

# Ars Industrialis

association internationale pour une politique industrielle des technologies de l'esprit

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Accueil

## manifesto

### A MANIFESTO FOR AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION *ARS INDUSTRIALIS* FOR THE PROMOTION OF AN INDUSTRIAL POLITICS OF SPIRIT

#### Motifs and motives in the creation of *Ars Industrialis*

1. Our age is facing the worldwide threat that the "life of the mind" (to cite the title of Hannah Arendt's last work, a title which in German and French can also be translated and understood as "the life of the spirit"), will be entirely subjected to the demands and requirements of the market, to the law of rapid profits for firms exploiting the technologies of what have come to be known as the culture industries, program industries, media, telecommunications, and lastly the technologies of knowledge, or cognitive technologies. All of these sectors, in the expansion made possible by digitisation, tend to integrate into what was referred to a decade ago already as the convergence of the audiovisual sector, telecommunications and information technologies. This expanding, converging sector is that of what we will call the technologies of spirit. If the process of integration leading to this convergence has hitherto essentially and brutally intensified the possibilities for the control of mind and spirit, we affirm that the technologies of spirit can and must become a new age of spirit, that they can spark a renewal of spirit and issue in a new "life of the mind".
2. Now, such an industrial politics must also be an industrial ecology of spirit. The submission of technologies of spirit to sole market criteria forces them to remain in a control function, in the service of "societies of control" (to use an expression forged by William Burroughs and later picked up by Gilles Deleuze). This function would systematise the development of applications and uses of methods of calculation, communication and consumption to favor short-term financial investments and large profits in industrial enterprises. This function blocks access to these technologies for any other finality, and in particular, it systematically forbids and impedes the development of new and original social practices which these technologies not encourage but call for as an essential requirement -- that is our thesis: these technologies could become the base of a new epoch of civilisation and could conduct the neutralisation of the imminent threat of chaos everyone senses.
3. These technologies of the "soul" and of "consciousness" on which are being grafted technologies of the body and other "living" technologies, aim today at the hegemonic control and shaping of individual and collective modes of existence at every stage on life's way. Now, this control of existence, which is a control and a manipulation of the desires of individuals and groups, leads to the destruction, for these individuals and groups, of the very possibilities of their existence, for to exist can only mean to exist as a singularity. More precisely, this control destroys the desire of individuals and groups, what since Freud we call their libidinal energy. Capitalism, in the 20th century, has marshaled libido as its main energy source, an energy that, channelled into commodities, allows excess industrial production to be absorbed, by means of the capture of libido, of desires shaped to conform to the requirements of profitable investment. Today, however, this capture of libido has ended up destroying it, and this incontrovertible fact represents a huge threat for industrial civilisation: it leads, inevitably, to an unprecedented global crisis.
4. This threat to desire threatens humanity as a whole: the ruin of desire is also the ruin of possibilities of sublimation and of the constitution of a super-ego, and it consequently produces, above and beyond the economic disturbances brought on by a model casting production and consumption as opposites, extremely alarming geopolitical, political, social and psychic disorders. These dysfunctions, veritable plagues for humanity, represent the most recent manifestations of problems that an industrial ecology of spirit and desire must solve.
5. Desire is constituted in symbolic practices sustained by symbolic techniques or technologies. The objects of desire are intrinsically singular, and as such, are capable of intensifying the singularity of the desiring subject. Now, the industrial fabrication of desire, which is made possible by information and communication

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technologies, consists in the categorisation of singularities, i.e., in rendering calculable that which, being incomparable (the singular is by definition that for which there can be no comparison) is irreducibly incalculable. For all that, singularities are in no respect to be seen as at a safe remove from technics or from calculation, but on the contrary, as founded in practices of techniques, technologies and calculations aiming to intensify the irreducible element in all calculation. This is immediately brought forth in all forms of art, as in this from Claudel: "**there must be in the poem a number that averts counting**". The fact is, however, that information and communication technologies are, precisely, spiritual technologies, and that also means that they are situated in the field of *hypomnēmata*, whose sense Foucault pinpointed as that of a "technique of the writing of self." This was also the major question of Plato's philosophy with its definition of writing as *hypomnesis* i.e., as technical memory. Inasmuch as they are mnemo-technologies, the industrial technologies of spirit are a new form of *hypomnēmata*. And as was the case for the hypomnēmata in Greece and Rome, and particularly in the Stoic and Epicurean schools, and also in ancient Roman Christianity, the industrial technologies of spirit conjure new practices, that is., in the final analysis, new social organisations. For the relations of mankind to these technologies can in no case continue to be limited to uses and usages as set out in user's manuals are marketing campaigns, which tend to guarantee nothing other than immediate profit for share-holders who, according to reports, want "two-digit rates of return" on their investments, and where possible, never below 15%.

