

OF STRUCTION¹

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I

Technology² supplants and supplements nature. It comes to supplant or take the place of nature wherever nature does not provide certain ends (such as a house or a bed), and it comes to supplement nature when it adds itself onto nature's ends and means. This twofold value is what Derrida inscribes into the "logic of the supplement," and one could say that this logic itself has no other source or medium than precisely this relationship between technology and nature. The supplement and its twofold concept always fall under the category of technology, artifice, or art, three words which are nearly synonymous in this regard.

Two conditions are necessary for this to be the case: to begin with, nature must present a few characteristic lacks (it is able to offer shelters, but not houses); then, it must be possible for technology to be grafted onto nature (using its materials, its forces). This is indeed the case: on the one hand, the animals of the *homo* species or varieties at least express needs that nature does not satisfy (inhabiting, warming up), and on the other hand, the technologies invented by *homo* take their operating resources (sharp stones, fire) from nature. Fire represents, perhaps, the symbolic meeting point where supplanting and supplementing occurs: it can light up during a thunderstorm, a volcanic eruption, or a spontaneous combustion of gas, and it constitutes the major "invention" of the first human beings despite the fact that it is not combustion that they invent but rather the conservation and "technological" production of combustion. What applies to fire also applies to electricity, semiconductors, optical fibers, and the energy that is released by atomic fission and fusion. Nature always contains and offers the prime matter for technology, whereas technology alters, transforms, and converts natural resources toward its own ends.

This very simple consideration has an important consequence: technology does not come from outside of nature. It has a place within nature, and furthermore, if nature is defined as what achieves its own ends by itself, then technology too must be defined as one of nature's ends, since it is from nature that the animal that is capable of—or in need of—technology is born.

OF STRUCTION

Technology in turn undergoes its own development: it no longer simply responds to its own shortcomings; it generates its own expectations and tries to respond to the demands that come from itself. This is what happens as soon as the artificial selection of plants and livestock is invented. What follows from this is the construction of an order that is specific to technology, a relatively autonomous order that develops new expectations and demands from out of its own possibilities. It not only consists in the assemblage of materials and forces (what are called “simple machines”: lever, mill, etc.), but also in the elaboration of logics that are structured by a given that is itself produced in view of a new end: good examples include the power of vapor, oil and gas, electricity, and the atom, and later cybernetics and numerical computation (immaterial givens which at once presuppose and bring about new treatments and assemblages of matter, such as with silicon or deuterium).

What profoundly instructs this development is not “the machine,” as it is all too often thought. The machine does not suddenly emerge from out of nowhere. It is machined itself—that is to say, it is conceived, elaborated, and structured by the ends that one proposes oneself. A few anecdotes about inventions that are due to chance (the observation of vapor raising the lid of a boiling pot) cannot obscure the fact that the process of technological invention is a process which is specific to the unfolding of aims and investigations that are oriented by this aim. We attempt to go faster and further, to cross oceans, to produce in greater quantities, to reach the enemy from afar, etc. At one and the same time we attempt to transport more goods, make investments for this, and insure against the risks of it: financial technologies are on an equal footing with nautical technologies within a development that presupposes the existence of independent and competing entrepreneurs—that is, an entire sociopolitical and juridical technology that structures the whole space of our common way of life [*la vie commune*].



Thus “technology” itself is not only limited to the order of “technologies” in the sense that one speaks of them today. Technology is a structuration of ends—it is a thought, a culture, or a civilization, however one wants to word it—of the indefinite construction of complexes of ends that are always more ramified, intertwined, and combined, but above all of ends that are characterized by the constant redevelopment of their own constructions. The transmission of sound, image, and information without a tangible medium creates new assemblages of both apparatuses and modes of life or ways of living. The possibility of acting on certain diseases or else on fertility or life spans through interventions and substances that are invented for these purposes or ends creates new social, sexual, and affective conditions.

