

ESCAPING THE ANTHROPOCENE

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Foxconn To Replace Human Workers With One Million Robots



Foxconn, an electronics manufacturer from Taiwan with huge factories in China, generates about 40 percent of the global consumer electronics revenue by creating things like iPhones and computer components on giant assembly lines staffed by humans. Until recently, you'd probably never heard of Foxconn, but a series of worker suicides made us all take a hard look at where our electronics were coming from. Foxconn has made some improvements (including nets around tall buildings), but **by all accounts**, the core of the problem (the work) remains "repetitive, exhausting, and alienating."

1. Automation and negentropy

The propositions at the heart of this paper are founded on the conclusions of my recent work entitled *La société automatique*, a book concerned with the

issues of complete and generalized automatization that have accompanied the advent of the digital age. In it I argue that algorithmic automatization has led to the decline of wage labour and employment, and hence to the imminent disappearance of the Keynesian model of redistributing productivity gains, a model that has until now been the basis of the macro-economic system's ability to remain solvent.

After the '*great transformation*' that Karl Polanyi described in 1944, which gave rise to what we now call the Anthropocene, an *immense* transformation is now taking place, a transformation that presents us with an alternative:

- either we continue being led in the direction of hyper-proletarianization and a generalized form of automatic piloting that will engender both structural insolvency and a vertiginous increase in entropy;
- or we lead ourselves *out* of the process of generalized proletarianization into which we have been placed by 250 years of industrial capitalism. This second alternative requires negentropic capabilities to be widely developed on a massive scale, through a noetic politics of reticulation that places automata, automation systems of every kind, into the service of individual and collective capacities for dis-automatization – that is, it places them in the service of the *production of negentropic bifurcations*.

The immensity of the transformation currently underway is due both to the speed of its effects and to the fact that these effects operate on a global scale. So-called 'big data' is a key example of this immense transformation that is leading globalized consumerism to *liquidate all forms of knowledge (savoir vivre, savoir faire and savoir conceptualiser, knowledge of how to live, do and think)*.

The Anthropocene is an 'Entropocene',

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that is, a period in which entropy is produced on a massive scale, thanks precisely to the fact that what has been liquidated and automatized is knowledge, *so that in fact it is no longer knowledge at all*, but rather a matter of *closed systems*, that is, *entropic systems*. Knowledge is an open system: it always includes a capacity for dis-automatization that produces negentropy. When Chris Anderson announced the end of theory in the era of big data,



that he calls here data deluge, he made a serious mistake, given that he ignored the fact that to close an open system leads in a systemic way to its disappearance.

Given that it is founded on proletarianization and the destruction of knowledge, the model of redistributing productivity gains through employment is itself doomed. Another model of redistribution must be conceived and implemented if we are to ensure macro-economic solvency in the age of digital automation. The *criteria* for redistribution that must now be adopted can no longer be founded on the productivity of labour. Productivity is today a question of machines, and today's digital machine no longer has any need for



either work or employment.

Manual *work* that produces negentropy and knowledge – which Hegel discussed in terms of *Knecht* – was replaced in the nineteenth century by proletarianized employment, that is, by a proletariat forced to submit to a machinery that was entropic not just because of its consumption of fossil fuels, but because of its standardization of operating sequences and the resultant loss of knowledge on the side of the employee. This loss of knowledge has today become so widespread that it has reached as far as Alan Greenspan,



as I have shown in *La société automatique* and as he himself stated on October 23, 2008.

The Anthropocene is unsustainable: it is a massive and high-speed process of destruction operating on a planetary scale, and its current direction must

be reversed. The question and the challenge of the Anthropocene is therefore the ‘Neganthropocene’,

neganthropocene

that is, to find a pathway that will enable us to escape from this impasse of cosmic dimensions – which requires a new speculative cosmology in the wake of Whitehead.

New criteria, as I said, must be implemented in order to organize redistribution in the economy of the Neganthropocene, and these new criteria must be founded on the capacity for dis-automatization that it is up to us to resuscitate. This necessarily involves a resurrection of what Amartya Sen calls capabilities, which he places at the foundation of human development – that is, of the *individuation* of humankind.

