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Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ttap20

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To cite this article: Cristina Andrea Sereni (2021) Digital Nomos and the new world order: towards a theological critique of Silicon Valley, Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society, 4:1, 1843870, DOI: 10.1080/25729861.2020.1843870

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/25729861.2020.1843870

Published online: 15 Mar 2021.

TAPUYA: LATIN AMERICAN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY
2021, VOL. 4, 1843870
https://doi.org/10.1080/25729861.2020.1843870

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Digital Nomos and the new world order: towards a theological critique of Silicon Valley

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ABSTRACT

Among the dominant narratives that form the ideological substrate of global processes, we can identify powerful deterministic and substantivist mythologies about technology. The most influential of these is the worldview of Silicon Valley, as a producer and exporter of a political theology that holds that the impending civilizational crisis will find a technical solution. This worldview has colonized the daily life of the world, providing a new spatial ordering for our present temporality. Various critical currents have placed the substantivist-deterministic narrative in the context of an intellectual history linked to *political theology*, a conceptual framework that illuminates several functions of this narrative – chief among these, the function of *legitimation*. Therefore, the sociology of concepts proposed by Carl Schmitt allows us to identify the contradictions present within these contemporary narratives. Political theology, seen as the study of the structures and sources of political legitimacy, helps us elucidate the power that the Siliconian worldview exerts. Among other aspects, the framework of political theology highlights the fundamental *invisibility* of these mythologies, which is proportional to their power of domination, and sets the basis for a new digital *nomos* of the earth.

KEYWORDS
Digital Nomos; Silicon Valley; political theology; technocene; posthumanism

PALAVRAS-CHAVE
Nomos digital; Silicon Valley; teologia politica; tecnoceno; posthumanismo

PALABRAS CLAVE
Nomos digital; Silicon Valley; teología política; tecnoceno; posthumanismo

O nomos digital e a nova ordem mundial: em direção a uma crítica teológica do Silicon Valley

ABSTRATO

Entre as narrativas dominantes que formam o substrato ideológico dos processos globais, podemos identificar mitologias poderosas da tecnologia determinística e substantiva. Um exemplo é a visão de mundo do Silicon Valley como produtor e exportador de uma teologia política que afirma que a iminente crise civilizatória encontrará uma solução técnica. Essa visão colonizou a vida cotidiana do mundo. Várias correntes críticas colocaram a narrativa substantivista-determinista no contexto de uma história intelectual ligada à teologia política como uma estrutura conceitual que dá sentido a vários aspectos dessa narrativa, cuja principal função é a legitimação. Essa é também a principal

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função da teologia política. Portanto, a sociologia dos conceitos propostos por Carl Schmitt nos permite identificar as contradições presentes nessas narrativas contemporâneas. A teologia política vista como o estudo das estruturas e fontes de legitimidade política abre as portas para elucidar o poder de dominação exercido pela cosmovisão siliconiana e entendê-la como uma teologia política cuja característica fundamental é a sua invisibilidade, que é proporcional ao seu poder de dominação e lança as bases de um novo nomos digital.

El nomos digital y el nuevo orden mundial: hacia una crítica teológica de Silicon Valley

RESUMEN

Entre las narrativas dominantes que forman el sustrato ideológico de los procesos globales, podemos identificar poderosas mitologías de la tecnología de corte determinista y sustantivista. La más influyente es la cosmovisión de Silicon Valley como productora y exportadora de una teología política que plantea que la inminente crisis civilizatoria encontrará una solución técnica. Esta cosmovisión ha colonizado la vida cotidiana del mundo. Diversas corrientes críticas han situado la narrativa sustantivista-determinista en el contexto de una historia intelectual ligada a la teología política como marco conceptual que otorga sentido a varios aspectos de esta narrativa, cuya función principal es la legitimación. Por lo tanto, la sociología de los conceptos propuesta por Carl Schmitt permite identificar las contradicciones presentes dentro de dichas narrativas contemporáneas. La teología política vista como el estudio de las estructuras y las fuentes de la legitimidad política abre las puertas para dilucidar el poder de dominación que ejerce la cosmovisión siliconiana y entenderla como una teología política cuya característica fundamental es su invisibilidad, que es proporcional a su poder de dominación y sienta las bases de un nuevo nomos digital.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to provide a theological-political critique of Silicon Valley's worldview and the global domination it exercises, finding a meeting ground between political theology and the philosophy of technology. I will take Eric Sadin's characterization of this worldview as a reference point (2018), linking it to its precedents in Schmitt's critique of libertarianism and the progressist view of technology (Schmitt 2009a, 2009b). I employ the term "worldview" rather than "ideology" due to the dogmatic implications of the latter (Žižek 2016; Kotsko 2018). We will particularly focus on Carl Schmitt's political theology and Adam Kotsko's subsequent development of this approach. According to these authors, there is a substantial void at the heart of modernity, which coexists with a constant search for order; a new *nomos* of the earth. The *nomos* constitutes a fundamental principle of the distribution of terrestrial space and the immediacy of a juridical force not attributed to laws. It is a constitutive historical event, an act of legitimacy that gives meaning to the legality of the mere law (Fernández Pardo 2007, 43). In the present time, the *nomos*' most important feature is its "incorporeal virtuality" (Ludueña Romandini 2020, 42).