At this stage or level, ends and means never stop changing roles with one another. Technology develops a general regime of inventing ends that are themselves thought through the perspective of means (How can sterility be overcome? How can an animated image be transmitted?), and by consequence, that are thought through the perspective of means that are taken as ends (it’s good to live longer, it’s good that money yields more money). This is also why the technologies of the arts—that is to say, technologies as “arts” or the enjoyment of ends in themselves, or forms that have value on their own—can become on the one hand the highest standard of every relationship to ends (everything must be put into image, sound, rhythm, everything must be hypostasized into a monstration: bodies, products, and places) and on the other hand the privileged domain for an interrogation into finality (Why art? What is it for?) that becomes suspicious of identity (What is art? What is it in the service of?).

Construction and deconstruction are closely interconnected with one another. What is constructed according to a logic of ends and means is deconstructed when it comes into contact with the outermost edge where ends reveal themselves to be endless and where means, for their part, reveal themselves to be temporary ends that generate new possibilities for construction. The automobile has given birth to the highway, which has given birth to new modes and norms of transport. It is also making the city have to reinvent both its means of transportation (streetcars, etc.) and over time the very aims or ends of a “city.” Digital cameras and editing processes are deconstructing and reconstructing not only the formal landscape of cinema, but also the signification and the stakes of this art form (along with digital audio processing).

II

What is at stake more generally in this process is sense: whereas we were in the habit of relating sense to an ultimate purpose or final end (whether it be one of history, wisdom, or salvation), today we are discovering that ends are proliferating at the same time as they are constantly transforming themselves into means. In this regard one could say that technology and nihilism go together: whereas until now one used to describe ends (values, ideals, and senses) as being destitute, today ends are multiplying indefinitely at the same time as they are showing themselves more and more to be substitutable and of equal value.

Still it is precisely here that technology conveys its lesson: through technology, nature itself—from which technology is descended—reveals that nature is by itself devoid of an end. We knew this and we said that “the rose is without a why / it flowers simply because it flowers.” But this “without why” continued to foster a more or less muted, more or less latent relationship with a hidden reign in which things were gratuitous, a hidden reign in which we thought we might be able to recognize a pure glory of Being (as long as we no longer needed to locate a divine goodness in it anymore).

Technology teaches us to do away with this glory and hidden reign. This is troubling not only for our meta-physical, theological, and spiritual tendencies, but also for our poetic inclinations. In a sense, this challenges all of our loftiness, sublimities, inclinations, and dispositions that are oriented towards grandeur and thus towards something other than the always mediocre measure of a life that is subjected to a necessity or need that nothing can ever explain. And if it is not explained, this need, this simple need to live, is transformed into a servitude, whereby we feel that we are slaves to technology and to its manifest corollary: capitalism, as the infinite production of values that are producible, exchangeable, and liable to grow exponentially. Value as monetary value in a way represents an inversion of nature: that which grows by itself but whose flourishing is confounded with indefinite growth and yet displays neither flowering nor fruit. “Yield” is not a random term used to speak about the profitability of an investment, including a purely financial investment (in sum, development in itself in its pure form and trade in its pure form without any reference outside of itself).

Capitalism constitutes the exhibiting of a proliferation through value—the proliferating infinity of ends and sense to which technology has introduced us. This exhibiting defines end, sense, and value precisely as the very process of an endless increase (we speak of “growth”). It is from this process that we could, as Marx did, look toward a passage through the limit and a reversal through which growth would reach a stage where its fruits would become available to all without relying on a distortion between the conditions of their production and their actual value (their pleasant taste, their value, their non-tradeable sense). This expectation presupposed something like a nature that would come to reclaim its rights. A *phusis* that, through technology as growth—revealing that all technology is growth—would bring about the flowering and yield of a value or sense that is free from any measure, equivalence, or possibility of subtraction or accumulation.

Yet it is not a *phusis* that is unfolding beneath our eyes. We would claim that it is the contrary of a *phusis*, and we are prepared to call this contrary “technology.” Still as I have mentioned, if technology is the unfolding of nature, one cannot see nature as the contrary of technology—or else we have to know how to consider this in terms of a reversal of nature in and of itself: but would this not renew a dialectic from out of which we would inevitably anticipate a second nature?