2. Knowledge, freedom and agency

Amartya Sen relates ‘capability’ to the development of freedom, which he defines as always being both individual and collective:

we have to see individual freedom as a social commitment.¹

In this way, Sen remains faithful to both Kantian and Socratic perspectives. Capability constitutes the basis of economic dynamism and development, and it does so as freedom:

Expansion of freedom is viewed, in this approach, both as the primary end and as the principal means of development.²

Freedom, in Sen’s definition, is therefore a form of agency: the power to act.

Sen’s comparative example of the incapacitating effects of consumerism (that is, in his terms, of the indicators of affluence) is well-known:



¹ Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), p. xii.

² *Ibid.*

the black residents of Harlem have a lower life expectancy than the people of Bangladesh, and this is precisely a question of their ‘agency’.



Freedom is here a question of knowledge insofar as it is a capability that is always both individual and collective – and this means: individuated both psychically and collectively. It was on this basis that Sen devised the human development index in order to form a contrast with the economic growth index.

I would like to extend Sen’s propositions by means of a different analysis, one that leads to other questions. In particular, consideration must be given to the question of what relations psychic and collective individuals can forge with automata, in order to achieve individual and collective bifurcations within an industrial and economic system that, having become massively automatized, tends also to become closed.

The Anthropocene,



insofar as it is an ‘Entropocene’,

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amounts to accomplished nihilism: it produces an unsustainable levelling of all values that requires a leap into a ‘transvaluation’ capable of giving rise to a ‘general economy’ in Georges Bataille’s sense, whose work I have elsewhere tried to show involves a reconsideration of libidinal economy. The movement I am describing here is no doubt not a transvaluation in a strict Nietzschean sense. Rather, it is an invitation to re-read Nietzsche with respect to questions of disorder and order that in the following will be understood in terms of becoming and future.

3. *Becoming and future*

If there is to be a future, and not just a becoming, the value of tomorrow will lie in the constitutive negentropy of the economy-to-come of the Neganthropocene.

neganthropocene

For such an economy, the practical and functional differentiation between becoming and future must form its criteria of evaluation – only in so doing will it be possible to overcome the systemic entropy in which the Anthropocene consists. This economy requires a shift from anthropology to neganthropology,

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where the latter is founded on what I call general organology and on a pharmacology: the *pharmakon* is the artefact and as such the condition of hominization, that is, an organogenesis of artefactual organs and organizations, but it always produces both entropy and negentropy, and hence it is always also a threat to hominization.

The problem raised by such a perspective on the future is to know how to *evaluate* or *measure* negentropy. Referred to as negative entropy by Erwin Schrödinger and as anti-entropy by Francis Bailly and Giuseppe Longo, negentropy is always defined in relation to an observer (see the work of Henri Atlan³ and of Edgar Morin⁴) – that is, it is always described in relation to a *locality that it as such produces*, and that it *differentiates* within a more or less homogeneous space (and this is why a neganthropology is always also a geography). What appears entropic from one angle is negentropic from another angle.

Knowledge – as *savoir faire* (that is, knowledge of what to do so that *I do not myself collapse* and am not led into chaos), as *savoir vivre* (that is, knowledge that *enriches and individuates the social organization in which I live without destroying it*), and as conceptual knowledge (that is, *knowledge the inheritance of which occurs only by passing through its transformation, and which is transformed only by being reactivated* through a process of what Socrates called anamnesis, a process that, in the West, structurally exceeds its locality) – knowledge, in all these forms, is *always a way of collectively defining what is negentropic in this or that field of human existence*.

³ Henri Atlan, *Entre le cristal et la fumée* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1979).

⁴ Edgar Morin, *The Nature of Nature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992).