6. Such a politics is suicidal: this capitalism is self-destructive. By affirming the possibility of an industrial politics of spirit, our association intends to organise a struggle against this self-destructive tendency, by contributing to the invention of practices of spiritual technologies that can reconstitute objects of desire and experiences of singularity. We believe that the development of such practices is a fundamental condition for a peaceful future in the global industrial society.
7. The political-economic issue looming over our industrial future is, then, one of giving a boost to desire, and not simply giving a boost to consumption, as is frenetically and obstinately attempted in countless technocratic and artificial measures and policies that only contribute, time and again, to the aggravation of the evils they are designed to alleviate. The industries of spirit, which then already exist, but which are off-target and in a position to destroy society instead of contributing to the foundation of a new epoch, produce all sorts of ever-growing symbolic exchanges, whose development will continue into the decades to come, as is the case today with wifi connections, and as will be the case soon with the nano-technologies. Now, these devices and services cannot be allowed to increase to the detriment of the social fabric and the general interest. Insofar as the issue of general interest relates back to the question of the symbolic, the definition of an industrial politics of spirit requires the invention of a new form of public power and agency, bringing together skills and knowledge of all types and from all horizons: economic agents and public institutions, research foundations and associations, economists, artists, scientists, philosophers, investors and partners in the tasks of government at all echelons, etc.
8. Our association is situated in Paris, France, but defines itself above all as European. We will seek to find interlocutors, partners and members throughout Europe, and to organise activities outside of France as often as possible. This said, our association is not only European, but international in scope and aim. We wish to project our thinking in the above-mentioned areas to the global level, which includes the areas of education, research, science, art, the media, the organisation of radio and television services, cultural industries and private program industries, as well as national and regional development programs.
9. Besides its partners and members in Europe and on other continents, Ars Industrialis will develop in French cities a network of meeting places and activities for and by its members and correspondants.
10. The association will energise these networks through the use of all available means of communication, and will thus have to seek the support and sponsorship of public and private organisms and institutions.

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On the basis of these 10 motifs and motives, **Ars Industrialis**, an international association for an industrial politics of spirit, will pursue the following objectives:

- . to promote collective, international and trans-disciplinary reflection by organising discussions, symposiums and work-groups,
- . to publish the results of these undertakings in the press, in publications and in books, on this Internet site, and in the form of motions to be drawn up,
- . to prepare preliminary studies and investigations in order to submit propositions to

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be implemented, whenever possible, by interventions and/or experiments,  
. to defend the interests of its members against any prejudice resulting from an attack on the common interests of the Association, which has a vested interest in their defense.

In the meantime, **Ars Industrialis** will organise meetings in Paris centered around the following themes:

- . past and present European policies in the fields of the industries of spirit.
- . the Google initiative in the field of digital libraries and past and future French and European policies on the subject.
- . the issue of scientific research in the context of an industrial politics of spirit.
- the stakes involved in the UN International Summit on the Societies of Information to be organised in Tunis in November 2005.
- . the roles of marketing and publicity in industrial society, past, present, and to come.
- . the questions of art in industrial society, past, present, and to come.
- the question of European languages, and beyond that, of idiomatic difference in general.
- . psychological disorders and the issues of public health from the standpoint of an industrial ecology of spirit.
- . the issues involved in industrial ownership and copyright.
- . existing points of view in the USA, in Latin America, in China and in Japan concerning the question of an industrial politics of spirit and a new public power and agency, in particular at the international level.

George Collins, philosopher and art critic

Marc Crépon, philosopher

Catherine Perret, philosopher and art critic

Bernard Stiegler, philosopher and director of IRCAM

Caroline Stiegler, jurist



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