It is therefore necessary to think otherwise. If “technology” gives a sense to “nature,” from which technology is constructed and which it destroys at the same time, this implies that speaking of nature is no longer entirely possible, nor by consequence is it possible to speak of “technology.” The opposition of *phusis* and *technē*, the use of which Aristotle established, has undergone several centuries of maturation, which has complicated this opposition by contorting it in a decisive way through the introduction of what Derrida would later call the “supplement” and what Heidegger designated as “the last sending of Being.” In any case, what is at stake is this: “technology,” as that which adds to “nature” and opens ends that it ignores, constructs in reality the very idea of this “nature”—its immanence, autofinality, and law of blossoming. Yet it is also nature which destroys and deconstructs this idea, and with it an entire structure of representations which have organized Western thought.

OF STRUCTION

It is remarkable that the motif of destruction punctuates the dawn of modernity: first with Baudelaire, for whom “Destruction” concentrates, in his poem by the same name, all the “repugnant” and “demonic” desire which overwhelms him as he overwhelms (in “Meditation”) “the vile multitude,” and then, as it is well known, with Mallarmé, for whom destruction was “[his] Beatrice.”³ One may also recall Rimbaud: “Is it possible to become ecstatic amid destruction, rejuvenate oneself through cruelty!”⁴

(Before the dawn of modernity, the motif of *ruin* already occupied an ambivalent place by exhibiting the melancholic charm of broken-down constructions, that is, monuments to their own ruin).

III

There has thus been something like an enlargement of construction: not so much the edification or erection of buildings, for which the temple, the palace, and the tomb formed the triple paradigm, but rather the montage, assemblage, and composition of forces whereby the “engineering structure” [*ouvrage d’art*] almost gives it its concept (bridge, pier, fort, hall, etc.). The engineering structure requires an engineer more than a builder, a constructor more than a founder (and incidentally one also *constructs* roads, vessels, silos, chariots, and machines). Construction becomes dominant when edification, on the one hand, and making, on the other hand, become industrial and engineered, or in other words, when they bring into play the construction of operational, dynamic, and energy-producing schemata which serve ends that are themselves invented and constructed according to defined aims (production power, speed, durability, reproducibility, etc.).

The constructive paradigm that has been spread through urbanization, means of exploration and transportation, and the mobilization of non-manifest energies (coal, gas, oil, electricity, magnetism, digital computation, etc.)—a paradigm that has rendered ends and means more and more consubstantial—has led to a response of destruction. This does not concern ruining and demolishing so much as it concerns detaching oneself from what could be called “constructivism” (if one reappropriates a term whose invention in the beginning of the 20th Century is nevertheless not insignificant). The Heideggerian *Destruktion* of ontology, which expressly distinguishes itself from demolition (*Zerstörung*), is “destruction” in this sense (Granel and Derrida translate it as “deconstruction”). In a way it gives a philosophical counterpart to the existential and aesthetic Destructions of Baudelaire and Mallarmé. Construction as such is brought into play (as well as “instruction,” as what puts knowledge into an order: one could demonstrate it through the recent use of the term “instruction” in school contexts—the expression “*Instruction publique*” [Public Education] dates back to the French Revolution and “*instruction religieuse*” [religious education] is not any older than this).



Onto what does destruction open? Perhaps onto the very movement of modern construction? What is of concern is not to “re-construct” (contrary to the incessantly repeated petition addressed to “deconstructionists”: will you reconstruct already?). Nor is it to return to founding, building, constituting, or instituting gestures, even if it is to open and inaugurate, to allow for a birth of sense. What is at stake beyond construction and deconstruction is *struccion* as such.⁵

Struo signifies “to amass,” “to heap.” It is truly not a question of order or organization that is implied by *con-* and *in-*struction. It is the heap, the non-assembled ensemble. Surely it is contiguity and co-presence, but without a principle of coordination.