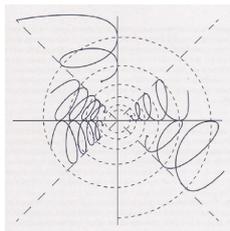
What we call the *inhuman* is a denial of the negentropic possibilities of the human, that is, a denial of its noetic freedom and, as a result, its *agency*. What Sen describes as freedom and capability must be conceived from this cosmic perspective, and related to Whitehead's 'speculative cosmology', as constituting a negentropic potentiality – as the potential for *openness* of a *localized* system that, for that being we refer to as 'human', may always once again become closed. Or, in Whitehead's terms, human beings may always relapse, decay into simpler forms, that is, become inhuman.⁵

This is so only because the anthropological is both hyperentropic and negentropic to the second degree: the *anthropos* is organological, that is, pharmacological, or, as Jean-Pierre Vernant put it, constitutively ambiguous.

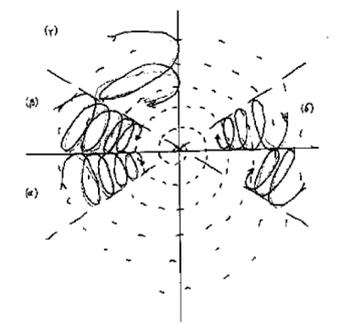
4. Anthropology as entropology according to Lévi-Strauss and beyond

In addition to being fundamentally local, an open, negentropic system is characterized by its *relative* sustainability – or in other words, by its finitude. What is negentropic – whether idiom, tool, institution, market, desire and so on – is always in the course of its inevitable decay.

What I call an idiotext,



as I attempted to define it in the final part of my thesis (which has not yet been published), is an open locality taken up within another, greater locality, or within what I describe as nested spirals



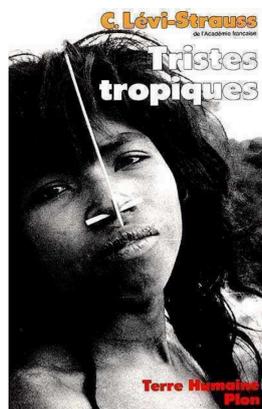
⁵ Whitehead, *The Function of Reason* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1929), pp. 18–19.

as they co-produce a process of collective individuation by psychically individuating themselves. This is not without an echo in the questions posed by Edgar Morin in *The Nature of Nature*.⁶ But Morin, like Atlan, overlooks the essential, namely, the organological dimension (that is, the technical and artificial dimension) of the negentropy characteristic of *anthropos*, which means that it is also pharmacological, that is, both entropic and negentropic, and hence requires continual arbitration – negotiations that are *operations of knowledge as therapies and therapeutics*.

In an idiotext tendencies compose, tendencies that are highly pharmacological, that is, both entropic and negentropic, and in this way they constitute a dynamic wherein figures or motives emerge that are protentions, that is, differences that separate future from becoming and thereby allow this separation to be perpetuated. These are the motives and figures through which knowledge is woven as the circuits of transindividuation that form both within a generation and between the generations.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, at IRCAM, that is, as a result of my journey through musicology, I have presented this composition of tendencies as what results from negotiation between psychosomatic organisms (psychic individuals), artificial organs (technical individuals) and social organizations (collective individuations). It is through the complexity of this negotiation that the principles of general organology are formalized, as a kind of pharmacological drama, that is, as the constantly renewed and reposed problem of the decay of negentropic conquests into entropic waste.

This point of view is the complete opposite of the conclusion reached by Claude Lévi-Strauss at the end of *Tristes Tropiques*



⁶ Morin, *The Nature of Nature*.

when, having recalled that ‘the world began without man and will end without him’ and that man works towards ‘the disintegration of the original order of things and precipitates a powerful organization of matter towards ever greater inertia, an inertia that one day will be final’⁷, he adds that

From the time when he first began to breathe and eat, up to the invention of atomic and thermonuclear devices, by way of the discovery of fire – and except when he has been engaged in self-reproduction – man has *done nothing other* than blithely break down billions of structures and reduce them to a state in which they are no longer capable of integration.⁸

Hence Lévi-Strauss poses with rare radicality the question of *becoming without being*, that is, of the *inevitably ephemeral character* of the cosmos in totality, as well as of the localities that form therein through negentropic processes themselves always factors of entropic accelerations.

