

The Explosion of Network Techniques and the Myth of the Network between Science and Democracy. Legal Implications

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Abstract

The network has become a dominant form of contemporary thought, its constitutive metaphor reinvented during the explosion of networked techniques - the Internet and planetary telecommunications networks. It seems to draw the invisible infrastructure of contemporary society. The figure of the network tends to define the ways in which thought works, being ubiquitous in all disciplines, from biology to sociology, from law to computer science, etc., for the hidden structure of the complexity of today's society is the network that dominates and shapes it. The network itself produces social change, being conceived as a technique that provides connection and as a political-moral operator that provides meaning and is identified with a social and democratic revolution. In contemporary society everything is networked, from transport to energy, from telecommunications to information technology, even human relations have become 'networks'. The network, as the explanatory structure of the contemporary capitalist system, constitutes the 'new morphology of our societies', converging towards a 'meta-network of capitals', as the new figure of power, with the whole planet caught in its net, leading to the suppression of state control over society and the economy and the destruction of the sovereign nation state through the destruction of hierarchies.

Keywords: network metaphor, networking techniques, democracy, logos, moral responsibility.

JEL Classification: K10, K19

1. Introduction

The development of networks is the equivalent of a political revolution. The telecommunications network is, for the social body, the equivalent of the nerve network for the human body, its functioning ensuring its survival.² Industrial development and the steam engine made it possible to invent self-regulating mechanical networks (telegraph, railways), communication techniques and the computer made self-organising networks possible. These, as intelligent networks, went from the pyramidal model of the hierarchical network of actors (broadcasting network) to the anarchical dispersion model (computer network), to end up in the switched telephone network, egalitarian and interactive image.³

In contemporary society even human relationships have ended up becoming networks⁴. The new figure of power, the "meta-network of capitals"⁵, is trapping the whole planet in its net, leading to the destruction of hierarchies and the sovereign nation state as we know it. The invention of information technology has allowed the notion to evolve towards a form of network autonomy capable of self-organisation, heralding the end of the nation-state: "For the first time in history, the primary unit of economic organisation is no longer a subject (...) the unit is the network, composed of a diversity of subjects and organisations that are constantly changing as they adapt to environments and structures."⁶ But the lack of hierarchy that the network assumes is only an appearance, an illusion, as is the network ideology, supposedly non-hierarchical, transparent and egalitarian.

2. The network, metaphor turned myth

The word network is used to designate a variety of phenomena and objects, taking on new meanings with the symbolic importance of the Internet. Gradually detaching itself from the concrete objects it originally referred to, enriched by the extension of metaphorical registers, the network

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² Alvin Toffler, *The New Powers? Savoir, richesse et violence à la veille du XXIème siècle*, Fayard, Paris, 1991, p. 144.

³ Jean-Louis le Moigne, *La théorie du système général. Théorie de la modélisation*, pp. 180-182, https://archive.org/details/JL.Le_Moigne_theorie-du-sys-general_theorie_modelisation_1977, accessed 11 December 2022.

⁴ Manuel Castells, *The network society. L'ère de l'information*, Fayard, Paris, 1997, p. 525.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 531.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 236-237.

makes it possible to describe and understand new forms of coordination, control and cohesion, circulation, social exchange, and the conceptualisation of the links between the local and the global, attempting to account for contemporary social change.⁷

Today's Romanian language is a faithful mirror of society, constantly searching for itself in terms of lexical identity. The word *network* comes from Lat. **rētēlla*, diminutive of *rētis*⁸, meaning "braid of threads of yarn, string, wire, etc., worked with large meshes; net, netting"⁹. This definition of netting refers to the technique that highlights it: weaving. As far back as mythology, the net is observed as a weaving technique. There was a time when the notion pre-dated the term web, the mythological use of the metaphor of weaving representing the links the gods weave between the invisible cosmos and the visible world, the web being "the invisible link between the visible places of the physical body"¹⁰. The net, whose etymology is Latin *retis*¹¹, was composed of regularly braided threads, and was a wide-meshed fabric used to catch certain animals. It is necessary to insist on the size of the weave, which implies the connection, and the size of the catch, which aims at control.

From the seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the notion acquired a figurative, metaphorical meaning, being applied to the analysis of the human body, especially the circulatory apparatus, becoming "the visible place of an invisible organization"¹², being enriched with new dimensions: circulation and fluidity, its genealogy showing the close link between body and organism¹³.

In the 19th century, the body metaphor moved into the field of engineering, where it was transformed from a given network into an artificial network, as engineers became aware of the enormous prospects that the application of the network concept opened up in their respective fields and was increasingly used in everyday life. If the doctor observes it, the network being for him a living tissue, the engineer conceives and constructs it, thinking of it as an organism, but becoming an artificial, constructed network, an artefact, an autonomous technique independent of the body. And now the network designates the intermediate place and link between continuous circulation and blockage, between "a paradise of circulation and exchange and a hell of control and surveillance"¹⁴. The history of science and technology notes the profoundly reticular nature of natural and social organisations, the general form of the network arising from the concrete problems facing natural realities and social constructions and serving to designate a wide variety of objects and phenomena (roads, railways, etc.).

