

SATANIC MILLS

“The push for power will finally lead to attempts to ‘breed’ human beings in factories, because humans are the most important raw material.” (Ernst Jünger, 1930)

“Mechanical trades also bind a man to his workshop as the source of his income and sustenance, and since the well-being of craftsmen depends upon the sale of what they produce such men are necessarily lovers of peace .. Cities full of tradesmen and craftsmen and merchants love peace and tranquillity.”(Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, p. 102)

“To order is an aristocratic act; to work is a servile act.” (Leonardo da Vinci, in Carlo Pedretti (ed), *Literary Works*, p. 250)

“Capitalist production only really begins when capital employs a relatively large number of labourers .. ” (Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol 1*, Chapt. 13, ‘Cooperation’, p. 305)

“We might conceive of the using-up of our planet as the locale and substance of a gigantic factory, run by the masses of mankind. In the planet as thus conceived, there would no longer persist anything purely and directly natural. The material out of which the apparatus was made would, of course, be a gift of nature, but having been applied to human purposes, would have been used up and no longer have an independent being. The only substance remaining in the world would be that which had already been moulded by man. The world itself would be like an artificial landscape, consisting exclusively of this man-made apparatus in space and time, a unique product each of whose parts would be kept in touch with one another by incessantly-working means of communication, human beings being fettered to the apparatus in order, by their joint labour, to continue to make for themselves the necessities of life. Thus a stable condition would have been achieved.” (Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 42)

“In the modern culture, industry, industrial processes, and industrial products have progressively gained upon humanity, until these creations of man’s ingenuity have latterly come to take the dominant place in the cultural scheme; and it is not too much to say that they have become the chief force in shaping men’s daily life, and therefore the chief factor in shaping men’s habits of thought.” (Thorstein Veblen, *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization*, p. 17)

Introduction/statement of problem

- *Industrialism/Science/Productionism/Truth*
- *The synchronization of individual & mass, men & things*
- *Work and the spirit of capitalism*
- *Capitalism, organicism, and human nature*
- *The rise and fall (and rise) of the market economy*

How has capitalist modernity come to define the possibilities of our whole lives?

Continuing with the theme introduced into the background of the last two sessions - the shift in accent from a political technology concerned to regulate spaces (health, reason, delinquency) to one concerned with time, and the temporal dimension (the physiology of the well-ordered city, the proper constitution of humors in the body, the regular functioning of exchange and commerce and communications, etc.) - we arrive at the birth of the factory, where these impulses overlap, reinforce one another, constituting a *grille*, or grid of immediate social, technological and historical experience. The factory is the heart of modernity; and the most mundane and yet incredible technology for securing man's relation to the world, to fellow men and to himself. How was the *spirit of capitalism* established? By what coercions and persuasions would it become so inscribed and imprinted on bodies and souls so as to become virtually, and now (if we believe Fukuyama), historically, undefeatable. Could any one dictator have imagined such a perverse and totalising, inescapable law of existence?

The birth of political economy; what an incredible concept. Undenied, out in the open; that capital would be political, and that the political would from this time forth, be bound to the fate of capital. How can we explain the failure of people to comprehend the meaning of this one phrase; that the state and capital have codependent interests, and in some respects, are the same thing. By what means, what specific technologies, was this blindness burnt into memory?

Industrialism/Science/Productionism/Truth

- Though we don't fully have time to consider all the elements here, remember that while capitalist modernity is - in large part - an intensified modality of power, produced (called forth) in its own age (i.e., by political theoreticians, for specific purposes), it also survives upon (indeed, is unimaginable without) a whole range of earlier transformations in European consciousness.

So, to clarify, it seems to me at least that while we are not talking of the development of a collective consciousness (in the sense of a structure, or something 'external', and beyond political intervention), that intervention itself develops in reaction to - and on the basis of - a more diffuse series of 'ruptures' and 'transformations'.

