

2. Dreams of cyberspaceⁱ

American scientists published in 1994 a manifesto based on the theses of futurologist Alvin Toffler and of George Keyworth, former scientific advisor of president Reagan. The manifesto delineates the vision of universal cyberspace and announces a new epoch (era) as the consequence of the predominance of knowledge vis-à-vis matter.

Societies can only assure themselves of their own reality when they imagine themselves in the shape of (*or*: Societies then are only confirmed or make sure of themselves that they really exist, when they imagine themselves as) mythical hypostases. Because in such hypostases, which are unskilfully cobbled (lumped, put) together (compiled) out of both real magnitudes and elements, as well as the wish-projections of the same, i.e. these magnitudes and elements' desired future extensions, their self-understanding is condensed (compressed). If the self-understanding of bourgeois society referred – after the death of God – to mythical hypostases like for instance “Nature”, “History” or “Mankind (Humanity)”, now then, after the death of Man, i.e. after the death of the Humanⁱⁱ, mass democracy characterises itself as a “structure” or “functional system”, which is apprehensible and guidable cybernetically (*or*: which someone can comprehend and direct through cybernetics). From the point of view of global informatics (information technology), this system was recently baptised or named “cyberspace”, in relation to which the search for an emphatic name corresponded precisely with the need for the impressive hypostatization of the thing. As an autonomous and self-contained entity with its own law bindedness (determinism, law(rule)-based necessity), cyberspace subjugates human action to its logic, and at the same time presents features which are

supposed to mark an epochal turn (*or*: which, as is said, mark a turn towards a new historical epoch). The “overthrow of matter” – no less than that! – is proclaimed, which means the increasingly economic irrelevance (*or*: the ever so smaller economic significance) of material factors, and the gaining of the upper hand of the “forces of the spirit(-intellect)” or of knowledge (*or*: the “forces of the spirit(-intellect)”, of knowledge and of information), hence the Cyberspace Manifesto (see. F. A. Z. from 26. 8. 95)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Communicatively instead of productively

This proclamation especially requires (a) commentary. It is trivial if one ponders that already the pyramids were erected and built not by the resources “sandstone” and “forced (hard) labour” as such, but [[by]] the – conscious of its domination – dynastic-sovereign/dominating “force of the spirit(-intellect)” standing behind such “sandstone and forced labour”, which directed for its own purposes those resources, as well as [[by]] (the) corresponding knowledge. The proclamation above is on the other hand (*or*: furthermore) misleading because it is completely wrong in relation to that, and conceals that the asserted volatilisation (evaporation) and liquefaction of matter has very material preconditions, prerequisites (presuppositions), implications and consequences. Not coincidentally (Not by chance/accident), the new message or Good News comes from the highly industrial continent[[s]] and regions of Earth, which with one sixth of the world population have at their disposal for instance four fifths of world wealth and world energy^{iv}. As an “American Dream”, as its originators and authors name it, the cyberspace-plan/design (*or*: the cyberspace manifesto/the manifesto of cyberspace) stems more specifically from a country in which four percent of the world population consumes, uses up or wastes and squanders one quarter of world energy, and every resident attaining the average

age has required and expended, amongst other things (inter alia), one thousand trees for the satisfaction of his needs.

These data (facts) do not in the least mean that that continent[[s]] and these regions of the Earth owe their high proportion (share, stake or quota) in world wealth to an equally high (direct) proportion etc. in the material resources of the planet; in their wealth undoubtedly hides (*or*: their wealth encloses undoubtedly) much technical knowledge, expertise and much political-military energy and vigour. However, such knowledge and such energy were never decisive in the sense that their bearers could leave, cede or hand over with impunity (unpunished) to the rest of the world, all material resources. On the contrary, such knowledge and such energy proved themselves determinative because they at any time granted and ensured a privileged access to exactly these resources, and indeed irrespective of to what extent they really depended on these same resources on each and every respective occasion (*or*: independent of whether these resources were needed at any given moment or not). A presumed shortage set off here always the effects of an actual shortage, and this will probably stay so/this way (remain the case) (*or*: The possibility of a lack of material resources always provoked the same reactions just as a real lack of such material resources, and this of course is not bound to change in the future). Only on the basis of the secured material reproduction of a highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced or hyperdeveloped) society, can knowledge become the essential factor and motor (driving force) of precisely this same reproduction, whereas (the) interest in such knowledge necessarily subsides as soon as the absolutely indispensable material basis appears to be in danger. No know-how and no cyberspace will be able to maintain and safeguard Japan's economic position in the world, if one cuts the country, i.e. Japan, off completely and consistently from all raw materials. And the other way around: without its own formidable, enormous potential in regard to material resources,