The term is used by doctors to designate and describe the blood system and fibres that make up the human body. It was Harvey who explained the laws of blood circulation in the human body¹⁵, developing the idea that blood circulates in the body in a closed circuit, a theory that contradicts earlier medicine which considered that blood was produced by food, then 'consumed' and then

⁷ Simon Borel, *L'axiomatique des réseaux: entre réalités sociales et impensés éthico-politiques*, thesis, Université Paris Ouest Nanterre la Défense UFR de sciences sociales et administratives Département de sociologie, 2013.

⁸ Cf. it. *rezza*, abruz. *ritedda*, fr. *réseau* (Alexandru Ciorănescu, *Dicționarul etimologic român*, Universidad de la Laguna, Tenerife, 1958-1966).

⁹ Romanian Academy, Institute of Linguistics, *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, 2nd revised and added edition, Univers Enciclopedic Gold Publishing House, Bucharest, 2009.

¹⁰ *Ditto*.

¹¹ Gabriel Dupuy, *Réseaux, philosophie de l'organisation*, in *Encyclopædia Universalis*, t. 19, 1990, pp. 875-882; J.-L. le Moigne, *La mémoire du réseau: Tout s'écoule...et pourtant...*, in *Information, culture and society: the rise of networks*, Proceedings of the international symposium, Grenoble 9-12 May 1989, pp. 173-185.

¹² Pierre Musso, *Télécommunications et philosophie des réseaux: la postérité paradoxale de Saint-Simon*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1997, p. 33.

¹³ Pierre Musso, *La pratique des réseaux chez Saint-Simon et l'émergence d'un concept*, in *Télécommunications et philosophie des réseaux. La postérité paradoxale de Saint-Simon*, under the direction of P. Musso, Paris cedex 14, Presses Universitaires de France, "La Politique éclatée", 1998, pp. 31-67, <https://www.cairn.info/--9782130483977-page-31.htm>, consulted on 12 March 2023.

¹⁴ Pierre Musso, *La symbolique du réseau*, in *Quaderni*, n°38, Printemps, 1999, Politique symbolique et communication, pp. 69-98. doi: 10.3406/quad.1999.1396 http://www.persee.fr/doc/quad_0987-1381_1999_num_38_1_1396, p. 71, consulted on 12 March 2023.

¹⁵ Andrea Cesalpino (1519-1603), in *Quaestionum peripateticarum libri quinque* (1571), is the first to speak of "circulation" to describe how blood moves (*Cesalpino and the Circulation*, Nova et Vetera, *British Medical Journal*, 23 mars 1946, p. 436). It was Harvey who generalised the closed-circuit scheme to the whole human body.

evaporated as sweat.¹⁶ His theory would stir up controversy among doctors¹⁷ and beyond, the discovery being all the more important as it required the reconfiguration of the entire blood system. It was Descartes who defended Harvey's thesis¹⁸ and integrated it into his general conception of the human being, rejecting the old theory of *pneuma* or "breath of life"¹⁹. United with the body, the soul figures in a *network*. It acts on it and through it but is conditioned by passions²⁰. This paradigm of the body-machine has the heart as its principle of movement, the body being conceived as a complex network of fibres allowing the continuous circulation of blood (even if Descartes' use of the term "network" is reserved by him only for the analysis of the function of a certain area of the brain - the central part of the brain in the shape of a U - this network being described by him as made of wires and spaces between the centre of the brain and the periphery of the body). But Descartes remains attached to the linear conception of knowledge, which develops regularly, gradually and directionally, and therefore mechanically and reversibly.

It is Diderot who goes beyond network theory in terms of points and lines, drawing on the fibrillar theories of Haller and Bordeu and thinking of the polity in terms of links and flows, connection, control and circulation. The particular status accorded to analogy by Diderot justifies the shift from the human body to the body politic and the treatment of geopolitics from the reticular form. Even if he does not explicitly achieve a theory of the network, he inaugurates "the use of the potential and analogical richness of the network, its capacity for transfer into disciplines with historically divergent epistemologies that nevertheless tend towards a common category of understanding that translates a new vision of the natural and social order"²¹. In its political works, the network promotes the idea of an organisation that regulates, matching private and public interests, by rebalancing functions by mediating instances within a configuration that is no longer hierarchical but decentralised and fluid.²² As in the case of the organism, which owes its integrity to collaboration, consensus and the equal distribution of competences and power to all its parts, in the case of its political theory the relations of domination and obedience are erased in favour of multilateral exchanges between rulers and ruled.