- In particular, we would need to think about - in Huizinga's terms 'the waning of the

middle ages'¹, also useful would be the recently published work of Alfred Crosby², and of course, Ian Hacking³. Historical analysis can be found in the works of Braudel⁴, McNeill⁵, Weber⁶, Marx⁷, Bloch⁸, Mumford⁹, Polanyi¹⁰, Gehlen¹¹, Clay¹², Blaug¹³, and of course, Michel Foucault¹⁴ ..

- *What we'd be interested in mapping is the development of a certain perception of truth concerning industrial society:*

“ .. canons of validity are made .. by the cultural situation; they are habits of thought imposed .. by the scheme of life current in the community .. and under modern conditions this scheme of life is largely machine-made.” (Thorstein Veblen, *The Place of Science in Modern Civilization*, p. 17)

- *Nietzsche's genealogy of 'responsibility' is crucial:*

“In order to have that degree of control over the future, man must first have learnt to distinguish between what happens by accident and what by design, to think causally, to view the future as the present, and anticipate it, to grasp with certainty what is end and what is means, in all, to be able to calculate, compute - and before he can do this, man himself will really have become *reliable, regular, automatic* .. so that he, as someone making a promise us answerable for his own

¹ Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Penguin, 1990).

² Alfred W. Crosby, *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600* (Cambridge, 1997).

³ Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas about Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference* (Cambridge, 1975), *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge, 19--).

⁴ Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century: Volume 1, The Structures of Everyday Life* (Harper and Row, 1979), *Volume 2, The Wheels of Commerce* (Harper and Row, 1979), *Volume 3, The Perspective of the World* (Harper and Row, 1979).

⁵ William H. McNeill, *The Rise of the West: A History of Human Community* (Chicago, 1963), *Europe's Steppe Frontier: 1500-1800* (Chicago, 1964), *Venice: The Hinge of Europe* (Chicago, 1974).

⁶ Max Weber, *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* (London: NLB, 1976).

⁷ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings* (Oxford, 1978).

⁸ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962).

⁹ Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine, Volume One: Technics and Human Development*. (Harcourt Brace, 1967), *The Myth of the Machine, Volume Two: The Pentagon of Power* (Harcourt Brace, 1971).

¹⁰ Karl Polanyi, *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays by Karl Polanyi* (Boston: Beacon, 1969).

¹¹ Arnold Gehlen, *Man in the Age of Technology* (Columbia University, 1980).

¹² C.G.A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change, Volume I: England, 1500-1700 (People, Land and Towns)* (Cambridge, 1984), *Economic Expansion and Social Change, Volume II: England, 1500-1700 (Industry, Trade and Government)* (Cambridge, 1984).

¹³ Mark Blaug (Ed.) *The Early Mercantilists: Thomas Mun (1571-1641), Edward Misselden (1608-1634), Gerard de Malynes (1586-1623)* (Edward Elgar, 1991), *The Later Mercantilists: Josiah Child (1603-1699) and John Locke (1632-1704)* (Edward Elgar, 1991), and Mark Blaug, *Economic History and the History of Economics* (New York University, 1986).

¹⁴ in addition to the oblique references in *Madness and Civilization*, and the rather more obvious references in *The Will to Know* and *Discipline and Punish*, don't forget his analysis of 'political economy' in *The Order of Things*.

future! .. That is precisely what constitutes the long history of the origins of *responsibility*. That particular task of breeding an animal which has the right to make promises includes, as we have already understood, as precondition and preparation, the more immediate task of first *making* man to a certain degree undeviating, uniform, a peer among peers, orderly and consequently predictable .. ‘How do you give a memory to the animal, man? How do you impress something upon this partly dull, partly idiotic, inattentive mind, this personification of forgetfulness, so that it will stick?’ This age old question was not resolved with gentle solutions and methods, as can be imagined; perhaps there is nothing more terrible and strange in man’s pre-history than his *technique of mnemonics*. ‘A thing must be burnt in so that it stays in the memory: only something that continues *to hurt* stays in the memory’ .. ” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morality*, ‘Second Essay’, §1-3)