Modernity (and also the acceleration of modernist tendencies in postmodernity) is a time of exception that requires decisive instances. It is an era in which humans find themselves coexisting with other beings whose ontological status has not yet been established. As an expression of the Technocene – a term coined by German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk (2016) – Silicon Valley provides an appropriate example for a theological-political analysis, since it also expresses a will to go beyond the human and towards the posthuman. Silicon Valley harbors the most renowned representatives of transhumanism, the project to redesign the human species and create a new species of optimized posthumans.

The article is structured as follows: First, we review the usefulness of political theology as a tool to carry out a critical analysis of the Siliconian worldview. Second, we conduct a historical recount of the origins of Silicon Valley as an expression of the Technocene, followed by a revision of the passage made from the Anthropocene to the Technocene towards the silicolonization of the world. This passage leads to the emergence of a renewed nomothetic power, which is a distinctive feature of human groupings (Ludueña Romandini 2020, 43). Finally, we analyze the postmodern leap from human to posthuman philosophy.

2. A "sociology of concepts": Carl Schmitt's political theology as a tool for critical analysis

Carl Schmitt reinvented the term political theology during the 1920s and identified it with the invisible metaphysical remnant beyond any political act. Political theology denotes the inevitable association between the sphere of politics and the sphere of theology. It stands against the neutralization of that association, which would result in the separation of the two spheres within the framework of the rationalist, liberal advance of modern thinking. Schmitt's political theology is foundational to his well-known decisionism, which considers the exception to be the creator of order and analogous to a miracle, inasmuch as that decision is the secularized form of the miracle. Schmitt presents political theology as a *sociology of concepts* which enables understanding of the historical changes in political thought in parallel to the changes that have taken place over time in the metaphysical view of the world. In each era, ideas take on a specific form. The dominant elites and their beliefs regarding existence and the world change constantly and are realized materially based on concrete political existence. The change in dominant ideas of each era takes place gradually, resulting in a sequence of shifts in the centers of gravity or existential cores (*Zentralgebiete*) (Schmitt 2009a).

Although Carl Schmitt has been a controversial thinker due to his active role as a jurist within the National Socialist party at the beginning of the regime, I consider that some of his ideas are precursors of current ideas due to their lucidity and realism. For this reason, without minimizing the moral implications of Schmitt's political sympathies, it is essential to especially incorporate his particular theological-political method into the present analysis.

Schmitt proposes establishing a systematic analogy between dominant theological-metaphysical concepts and juridical-political concepts of each era. His particular methodology is based on the counterrevolutionary writings of Louis De Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. I am interested particularly in De Bonald, who clearly establishes that an

intelligent being is one that executes its own will (De Bonald 1823, 3), and that in the same way, society is not only a being, but also an intelligence which has the ability to recognize and realize its will. Power thus constitutes a public being whose public will is called law (De Bonald 1823, 5). In other words, power is inherent to humanity and allows humanity to act with its passions under control, with the purpose of preserving human society.

Schmitt's method does not propose political theology in a dogmatic sense, but rather, endeavors to explain the theological core of any political theory, as well as the political aspect of any theology. In this regard, Schmitt established associations among theology, politics and thought. He also linked the theological with the juridical, and this link is always embedded in a historical context that defines its characteristics and enables the prevailing worldview of a given era and its theological core to be interpreted based on political theory.

