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 60.

144. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 77: "Only revolutionary war made him a key figure of world history. However, what is one to make of him in the age of

atomic weapons of mass destruction? In a thoroughly organized technical world, the old, feudal-agrarian forms and concepts of combat, war, and enmity disappear. That is obvious. But do combat, war, and enmity thereby also disappear and become nothing more than harmless social conflicts?"

145. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 21n32. §243–46 of Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* is on civil society and poverty; Schmitt refers to Marxist interpretation, not Marx's commentary on Hegel's *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, because the commentaries that Marx left us only started from §261.

146. See Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 80.

147. Thiel, "The Education of a Libertarian."

5. *Nomos* of the Digital Earth

1. Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 175.

2. Notably Carl von Savigny's 1814 *Concerning the Vocation of Legislation and Jurisprudence*, where Savigny rejected the ahistorical validity of natural law regardless of time and nation; he also proposed to understand the nature of law in terms of historical deduction from Roman Law. See Ulmen, "The Sociology of the State," 14–15.

3. Rasch, "The Emergence of Legal Norms," 97. Rasch quoted the criticism of the neo-Kantian philosopher Emil Lask in his "Rechtsphilosophie" (1905): "The criterion of communal authority is thereby eliminated altogether, and in its place appears reason (*Vernunft*) as a higher formal source of law, from which 'law' emanates without and against human positing, so that law that is not in conformity with reason becomes formally nullified and no longer deserves to be called law, but rather only brutal arbitrariness and violence."

4. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 91.

5. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 50.

6. Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 119.

7. Bartelson, in his *Sovereign as Symbolic Form*, after exposing the multiple definitions of sovereignty, turns to Ernst Cassirer's concept of the symbolic form for help. Cassirer's symbolic form, in a broader sense, refers to various meaning systems where one can identify the symbol's mythical, representative, and significative function; in a narrow sense, it refers to an organic whole (like in Gestalt theory) without which the meaning of the symbol cannot be fully understood. I am not very sure if Bartelson's application of Cassirer's symbolic form is a satisfactory way of elucidating the nature of the sovereignty.

8. Onuf, *The Mightie Frame*, 95.

9. Thanks to colleagues from the law school of the University of Kent for emphasizing this difference.

10. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 5.

11. Rasch, *Carl Schmitt*, 53–54.
12. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A249, 312.
13. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 308, 318: “Such an intuition—viz., intellectual intuition—lies absolutely outside our cognitive power, and hence the use of the categories can likewise in no way extend beyond the boundary containing the objects of experience.”
14. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 170.
15. Quoted by Bartelson, *Sovereignty as Symbolic Form*, 22.
16. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1.2.4., 33.
17. Stiegler, *Philosophising by Accident*, 52. Italics in original.
18. Stiegler, *Philosophising by Accident*, 53.
19. Suganami, “Understanding Sovereignty through Kelsen/Schmitt,” 522.
20. Skinner, “The Sovereign State: A Genealogy,” 45.
21. Rasch, *Carl Schmitt*, 56.
22. Schmitt, *Glossarium*, 388.
23. Kelsen, *Pure Theory of Law*, 193.
24. Raz, *The Authority of Law*, 95; see also Kelsen, *General Theory of Law and State*, 116: “To interpret these acts of human beings as legal acts and their products as binding norms, and that means to interpret the empirical material which presents itself as law as such, is possible only on the condition that the basic norm is presupposed as a valid norm. The basic norm is only the necessary presupposition of any positivistic interpretation of the legal material.”
25. Kelsen, *Pure Theory of Law*, 202.
26. Heller, *Sovereignty*, 92.
27. Suganami, “Understanding Sovereignty through Kelsen/Schmitt,” 521: “But the whole intellectual enterprise of seeking the origins of positive legal norms in the so-called basic norm is doomed. All it achieves is a redundant circular reassurance.”
28. Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, Part I §9.1, 64.
29. Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 21.
30. Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, Part I §9.2, 64, translation modified; *Eine Norm setzt niemals sich selbst*, which literally means “a norm doesn’t posit itself,” is translated as “a norm doesn’t establish itself.” We may miss the meaning of *Selbstsetzung* (self-positing), which is the principle of organism; in this sense Schmitt’s criticism of positivism as merely mechanical is brought into problem by himself.
31. Derrida, *Rogues*, 154: “We did not have to wait for Schmitt to learn that the sovereign is the one who decides exceptionally and performatively about the exception, the one who keeps or grants himself the right to suspend rights or law; nor did we need him to know that this politico-juridical concept, like all the others, secularizes a theological heritage.”