- *It is clear then that capital - that the calculating mind - is dependent upon a certain relation to social power (that is, power effected in the context of a collectivity): thus the nexus between power, discipline, responsibility and good order.*

“Most .. social controls have been justified by invoking the idea of responsibility.” (Michel Foucault, ‘Problematics’, *Foucault Live*, p. 420)

- *This focus on political technology is of course a common theme for us:*

“ .. bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.” (Michel Foucault, ‘The Right of Death and Power over Life’, *The History of Sexuality, Vol I*, p. 140-1)

- Yet what is important to recognise - and to think through - is the intricate relationship between social phenomena, the exercise of power, and the surrounding epistemic relations of knowledge within which actions (and men) are **recognised** ..

Michel Foucault formulates this relation particularly well, though it takes some considerable thought to really pick out what he saying in the following. This formulation arises in reference to mental illness, but is universal to Foucault’s archaeological method ...

“My analysis is about the problematization of something which is real, but that problematization is something which is dependent on our knowledge, ideas, theories, techniques, social relations and economical practices. What I have tried to do is analyse this kind of

problematization as it conforms to the objectives which it presupposes.” (Michel Foucault, ‘Problematics’, *Foucault Live*, p. 418)

- *The subtlety and profundity of this last sentence is just stunning ..*

**The key problematic leading to the birth of the factory:
the synchronization of individual & mass, men & things**

- This is arguably the single most essential problem of the modern age, especially in relation to the final aim of biopower (the disappearance of the state into the body and the soul of society and individual?).

As we have seen, over the period of modernity as a whole, political technicians progressively sought to refine the operation of power ..

“Man as member of a mass is no longer his isolated self. The individual is merged in the mass, to become something other than he is when he stands alone. On the other hand in the mass the individual becomes an isolated atom whose individual craving to exist has been sacrificed .. This mass-effect is intensified to-day by the complicated articulations of a modern economic society .. It has become obligatory to fulfil a function which shall in some way be regarded as useful to the masses.” (Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, pp. 39-40)

- *This is also the single most important **dilemma** of the modern age: how to resolve the tensions between the social order that by necessity conceives of man in relation to other men, and things (i.e., en masse), but relies upon the individuality of man for its own reproduction ..*¹⁵

“Self-interest as the working motor of individual activity fashions, at one time, vital conditions which promote the general interest, and, at another time, destroys these same conditions. The orderly machinery, with its sharply delimited functions, duties, and rights of atomised human beings all regarded as perfectly interchangeable, arms itself against initiative, against individual venturesomeness, which threatens orderliness - and yet this machinery itself could not, in the absence of such initiative, continue to adapt itself to the perpetually changing situations of its environment.” (Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, pp. 73-4)

¹⁵ This is exactly the same problem that Georg Simmel identifies at the beginning of his paper (which we will read in the next session) on ‘Metropolitan Life’ (the ways in which the metropolis negotiates the equation between the individual and the mass, or what Simmel calls the ‘super-individual’).

Religion, work and the spirit of capitalism¹⁶

For John Calvin (1509-1564), the notion of 'predestination' invested God with such omnipresence and omnipotence that sinful humanity could never be entirely sure who would be afforded salvation. This doctrine instilled such a psychological insecurity in the minds of Calvin's followers (as earnest believers in "hellfire" and the Last Judgement), that they attempted to think beyond it: to find exits, and escape hatches ..

They found an exit in the notion that *men should work toward the greater estate of God*. This greater estate was to be served by the repression of carnal instinct, abnegation from self-interest, the creation of order in the universe of men's affairs, an unceasing commitment to one's 'worldly calling' (**idleness** is the ultimate affront to God), and an ascetic attitude to the benefits of work. Enjoyment was not to be reaped from work, in case this was taken by God to be hubris. So, instead of enjoyment, all efforts were put into *ceaseless accumulation*. The birth of capitalism?