Schmitt's political theology transcends any political or religious doctrinal justification. He secularizes the theological politics implicit in medieval ecclesiastic catholic theology, and turns this method into part of the science of being – taking *being* in a classic sense which includes all sciences and their objects of study (Scattola 2008, 9). His aim is to transcend juridical science itself through an analysis of the concepts implicit in it, in order to approach the study of ideas within a given historical context, analyze their semantic structure and contrast them with the conceptual articulation of the social structure of a given era (Schmitt 2009b, 43). With Schmitt, political theology, as a sociology of juridical concepts, is a method that endeavors to determine the analogy that exists between the system of juridical-political concepts and the system of metaphysical-theological concepts of a given era. The structure shared by theology and politics arises from the shift that took place in the existential core over the modern era. In each stage, an existential core was occupied by a different sphere of human activity, each of which determined the content of the political-theological analogy corresponding to each era (Schmitt 2009a, 109). This means that in each era, one sphere of human activity prevailed over the others, enabling the emergence of the concepts through which the elites of the time reflected their own worldview (Schmitt 2009a, 109). During the nineteenth century, the core or central sphere of European culture shifted towards the economy, strongly adopting science and technology. When the nodal existential core of an era shifts, even though it continues to coexist with the previous ones, it modifies the content of the era's political and cultural interests. The concepts reflected by these shifts are pluralist and only understandable based on concrete political existence. In other words, the relevant ideas of a given era are existential, not normative (Schmitt 2009a, 112). The predominance of one sphere causes the other spheres to be reinterpreted from the standpoint of the predominant concepts, and they often become a set of secondary issues. Thus, for example, in a moralistic era, what is important is the shaping of humanity, while in an economic era, the main issues are the production and distribution of goods. The representative form of each era also varies according to the predominant concepts. These figures obtain their concrete historical content according to the position they occupy with relation to the central sphere, and are only understood with reference to it (Schmitt 2009a, 114).

Adam Kotsko, theologist and translator of Giorgio Agamben, endeavors to transcend Schmitt's view by focusing on the relationship between the age of technology and the advance and establishment of neoliberalism, as well as on its legitimacy. In technological

neoliberalism, freedom, far from being the expression of human dignity, takes on the form of a mechanism that creates blameworthiness. Inherited from modernity, this demoniac notion (Kotsko 2018, 42 and ss.) of freedom as blameworthiness has established the bases for the strategy used in the system for its legitimization. The neoliberal system turns us into demons, inasmuch as it confronts us with forced functional choices to accept blame for social problems, mismanagement or failures. This de-legitimates protest, criticism, and political debate by imposing the idea that the state of things is exactly what we ourselves have chosen. In contrast to the preceding form of capitalism, neoliberalism aspires to be a way of life and a holistic worldview that combines a certain political agenda with a moral *ethos*. Kotsko's renewed view equates the neoliberal system to a political theology in itself, in the sense that its ambition is to reorder the world through certain narratives or discourses (Kotsko 2018, 6). He, therefore, insists that political-theological genealogies help to relate critically to the past in order to understand the present and design possible future alternatives. However, the main danger of neoliberalism is its invisibility. The system presents reality simply as "the way things are," and also as a set of effective, realistic, pragmatic policies. Its power is measured, precisely, in the invisibility it possesses and maintains. Neoliberalism, ultimately, is a worldview whose supporters refuse to admit that it exists (Kotsko 2018, 11).

From the standpoint of political theology as sociology of concepts, it can be stated that a new concept of legitimacy is arising, which has its metaphysical parallel in the positivist indifference to any kind of metaphysical thought.

In its advance on politics, the economy initiated a process of neutralization and depersonalization of politics, reducing the capacity for decision of political actors and thereby delegitimizing their leadership role in society. At the same time, the prevalence of the economic spreads to all areas of human life. Humans, having lost their autonomy to decide to a great extent, have become a cog in a productive process, ruled by expectation and risk, e.g. the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur acts within the horizon of meaning that enables, guides and legitimizes action. Initial faith in technology as a neutral space has been subjected to its instrumental character, the fact that it can be appropriated for *non-neutral* ends. Although technology is in itself neutral, it is at the service of whoever appropriates it because it is blind to any religious, moral or economic purpose (Schmitt 2009a, 74 and ss.). It is in this sense that Schmitt noted, almost a century ago, the danger that resides in the dominion of technology over all spheres of human life. Technology will become the new arena for political struggle; in that process, "man risks losing his human essence" (Schmitt 2009a, 76).