and also without the politically-militarily covered (*or*: political-military cover in respect of) access to the required resources at a world level on each and every respective occasion, the United States would never have become the pioneer in cyberspace. Incidentally, the United States watches over this access Argus-eyed, i.e. like a hawk (extremely observantly and vigilantly), and Western Europeans and Japanese have so far (until today) not lived badly from this watchfulness, alertness and vigilance, and have benefitted; a guarantee for the future cannot of course be deduced or derived from that (*or*: today's situation does not at all constitute, of course, a guarantee for the future).

All the same, in regard to the mass-democratic perception of the social, the factor "information" or "communication" puts the factor "resources" or "production" in the shade. That seems obvious or plausible when agriculture and industry have achieved such productivity that the labour of a relatively small minority can vouch for, i.e. guarantee, the copious (plentiful, ample, abundant) material supply (provision, providing) in respect of the whole, whilst the great majority carries out their work primarily via the exchange of signs and symbols^v. "Communication" ideationally autonomises itself (i.e. becomes autonomous), in other words, in the same sense – and to the same extent – vis-à-vis "matter", that increasingly less people produce that which they themselves consume, and as a result, the material production of goods is for the most part more than covered or even (and or) absorbed by symbolic exchange – exchange of information and money, but also of services, which can be considered and comprehended, in the language of contemporary sociology, as symbolic interaction. The impression that through this, "matter", and concern over its possession, have vanished into thin air, indeed makes the picture of the future rosier, but it is nevertheless false. Because the surplus in "communication" is due to a specific texture and composition of the – in the end, dependent on material resources – (mass-)production, which permits and in fact demands it

(*or*: precisely the texture of production permits, and indeed demands, communicative glut (excess, surfeit, repleteness)). However, the network of exchange(s) and kinds of information would have to all at once become much more wide-meshed or much more sparse, should the production of goods suffer heavy setbacks and seriously retreat, or if a shortage/scarcity of material factors underlying this production of goods emerged and became apparent. Cyberspace revolves, therefore, around a hard and not at all small material core (nucleus), with regard to which the process of communication and of information is acted and carried out in the broader sector or area (realm) of the economy.

Borderless and Boundless only for the [[what is]] unimportant

If the “*beati possidentes* (= blessed possessors)”^{vi}, the rich, can afford to look down on ungainly and crass matter (*or*: can allow themselves the luxury of considering base, despicable matter from on high), in order to extol the force and strength of the spirit(-intellect) (of their own), then the five (soon seven or eight) billion who want and have to emulate them (i.e. the “*beati possidentes*”) will push without further ado for the ruthless, reckless exploitation and depletion of material resources in order to acquire tangible material goods. With the existent demographic pressure, it is quite (*or*: essentially) indifferent whether they – in their wild struggle for survival and development – destroy or economically “sensibly” consume and use (up) material (as well as ecological) resources. In both cases, the significance of the latter would have to increase, and possible technical advances and progress, which could enable energy saving (the saving of energy) (*or*: reduce the consumption of energy), and lessen environmental burdens, would hardly equalise (offset, balance out) the side-effects of the rapid industrial rise of giants like China, India or even Brazil, which moreover will crop up as strong competitors and rivals of the present