- Very similar themes were introduced - as you may remember - in Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*:

"In [the] first phase of the world, labour did not seem linked to the problems it was to provoke; it was regarded, on the contrary, as a general solution, an infallible panacea, a remedy for all forms of poverty. Labour and poverty were located in a simple opposition, in inverse proportion to each other. As for their power, its special characteristic, of abolishing poverty, labour - according to the classical interpretation - possessed it not so much by its productive capacity as by a certain force of moral enchantment. Labour's effectiveness was acknowledged because it was based on an ethical transcendence. Since the Fall, man had accepted labour as a penance and for its power to work redemption. It was not a law of nature which forced man to work, but the effect of a curse. The earth was innocent of that sterility in which it would slumber if man remained idle: 'The land is not sinned, and if it is accursed, it is by the labour of the fallen man who cultivates it; from it no fruit is won, particularly the most necessary fruit, save by force and continual labour.

The obligation to work was not linked to any confidence in nature; and it was not even through an obscure loyalty that the land would reward man's labour. The theme was constant among Catholic thinkers, as among the Protestants, that labour does not bear its own fruits. Produce and wealth were not found at the term of a dialectic of labour and nature. Here is Calvin's admonition: 'Nor do we believe, according as men will be vigilant and skilful, according as they will have done their duty well, that they can make their land fertile; it is the benediction of God which governs all things.' And this danger of a labour which would remain sterile if God did not intervene in His infinite mercy is acknowledged in turn by Bossuet: 'At each moment, the hope of the harvest and the unique fruit of all out labours may

¹⁶ c.f., Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

escape us; we are at the mercy of the inconstant heavens that bring down rain upon the tender ears.’ This precarious labour to which nature is never obliged to respond - save by the special will of God - is nonetheless obligatory in all strictness: not on the level of natural synthesis, but on the level of moral syntheses. The poor man who, without consenting to ‘torment’ the land, waits until God comes to his aid, since He has promised to feed the birds of the sky, would be disobeying the great law of Scripture: ‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ Does not reluctance to work mean ‘trying beyond measure the power of God’, as Calvin says? It is seeking to constrain the miracle, whereas the miracle is granted daily to man as the gratuitous reward of his labour. If it is true that labour is not inscribed among the laws of nature, it is enveloped in the order of the fallen world. This is why idleness is rebellion. - the worst form of all, in a sense: it waits for nature to be generous as in the innocence of Eden, and seeks to constrain a Goodness to which man cannot lay claim since Adam.” (Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, pp. 55-6)

As Christian Thomasius would put it: “.. ‘man is destined for labour, and that he who does not work is not worthy to eat.’”¹⁷ As Foucault continues:

“Pride was the sin of man before the Fall; but the sin of idleness is the supreme pride of man once he has fallen, the absurd pride of poverty. In our world, where land is no longer fertile except in thistles and weeds, idleness is the fault *par excellence*. In the Middle Ages, the great sin, *radix malorum omnium*, was pride, *Superbia*. According to Johan Huizinga, there was a time, at the dawn of the Renaissance, when the supreme sin assumed the aspect of Avarice, Dante’s *cicca cupidigia*. All the seventeenth century texts, on the contrary, announced the infernal triumph of Sloth: it was sloth which led the round of the vices and swept them on. Let us not forget that according to the edict of its creation, the Hôpital Général must prevent ‘mendicancy and idleness as sources of all disorder.’ Louis Bourdaloue echoes these condemnations of sloth, the wretched pride of fallen man: ‘What, then, is the disorder of an idle life? It is, replies Saint Ambrose, in its true meaning a second rebellion of the creature against God.’” (Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, pp. 56-7)

Weber never held that capital exchange existed only in the modern period (or that following the rise of Calvinism) - or only in areas dominated by Protestant/Calvinist doctrine - but he did argue that any such capitalist exchange was fettered by the prevalent social and religious order. Following the critical transition in theological thinking, the preconditions for a new relation between man and the environment were put in place (ascetic, rational, disciplined). In short, this is the essential precondition - though perhaps transcended in our own age - of the *spirit of capitalism*.