3. Seeking for a new spatial order: the "silicolonization of the world"

The San Francisco Bay area in USA has been the cradle of a series of paradigmatic inventions that affect the daily life of much of the world's population. The birth of Silicon Valley is largely owed to the establishment of Stanford University in the late nineteenth century. Stanford University focused on practical knowledge and business enterprise, giving rise to close collaboration between military capital and technological development, leading to successive waves of innovation ranging from the transistor to the Internet. It is here that the most powerful technological companies have established their headquarters:

Hewlett Packard, Intel, Yahoo, Adobe Systems, eBay, Google and Facebook, among many others (Vaccari 2016, 306).

Each innovation at this "dream factory" was accompanied by a wave of grandiloquent promises and utopic visions aimed at fueling consumption and maintaining faith in the unlimited progress of technology. During the 1980s and 90s, the entrepreneurial culture of the information technology and digital industry – concentrated around Silicon Valley and the Wired magazine – developed a hybrid between the neoliberal free market doctrine and the theory of networks, of which the backbone is deregulation (Vaccari 2016, 307). According to this idea, technological systems follow the laws of markets and self-regulate according to their own rules. It is a conception of technology that proposes that the Internet will release humans from political hierarchies, establishing a liberal democracy in which an emerging order will arise from the hubbub of individual decisions of free, rational agents. This mutation of neoliberal ideology and its exaggerated optimism are part of a global ideological current that contributed to the collapse of the dot-com bubble in 2002. However, the Silicon Valley publicity machine continues to welcome each new "innovation" with feverish enthusiasm and grand predictions. The main proposal of the new narratives associated to market capitalism is that technological development constitutes a sphere in itself, which will continue to grow independently of the other "systems." Despite market fluctuations, technological progress will follow its course to Singularity. We can find several mutually supporting ideologies that converge in the Silicon Valley worldview, but the main narrative supporting this worldview is a synthesis between substantivism and technological determinism.

Substantivism conceives technology as an autonomous system with its own internal logic, whose development and progress are inevitable. This idea is often expressed by means of analogies with nature, as if technology was a natural kingdom in itself and followed the same principles as complex systems, and which should be thought of in ecological terms (Kelly 2010). Ray Kurzweil (2005) defines technological evolution as an extension of biological evolution. Although these notions are clearly slogans and lack conceptual substance, they fulfill an important ideological function, justifying the established order as something unchangeable and opaque to human intentionality. Saying that something is natural means claiming that it is inalterable and necessary. Thus, its real historical origins are concealed and any attempt at intervention and change is discouraged. Analogies with the natural order fulfill a similar ideological role in the justification of free market capitalism. These analogies were first expressed in the nineteenth century in the context of the progressive expansion of the mechanistic worldview to human systems, in particular, the economy. According to the famous image of the "Invisible Hand" of the market coined by Adam Smith, the free market is a fairer and more efficient way of regulating an economy than is centralized control. The accumulation of thousands of individual decisions, extrapolated on a large scale, lead to collective benefit. This idea is based on self-regulating technological mechanisms, such as the scale, and incorporates a deterministic, ahistorical ontology. This type of metaphors established the basis for the determinist-substantivist conception of technology. Indeed, technology was "infected" by economy, with which it shares a vast number of mechanisms, according to this view. For example, the "trickle-down theory" applies both to technological innovation and to wealth: they both accumulate in the high levels of society and tend to spread to the

lowest sectors. Thus, technologies enter the market at high prices and subsequently, their prices drop and they become widespread (Vaccari 2016).

The current incarnation of this idea makes reference to complex systems and the emergence of order out of chaos. In *Bionomics: The Inevitability of Capitalism* (1990), Michael Rothschild argues that like life itself, the market is a self-organizing phenomenon. In nature, feedback cycles are complexly interrelated and tend to balance out. Rothschild expresses the naturalization of capitalism in a direct manner (Vaccari 2016, 310).

Close to substantivism and technological determinism are technological *solutionism* (Morozov 2016) and technological utopianism (or techno-utopianism). Politically, these lines of thought mingle with libertarianism, neoliberalism, individualism and social conservatism, drawing on each other.