32. Derrida, *Rogues*, 141.

33. Cacciari, *Europe and Empire*, 55.

34. Derrida, *Rogues*, 149. Italics in original.

35. Derrida, *Rogues*, 149.

36. See also Derrida, "The Force of Law," 971.

37. Derrida, *Rogues*, 149.

38. It might be interesting to note that Stiegler's rupture with Derrida can be seen as an effort to shift from the transcendental or the quasi-transcendental to an immanent historical analysis of technicity, inspired both by Leroi-Gourhan and Gilbert Simondon. Despite the crucial role played by the supplement in Derrida's work, Stiegler reproaches the philosopher of deconstruction for being unconcerned with its history; see Stiegler, "Discrétiser le temps," footnote 6.

39. Schmitt, *Ex Captivitate Salus*, 29.

40. Howse, "Europe and the New World Order," 101–2.

41. See Cacciari, *Europe and Empire*.

42. See Rasch, "A Just War or Just a War,?" 1683: "Schmitt the nationalist, might also be Schmitt, the international multiculturalist, who offers those who 'obstinately' wish to resist the 'West' a theoretical foothold." The same thing could also be said about Herder.

43. Schmitt, "Über das Verhältnis der Begriffe Krieg und Feind," in *Positionen und Begriffe*, 245.

44. Schmitt, "Wisdom of the Cell," in *Ex Captivitate Salus*, 71.

45. Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 85.

46. Hegel, *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, §331: "It is no less essential that this legitimacy should be rendered complete through its recognition by other states, although this recognition requires a guarantee that where a state is to be recognized by others, it shall likewise recognize them, i.e. respect their independence; and so it comes about that they cannot be indifferent to each other's internal affairs."

47. Derrida, "Autoimmunity," 94.

48. Derrida, *Rogues*, 101.

49. We recall that in Greek mythology, Epimetheus committed the fault for not giving the gift to the human being but only animals, and he also opened Pandora's box; Schmitt compared Epimetheus with Abel in *Glossarium*, 180; Hjalmar Falk opposes Schmitt, the Christian Epimetheus, to the Christian Prometheanism, namely, the "anti-religion of technicity," "the religion of technical progress," "a religion of technical miracles," etc. See Falk, "The Modern Epimetheus."

50. Schmitt, "Raum und Großraum im Völkerrecht," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 239.

51. See Heaney, *Rhythm*.

52. Hooker's emphasis on this relation between *Ortung* and *Ordnung* in his *Carl Schmitt's International Thought* is significant, because it also points to the question of locality, the necessity to orient, to *erörtern*.

53. Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 92.

54. Schmitt, "Die Einheit der Welt," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 500: "Auch im *Jus Publicum Europaeum* gab es eine Einheit der Welt. Sie war europazentrisch, aber sie war nicht die zentrale Macht eines einzigen Herrn der Welt. Ihr Gefüge war pluralistisch und ermöglichte eine Koexistenz mehrerer politischer Größen, die sich gegenseitig nicht als Verbrecher, sondern als Träger autonomer Ordnungen betrachten konnten."

55. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 126–27.

56. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 149.

57. Schmitt, "Raum und Großraum im Völkerrecht," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 235–36.

58. Schmitt, "Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 271.

59. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 43.

60. Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 49.

61. Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 9–10.

62. Hooker, *Carl Schmitt's International Thought*, 75.

63. Schmitt, "Welt großartigster Spannung," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 514: "Durch die kleine Schrift *Land und Meer* gewann ich zum erstenmal einen Begriff von der Bedeutung der Elemente als Kräfte weltgeschichtlicher Auseinandersetzungen."

64. Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 53, italics are mine.

65. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 73, "In its original sense, however, *nomos* is precisely the full immediacy of a legal power not mediated by laws; it is a constitutive historical event—an act of legitimacy, whereby the legality of a mere law first is made meaningful."

66. Schmitt, "The New *Nomos* of the Earth," in *Nomos of the Earth*, 352.

67. Schmitt, "The New *Nomos* of the Earth," in *Nomos of the Earth*, 352.

68. Schmitt, "The New *Nomos* of the Earth," in *Nomos of the Earth*, 352.

69. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 293

70. Schmitt, "Großraum gegen Universalismus," in *Positionen und Begriffe*, 295; "Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 290.

71. Schmitt, "Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 282

72. Schmitt, "Großraum gegen Universalismus," 297.

73. Schmitt, "Großraum gegen Universalismus," 299.

74. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 235.

75. It is not without interest to observe that the Kyoto School philosopher

Keiji Nishitani made a similar analysis that resonates with Schmitt's analysis of sea power. Nishitani analyzed three civilizations: Mediterranean (Roman world), Atlantic (Anglo-American world), and Pacific, and claimed that the Pacific has become a hegemonic center of the globe; he also saw that Japan, being on the edge of the Atlantic civilization, had the historical duty to explore the Pacific. See Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan*, 107.

76. Schmitt, "Die Einheit der Welt," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 503; see also Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, 13.

77. Schmitt, "Die Einheit der Welt," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 505: "Der Osten insbesondere hat sich der Geschichtsphilosophie Hegels nicht anders bemächtigt, wie er sich der Atombombe und anderer Erzeugnisse der westlichen Intelligenz bemächtigt hat, um die Einheit der Welt im Sinne seiner Planungen zu verwirklichen."

78. Schmitt, "Die geschichtliche Struktur des heutigen Welt-Gegensatzes von Ost und West," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 537: "Die heutige kommunistische Revolution des Ostens aber besteht darin, daß sich der Osten eine von der christlichen Religiosität abgelösten europäischen Technik bemächtigt."

79. Schmitt, "Die geschichtliche Struktur des heutigen Welt," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 540, "Was sich gegen Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts abgelöst hat, ist also nicht, wie Arnold Toynbee meint, ein 'technischer Splitter,' sondern etwas anderes. Eine europäische Insel löste sich vom europäischen Kontinent ab und eine neue, von der Insel getragene maritime Welt stellte sich der Welt des festen Landes gegenüber."

80. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.

81. Derrida, *Rogues*, 158. A similar argument was made in Habermas and Derrida's cosigned article on Europe's responsibility and its autonomy against the U.S. unilateral policy in the wake of the United States' war in Iraq and the European political leaders' call for European unity with the United States. See Habermas and Derrida, "February 15."

82. Schmitt, "Die Einheit der Welt," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 501. "Nun ist diese Hegelsche Philosophie scheinbar idealistisch; sie erblickt das Ziel der Menschheit in der Einheit des zu sich selbst zurückkehrenden Geistes und der absoluten Idee, nicht in der materiellen Einheit einer elektrifizierten Erde."

83. Schmitt, "Die Einheit der Welt," in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 496.

84. Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralization and Depoliticizations," in *The Concept of the Political*, 95.

85. Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*, 178.

86. Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, 57. *Land and Sea* was published in 1942; in an earlier essay "Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung" (republished in 1941 in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*), Schmitt did not fail to disclose his disappointment of the "spatial consciousness" of air, which he expected to be analogous to that which is

brought about by the sea. Instead Schmitt mocked, “im Gegenteil, der Gedanke der territorialen Souveränität des Staates im atmosphärischen Raum in besonders betonter Weise die Grundlage aller bisherigen vertraglichen und sonstigen Regelungen des internationalen Flug- und Funkwesens geworden. Vom technischen Standpunkt aus ist das sonderbar und geradezu grotesk, besonders bei territorial kleinen Staaten, wenn man bedenkt, wie viel ‘Souveränitäten’ ein modernes Flugzeug unterstehen soll, wenn es in wenigen Stunden über viele kleine Staaten hinwegfliegt, oder gar was aus den vielen Staatshoheiten über alle die elektrische Wellen wird, die ununterbrochen mit Sekundenschnelle durch den atmosphärischen Raum über den Erdball kreisen,” in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 304.