The Puritans - under the conviction of God - had accepted ‘worldly asceticism’ voluntarily.

¹⁷ quoted in Small, *The Cameralists*, p. 210.

In doing so, however, in the aim of lightening the burden of spiritual existence, they helped create the enormous structure of modern economic life. Capital became rational, reasoned and regular; men utilizable, to be bent and mis-shapen, according to morality .. an ‘iron cage’ within which not only man would be imprisoned, but the whole planet:

“ .. the world of technique .. man [has] begun to enwrap the planet in a mesh of apparatus. The step thus far taken has been as momentous as that taken when our forefathers first began to use tools; and we can already look forward to the day when the world will become one vast factory for the utilization of its matter and energy.” (Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 22)

in the words of Marx:

“For the first time, nature becomes purely an object for humankind, purely a matter of utility; ceases to be recognised as a power for itself; and the theoretical discovery of its autonomous laws appears merely as a ruse so as to subjugate it under human needs, whether as an object of consumption or as a means of production.” (Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse*, p. 410)

remarkably, this paragraph, as Heidegger would later argue, could just as well serve, *as we have tried to outline*, as a description of the use and abuse of that other resource: men. It is an instrumentalism that would affect every domain of human experience; especially those concerned with ‘production’ in the Marxian sense; the production of the means to subsistence (which was of course the duty and objective and regular practice of “police”). With this in mind the following from Heidegger makes even more disturbing reading:

“ .. the instrumental conception of technology conditions every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology .. Agriculture is now the mechanised food industry. Air is now set upon to yield nitrogen, the earth to yield ore, ore to yield uranium .. uranium to yield atomic energy, which can be released either for destruction or for peaceful use .. maximum yield at the minimum expense .. But man does not have control over unconcealment itself .. Modern technology .. gathers man into the ordering.” (Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, p. 5, p. 15, pp. 18-9)

- *could it be that this “gathering” was not only foreseen by the **politzei**, but actively encouraged as the best means - the best technical means - of attaining tranquility?*
- Continuing this theme .. the problem of the disappearing individual¹⁸, in the face of mass society, brings into focus again the question of the synchronization of the individual and the mass, men and things ..

¹⁸ as Heidegger suggests, “the self disappears in the process of production”.

Karl Jaspers, writing in 1931:

“Estimates of the total population of the world are: for 1800, roughly 850 millions; for the present time, 1,800 millions. This unprecedented increase, whereby the population in four-thirds of a century, was rendered possible by technical advances. The results of discoveries and inventions were as follows: a new basis for production; the organization of enterprises; a methodological increase in the productivity of labour; a world-wide and enormous improvement in the means of transport and communication; the codification of law and the establishment of effective police systems, whereby public order was ensured; and, as the combined effect of all the foregoing, greatly improved facilities for anticipating the results of industrial and commercial enterprise. huge undertakings can now be purposively guided from a single centre, even though their employees are numbered by the hundred thousand and their tentacles extend over the entire surface of the globe.

This development is associated with the rationalization of productive and distributive activity, resolves being made in accordance with knowledge and calculation instead of mere instinct and desire; and it is likewise associated with mechanization, all the work being done under detailed rules and regulations which apply to every one concerned. Whereas in such matters people used to wait upon events and make no more until ‘something turned up’, they now think things out beforehand and leave nothing to chance - with the result, however, that in many respects the individual worker becomes little more than a part of the machine.

The broad masses of the population could not exist to-day but for the titanic interlocking wheelwork of which each worker is one of the cogs. Thereby our elementary needs are supplied with an efficiency new to history.” (Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, pp. 34-35)

- *The dilemma is that bureaucratic/rationalised production is the most efficient form of capitalist activity in the modern age, and yet, it survives (as does its social order), on the disappeared individual ..*
- Not much of a surprize then that we find the roots of modern bureaucratic government in the cameralistics of the 17th and 18th century ‘police scientists’¹⁹ ..