These different lines of thought all share certain features: the creed of deregulation, free market, substantivism and technological determinism, libertarianism and individualism. In short, Silicon Valley's narrative claims that technologies should be launched on the market, exempt from any regulation and intervention, and be made freely available. In turn, technological progress is equated to a natural phenomenon such as an earthquake or a tornado, in other words, it is inevitable. The beneficiaries of these technologies are autonomous, rational individuals who exercise their rights and liberties. Thus, improvement of the species will be achieved via countless individual decisions, which will lead to collective benefit. This conceptual framework also implies that social and political change occurs as a result of technological change, which is a clear expression of technological determinism. Therefore, despite its revolutionary, groundbreaking rhetoric, the politics underlying this worldview is clearly conservative, since it argues that introducing new technologies suffices to change society. In other words, there is no need for institutional, cultural, economic or power structure changes. This worldview leads us to another important aspect, which is the fetish for new technologies. This commitment to novelty is a core value in the Siliconian world.

Simultaneity rules this world, which is synchronized and without distances or frontiers. Silicon Valley offers a new global order, new institutions and new moral standards. This new global order invisibly exercises its dominion, which is proportional to its power. These "cosmotechnics" (Yuk Hui 2017) are an aspect of the Technocene. Technological substantivism has taken on new and urgent relevance because it expresses a palpable feeling which is prevalent in our societies: the notion that there is no "outside" of the global system. From this standpoint, Silicon Valley's worldview is a perfect expression of the Technocene, understood as an unstoppable, inevitable historical dynamic which has marginalized human beings as agents of their own historical transformation, while enthroning the possibility that a small group of self-elected transhumans take command. Thus, any attempt at intervention and change is discouraged: there is no alternative, because human action is embedded in a vast fabric of machines and structures with its own laws and autonomous trajectory. Silicon Valley embodies this conception and puts on stage a tension between human agency and historical evolution. The danger lies in that technology tends to create a completely independent technical morality, with the system remaining outside any human control or planning.

The Silicon Valley worldview has been criticized from a number of standpoints in recent years. One is the critique by French philosopher Eric Sadin (2018). The *silicolonization of the world* differs from any previous colonizations because it is not unilateral, but

rather, people aspire to submit to it. *Silicolonization* took place without force or violence through endogenous will, imposing universal values. The self-colonizing drive gains effectiveness through proselytism by those "touched by grace," who spread the precepts of the "Siliconian bible" by means of a narrative spread by entrepreneurs, think tanks, advertising agencies, etc. Start-uppers, TED talks, slogans, experts, self-help and "Siliconian gospel" preachers are all broadcasters of a new disease: *psiliconism* (Sadin 2018, 36), which manifests the "desire of Silicon Valley." This desire implies a kind of blindness. What is concealed due to naivete or cynicism goes beyond a mere industrial model: it is a civilizing model based on algorithmic accompaniment of human existence which tends to be continuous. Internet conquers all spheres of life, and since the 2010s, the "era of measuring life" has been added to the era of internet access. Before that, digital capability involved data management, but now it involves interpretative and decision-making ability. Digital innovation modifies, without public debate, the framework of cognition, and above all, of human action (Arendt 1958) or what remains of it. It also involves the destruction of the power of decision-making, which is a fundamental right that enables us to contradict, critique and preserve our sensitivity, through mechanisms of delegitimization *a priori* of any discordancy regarding the dominant doxa. The algorithmic guide has increasing management power over our daily lives, reflected in the advance of radical anti-humanism, because it means the destruction of the principles of humanism, namely, autonomy of judgment and free choice. Moreover, as the authenticity of humans resides in their unique way of placing themselves in the world, their delocalization (*Entortung*) gives rise to arbitrariness, since the notion of concrete order and formal unity loses weight. Therefore the located space becomes an abstract, quantitative, and neutral space without a center or a point of reference. The *global nomos* of the technocene means the disintegration of the *nomos of the earth* and the rise of a new *digital nomos*. The submission of the political class and of the *res publica* to technocapitalism (Sadin 2018, 40) enables a limited group of persons to wield disproportionate power over our activities and to exclude anything divergent.

If information is the main feature of both material and immaterial reality, then both nature and human nature become infinitely malleable (Hayles 1999). Humans become codes or patterns of information embedded in an endless sequence of interpretation of interpretations.

