

The Destiny of Humanity with Machines

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While a foundation year student at Emerson College in 1978, my employer, IBM, from whom I had taken a sabbatical leave, requested that I return to restore a simulation model that my colleague at work had accidentally deleted. This awakened my classmates to my career choice. Upon my return to Emerson, I often faced the question, “why are you helping Ahriman?” or “shouldn’t you change professions now to something more healthy and becoming for an Anthroposophist?” Examples of those who had left high tech jobs for Waldorf teaching or BD farming positions were offered as heroes. In talking about this with my advisor at Emerson, John Davy, he urged me to stay within the field of computers and technology, to go through the skin of the dragon to facilitate change from within.

Over the next 20 years, my sense of the relationship that many Anthroposophists had to technology remained similar: a near-contempt for technology because it was seen as the bearer of negative changes to social life and to the soul. Many proclaimed it de-humanizing. Many treated technology as a poison. Many refused to own a computer or use email. Many lecturers, when discussing technology, often included the caveat “but we shouldn’t fight against it” while its effects were roundly criticized.

In the past 3 years, I sense a change. Perhaps it is coming from a new generation of Anthroposophists who are “[digital natives](#)” and don’t fear computer technology like its prior generations. Today most major branches have web sites and the vast majority of Anthroposophists receive their branch news through email. We are shaking off the neo-Amish label.

Despite the growing use and acceptance of computer technology, the question of the relationship of technology with Anthroposophy remains. When we think of a future worthy of a human being, do we conceive a future where we are deeply enmeshed with machines? I suspect not. I suspect that the picture we form of our future is one free of machinery and its dehumanizing effects. When we ask “What are the New Mysteries?” do we envision new mysteries like those of Freemasonry that Rudolf Steiner claimed is our task; that is, new mysteries that lead to the penetration and spiritualization of sub-Nature just as the prior Masonic mysteries led to the spiritualization of stone with Truth, Beauty, and Strength? Is it not a bit selfish to consider only our own future? What about the future of those who will be Human on Jupiter? The current angels cared for us during the involution period of Old Moon and now in the involution period of Earth, those who will Human on Jupiter are being pushed up into our will. Our future cannot be free of our task to care for those preparing to enter the stage. Any picture of the future that shirks our responsibility and destiny with machines and technology surely, it seems to me, is a picture inspired by Lucifer.

A destiny enmeshed with machines and technology? Am I serious? Did Rudolf Steiner suggest this? Yes he did, as difficult as that is to hear and fathom. Especially in the West, the role in the destiny of

Humanity is for a greater and greater integration with machines. Although this destiny “cannot be fought against,” what matters is how this destiny manifests. It can be (Steiner says “should be”) decided by spiritual scientists. Anthroposophists cannot afford, in terms of our concern for the future, to not be deeply involved as researchers, inventors, and users of cutting-edge technology, especially where it interfaces with the human being, in order to ensure a healthy future. Today, it appears, no spiritual scientists are involved in fields such as nanotechnology, computer-human interfaces, and bio-sciences meaning that the contributions from these fields for the future are likely to be heavily influenced by Ahriman.

It has been the destiny of the 5th Post Atlantean Age (PAA) to deal with Matter, to spiritualize stone. Masonry took on that task during the 4th PAA and even prepared during earlier Post Atlantean Ages while Free Masonry carried out the esoteric side of this mission. A crowning of this stream came with the Knights Templar and their selfless construction across Europe of Gothic Cathedrals adorned with high-tech stained glass windows. Just before the dawning of the Consciousness Soul Age, the Knights Templar met a brutal end but their deed for our age was done. Their esoteric stream may have flowed into the Scottish rites of Freemasonry. Before their end, another esoteric Western stream had begun, Rosicrucianism. In 1904, as Albert Einstein was busy writing his three landmark papers that were published in 1905 bringing about what NPR called the Golden Age of Physics, Rudolf Steiner was countering this with his lectures on the Rosicrucian perspective of the atom, electricity, and thoughts.

Like the Army Corps of Engineers warning towns downstream of an impending flood, RS warned of a destiny of humanity to be joined to machinery as a preparation for what would follow our Earth-phase, what spiritual science calls the Jupiter-phase. In this next phase, life as we know it will no longer exist. The remains of matter will have dissipated into the cosmos while the plants and the animals will have been reabsorbed into Mankind. A new form of existence will come about with our participation, one where Humanity existence will be roughly a half-step up while a new group of beings will have their existence at a half-step below, that is, in what today could be called an existence in sub-nature. Earth-Humans will be to Jupiter-Humans what the Angels are to us today. RS warned that the flood of destiny was coming; it was not a matter of what, rather, it was (and is) a matter of how and to whom these things will be entrusted. If we fail to bring Spiritual Science to technology, then Humanity will be dragged down too far. Steiner did not look upon this a poison to be avoided; rather as a challenge to our strength of Humanity. We will not succeed in our Anthroposophical mission if we merely watch and cannot guide the research and selfless motivations for forthcoming products. Anthroposophy must engage in the penetration of technology and sub-nature as did the Masons with stone. Into sub-nature we must bring wisdom, beauty, and strength.