¹⁹ See: Walter L. Dorn, ‘The Prussian Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century’, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. XLVI (1931), Hubert C. Johnson, ‘The Concept of Bureaucracy in Cameralism’, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 79, No. 3 (1964), Geraint Parry, ‘Enlightened Government and its Critics in Eighteenth-Century Germany’, *Historical Journal*, Vol. VI (1963).

Capitalism, organicism, and human nature²⁰

- Whether capital is natural or not, the necessities of ‘exchange’ have imposed a certain relation to the self and to others .. it demands certain political technologies - both of the body, and of society ..

“The feeling of guilt, of personal obligation .. originated .. in the oldest and most primitive personal relationship there is, in the relationship of buyer and seller, creditor and debtor: here person met person for the first time, and *measured himself* person against person. No form of civilization has been discovered which is so low that it did not display something of this relationship. Fixing prices, setting values, working out equivalents, exchanging - this preoccupied man’s first thoughts to such a degree that in a certain sense it *constitutes* thought: the most primitive kind of cunning was bred here, as was also, presumably, the first appearance of human pride, man’s sense of superiority over other animals. Perhaps our word ‘man’ (*manas*) expresses something of *this* first sensation of self-confidence: man designated himself as the being who measures values, who values and measures, as the ‘calculating animal as such’. Buying and selling, with their psychological trappings, are older even than the beginnings of any social form of organization or association: it is much more the case that the germinating sensation of barter, contract, debt, right, duty, compensation was simply *transferred* from the most rudimentary form of legal rights of persons to the most crude and elementary social units (in their relations with similar units), together with the habit of comparing power with power, of measuring, of calculating.” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morality*, ‘Second Essay’, §8)

- As we have already seen, there is a distinct locus of political technology (state power), which has held an active interest in the development of the commercial economy - beyond simply the question of taxation for foreign or domestic military intervention. Commerce was from an early stage identified alongside good order, tranquillity, civic security - the things that *polizeiwissenschaft* (police science) dreamt of throughout the Classical age:

“ .. interest in the state can be secured by compelling [men] to undertake some work, such as agriculture or any trade which will give them a sufficient income to live on.” (Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, p. 92)

- All of this is consistent with a modality of power which is essentially *facilitative*. The question remains, however - how did we get to the great economic transformations of the 19th century - transformations that have continued throughout modernity .. in Marx’s terms instilling such radical dynamics of disturbance within societies as to

²⁰ ‘History was geared to social change’

periodically drive them to the point of collapse (the logic of imperialism, Lenin's response to WWI, Polanyi's analysis of the rise and fall of the free market)?

The rise and fall (and rise) of the market economy

- In the words of Karl Polanyi,

“The discovery of economics was an astounding revelation which greatly hastened the transformation of society and the establishment of a market system, while the decisive machines had been the inventions of uneducated artisans, some of whom could hardly read or write. It was thus both just and appropriate that not the natural but the social sciences should rank as the intellectual parents of the mechanical revolution which subjected the powers of nature to man.” (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 119)

- But was all of this - as Adam Smith²¹ asserted - a natural phenomenon?

“ .. man holds .. a natural propensity to barter, truck and exchange one thing for another .. ” (Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, p. -)

- not according to Polanyi ..

“Nineteenth century civilization alone was economic in a different and distinctive sense, for it chose to base itself on a motive only rarely acknowledged as valid in the history of human societies, and certainly never before raised on the level of a justification of action and behaviour in everyday life, namely, gain. The self-regulating market system was uniquely derived from this principle.” (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, p. 40)

- In Polanyi's view then, commercial society was something of a artificial creation - like Hobbes's great Leviathan; an ensemble 'put together' under specific circumstances, and with specific purposes. A certain range of dividing practices and practical necessities influenced its form ..