87. Schmitt, “Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung,” in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 308.

88. In “Grossraum gegen Universalismus” Schmitt discussed the Asian Monroe Doctrine and referred to a book by Johnson Long titled *La Mandchourie et la doctrine de la porte ouverte* (1933), in which the author outlined the problematic of the Asian Monroe Doctrine. Schmitt summarized this in three points; the third point says that Monroe Doctrine is obsolete due to the development of the modern transportation system. During Monroe’s time, the United States was isolated—that being the background of the doctrine, but in 1933 transportation technology had already created a globalized world. Schmitt criticized the author as being contradictory and wrote that it only shows that modern transportation technology allows American imperialism to intervene in others’ internal affairs more effectively.

89. Bratton, *The Stack*.

90. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1.

91. Schmitt, “Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung,” in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 309. “Das Reich ist nicht einfach ein vergrößerter Staat, so wenig wie der Großraum ein vergrößerter Kleinraum ist. Das Reich ist auch nicht identisch mit dem Großraum, aber jedes Reich *hat* einen Großraum und erhebt sich dadurch so wohl über den durch die Ausschließlichkeit seines Staatsgebietes räumlich gekennzeichneten Staat wie über den Volksboden eines einzelnen Volkes.”

92. Schmitt, “Der Reichsbegriff im Völkerrecht,” in *Positionen und Begriffen*, 312. “In ihm [Begriff des Reiches] haben wir den Kern einer neuen völkerrechtlichen Denkweise, die vom Volksbegriff ausgeht und die im Staatsbegriff enthaltenen Ordnungselemente durchaus bestehen läßt, die aber zugleich den heutigen Raumvorstellungen und den wirklichen politischen Lebenskräften gerecht zu werden vermag; die ‘planetarisch,’ d. h. erdraumhaft sein kann, ohne die Völker und die Staaten zu vernichten und ohne, wie das imperialistische Völkerrecht der westlichen Demokratien, aus der unvermeidlichen Überwindung des alten Staatsbegriffs in ein universalistisch-imperialistisches Weltrecht zu steuern.”

93. Schmitt, “Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung,” in *Staat, Großraum, Nomos*, 305.

94. Hooker, *Carl Schmitt's International Thought*, 147.

95. See Williams, *The Philosophy of Japanese Wartime Resistance*, 211–13; the term *Großraum* is transcribed in katakana as グロース・ラウム and translated into kanji as 広域圏 (*kōikiken*, literally, “sphere of wide territories”), which is then identified as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

96. Williams, *The Philosophy of Japanese Wartime Resistance*, 247. Nishitani claimed that “*Moralische Energie* is the essential ingredient of any such transformation. To restate the argument, the ethical foundations (*konpon*) of Greater East Asia are to be secured by the dissemination of Japanese *moralische Energie* to the various peoples of the region, and this process will help in a substantial way to enhance their respective levels of subjectivity.”

97. See Parsley, “Seasons in the Abyss.”

98. Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” 117: “Marx and the Marxists really erred in only one way. They assumed that capitalists were exactly as naive and shortsighted, exactly as unwise and blind, as the bourgeois political economists and intellectuals generally, who believed themselves to have ‘refuted’ Marxist theory in books of varying thickness.”

99. Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” 122: “Now, if such a country really invests the entire surplus value, or even more than that, in this way, one can, to be sure, no longer speak of colonialism in the conventional sense. For then one is certainly, *de facto*, no longer taking anything, and is even giving something. And when the country in question spends far more than is collected by it, then it must even really be called anticolonialist.”