By speaking of “nature,” we used to suppose or rather superimpose that there was a coordination that was proper and immanent to the profusion of beings (a spontaneous or rather divine construction). With “technology,” we used to suppose that there was a coordination that was ruled or regulated by ends that were particular to “humankind” (their needs, capacities, and expectations). By acting retroactively, if one may say so, onto “nature” from where it comes out of or emerges (we cannot decide between these two concepts...), “technology” muddles the two possibilities for coordination. It invites the consideration of a struction: the uncoordinated simultaneity of things or beings, the contingency of their belonging together, the dispersion of profusions of

aspects, species, forces, forms, tensions, and intentions (instincts, drives, inclinations, and momentums). In this profusion, no order is valued more than the others: they all—instincts, responses, irritabilities, connectivities, equilibriums, catalyses, metabolisms—seem destined to collide or dissolve into one another or to be confused with one another.

Whereas the paradigm had been architectural, and consequently architectonic in a more metaphysical way, it then became more structural—a composition, surely, an assembling, but without constructive finality—and finally structional, that is to say, relative to an assembling that is labile, disordered, aggregated, or amalgamated rather than conjoined, reunited, paired with, or associated.

In fact, it is the question of a “sociation” in general that is posed alongside struction. Can there be an association, a society—if the *socius* is the one who “goes with” or “accompanies” and if, as a result, she or he brings into play an active or positive value of the “with” or *cum* around which or through which something akin to a sharing plays out? What I am calling here “struction” would be the state of the “with” deprived of the value of sharing, bringing into play only simple contiguity and its contingency. It may be, to take back the terms that Heidegger wants to distinguish in his approach to the “with” (the *mit* in the *Mitdasein* as the ontological constitution of the existent), a “with” that is uniquely categorial and not existential: the pure and simple juxtaposition that does not make sense.

IV

Perhaps struction is the lesson of technology—a construction-deconstruction of the ensemble of beings without any distinction between “nature” and “art”—insofar as it instructs us with this instruction (which indeed we do not comprehend and which appears badly constructed to us). Following this instruction, sense from now on will not let itself be constructed or instructed. What is given to us only consists in the juxtaposition and simultaneity of a copresence in which the *co-* does not bear any other particular value than that of contiguity or juxtaposition within the limits according to which the universe itself is given. At the same time, these limits themselves are only given with the caveat that it is impossible to properly assign them as delimitations of a world in relation to what is beyond or behind it. On the one hand, the universe is said to be expanding as the same time as it is finite; on the other hand, it cannot even be called a “universe” but only a “multiverse.” And yet, in order to think beyond the “universe,” it is no longer necessary of course to understand the multiple worlds as one (or several) other world(s). “They are not somewhere else but modes of relating to what is ‘outside-of-itself.’”⁶

The idea of the universe contains a schema of construction or architecture: a basis, a foundation, and a substruction (a word that is also found in the work of Mallarmé!) that forms the base on which uni-totally is erected and assembled. Uni-totally is posited on the basis of its own supposition and refers essentially to itself; in short, it is in itself (and “Being” is Being “in itself” within the thought that is sustained by this schema). But copresence and coappearance both turn away from the in-itself and construction: “Being” is no longer in itself, but rather contiguity, contact, tension, distortion, crossing, and assemblage. “Being,” of course, shows traits of “construction” understood as mutual disposition and mutual distribution of the multiverses which belong to each other, but not as a (sup)position of a Being or a fundamental real.⁷ The real does not dissolve itself at all in unreality, but rather opens onto the reality of its nonsupposition [*insupposition*]. This is what is signified by the dissolution of the *technē/physis* opposition or what we call “the reign of technology.”

This is what has occurred in our history. We have come to a point in which architectonics and architecture—understood as the determinations of an essential construction or essence as construction—no longer have value. They have worn themselves out by themselves.

Still it has not only been a question of being worn out. It is not only a construction that has been destroyed by time. It is the very principle of construction that has been weakened.

The accumulation, noted above, of motifs of destruction at that time—around 1900, which is traditionally considered as “the” turn of the century *par excellence*, the time in which in fact something was inverted and

OF STRUCTION

overturned, where an edifice was weakened to the point that one could say, in every possible sense, that the edifying and the edified trembled—this accumulation bears witness to a sort of saturation point and a rupture in the model of “construction.” This signifies that construction bore within itself the seed of deconstruction. What first presented itself as the extension of the assemblage and montage of *tools*—continuations of bodies and simple machines—and later as the expansion of a gesture of mastery or command—the administration and governance of energies (vapor, electricity, chemical reactions) in lieu of the mere use of forces (moving water, winds, gravity)—revealed another nature: one of combination, interaction, and, later, feedback.