If we were to take literally this *profoundly nihilistic* statement by Lévi-Strauss (when, for example, he writes that ‘man has *done nothing other* than blithely break down billions of structures and reduce them to a state in which they are no longer capable of integration’), we would be forced to assume that very little time separates us from the ‘end times’. We would be forced to reduce this time to nothing, to *annihilate* it, and to discount negentropy on the grounds of being *ephemeral*: we would have to *dissolve the future into becoming*, to assess it as null and void [*non avenu*], as never coming, that is, *as having ultimately never happened*, the outcome of having no future – as becoming without future. And we would be forced to conclude that what is ephemeral, because it *is* ephemeral, is merely *nothing*.

This is literally what the anthropologist says. I define myself as a neganthropologist. And I have two objections to Lévi-Strauss:

- on the one hand, that the question of reason, understood as a *quasi-causal power (in the Deleuzian sense) to bifurcate, that is, to produce, in the jumble of facts, a necessary order forming a law*, is always the question of being ‘worthy of what happens to us’⁹, which is another way of describing the function of reason as defined by Whitehead, namely as what makes a life a good life, and what makes a good life a better life¹⁰, that is, a struggle against static survival, which is nothing other than the entropic tendency of all life;

⁷ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (Harmondsworth: London, 1976), p. 542, translation modified.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 542–3, translation modified.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 149.

¹⁰ Whitehead, *The Function of Reason*, p. 5.

- on the other hand, that Lévi-Strauss's bitter and disillusioned sophistry seriously neglects two points:
 - i. first, life in general, as 'negative entropy', that is, as negentropy, is always produced *from* entropy, and invariably leads back there: it is a detour – as was said by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and by Blanchot in *The Infinite Conversation*;
 - ii. second, *technical* life is an *amplified and hyperbolic form of negentropy*, that is, of an organization that is not just organic but *organological*, but which produces an *entropy that is equally hyperbolic*, and which, like living things, returns to it, but does so *by accelerating the speed of the differentiations and indifferenciations* in which this detour consists, speed here constituting, then, a locally cosmic factor.

This *detour* in which technical life consists is *desire as the power to infinitize*.

It is misleading to give the impression, as Lévi-Strauss does here, that man has an *entropic essence* and that he destroys some 'creation', some 'nature' that would on the contrary have a *negentropic essence* – alive, profuse and fecund, animal and vegetable. Plants and animals are indeed organic orderings of highly improbable inert matter (as is all negentropy), yet all life unfurls and succeeds only by itself intensifying entropic processes: plants and animals are themselves only an all too temporary and in the end futile detour in becoming.

By consuming and thereby disassociating what Lévi-Strauss calls 'structures', all living things participate in a local increase of entropy while at the same time locally producing a negentropic order. What Derrida called *différance*, if we may indeed relate negentropy to this concept, is first and foremost a matter of *economy* and *detour*. And if it is also true that *différance* is an arrangement of retentions and protentions, as Derrida indicates in *Of Grammatology*, and if it is true that for those beings we call human, that is, technical and noetic beings, arrangements of retentions and protentions are trans-formed by tertiary retentions, then we should be able, on the basis of this concept of *différance*, to redefine economy and desire (as configurations of circuits that form through these detours like turns and spirals).

Unlike purely organic beings, those beings called human are organological, that is, *negentropic (and entropic) on two levels*: both as *living beings*, that is, organic beings, which through reproduction bring about those 'minor differences' that lie at the origin of evolution, and hence at the origin of what

Schrödinger called negative entropy¹¹, and as *artificial beings*, that is, organological beings, which produce differentiations that are no longer those of what we refer to as a species but of a ‘kind’ that is here the humankind – which is what Simondon called the process of psychic and collective individuation.

Artifices are always detours, detours that are always more or less ephemeral, like the genus of insects named ephemera,



neither more nor less ‘without why’ than those roses that are much prized in Great Britain, and that are themselves essentially artificial.¹²



But these artifices, inasmuch as they give rise to the arts and to works and artworks of all kinds, as well as to science, can infinitize themselves and infinitize their recipients beyond themselves, that is, beyond their own end, projecting them into an infinite protention of a promise always yet to come, which alone is able to pierce the horizon of undifferentiated becoming.

