

5. Technique (technology) and the changes, transformations in and of humanity (= So that the cannibals stay out)ⁱ

The latest (more recent) debates over/on technique (technology) can be classified into (assigned to, classed within) two large circles in respect of themes (topics) (two large/great thematic circles) (*or*: revolve around two great themes). On the one hand, it is a matter of the effects of the technical mode of thought and behaviour (the technical act) (the technical way of thinking and of acting) on or as regards the “essence” or the “humanity” of man as a person; on the other hand, it is a matter of the consequences of technical development for mankind as a whole, which now – in so far, in the course of this, there must be talk of life and survival – is looked at and regarded as a collective (entity) and as a biological species. In relation to both question formulations (examinations of the problem, central themes), all conceivable optimistic or sceptical and pessimistic views were put forward and expressed, and one can hardly say something about that without repeating what has been already said. We do not want to do that here (*or*: This is not our intention). Rather, what interests us more is the symptomatic value of the fact that in the course of recent decades, the centre of gravity and main emphasis of the debate on technique (technology) gradually (was) shifted from the former (as regards the effects of technique/technology on the “essence/humanity” of man as a person), to the latter thematic circle (of the consequences of technical development on mankind as a whole). Certainly, both thematic circles cross – and intersect with – each other on important points, especially if one believes – nursed in the spirit of the humanistic tradition – that survival is meaningful (plausible, reasonable), in fact possible, only as an ethically good life (*or*: as a morally benign (good) life).

However, the difference between the examinations of the problems and question formulations (central themes) remains conceptually clear and recognisable as well as heuristically (methodically, methodologically) useful. And the transition from the ideal of the all-round (well-rounded) educated (learned, cultivated) personality, to the ideal of collective survival, marks a historical caesura (break, rupture).

First-class funeral

The increasing distance between humanistic and technical education (paideia, learning, cultivation, formation) was expressed and manifested itself in the 1960s in the well-known slogan or saying in respect of “two cultures”. It gave or generated the impression that two approximately equally strong tendencies (lines (schools) of thought) would be measured precisely with each other, and the outcome would still remain open. The impression deceived. The rapid, meteoric development of technique (technology) after the Second World War had presaged the collapse of humanistic education (paideia, learning, cultivation), and only the effect of the law of inertia secured the relatively long survival (living on) of the bourgeois world of the spirit(-intellect) (the bourgeois intellectual(-spiritual) world) in the mass-democratic world (*or*: inside the world of mass democracy). Out of the collapse, thus, there was a gentle death with a first-class funeral (*or*: Thus, the collapse took the form of a painless death, which was followed by a luxurious funeral). Exactly when that above-mentioned slogan or saying cropped up or was first-formulated, humanistic education (paideia, learning, cultivation) lost precisely its final (last) battle against the united forces of the cultural revolutionⁱⁱ and of the economy, which despite all their opposition (i.e. between the cultural revolution and the economy), hit upon the motto that education (paideia, etc.) should be put at/in

the service of “praxis” and “society”. Thereunder (*or*: With these words), each side (i.e. humanistic education vs. the united (vis-à-vis humanistic education) forces of the cultural revolution and the economy) understood, incidentally, something different. However, it was easy (not difficult) to foresee whose interpretation would prevail (predominate or be victorious) [[as between humanistic education vs. cultural revolution/economy – to the extent the latter two were united against humanistic education]]. But the cultural revolution of the 1960s and the 1970s went deeper (proceeded even further). It took up and adopted the basic motifs of the earlier (older) artistic avantgarde, and led to (*or*: paved the way for) “postmodernism” by knocking down, wrecking and smashing – through the legitimation of the trivial and surrealistic “aesthetic of the flea market (or junk shop)” – the hierarchies of the humanistic canon. Parallely in relation to that, the ideal of the personality, built upon these hierarchies, was dissolved and decomposed in order to make way for the perception and notion of a fluid, flowing I (Ego) open to all chances, possibilities and opportunities of “self-realisation”. The intention was, at the same time, emancipatory, however the tangible result was that mental-spiritual stances were formed and reinforced which support and interweave with the functioning of a mass-producing and mass-consuming mass democracy.