100. Thiel, “The Straussian Moment,” 207: “The modern West has lost faith in itself. In the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment period, this loss of faith liberated enormous commercial and creative forces. At the same time, this loss has rendered the West vulnerable. Is there a way to fortify the modern West without destroying it altogether, a way of not throwing the baby out with the bathwater?”

101. Crary, *Scorched Earth*.

102. Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*.

103. Glasze et al., “Contested Spatialities of Digital Sovereignty,” 6.

104. Glasze et al., “Contested Spatialities of Digital Sovereignty,” 14.

105. Bratton, *The Stack*, 35.

106. Reuters, “Majority Shareholders Vote in Favor of Delisting Didi from New York,” <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/majority-shareholders-vote-favor-delisting-didi-new-york-2022-05-23/>.

107. Chris Rufo, “US House Energy and Commerce Committee Approves Bill that Would Force China-Based Company ByteDance to Sell TikTok,”

<https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/03/us-house-energy-and-commerce-committee-approves-bill-that-would-force-china-based-company-bytedance-to-sell-tiktok>.

108. Probably only in this sense is it productive to talk about a politics of *katechon*, as a power of epoch making, which Massimo Cacciari explored in *The Withholding Power*. The imperial power considered as a katechontic one makes both a new epoch and an epoch of its own death, as Cacciari says, “Only this self-consciousness allows power to assume an eschatological character” (28); in a later passage, Cacciari also states that “by containing within itself the coming apostasy, even presaging it, the *katechon* works for its own death. Through the heterogenesis of ends he finds he has been ‘nurturing’ that seed that will sweep him away” (76).

6. An Organology of Wars

1. Bergson’s *The Meaning of the War* was published in English in 1915; the French text is available at: <http://14-18.institut-de-france.fr/1914-discours-henri-bergson.php>; English translation is also available on Project Gutenberg: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/17111/17111-h/17111-h.htm>.

2. See Die Bibliothek Carl Schmitt, edited by the Carl-Schmitt-Gesellschaft, <https://www.carl-schmitt.de/forschung/privatbibliothek-carl-schmitts/>.

3. Canguilhem, “Machine and Organism,” in *The Knowledge of Life*; In *Recursivity and Contingency*, I tried to reconstruct Bergson’s general organology through a reading of *Creative Evolution* and Canguilhem’s commentary on Part III of Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*; this chapter constitutes the further interrogation of this subject.

4. Bergson, *The Meaning of the War*, 34.

5. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 268.

6. Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto (1909),” <https://www.arthistoryproject.com/artists/filippo-tommaso-marinetti/the-futurist-manifesto/>.

7. Bergson, *The Meaning of the War*, 36.

8. Kapp, *Der konstituierte Despotismus und die konstitutionelle Freiheit*, 85.

9. See Kawakami and Takeuchi (ed), *Overcoming Modernity* (近代の超克); On the discussion of war and the Kyoto School, please see the second part of Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China*.

10. I was made aware by the Russian editor of one of my books, Eugene Kuchinov, that a book published by the nationalist agitator Maxim Kalashnikov was entitled *Robot and Cross: Technosense of the Russian Idea*.

11. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 249.

12. Varela, “Steps to a Cybernetics of Autonomy,” 117.

13. Negri, *The End of Sovereignty*; see also my discussion in the Introduction.

14. As Charles Taylor said, today Hegel’s ontology of Geist is “close to

incredible,” but at the same time highly relevant, see Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society*, 69, 72.

15. Wiener, “Some Moral and Technical Consequences of Automation,” 1358.

16. Wiener, *God and Golem*, 73

17. Simondon, “Cybernétique et philosophie,” in *Sur la Philosophie*.

18. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 268.

19. Lapoujade, *Powers of Time*, 81.

20. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 265.

21. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 263.

22. Lapoujade, *Powers of Time*, 63: “The intelligence is precisely what distracts man from life itself; it is a form of inattention to life. The pure intelligence is in effect characterized by a ‘natural inability to comprehend life’ insofar as it always perceives life from the outside. The intelligence is life having become external to itself.”

23. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 59–62.

24. Simondon, “Cybernétique et philosophie,” in *Sur la Philosophie*, 43.

Simondon used the term holistic (*holique*) to describe this form of organization of cybernetics.

25. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 17.

26. Bergson in *The Two Sources* proposed what he calls “attachment to life”; however, this attachment to life is not about abandoning technology. Instead, this attachment to life is an act of overcoming. For the discussion between the tension of “attention to life” in his *Matter and Memory* and “attachment to life” in *The Two Sources*, please see Lapoujade, *Powers of Time*, 65–67.

27. On the concept of tragist, see Hui, *Art and Cosmotronics*.

28. Schure, *Bergson and History*, 199.

29. Schure, *Bergson and History*, 200.

30. It could be equally interesting to compare Bergson’s interpretation of the external obstacle in evolution and the *Hemmung* in Schelling’s recursive form of nature.

31. Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 47–48.

32. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 257.

33. See Miquel, “Bergson and Darwin.”

34. Even though Bergson never mentioned the name Hegel, and he rejected any telos of history, one wonders how far this is from Hegel’s own dialectics and the concept of sublation not as cancellation but as reconciliation.

35. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 234.

36. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 13.

37. Bergson, *The Two Sources*, 268. “Ne nous bornons donc pas à dire, comme nous le faisons plus haut, que la mystique appelle la mécanique. Ajoutons que le corps agrandi attend un supplément d’âme, et que la mécanique exigerait une

mystique. Les origines de cette mécanique sont peut-être plus mystiques qu'on ne le croirait; elle ne retrouvera sa direction vraie, elle ne rendra des services proportionnés à sa puissance, que si l'humanité qu'elle a courbée encore davantage vers la terre arrive par elle à se redresser, et à regarder le ciel."

38. Hawking, "Artificial Intelligence Could Spell the End of the Human Race."

39. Schure, *Bergson and History*, 204.

40. Lapoujade, *Powers of Time*, 66. Lapoujade sees the paradox between delusion (*délire*) and believing, for delusion can only become vital when it is believed.

41. On the nonrational, see Hui, *Art and Cosmotekhnics*, where we elaborated what we call "epistemology of the unknown." The nonrational is distinguished from the irrational, because the nonrational is that which remains unknown and unknowable, however essential to the plane of consistence of a spiritual life.

42. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 338–39.

43. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 339.

44. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 95.

45. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 338. "Mais la simple observation d'un animal ou d'une technique démontre que la tendance générale ne contient pas toutes les caractéristiques: le sabre, qui réalise dans tous ses types un ensemble harmonieux, offre pourtant des formes extrêmement nombreuses conditionnées les unes par la matière, les autres par l'usage particulier de l'arme, les coutumes de l'escrime locale, les traditions esthétiques, etc."

46. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 342.

47. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 396. "Nous avons fait la part de deux notions qui semblent dominer les faits, parce qu'elles fournissent une vue primordiale sur l'Évolution: la tendance et le milieu extérieur."

48. See Hui, *The Question Concerning Technology in China*.

49. Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et Technique*, 344.

50. This leads to the association of modernization and resistance, in the sense that the history of modernization of the non-West is a history of resistance against the West. See Takeuchi, *What Is Modernity?*.

51. Lefebvre, *Le manifeste différentialiste*.

52. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 218.

53. See Ober, *Demopolis*.

54. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 54, italic original; also cited by Lefebvre, *State, Space, World*, 85.

55. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 51.

56. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 53–54.

57. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 129.

58. Democracy as an act that allows the system to differentiate is a key argument of Niklas Luhmann against the classical concept of democracy, which

means eliminating other options, such as choosing between A and B. Luhmann believes that systems theory provides a concept of democracy more appropriate to our time. See Luhmann, “Komplexität und Demokratie,” 36.

59. Chérif, *Islam and the West*, 43: “Democracy is always to come, it is a promise, and it is in the name of that promise that one can always criticize, question that which is proposed as the *facto* democracy. Consequently, I believe that there doesn’t exist in the world a democracy suitable for the concept of the democracy to come.”