One might offer the retort that my own objection to Lévi-Strauss, that organological negentropy is not just organic, and constitutes what I thus describe as *neganthropos*, can only mean that the organological is nothing but an accelerator of entropization that precipitates the end and from this perspective shortens what is ultimately essential, namely, the time of this différance. But this would be to precisely misunderstand what I am trying to say.

There is no doubt that the question of speed in relation to thermodynamic physics, as well as biology and zoology, is a crucial issue. But the question here is of a *politics* of speed in which there are opposing possibilities, and where it is a matter of knowing *in what way, where, on what plane and for how long* what, in order to define the dynamic of human evolution, Leroi-Gourhan called the ‘conquest of space and time’, *increases or reduces entropy*. The concept

¹¹ This is why Lévi-Strauss says that man is not entropic only ‘when he has been engaged in self-reproduction’.

¹² It is with this organological disruption of the organic that Bertrand Bonello opens his film, *Tiresia*.

of idiotext with which I have been working is conceived precisely in order to understand something not just as a question but rather, as Deleuze said, as a problem.

In a situation as exceptional and unsustainable as the Anthropocene, only a resolute *assumption* of the organological condition, that is, an adoption of the organological condition, directed towards an increase in negentropy, can transform the speed of technological vectors currently at work – in a world where today the digital reaches speeds of two hundred thousand kilometres per second, or two thirds of the speed of light, which is some four million times faster than the speed of nerve impulses. Only such a resolute adoption or assumption of the organological condition will allow us, in a literal sense, to save time, that is, differentiation, insofar as, precisely, a transvaluation of the industrial economy can commit us to and engage us with the Neganthropocene, and disengage us from the Anthropocene.

If the hyperbolic negentropy in which the organological becoming of the organic consists installs a neganthropology that accelerates (entropic and anthropic)

entropic and anthropic

becoming, it can nevertheless also transform this acceleration into a future that differs and defers this becoming, according to the two senses of the verb *différer* mobilized by Derrida in his term *différance*. Hence a (negentropic and neganthropic)

negentropic and neganthropic

future can be established from this infinitizing form of protention that is the object of desire as a factor of (psychic, social and technical) individuation and integration – failing which, *différance* will remain merely formal.

It is in the light of these questions – effaced by Lévi-Strauss's *triste* statement, his sad and gloomy words erasing the *indetermination* of the future under the *probabilistic* weight of becoming – that today we must reinterpret Spinoza.

5. Noetic intermittence and cosmic potlatch

Organological beings are capable of purposefully organizing the negentropic and organo-logical works that we are referring to as neganthropic. Depending on how they undertake this organization that is both psychic and social, depending on the way that they take or do not take care of the anthropic and neganthropic power in which their behaviour consists, they can either indifferently precipitate a release of entropy, or on the contrary differ and defer it – thereby constituting a *différance* that Simondon called individuation and that he thinks as a process, as does Whitehead.¹³

We ourselves are in favour of a neganthropological project conceived as care and as an economy in this sense. This economy of care is not simply a power to anthropologically transform the world (as ‘master and possessor of nature’). It is a pharmacological knowledge constituting a neganthropology in the service of the Neganthropocene, in a way that resembles Canguilhem’s conception of the function of biology as knowledge of life in technical life, and Whitehead’s conception of the function of reason in speculative cosmology.

It goes without saying that we must identify and describe those ‘negative externalities’ that the ‘neganthropy’ generated by anthropization propagates in ‘anthropized’ milieus. But this is not a question of nullifying neganthropy. It is rather, on the contrary, a matter of passing from anthropization to neganthropization by cultivating a positive pharmacology no more nor less ephemeral than life that is carried along in becoming just as is everything that ‘is’ in the universe – this care being that in which this neganthropology *consists*, and that Lévi-Strauss always ignored, *by ignoring and deliberately censoring the thought of Leroi-Gourhan*.