The contrast and opposition between the “two cultures”, in the sense of two educational (paedagogical) ideals, was taken care of and dealt with therefore, of itself, as late and as reluctantly (i.e. notwithstanding how law and how reluctantly) those who had grown up with, and were nurtured (nourished, fed) by, the humanistic world of education (paideia, learning, cultivation), wanted or liked to really perceive and understand this. To(wards) this drastic solution pushed objective social reasons (*or*: Objective reasons imposed this drastic solution), and not for instance an original and incurable irreconcilability of humanistic education (paideia, learning, cultivation) with technical matters of

concern as such. Inside the bourgeois-humanistic hierarchy of intellectual-spiritual values, science stood (absolutely) at the top (*or*: possessed a highest place); technique (technology) was connected closely with science, and the great technician, whether as a solitary (lone(ly)) inventor or as the vanquisher, conqueror or tamer of the forces of nature (natural forces) for economic purposes (goals and ends in respect of the economy), figured as a new Prometheus next to the artist and the philosopher in the pantheon of great individuals. He was, that is to say, himself a striking, clear-cut embodiment and incarnation of the bourgeois ideal of personality, and his work (labour) was supposed to create the material preconditions for the free development of personality in general. Therefore, technique (technology) was supposed to serve the development of that which the humanistic ideal of the personality held to be worthy of development. Thus, did the bourgeois-liberal synthesis of technique (technology) and humanity look, in terms of theory, and in the Marxist utopia of a highly technicised (i.e. technologically advanced and hyperdeveloped) society of free all-round (well-rounded) individuals, this synthesis was merely eschatologically thought [[about]] and conceived of (reckoned) (*or*: and the Marxist utopia of a technicised society of free all-round individuals was nothing but the eschatological version of this synthesis). Not the bourgeois, and or not the humanist, viewed technique (technology) as *hubris*, but the patriarchal aristocratic great landowners and representatives of classical conservatism, whose world was destroyed and came to an end with the second industrial revolution, raised this complaint and formulated this censure and reproach first of all. Later foes of liberalism opined and maintained, by the way, that technique (technology) is to (should (ought to)) be comprehended as *fate and destiny (predestination, lot)* rather than as *hubris*, and the affirmation of this fate, predestination etc. – beyond humanistic hopes or conservative curses (and conservative principles)ⁱⁱⁱ – could enable and equip the “Worker (Labourer)”

(Jünger) or the “Caesars of Industry” (Spengler) for great historical achievements.

After the dissolution, disintegration and decomposition of classical conservatism, the accusation (censure, reproach) of *hubris* hibernated or wintered in various “right-wing” and “left-wing” refuges. It (i.e. the accusation and reproach of *hubris*) acquired new topicality (*or*: It again became topical) when the competition (rivalry) between the “two cultures” came to an end on the basis of the atrophy of one [[i.e. humanistic education/paideia]], and one began to handle and examine the question and matter of technique (technology) no longer from the individualistic perspective of the humanistic educational (paedagogical) ideal, but mainly in connection with collective survival. This turn was the effect and result of a double angst and fear: before atomic world war and before an ecological collapse. The paradox, rich in consequences, exists in both cases in that with regard to growing angst and fear, technique (technology) becomes increasingly indispensable and essential, so that a return to circumstances (relations, conditions), in which the dangers having been caused by this technique (technology), would be absent, is excluded.

Compulsion to retreat

The existence of atomic weapons drove or forced the protagonists of the Cold War to of themselves – in relation to that – build up, broaden and perfect their arsenals, already in order to be able to deter [[the other side]] (*or*: already in order to have the possibility of deterrence at their disposal). The possibility and the presumed destructivity of an atomic war grew parallelly with the efforts at deterrence, that is, efforts at the turning away from – and averting – war, through further technical (technological) progress. The vicious circle did not fall through, or was not terminated, by way of the internal logic of this constellation

or situation, but by way of external factors^{iv}, which compelled and forced one of both rivals (competitors) to retreat. Far less is the intervention of a *deus ex machina* to be reckoned on, in the ecological sector or area. If here there is a way out at all, then that is that technique (technology) itself will move its own undesired side-effects out of the way – i.e. technique/technology will eliminate its own undesired side-effects. Nevertheless, technique (technology) brings about these side-effects because the reproduction of social life depends more and more on technical processes and developments. Even the most vehement (fiercest) accusers of modern technique (technology) will not be able to dispute that the supplying and provision of the mass societies of today would necessarily break down and collapse without high technicisation (i.e. advanced technological (hyper)development). Already the feeding and nourishment of six (soon eight or ten) billion humans makes far-reaching technical interventions in natural processes unavoidable (*or*: renders inevitable extensive technical interventions in nature), and ecological burdening must grow to the extent that the expectations of consumption will be oriented worldwide towards the Western model. The angst and fear before the consequences of technique (technology), and the social need for technique (technology), will grow parallelly with each other, in relation to which the angst and fear, as well as the need, will be determined existentially-biologically (*or*: will be reduced to existential-biological causes). Making a virtue out of necessity is not always recommended, however, current ideological needs often command or demand it. According to the self-understanding and self-legitimation of the West, technique (technology) is not merely something socially indispensable, but it is also connected with the Western ideal of freedom. On the one hand, it is supposed to be the creation, and at the same time, the confirmation of that rationality which protects (the spirits-intellects) from obscurantist “metaphysics”, and therefore promotes and reinforces pragmatic or tolerant stances (attitudes, positionings), and consequently consolidates pluralistic

democracy. On the other hand, technique (technology) interrelates with another basic pillar or mainstay of democracy, [[i.e.]] with the free market. This free market unconditionally and definitely needs technical progress, and constantly drives such technical progress forward through the competition of enterprises (businesses, companies).