60. Chérif, *Islam and the West*, 50.

61. Chérif, *Islam and the West*, 44.

62. However, to be noted is that Derrida’s democracy to come is neither a Kantian idea such as the world republic of Karatani nor is it a messianic politics like that of Walter Benjamin. See Derrida, “The Force of Law,” 965: commenting on the idea of justice, Derrida said, “I would hesitate to assimilate too quickly this ‘idea of justice’ to a regulative idea (in the Kantian sense), to a messianic promise or to other horizons of *the same type*” (italics in original).

63. See Gille, *Histoire des techniques*.

64. Hui, “For a Planetary Thinking.”

65. Wilson, *Biophilia*, 11.

66. Wilson, *Biophilia*, 71.

67. Wilson, *Half-Earth*, Prologue.

68. Wilson, *Biophilia*, 138.

69. Shiva, “Monocultures of the Mind,” 237–48.

70. Günther Anders made an interesting remark when he said that even if one stops experimenting on the atomic bomb, and destroys all the existing bombs physically, the risk of the atomic catastrophe still exists; see Anders, “Commandments in the Atomic Age, 1957.”

71. Hui, “Machine and Ecology.”

72. Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine*. Vol. 2., 271; Mumford reflects on the American megamachine after the Second World War.

7. Toward an Epistemological Diplomacy

1. Marx, *Capital*, 492.

2. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 127.

3. This is the subject of Hui, *Art and Cosmotronics*.

4. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*.

5. Sohn-Rethel, “Das Ideal des Kaputten: Über neapolitanische Technik,” 41–48; the English translation by John Garvey, “The Ideal of the Broken Down,” is available at <https://hardcrackers.com/ideal-broken-neapolitan-approach-things-technical/>.

6. Sohn-Rethel, "The Ideal of the Broken Down."
7. For a discussion on Sohn-Rethel and Simondon on the question of technical knowledge, see Hui, "Notes on Technical Normativity."
8. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 176–77.
9. Hui, "Apropos Technophany."
10. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 234.
11. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 49.
12. Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*, 49.
13. Hazard, *The Crisis of the European Mind*, 20.
14. Kojève, *Kant*, 70; Kojève argues in the book that Kant's *Critique of Judgment* marks a turn from the discursive mode of truth to the mode of "as if" by eliminating the thing-in-itself; by doing so, Kojève also claims that the Kantian system is transformed quasi-automatically into a Hegelian system of knowledge (103).
15. Achilles Skordas defines these sets of conflicts as that which characterizes a neo-Hobbesian age; see Skordas, "The Rise of the Neo-Hobbesian Age."
16. Gaché, "Foreword," xiii.
17. Macron, "L'autonomie stratégique." A similar proposal was made by Habermas in 2003, arguing that Europe should maintain distance from the unilateral policy of the United States; see Habermas and Derrida, "February 15, or What Binds Europeans Together."
18. Cacciari, *The Withholding Power*, 110. This reading of Epimetheus seems almost opposite to Schmitt's; see discussion in chapter 5.
19. Cacciari, *The Withholding Power*, 114.
20. Cacciari, *The Withholding Power*, 118.
21. *Elpis*, meaning hope or expectation, according to Hesiod's *Works and Days*, is the last object in Pandora's box. As expectation, it is also a form of anticipation, and in this sense, it complicates Cacciari's metaphorical and oppositional play of the collapse of the Promethean foresight and the replacement by the Epimethean calculation.
22. In the history of philosophy, the philosophical *epistēmē* and the sophistic *technē* were opposed, and *technē* was devaluated in face of *epistēmē*. Since the Second Industrial Revolution, we observe a transformation of the relation between them, that they have been integrated through the idea of constant innovation. See Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, Vol. 1, 1, 40–43.
23. For an elaboration on the individuation of thinking, see Hui, *Post-Europe* (forthcoming 2024)
24. Glissant, "Creolization in the Making of the Americas," 82.
25. Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 108.
26. Simondon's anthropological analysis of the genesis of technicity in the

third part of *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects* was influenced by James Fraser, Bergson, Leroi-Gourhan, and others.