This situation stems from the fact that Lévi-Straussian anthropology is *founded* on the repression of the organological fact to which Leroi-Gourhan drew attention, and from ignoring the *neganthropological* question that prevails *beyond* all anthropology. This repression of the organological can be related to the notion of *dépense*, of expenditure as conceived by Georges Bataille:

Every time the meaning of a discussion depends on the fundamental value of the word *useful* – in other words, every time the essential question touching on the life of human societies is raised, [...] it is possible to affirm that the debate is

¹³ It is this issue that the chorus of monkeys and parrots sung by little Derridians ten years after the death of Jacques Derrida ignores, in the belief they can simply accuse me of having lost sight of *différance* within an anthropocentric perspective.

necessarily warped and that the fundamental question is eluded. In fact [...], there is nothing that permits one to define what is useful to man.¹⁴

At stake here are those ‘so-called unproductive expenditures’¹⁵ that are always related to sacrifice, that is, to ‘the production of sacred things [...] constituted by an operation of loss’.¹⁶ *Every loss sacrifices, sacralizes and sanctifies a default of being older than any being* (and this is how I read Levinas). In this *tenor of primordial default*, noetic intermittence is constituted, and it can project itself speculatively only in and as a neganthropo-logically conceived cosmic totality – that is, as the knowledge and power to create bifurcations within entropy.

All noetic bifurcation, that is, quasi-causal bifurcation, derives from a *cosmic potlatch*



that indeed destroys very large quantities of differences and orders but does so by projecting a very great difference on another plane, constituting another ‘order of magnitude’ against the disorder of a *kosmos* in becoming, a *kosmos* that, without this projection of a yet-to-come from the unknown, would be reduced to a universe without singularity.¹⁷

Thus expenditure, even though it might be a social function, immediately leads to an agonistic and apparently antisocial act of separation. The rich man consumes the poor man’s losses, creating for him a category of degradation and abjection that leads to slavery. Now it is evident that, from the endlessly transmitted heritage of the sumptuary world, the modern world has received slavery, and has reserved it for the proletariat.¹⁸

In this proletarianized world, the expenditure of the ‘rich man’ nevertheless becomes sterile:

The expenditures taken on by the capitalists in order to aid the proletarians and give them a chance to pull themselves up on the social ladder only bear witness

¹⁴ Georges Bataille, ‘The Notion of Expenditure’, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 116.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

¹⁷ On the unknown, see Pierre Sauvanet, *L’insu : une pensée en suspens* (Paris: Arléa, 2011).

¹⁸ Bataille, ‘The Notion of Expenditure’, p. 125.

to their inability (due to exhaustion) to carry out thoroughly a sumptuary process. Once the loss of the poor man is accomplished, little by little the pleasure of the rich man is emptied and neutralized; it gives way to a kind of apathetic indifference.¹⁹

At a time when the becoming-automatic of knowledge forms the heart of the economy, and does so at the risk of denying itself *as* knowledge by taking the form of *a-theoretical computation*, I will return to this project from an epistemic and epistemological perspective in a new book, entitled *L'avenir du savoir*. It will there be shown that:

- the question of the future of knowledge is *inseparable* from that of the future of work;
- it must be translated into an *alternative industrial politics* that gives to France and Europe their place in becoming – and as trans-formations of this becoming into futures.

6. *Becoming, future and neganthropology*

Our question is the future – of work, of knowledge and of everything this entails and generates, that is, everything – insofar as it *is not soluble* into becoming. That it is not soluble means nothing other than the fact that it cannot be dissolved and (re-)solved without this dissolution being also its disappearance, that is, *ours*. This possible dissolution *in fact* is what is not possible *in law*: *we do not have the right to just accept this and submit to it*.

Lévi-Strauss cannot conceive this distinction between, on the one hand, that which remains *radically undetermined* because it is strictly and constitutively *improbable* and *remains* to come, and, on the other hand, that which is most probable, and which is as such statistically determinable.

If Lévi-Strauss is obviously not unaware of the many discourses emerging from philosophy that affirm the supra-causality of freedom – and therefore of will – in and before nature, he ultimately sees in this only an entropic power that accelerates the decay of the world, far removed from any differing and deferring that could give rise to new difference. In so doing, Lévi-Strauss adopts that nihilistic perspective the advent of which was announced by Nietzsche seventy years beforehand.