In reality, an entire *organicity* or a quasi-organicity has been developed. In sum, the constructive paradigm is overcoming itself; it is overconstructing itself by tending towards an organic autonomy. Overconstruction is turning into struction.

V

Or rather, according to another, slightly different perspective, it is the organic autonomy of our own behavior that has been extended very far beyond not only our bodies but even our minds by asking the latter to export and expose itself under the form of highly self-referential “machines” whose laws and schemas of organization require certain operations from our behavior in return. We learn how to use a computer, on our desk as well as in our car, in the train, on a plane, on a boat, for archeological excavations and for recording data, and in the “creation” of sounds and images. This use does not only imply a new domain of expertise but also a different space-time that incidentally is nonhomogenous and non-unitary or “universal”: we are, at each moment and all at once, in the extension of certain modules that are put into operation everywhere (a digital procedure, a use of signals or icons) and also in the renewal of unprecedented possibilities, which are without a doubt very repetitive (everyone takes the same photos of the same monuments, etc.) but whose very repetition lights up a new reality. We are no longer in the process of discovering a world that has remained in part unknown; we are in a spiraling, growing pile of pieces, parts, zones, fragments, slivers, particles, elements, outlines, seeds, kernels, clusters, points, meters, knots, arborescences, projections, proliferations, and dispersions according to which we are now more than ever taken hold of, interwoven into, absorbed into, and dislodged from a prodigious mass that is unstable, moving, plastic, and metamorphic, a mass which renders the distinction between “subject” and “object” or between “man” and “nature” or “world” less and less possible for us.

In fact, we are perhaps no longer within a world or “in the world” [*au monde*]. What is disappearing or being diluted is the more advanced sense of the *cosmos* or beautiful unity that is composed according to a superior order that directs it and which it also reflects. Our “world”—or our element—is instead composed of bits and pieces which, taken all together, are proliferated from the same source (humankind, the technological animal of nature, the constructive appendage of a great all that shows itself to be rarely constructed but incredibly rich in con-de-in-structive potentialities). Still the bits and pieces or “elements”—which are never elementary enough—of this great “element”—in the sense of a milieu or an ecosystem which is an *ecotechnology*—constantly escape the grasp of every construction. Their assemblage does not refer to a first or final construction but rather to a kind of continuous creation where what is constantly rekindled and renewed is the very possibility of the world—or rather the multiplicity of worlds.

In this sense, struction opens less onto a past or future and more onto a present that is never really accomplished in presence. It opens onto a temporality that definitely cannot correspond to a linear diachrony. Within this temporality there is something synchronic, which is not so much a cut across diachrony as it is a mode of uniting the segments of traditional time, which is the very unity of the present as it is *presenting itself*, as it is arriving, taking place, or coming about. This *coming about* is the time of struction: an event whose significance is not only that of the unexpected or inaugural—not only the significance of rupture or regeneration in the timeline—but also the significance of the passage, of ephemerality intermixed with eternity.

There is something outside of time at the heart of time: surely nothing else than what was perceived in all of our chronic thought in how time flies or gets away from us, or in the present instant’s perpetual flight. Still here “flight” does not signify a disappearance any more than the event signifies an appearance. As with (de)(con)

struction, it is necessary to uncouple (dis)(ap)pearance. “Pearance” or appearance is the appearing—but not as the manifestation of a phenomenon or as the semblance of appearance. As it is suggested by the former use of the word, “appearing” is coming into presence, presenting itself or oneself. That is, coming near to or beside. It is always appearing with.

Within this appearing with a displacement is revealed, a curve in the phenomenological apparatus. It does not so much concern the relationship between an aim and its fulfillment as it does the correlation of appearing between themselves. It is not so much about a subject and a world than it is about references that send the world back into itself and to itself, about the profusion of these referrals and the way that they thus create what could be called a sense, a sense of the world that is nothing other than its appearing with: that there is a world, and all that is in the world, and not nothing.