27. Simondon, "Psychosociologie de la technicité," in *Sur la Technique*, 33.

28. See Hui and Halpin, "Collective Individuation," 103–16, for an analysis of the history of social networks, its ontological and epistemological assumptions.

29. Gerovitch, "Artificial Intelligence with a National Face."

30. See Hui, *Cybernetics for the 21st Century Vol. 1*, which aims at an epistemological reconstruction of cybernetics in the twentieth century across various regions, including the United States, Soviet Union, Poland, France, China, Japan, and Latin American countries.

31. Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*.

32. Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques* coined the term "entropology," which suggests renaming his own discipline of anthropology. Entropology describes the disintegration of cultures under assault from Western expansion. See Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, 414: "Anthropology could with advantage be changed into 'entropology,' as the name of the discipline concerned with the study of the highest manifestations of this process of disintegration." For the question of entropy and ecology, also see White, "Outline to an Architectonics of Thermodynamics."

33. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Aim," in *Political Writings*, 45.

34. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*, 328.

35. Kant, "Perpetual Peace," in *Political Writings*, 107–8. Italics in original.

36. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A833, B861.

37. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A832 B860.

38. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A646–47, B674–75.

39. Rajiva, "Is Hypothetical Reason a Precursor to Reflective Judgment?"

40. Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (KU 438, 305), cited by Ypi, *The Architectonic of Reason*, 117: "There actually lies in us a priori an idea of a highest being, resting on a very different use of reason (its practical use), which drives us to amplify physical teleology's defective representation of the original ground of the ends of nature into the concept of a deity."

41. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 168.

42. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 232.

43. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 233.

44. Mann and Wainwright, *Climate Leviathan*.

45. Karatani, *The Structure of World History*, 283–84. Karatani's optimism is based on a set of seemingly mistaken observations, which he states further on the next page: "The growth of industrial capitalism required three preconditions: first, that nature supply unlimited resources from outside the industrial structure;

second, that human nature be available in an unlimited supply outside the capitalist economy; and, third, that technological innovation continue without limit. These three conditions have been rapidly disappearing since 1990.”

46. Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State*, 80.

47. Fichte, *The Closed Commercial State*, 145; also quoted by Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State*, 77. (Here I used the official translation published by SUNY Press.)

48. Fichte, *The Closed Commercial State*, 198–99.

49. The launch of Huawei’s Mate 60 Pro in September 2023 has created polar responses: on the one hand, the national pride of Chinese citizens who celebrated the breakthrough against the U.S. sanction on microchips; on the other hand, an even more fierce restriction might be imposed on Chinese firms from the U.S. side to weaken China’s capacity of producing 7 nanometer microchips on a large scale.

50. Henry Kissinger, “How the Enlightenment Ends”: “The Enlightenment started with essentially philosophical insights spread by a new technology. Our period is moving in the opposite direction. It has generated a potentially dominating technology in search of a guiding philosophy.”

51. There are many wonderful works on the intellectual history of the Enlightenment and its plead for nonpartisan reason. One of the outstanding works on this account is Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, especially chapter 8, “The Process of Criticism (Schiller, Simon, Bayle, Voltaire, Diderot and the *Encyclopédie*, Kant).”

52. Zammito suggests an “ethical turn” in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, as he writes that “Kant is really concerned with the kind of world which would exist were everyone to be fully moral. In a world of full worthiness, everyone should also be proportionately happy. What is required to compel the natural order to make happiness for man as a species a real possibility is nothing less than God.” Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant’s Critique of Judgment*, 339. We know that the pursuit of the systematic unity of reason has its main aim (*Hauptzwecke*) in what Kant called a general happiness (*allgemeine Glückseligkeit*), which ended his section on “The Architectonic of Pure Reason” in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, A851 B879. The possibility of general happiness is taken up as the “highest good” in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, a moral world in which actions are guided by moral laws defined according to the categorical imperative, and happiness is proportional to virtue.

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