“No less a thinker than Adam Smith suggested that the division of labor in society was dependent upon the existence of markets, or, as he put it, upon man's “propensity to barter, truck and exchange one thing for another.” This phrase was later to yield the concept of the

²¹ for an excellent analysis of Adam Smith's moral philosophy, and his place within contemporary politics and the wider development of modernity, see: Michael J. Shapiro, *Reading 'Adam Smith': Desire, History and Value* (Sage, 1993). See also, of course, the works of Malthus, Ricardo, Mill ..

Economic Man. In retrospect it can be said that no misreading of the past ever proved more prophetic of the future. For while up to Adam Smith's time that propensity had hardly shown up on a considerable scale in the life of any observed community, and had remained, at best, a subordinate feature of economic life, a hundred years later an industrial system was in full swing over the major part of the planet which, practically and theoretically, implied that the human race was swayed in all its economic activities, if not also in its political, intellectual, and spiritual pursuits, by that one particular propensity." (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, pp. 43-4)

Something of epistemic transformation was taking place, from the well-ordered mathematico-mechanical dreams of the *politzeiwissenschaft* of Classical age to the *biologico-developmental* episteme that would progressively define the age of Modernity proper, reducing the domain of man to little more than a mirror to the struggles witnessed in the natural world. As we pass into the 'age of the accelerator', and the emergence alongside *disciplinary society* (the social coordinates that gave rise to the first modern bureaucracy) of a kind of *biokinetic society* (the first society of flows, of forces, of vectors²²), the organization of commerce no longer depended upon the strictly standardized rules of nature, as grasped according to logical and technical principles, but instead to the laws of nature now as conceived in terms of conflict, motion and want.

"The biological nature of man appeared as the given foundation of a society that was not of a political order. Thus it came to pass that economists presently relinquished Adam Smith's humanistic foundations .. Malthus's population law and the law of diminishing returns as handled by Ricardo made the fertility of man and soil constitutive elements of the new realm the existence of which had been uncovered. Economic society had emerged as distinct from the political state.

The circumstances under which the existence of this human aggregate - a complex society - became apparent were of the utmost importance for the history of nineteenth century thought. Since the emerging society was no other than the market system, human society was now in danger of being shifted to foundations utterly foreign to the moral world of which the body politic hitherto had formed part." (Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, pp. 115-6)

²² I'll explain this in detail in the next session ..

“If the development of the great institutions of the state, as *institutions* of power, ensured the maintenance of production relations, the rudiments of anatomo- and bio-politics, created in the eighteenth century as *techniques* of power present at every level of the social body and utilized by very diverse institutions (the family and the army, schools and the police, individual medicine and the administration of collective bodies), operated in the sphere of economic processes, their development, and the forces working to sustain them. They also acted on as factors of segregation and social hierachization, exerting their influence on the respective forces of both these movements, guaranteeing relations of domination and effects of hegemony. The adjustment of the accumulation of men to that of capital, the joining of the growth of human groups to the expansion of productive forces and the differential allocation of profit, were made possible in part by the exercise of bio-power in its many forms and modes of application. The investment of the body, its valorization, and the distributive management of its forces were at the time indispensable.” (Michel Foucault, ‘The Right of Death and Power over Life’, *The History of Sexuality, Vol I*, p. 141)

- *The ‘disappearance’ of man into the machine ..*

“The technical life-order which came into being for the supply of the needs of the masses did at the outset preserve these real worlds of human creatures, by furnishing them with commodities. But when at length the time arrived when nothing in the individual’s immediate and real environing world was any longer made, shaped, or fashioned by that individual for his own purposes; when everything that came, came merely as the gratification of momentary need, to be used up and cast aside; when the very dwelling-place was machine-made, when the environment had become despiritualised, when the day’s work grew sufficient to itself and ceased to be built upon into a constituent of the worker’s life - then man was, as it were, bereft of his world. Cast adrift in this way, lacking all sense of historical continuity with past or future, man cannot remain man. The universalization of the life-order threatens to reduce the life of the real man in a real world to mere functioning.” (Karl Jaspers, *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 42)