VI

This kind of brute obviousness might seem to bring us back to a nascent, infantile, and rudimentary state. We would have nothing else to receive, project, or express than the crudest of conditions. We could not account for the world or give any kind of justice to the fact of its existence. Technology would have both withdrawn any kind of final aim or end or supreme good and also rendered reason to be proliferating, exorbitant, and even delirious in its very self-sufficiency—growing like a cancer.

However, to have arrived at the state of struction does not necessarily signify having regressed or degenerated. There may be progress in the passage beyond the processes of construction, instruction, and destruction. Struction is liberation from the obsession that wants to think the real or Being under a schema of construction and that thus exhausts itself in the pointless quest for an architect or mechanic of the world.

Struction offers a dis-order that is neither the contrary nor the destruction or ruin of order: it is situated somewhere else in what we call contingency, fortuity, dispersion, or errancy, which could equally be called surprise, invention, chance, meeting, or passage. It is nothing but the copresence or better yet the appearing-together of all that appears, that is, of all that is.

That which is, in effect, does not appear from out of a Being in itself. Being is itself appearing; it is appearing in an integral way. Nothing comes before or follows the “phenomenon” that is Being itself. Being itself is therefore not at all beings since it is the appearing of a being that “is” only appearing and appearing with. Thus in addition one must say that everything appears-through together: everything refers back to everything and thus everything shows itself through everything. Without end—and more precisely, without beginning or end.



Can we learn the logic—the ontology, the mythology, or the atheology, if one has to find a name for it—of this simple and inextricable appearing with? That is, of this *ecotechnology* that our ecologies and economies have already become, namely states of equilibrium in our milieus and ways of managing our subsistence?

Technology presents us from all sides with dispersion, often irritation, and always the indefinite multiplication of its aims or ends that are neither ends nor means. We prolong life merely to prolong it. We manage services for these prolonged lives. We increase our biochemical and biomechanical know-how, from which we extract new possibilities for further modes of assisting other endangered lives—and we are always further away from knowing how to think about “life,” not only the existence of each and every one but also the life of the ensemble of the living or of all of the living together. We are always further away from thinking nothing less than the impetus of the world through the question of “life,” that is, if “life” itself—what we thus call life—is not contained within the movement of assemblages, combinations, or actions and reactions that we call “matter.” Matter proves itself more and more thanks to exploratory technologies that are increasingly precise, but which are themselves becoming intricately connected to their “objects.”⁸

OF STRUCTION

Ultimately, all that we have called “matter” and “life” as well as “nature,” “god,” “history,” and “humankind,” have fallen into the same grave. The “death of God” is indeed precisely the death of all of these substances-subjects. As with the former death, the latter deaths are very long and, in our perception(s) and even for our imagination(s), never-ending. And furthermore, they carry within themselves formerly unseen potentialities of a practical, concrete death of the living, a death of human beings and why not of the world? With each step taken by technology, not only ends, means, and deviations become indistinguishable, but harms and benefits also become intermixed, all the more so since we often do not even know what must truly be considered as a harm or a benefit (For example, is the speed [*vitesse*] of transportation or transmission a “good” or a “bad” thing and according to what criteria?).

As soon as we think that we still have a few principles or rules of conduct—and, in fact, we do have some elementary ones such as bare or “vital necessities”—we cannot avoid being led toward the questions of their foundations or ultimate aims or ends. A decent life, yes, but to what end? And to which “decency”? To which level beyond mere survival? To an equality, yes, but to an equality of what if one were to go beyond the bare minimum of law? To consider each human being as an end and not exclusively as a means? Yes, but according to what? How are each an “end”? How and from where do all of the agents and levers that reduce it to the state of means enter (there are so many: economical, political, religious, and ideological ones)?

Yet we cannot presuppose that the entire assemblage and becoming of the world answers to, beneath appearances that are so problematic and even aporetic, an *intelligent design*. This idea is the typical product of a lack of thought concerning technology: it places back before nature the very *technē* that this presumed nature ends up producing.