We cannot accept the Lévi-Straussian perspective. We cannot and we need not resolve to dissolve ourselves into becoming. We cannot, because to do so would consist in no longer promising to our descendants any possible

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

future, a future to come, and we need not because Lévi-Strauss's reasoning is based on what in philosophy since its inception has consisted in repressing the neganthropological dimension of the noetic soul and of what we call 'human being', namely, *the passage from the organic to the organological* in which this soul and being *consists*.

Lévi-Strauss proposes that anthropology be understood as entropology. But he takes no account of the negentropy generated by the technical form of life as described by Canguilhem, that type that characterizes the noetic soul – whose very noesis (producing what Lévi-Strauss called the 'works' of man) is its intermittent fruit.

Any noetic work, as the intermittent fruit of noesis, produces a bifurcation and a singular difference in becoming, irreducible to its laws (improbable, quasi-causal and in this sense free – as freedom of thought, ethical freedom and aesthetic freedom). It would here be necessary to read Schelling. But such a noetic work thereby engenders a *pharmakon* that can turn against its own gesture – and this is why the *Aufklärung* can give rise to its contrary, namely, to what Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas follow Weber in describing as rationalization.

Prior to Lévi-Strauss, Valéry, Freud and Husserl all drew attention to this duplicity of spirit that was for the Greeks of the tragic age their Promethean, Epimethean and hermeneutic lot. But unlike Lévi-Strauss, neither the Tragics, nor Valéry, nor Freud, nor Husserl denied the neganthropological fecundity of noesis and of its organo-logical condition.

This denial is characteristic as well of the *nihilism suffered* by those who cannot conceive the *nihilism enacted* by absolutely computational capitalism, that is, by a capitalism that has lost its mind and spirit – and has done so thanks not just to its rupture with its religious origin and the dissolution of belief into fiduciary and calculable trust, but to the destruction it has wrought upon all theory through the correlationist ideology founded on the application of supercomputing to 'big data'.

Capitalism's loss of spirit results in the total proletarianization of the mind itself. To fight against this state of fact in order to restore a state of law is to prescribe, for the digital *pharmakon* that makes this state of fact possible, a new state of law that recognizes this pharmacological situation and that prescribes therapies and therapeutics so as to form a new age of knowledge.

The discourse of Lévi-Strauss is profoundly nihilistic, literally desperate and fundamentally despairing – and as such it is neither lucid (enlightening) nor rational. Rationality does not submit to becoming, and in this lies the unity

of the diverse dimensions of freedom, that is, of the improbable as constituting the undetermined horizon of all ends worthy of the name, within that 'kingdom of ends' that is the *plane of interpretation* of what we refer to as 'consistences'. The latter do not exist, in the sense that, as Whitehead indicates:

Reason is a factor in experience which directs and criticizes the urge towards the attainment of an end realized in imagination but not in fact.²⁰

Reason is an organ, as Whitehead says, and this organ organizes the passage from fact to law, that is, the realization of law in facts, law being the new, that is, negentropy:

Reason is the organ of emphasis upon novelty. It provides the judgment by which realization in idea obtains the emphasis by which it passes into realization in purpose, and thence its realization in fact.²¹

Consistences are promises – they are inherently improbable, and it is as such that they make desirable a *neganthropos* that remains always to come,²² that is, improbable.²³ This improbability is a spring that returns again in the winter of universal decay, the universe localized on this inhabited Earth being the site of

two main tendencies [...] the slow decay of physical nature [whereby,] with stealthy inevitableness, there is degradation of energy [whereas] the other tendency is exemplified by the yearly renewal of nature in the spring, and by the upward course of biological evolution. [...] Reason is the self-discipline of the originative element in history.²⁴

It is this discipline that is lacking in Lévi-Strauss, and in his entropology.

Translated by Daniel Ross.

²⁰ Whitehead, *The Function of Reason*, p. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²² This is a project initiated by Gerald Moore.

²³ The object of desire is literally improbable because incomparable – and it is also on the basis of desire that Maurice Blanchot revisits and discusses the improbable of Yves Bonnefoy.

²⁴ Whitehead, *The Function of Reason*, Introductory Summary.