Within this framework, uncertainty and the strategies to unquestioningly adapt to uncertainty play an essential role, because the future horizon prefiguratively brought to the present gives rise only to the risk of change, the risk that the course of events may be different. This is why flexibility and openness to change are highly valued in entrepreneurial personalities. Change is constant in both technological and business spheres. Neoliberalism offers an intellectual framework for this kind of high-tech entrepreneurship in the form of an entrepreneurial *paradigm* (Etzkowitz et al. 2000; Tuunainen 2005; Lam 2010). Neoliberalism as a theological-political framework legitimizes the practices, the shaping of meanings and the discourses of that paradigm. It is a moral order based on the development of technology and its relationship with the market and the impact it has on society. A clear example of this is the transhumanist ambition of optimizing the human being to the maximum by fusing the human body and mind with machines in order to release it from its inherently human weakness. Nick Bostrom, one of the founders of transhumanism, argues that "transhumanism is not limited to gadgets and medicine,

but also includes economic, social and institutional designs, cultural development and psychological skills and techniques" (Bostrom 2003, 493). These other types of *gadgets* shape the world of entrepreneurship, and what it should be like. Apparently, *undertaking an enterprise* requires not only economic and political techniques, but also psychological techniques. The collapse of negativity (Han 2016) is clear with regard to individual activity: the assessment of individual potential for action values subjects that display *passion, talent* and innovative ideas plus the right attitude to attempt to carry them out. Within this framework, an *entrepreneur is* someone who has an innovative idea and decides to turn it into reality, whose personality is characterized by creativity, passion and a dose of irrationality. This subjectivity is considered to be the center of action and the motor of the economy. From a romantic standpoint, emotion is evaluated positively as a natural human characteristic (Lutz and White 1986). In the case of entrepreneurship, Schumpeter's figure of the *innovative entrepreneur* is a romantic view of the process of invention, which involves a certain mystique. Unlike rational processes, invention is a kind of epic adventure in which the end point is not usually the one expected, but rather, the opposite. Massification of the positive congests and obstructs circulation within the system; information is no longer informative; production is no longer productive and communication is no longer communicative. Everything increases beyond its objective.

Neoliberalism fosters the construction of a safe, comfortable utopia, in contrast to an apparently nihilistic, chaotic alterative. Homogenization is the condition *sine qua non* of this line of thought, which justifies the exclusion of anything divergent under the banner of equal opportunities. A posthumanist destination is manufactured, whose *telos* is *techné*, because distinct acts of knowing and doing have been fused in the single act of wanting or desiring. The only universal characteristic in the world is information, which, as it lacks inherent meaning, can be interpreted and reinterpreted indefinitely. Reality is built on variable sources of information, which are in turn used by individuals to construct their own realities in an apparently autonomous manner.

Postmodern domination intends to transform nature and human nature in a revolutionary manner, affecting the genetics of plants, animals and humans. These changes are no longer sequential and gradual, as were the slow changes in centers of gravity described by Schmitt. Technology arises as a potential *Oikos* for humanity, in which the essence of the human can no longer be affirmed. The soteriological anxiety of feralized human leads to a naïve hope that what technology intends will be in accordance with humanity's best interests. The human commits to an attempt to redeem from its defectiveness, subjecting itself unquestioningly to the domination exercised by the way of life emanating from Silicon Valley. Certain that it is a free project that is constantly reconsidered and reinvented (Han 2014, 11), the postmodern human believes it has freed itself from external coercion and coercion by others, and submits to internal coercion and self-coercion in the form of coercion to performance and optimization. The freedom to do generates even more coercion than disciplinary duty. Duty has a limit, but the ability to do has none (Han 2014, 12).

The new planetary guardians, helped by *infotainment*, promote the twilight of privacy. The illusion of absolute knowledge (of self and the other) is part of the *cybertheology* (Ludueña Romandini 2018) which intends to dominate the world. The destatization of surveillance marks the unstoppable process of universalization of the Eye of Power (Ludueña