Learning from the sorcerer's apprentice

This extremely generous coupling and connection of technique (technology) with a rationality, which is supposed to serve freedom, undoubtedly contributes, in relation to that, to the appeasing of existential angst and fears, and lets or makes the comforting feeling arise that one is at least doing the politically-ethically correct thing, even if one cannot know whereto it leads (*or*: where this correct thing is leading us). Were not the ideological-psychological factor at play or in the game, i.e. present and operative (*or*: If the ideological-psychological factor did not slip in), then the complaints and grievances (reproaches and censures) of the guardians (keepers) of political correctness against “enmity towards technique (technology)” as an expression of an anti-democratic irrationalism, would turn out and prove to be milder. However, the complaints and reproaches will become more vehement to the extent that the angst and fear living and surviving on, or existing behind, appeasement, reassurances and consolation(s), threaten to get out of control.

Yet, despite the ideological justifications, the prestige of technique (technology) has sunk in the last twenty years. In terms of practice, what is decisive remains, nonetheless, the fact that a realistic alternative to technical (technological) progress is not suggested by any side. The clearer, behind Prometheus, is the sorcerer's apprentice delineated, the more dependence on the sorcerer's apprentice's ideas and inspirations is reinforced. One must rely on

technique (technology) without praising it and without being able to completely trust it (*or*: without totally overcoming an inner mistrust of it). Most people in Western societies, in so far as they at all reflect and cogitate upon such questions and matters, obviously hope that technique (technology) will find the solutions required in time. One can also resign oneself to hope [[in general]], if much worse forms of resignation are supposed to be avoided (*or*: Hope as a form of resignation seems to be the psychologically more appropriate and expedient way out, when one wants to avoid much worse forms of resignation). In any case, there are not many possibilities to choose from. If technique (technology) capitulates at the world level before demographic and ecological burden[[s]] and weight, then with certainty cannibalism stands before us. In this sense, humanity remains reliant and continues to be dependent upon technique (technology). But a humanity, which must struggle with its back against the wall will, because of that, narrowly avoid the worst catastrophic eventualities – and so that the biological substance of the species “man” is saved (survives, pulls through, stays preserved) – is already for that reason a reduced and truncated humanity. The bourgeois-liberal humanistic ideal collapsed through the unleashing of technique (technology) (*or*: owing to/on account of technical progress), which made the transition to mass-producing and mass-consuming mass democracy possible. If technique (technology), despite all that, continues to remain the last guardian and custodian of humanity, then the reason is only because the meaning of this humanity has in the meantime radically changed^v.

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 – which could deliberately be (partly) wrong and or unfair – 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 FAZ title: „Damit die Kannibalen draußen bleiben“ (= “So that the cannibals stay (remain) out(side) (outdoors, out there, abroad)”). The Greek title in English reads: “Technique and the swings (changes, transitions) of (in) the humanistic ideal”.

ⁱⁱ P.K. is referring to the 1960s and 1970s cultural revolution in Western mass democracies described in his *Decline...* book, and obviously not to the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

ⁱⁱⁱ Obviously, P.K. is referring to classical conservatives or “real” conservatives (where there were actual *differentiae specificae* as to societal content, and not e.g. being one “flavour” of mass democracy), who were in favour of the retention of as much of pre-industrial *societas civilis* and attendant feudal privileges as possible.

^{iv} What the fuck are these “factors” exactly? Why didn’t you Mr. P.K. tell us who are not so smart, so we can know too? Is it because these factors constitute “implied knowledge” and were not fully disclosed and “proven” through the ZIO-LOBOTOMISED mass media and the Satanic Channels of FILTH AND HATE-FILLED PROPAGANDA? Or is it simply that the leadership of the Soviet Union felt it could not keep up with the USA and just decided to “throw in the towel”, hence “Comrade” (or rather CIA-operative?) Beetroot Head.

^v Get it through your thick fucking heads – there is no significant continuity of Western bourgeois-liberal (Renaissance and Enlightenment) man anymore: only mass democratic man, which as we can see in practice, is increasingly transitioning from Satanic ZIO-Lobotomised-hedonistic-consumeristic man, to Ape Man, i.e. man in a state of anomie who is increasingly an Other man both racially-ethnologically and culturally, and as a consequence has increasingly less or nothing to do with Western bourgeois man c. 1500 to c. 1900/1950. If you’re going to “save something Western” it’s going to have to be on a new basis that looks to the future as a time of group survival more so than continuing distinguishing features of Western man from the past. The bond to the past has been torn so much and is now almost fully broken, so Western man will have to survive in the form of Repelling-Ape-Anomie Man, whilst trying to salvage aspects of his cultural-racial/biological inheritance to the extent possible, etc..