One could also wonder whether the Western transformation, which was a technological transformation (iron, currency, alphabet, law) at the same time as it was a religious one (the end of human sacrifice, the end of theocratic empires), did not also open up the double possibility of a god that is conceived of as the one who conceives and architect of the world, and also a god who is given in distance and non-presence. The other cosmogonies rarely if ever possess the character of a blueprint and a construction. Instead their gods are present and active in a world in which they are, in a way, “nature” itself.

In any case, it is indeed the image of a god as an architect or clockmaker or as a constructor and technician that has emerged within and imposed itself on our culture, a Platonic demiurge combined with an all-powerfulness which took over or was put in charge of the totality of a world whose beginning and end were clearly outside of itself and in the power and glory of a “Supreme Constructor.” This Constructor precipitated along with its fall a distant, personal, and living divinity of which it was the double. Thus at the same time as it became less and less possible to understand the technological blueprint of the construction of a world (which was the question of theodicy as a justification for the work of the divine), it also became less and less possible to resort to a “salvation” and a “grace” or a “love” that ultimately would supplant and supplement an impossible legitimization.

Neither providence nor promise: one could say that it is the entire situation or situation of togetherness that is developed by technology. It is clear that any representation of an *intelligent design* is bound to fail since the “intelligence” within it only represents itself—in other words, essentially a technological intelligence or an intelligence that is purely focused on technology.⁹ This intelligence can only be presupposed by its own production. Still it is condemned then to presuppose its own limits as well: because if it is a designer that conceived and constructed (both amount to the same thing) matter and life, both of which open onto human intelligence, why does human intelligence understand nothing about why it is there once its intellect itself compels it to renounce the projections of an “end,” a “second nature,” “nature” itself, and a “rational” or “total person”?

At the time when a technology (pottery, architecture, clockmaking, etc.) could have been a model for the intelligent design or intent of a Prime Technician, the model implied an aim toward an end. Today the model itself—“technology” thought as a dimension that is anthropological, cosmological, and ontological (and no longer as an order subordinated to what used to be called the “mechanic arts”)—manifests itself as a proliferation or even a pulverization of “ends” that cannot possibly be imprinted onto the schema of a supposed Designer anymore.

We must dispense with “intelligent design” or intent. This cannot be disputed. One might want to argue to the contrary that a Primordial Intelligence is far more vast than ours and that its intent is precisely to make us search for, fumble around, and stumble around in the limits of the erratic proliferation of its endless goals or finalities—something like what Derrida called “destinerrance.” But even if one admitted this, one would still have to face the question of an intent and design that is put to work in the wandering or errancy that we are. One could say then that the hypothesis of *intelligent design* annuls itself in another way: after having once been a hypothesis that was incapable of understanding itself, it has become a hypothesis which asks in turn for another hypothesis, a hypothesis about the sense of errancy, and even more precisely, about the sense of the errancy of sense.

To this, one must also add the following: we are not only living technicians perplexed by the development of their art or know-how. We are not only overwhelmed and disconcerted that all of the forms and aspects of sense have been brought into play and called into question. We are also ourselves already caught up in this transformation. We have been inserting ourselves into a technosphere, which is our development; what we call “technology” exceeds the entire order of tools, instruments, and machines. It does not concern what is possible through command or mastery (a means to an end), but rather the expansion of the brain (if one wants to call it this) within a network of “intelligence” that extrapolates a mastery that is significant by itself and for itself, a mastery that is an end and a means in itself indefinitely.

Since it is pointless to cast a veil over the errancy in struction—the veil of any preconceived “sense” that is taken from a model of “intelligence” which is supposedly “good”—then it is incumbent on us to reinvent everything beginning with “sense.” Sense does not correspond anymore to a schema of construction or to one of destruction and reconstruction: it must correspond to a “destinerrance” which signifies that even though we are not going towards any term or limit—as a result of providence, tragic destiny, or fabricated history—we are still not devoid of “going.” We are not devoid of advancing, roaming, crossing, and also experiencing [*faire l'expérience*], a word that used to express “going to the very end, to the outermost limit.”