Romandini 2018), which is located beyond the reach of comprehension of the very agents that fostered it. We face the emergence of an Eye of Power which is conscious and independent of its creators. Artificial Intelligence, together with what is posthuman, arises as an omniscient master that not only seeks to geolocate bodies but also to capture them algorithmically and reduce them to a set of bits of information. At the same time, cyberspace fulfills the role of new worship, following the definitive "death of God." The thinking on which the economic-political roles of digitalization are based intends not only to "improve" the world, but also "to get out" of the world, with the need to establish universally valid precepts or commands, such as Max More's "letter to mother nature" (2009). The infinite potential of capitalism constitutes an unsurmountable horizon (Sadin 2018). In this framework, technological information opens the doors to cybernetics and unlimited cyberspace. Postmodern identity is cybernetic in character. Technology becomes a mechanism and a symbol for imposing a completely artificial identity which has been created intentionally above and beyond natural boundaries. Mortality and natality, which are intrinsic human characteristics, are relegated. Temporality, which manifests as the continuity between past, present and future, loses meaning. Present and future are constructed artificially, and the past no longer fulfills any role. By eradicating any harm or suffering, virtual reality eradicates the need for care and assistance, and thereby also eradicates empathy and the sense of responsibility. With its idea of infinite self-projection towards the future, the post-humanist discourse of Silicon Valley represents quasi-religious idiosyncratic stances that have been forged in the postmodern historicist rhetoric with a clearly providential grammar.

4. The postmodern twist: from Anthropocene to Technocene, and from human to posthuman

The triumph of historicism in the postmodern era positions technology as the real subject of history (Cera 2017, 10) and calls for a redefinition of the human's humanity. Technology as the present form of the world gives rise to the "Technocene," because it introduces into any human context its *ratio operandi*, assimilating humans to an environmental, i.e. animal condition. The feralization (Cera 2017, 4) of the human is the apex of the era of the eclipse of *anthropos*, carrying forward the gradual dehumanization of mankind. The Technocene replaces the Anthropocene (Sloterdijk 2016, 10), which fulfilled the purpose of basic idea or paradigm of an era (Baskin 2015, 9). During the Anthropocene, the human confronted itself as creator of a technology which began to be perceived as *physis*. The Anthropocene was the era of technology as totality, in which *being* meant being raw material in a Heideggerian sense. But the absolutization of the *Machbarkeit* has turned *homo faber* into *homo creator* (Cera 2017, 11), with the ability to create *physis*. In order to become a creator, the human must transform everything into *Bestand*, including the human itself, thereby dehumanizing itself and subjecting itself to its own *Machbarkeit*. It is from the perception of the human as obsolete that the ambition arises of becoming available for technology to release the imperfect human being from being condemned to being human. In this regard, since the emergence of technology as epochal subjectivity cannot exist except at the price of dehumanizing the human, the Technocene era has begun.

In the Technocene, technology is affirmed as subjectivity of the present time, taking on an autotelic character. It can no longer be understood as a human function of instrumental action, but becomes a universal worldview which apparently cannot be called into question. Thus, it fulfills a function as a secularized substitute for theological-metaphysical principles which have lost their meaning.

The transfer and spread of technologies in a context of globalization of the media carries with it a concomitant spread of narratives regarding this new idea of technology. It can be observed that, following the example of Silicon Valley, this culture has dressed technology in a series of very popular narratives regarding the idea of progress and optimism about markets. Advertising narrative – the imperative non-apophantic logos – dominates current society. Orders are issued in the form of advice or invitation, placing will in the foreground to the detriment of responsibility.

It seems that humanity, as an epistemic-historic figure, has reached its end. The human is leaving behind its condition of living on Earth as a mortal, identified with inhabiting/dwelling (*wohnen*) (Heidegger [1954] 2000). Posthumanism (a critical and speculative project that must be differentiated from transhumanism) dismisses the hierarchy among species and the unique model of the human as a measure of all things. The exit of the human leaves an ontological vacuum which is rapidly filled with other species, and nonhumans of all kinds (Braidotti 2013). During modernity, there were natural limits that were not transgressed, which enabled the application of laws in the best interest of humans (Waters 2006). The world was discovered and modified, but not recreated. To post-modern humans, however, there are no limits. The neoliberal background of postmodern rhetoric conceals the extinction of personal autonomy, which is manifested in the self-aware being. With technological progress, distance and time are compressed and the representation of a person becomes a "disembodied will" (Waters 2006). As a result, science can no longer be equivalent to *episteme* in the classical sense of knowledge as distinct from *techné*. Science cannot subsist as such if information is the new language that governs its exercise and its underlying ontological assumption has not yet been defined.