leading nations in all sectors or fields – not least in that (sector or field) of access to world resources. Cyberspace, as a promoter of economic growth (growth in the economy), will only accelerate this development, and consequently will contribute unwillingly to the revaluation (i.e. appreciation as increase in value) of exactly those factors which cyberspace supposedly will push aside. Not only can cyberspace by no means guarantee the growing rationality of action in the sense of the “system” (see “Humanities” from 5th July^{vii} (= the previous article [[of this volume]] regarding the society of informatics/information technology)), but it, furthermore, will bring into being new imponderab(i)l(iti)es (*or*: imponderable data). Cyberspace’s proclaimers (or announcers) draw their optimism from the conviction that cyberspace will abolish borders. Nonetheless, the borders, which the global flow of information is supposed to efface, will be erected anew by the most acute struggles of distribution, regardless of where the dividing lines now run (*or*: which the new dividing lines will be), and how the new borders will be defined and set (fixed). In the distribution of goods, one is even less generous than in the exchange of information. And in the distribution of vital material resources (important/essential for life) – including air and water – the cyber-fun completely stops (*or*: then the delights which the electronic short walks grant in cyberspace will be cut abruptly).

ENDNOTES

All endnotes are by the translator, and **have nothing whatsoever to do with P.K.. Readers can and in fact probably must simply ignore them and draw their own conclusions from P.K.’s texts only, though some of the endnotes might be useful to some readers, and other endnotes**

are really only for the very few people who can look at themselves in the mirror and say “Oh my God, I’m really ugly, and retarded”. I do it every day, and it’s the only way to prepare yourself to be a truly profound thinker, and not a propaganda-spewing mouthpiece.

ⁱ The original title in the *FAZ* is: „Die verflüchtigte Materie“ (= “Evaporated (Volatilised, Dispelled, Vanished, Disappeared) matter”), and, the Greek title is: “The gaps (vacuums, lacunae, blanks, blank spaces, voids, emptiness(es)) of cyberspace”.

ⁱⁱ In *The Political and Man*, P.K. explains what the “death of Man” means – of course, man continues to exist, it’s just that the ideological understanding of him changes, etc..

ⁱⁱⁱ I found this online (https://books.google.com.au/books?id=N3WiBgAAQBAJ&pg=PA6&lpg=PA6&dq=Cyberspace-Manifest+FAZ+26.8.95&source=bl&ots=EkU87OLhBN&sig=sZk1WZ3gaBFjcSMyyvDX7daIjbl&hl=el&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi90_-_ordAhXCjlQKHflzB1MQ6AEwAHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=Cyberspace-Manifest%20FAZ%2026.8.95&f=false):

„Das sog. Cyberspace-Manifest (dt. FAZ 26.8.95) die „Magna Charta des Informationszeitalters“ einer Gruppe (neokonservativer) Intellektueller (Alwin und Heidi Toffler, George A. Keyworth, George Gilder) um den Senator Gingrich, ...“ (= “The so-called Cyberspace Manifesto (German FAZ 26.8.95) the “Magna Charta of the information age” by a group of (neoconservative) intellectuals (Alwin and Heidi Toffler, George A. Keyworth, George Gilder) around Senator Gingrich, ...”), and it “just happens” two of the five people mentioned above – if I’m not mistaken – are Tribal Warriors, i.e. even here 40% cf. 2% of the overall population of their country, and even if it were 20%, it would still be GROSSLY DISPROPORTIONATE involvement, and people who have high own-group consciousness tend to NOTICE THESE THINGS – HAHAHAHAHAHAHHA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And how ABSOLUTELY RETARDED are these Cretins? Did they think that the “rest of the world” would just sit by to have its material resources and labour “perpetually exploited FOREVER”? ARE YOU PEOPLE OK? DO YOU ACTUALLY HAVE BRAINS?

^{iv} This has obviously already changed considerably since 1995 – and don’t forget, in terms of world history, even a 10% change (and it’s been much more than a 10% change!) in 23 years is a HUGE CHANGE in QUICK TIME!

^v As opposed to the several thousands of years of physical labour since the Agricultural Revolution up to and including – grosso modo – the first and second Industrial Revolutions.

^{vi} = “Blessed are the possessors (those who possess), meaning that possession is nine tenths of the law. The law favours the possessor, whereas anyone else must prove his claim” (<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=32116>).

^{vii} In the *FAZ*, 5.7.1995 = „Wege in die Ratlosigkeit“ = “Paths to helplessness”, here.