Wisdom cries out from all sides: “This must stop at once! How far will it go?” This is because, in effect, it is limitlessness that is sprouting up on all sides. It is cropping up in genetic manipulations and in financial markets, in networks and poverties and social and technological pathologies. It cannot be a question of establishing limits for what, in itself, ignores the limit. Either this limitlessness will be self-destructive—a construction that goes up but only to fall down right at the end—or we will find a way to recognize “sense” in struction—at the place where there is neither end, nor means, nor assembly, nor disassembly, nor top, nor bottom, nor east, nor west. But merely an all together.

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NOTES

1. TN: This essay appears in a forthcoming book by Jean-Luc Nancy and Aurélien Barrau entitled *What's These Worlds Coming To?*, trans. Travis Holloway and Flor Méchain (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013). An earlier version of this text was first published in *Die technologische Bedingung. Beiträge zur Beschreibung der technischen Welt*, ed. Erich Hörl (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011).
2. TN: The polysemantic word *la technique*, which is translated as “technology” in this essay, could also be correctly translated as “technique” or “technics.” While in French *la technique* may suggest, like Aristotle’s *technē*, a kind of skill, know-how, or technique, *la technique* may also imply technology in the sense of Heidegger’s *die Technik*, which has typically been translated into French as *la technique* and into English as “technology” or, more recently, as “technics.” Still, whereas Heidegger generally does not translate *technē* with *die Technik* because he considers modern technology or *die Technik* as being very different from the Greek sense of *technē*, Nancy views modern technology as a one of many “maturation” of *technē* and has even offered *la technique* as a translation for *technē* in Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Technique of the Present: On On Kawara,” in *Multiple Arts: The Muses II*, ed. Simon Sparks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
3. Letter from Mallarmé to Eugène Lefébure on May 27, 1867: “...I’ve created my work only by *elimination*, and any truth I acquired resulted uniquely from the loss of an impression which, having sparkled, burnt itself out and allowed me, thanks to the shadows thus created, to advance more deeply in the sensation of the absolute shadows. Destruction was my Beatrice... the sinful and hasty road, a road which is satanic and *facile*, the road of self-destruction which has produced not strength but a sensibility...” Stéphane Mallarmé, *Selected Letters of Stéphane Mallarmé*, ed., trans. Rosemary Lloyd (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 77-8.
4. In “Tale,” from Arthur Rimbaud’s *Illuminations*, which can be found in Arthur Rimbaud, *Illuminations*, trans. John Ashbery (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 35. And one may also think of Dostoevsky: “Man loves to construct and lay down roads, no question about it. But why is he so passionately fond of destruction and chaos? Tell me that!...Isn’t man perhaps so passionately fond of destruction and chaos (and there’s no disputing that he’s sometimes very fond of them, that really is the case) that he himself instinctively fears achieving his goal and completing the building in course of erection?,” Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground and The Double*, trans. Ronald Wilks (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 30.
5. It so happens that *struction* is also a concept in graph theory, which is not relevant here.
6. Aurélien Barrau, “Quelques éléments de physique et de philosophie des multivers,” *Laboratoire de Physique Subatomique et de Cosmologie CNRS-IN2P3*, accessed September 27, 2013, http://lpsc.in2p3.fr/barrau/aurelien/multivers_lpsc.pdf, 122.
7. On this topic see the use of the term “construction” in the work cited in the previous footnote.
8. Thinking about this on a simple level, one knows that a particle accelerator or a space probe is not independent from the “objects” it examines, and this is also conversely the case. But in truth we are only at the beginning: the intricate connection or involvement of the observer in observed reality, such that this reality never ceases to be amplified and made more complex in the so-called hard sciences as well as in the sciences that are called human, signifies in reality a progressive transformation of the status of “science.” Even to speak of this “intricate connection” still suggests that there is an implied agreement with a model of non-involvement and “objectivity.” Here as well, whereas it was once customary to think of technologies as applications of certain scientific results, today technology gives science an unprecedented status and unprecedented content.
9. For the Moderns, intelligence has a tendency to get confused with technology. This is why “artificial intelligence” (a tautology perhaps?) seems so fascinating. On the other hand, when one speaks in French of emotional intelligence as the “intelligence of the heart,” one clearly indicates that one is using a metaphor.