Certain implicit intellectual, moral and religious assumptions have shaped the (post) modern worldview over time, giving rise to the cybernetic paradigm, in which the organic and the mechanical become merged. Material reality is reduced to manipulable information which is infinitely reconfigurable. Postmodern and posthumanist discourses represent emerging forces that shape contemporary culture (Waters 2006). Since cultures do not exist in a historical vacuum, they need a broad, interpretative discourse that will preserve and transmit traditions and institutions, and project future aspirations. Technology, science, or even theology can serve as types of public discourse to achieve this interpretative and legitimating purpose.

In the transhumanist project of directing human evolution, technology replaces religion and science as a formative cultural force (Waters 2006, 18). Indeed, faith in progress is as much an act of faith as faith in providence. The postmodern turn from a culture of progress and science towards one of process and technology (Ferkiss 1969, 26) has given rise to new forms of anthropotechnics (Ludueña Romandini 2010; Sloterdijk 2016). The blurring of the boundaries between human and machine renders any certainties obsolete and demands a complete revision of the notion of "human." Transhumanism is based on a historicist assumption, which has marked the culture of postmodernity to a

point where it is no longer even questioned. Given that historicism does not enable us to find a future course, or norms providing a framework for action, humans in their temporality can only see themselves as self-constructed. The existential desperation that follows explains the modern fixation with progress, which comes to fulfill the function of moral sedative to mitigate the terror of recognizing the intrinsic chaos of human nature (Grant 1995, 38). In a Nietzschean sense, we create ourselves with reference to horizons constructed by ourselves, disintegrating in pure will. The world dominated by radical contingency is the world of Silicon Valley, which lacks a theological view of history because it has left behind history itself to proclaim the transcendence and re-foundation of the human. We can detect the influence of theological narratives: human immortality, the dream of total and absolute knowledge (now revealed in the possibility of an Artificial General Intelligence). But technological progress does not necessarily entail moral, social and political progress. Religious faith continues to be a source of morality. The twist is that, in neoliberal capitalism, morality means survival, that is, it is reduced to competition between individuals. Human beings have taken control of their own evolution as a species (Hefner 2009). In one of these narratives, humanity finds immortality through fusion with a silicon substrate, where it no longer matters whether the sovereign decides on a state of exception, because sovereignty, decision and law are no more than logical attributes which no longer belong to the human species. Fabián Ludueña Romandini (2018) observes that a phenomenon inverse to secularization is taking place, i.e. political concepts do not move from the sphere of the divine to the sphere of the human, but rather, return to their nonhuman roots, except that now they are expected to be linked to algorithmic entities. Algorithms are nonhuman actants to which humanity's destiny is delivered, though they are incomprehensible even to their own creators.

Yuval Harari (2018), on the other hand, links transhumanism with dataism, the new "Silicon Valley religion." Dataism is the zealous defense of freedom of information – not in the sense of human freedom to be informed, but as a right of the data itself, which clamors to be released. Large corporations such as Google and Facebook keep secret the algorithms that manage this dataflow, calling into question the legitimacy of that flow. According to dataism, human imagination is a product of biochemical algorithms, resulting in an alliance between biology and technology. In other words, transhumanism has "killed God," and dataism, in turn, will ultimately render the human obsolete. This will happen when the Internet of Things connects all organisms and objects, extending universally and becoming godlike: omnipresent and with everything under its control, with humans fused within it. At this point, Harari argues, *Homo Deus* will arise.

5. Conclusions

My aim here has been to draw some elements towards a political-theological critique of the Silicon Valley worldview. A political-theological critique implies, as we have seen, the study of legitimation systems, of the ways and means used by political, social, economic and religious orders to maintain their explicative power and to justify the loyalty of their supporters, taking into account the parallelisms existing between political and theological concepts. Consequently, the neoliberal post-humanist thinking exported by Silicon Valley can be viewed as a political theology, because it is underpinned by a set of fundamental

precepts that determine what the world is like and what it should be like, conforming a theory of human nature as the source of social institutions and moral order.

Considering the above, it can be stated that Siliconization of the world consists of imposing certain values globally by means of practically imperceptible strategies, which draw on the unprecedented level of connection between the technological and the economic. Current technical-economic logics are contrary to ethics to the extent in which they aim at total dominion, intending to submit all gestures to results of equations according to a principle which constitutes an offense to human integrity.

The end of the state aeon and the beginning of an era dominated by technological advance requires a new spatial order that must transcend its original telluric character – and even its maritime and aerial character. Silicon Valley has already laid the foundations for the new *digital nomos* that could provide the framework to neutralize the permanent state of exception denounced by Agamben (2005).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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