It is the Saint-Simonist school that will place the reticular metaphor at the heart of its thinking, which will ensure its fruitfulness, once it has been successful. Saint-Simon's organicist vision of the network generates, through the multiplicity of relationships and the circulation of people, goods, capital, ideas and knowledge, the most grandiose projects. Organisation implies a certain solidity, and fluidity is necessary for life and exchange. The social body is organised as a human body, political science being founded, thanks to the logic of the network-organism, on a new religion, the "New Christianity", which is achieved "in the work of associates applied to the whole planet, to fertilise nature with communication networks"²³. The circulation of money in the network society ensures the functioning of the social body, just as the circulation of blood in the body through the blood network is the condition of life. Good governance is the condition of social change, ensuring the transition to the hoped-for industrial system through a peaceful transition from the present to the future. The network is no longer just an operational concept (banking and financial networks, networks of streets, canals, maritime lines, railways), but the vector of a philosophy, from the original topological

¹⁶ Observing the blood flow is made possible by squeezing the arm with a tourniquet, which shows us that it circulates repetitively. See http://animation.hepvs.ch/sciences-de-la-nature/images/stories/doc_cycle_3/demarchescientifique/dsharvey.pdf.

¹⁷ Harvey is called 'circulator', Latin for 'charlatan'. See <http://www.medarus.org/Medecins/MedecinsTextes/harvey.html>.

¹⁸ Harvey is explicitly mentioned by Descartes as Harvejus or Herveus. In the *Discours sur la méthode* he says that "if we ask how it is that the blood in the veins does not exhaust itself by continually flowing through the heart, and that the arteries do not fill up (...) I have to answer nothing but what has already been written by a physician in England, to whom we must praise him for having broken the ice in this matter and for having been the first to reveal to us that (...) the flow of blood is nothing but a perpetual circulation". (*Discours*, V).

¹⁹ C.U.M. Smith, *Descartes' Visit to the Town Library, or how Augustinian is Descartes' Neurophysiology*, in *Journal of the History of the Neurosciences: Basic and Clinical Perspective*, Vol. 7, no. 2, 1998.

²⁰ It is, says Descartes, the "principal effect of the passions" which incite and dispose the soul to desire things for which they prepare the body.

²¹ Éric Letonturier, *Le réseau mis en oeuvre: le Rêve de Diderot*, in *Flux*, nr. 24, 1996. pp. 5-19, https://www.persee.fr/doc/flux_1154-2721_1996_num_12_24_1183

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Pierre Musso, «La symbolique du réseau», *op. cit.*

dimension (the image of the fabric) and the circulatory dimension (accepted by medicine), the network now signifying more than any free movement and any free communication, becoming the instrument of the collective good, through "generalised communication based on organised connectedness", becoming "the new mobilising utopia of the social planner"²⁴. With Saint-Simonism, the network reaches its culmination, Michel Chevalier transforming the network into an object-symbol²⁵. The network itself comes to produce social change, and is identified, through the egalitarian circulation of money, with a social and democratic revolution.

In law, the network metaphor is highlighted by François Ost and Michel van de Kerchove²⁶ who start from the thesis that "out of the crisis of the pyramid model, a competing paradigm gradually emerges, that of networked law, without important residues of the former disappearing, which succeeds in complicating the situation further"²⁷, aiming to develop a science of law that accepts to face its challenges, suggesting a new theoretical framework capable of transposing the progressive movement which, schematically, goes from the pyramid to the "network". "With the network, the state ceases to be the sole home of sovereignty (...); the will of the legislator ceases to be received as dogma (...); the boundaries between fact and law become blurred; powers interact (judges become co-authors of the law and the sub-delegations of normative power, in principle forbidden, multiply); legal systems (and, more broadly, normative systems) become entangled; knowledge of law, which yesterday claimed to be methodologically pure (mono-disciplinarity), is today interdisciplinary and results more from contextualised experience (*learning process*) than from *a priori* axioms; finally, justice, which the pyramid model sought to reduce to the hierarchy of values laid down in law, is today perceived in terms of balances of interests and balances of values, as diverse as they are variable."²⁸ Built in opposition to the Kelsenian paradigm²⁹, the network is the fruit of the crisis of this model, seeking to fill the gap left by state deficiencies and transnational problems.

Metaphor appears as a strategic tool for the analysis of culture, an essential ingredient of its interpretation³⁰, conferring transparency to the social, through the permanent play between the manifest and the secret by means of rational modes of visibility, initiating us into the presence of the perceptible as a constitutive excess of the visible over itself and attempting to name the world in the unattributed moment of its appearance, for the phenomenal world is the site of an original metaphoricality.³¹ If metaphors structure our ways of perceiving and feeling, they also have the power to produce a new understanding of things and thus to transform reality.

Wisdom is intellectual intuition, the process of metaphorization succeeding in unifying the real with the intellect, the latter, as intuitive, becoming all that is. But intellectual intuition is instantaneous, it does not occur over time, in the case of metaphor we are faced with a paradox: it is given through intellectual intuition, but through intuition we know but do not know, through reasoning we know but do not know. Metaphor succeeds in unifying the two ways, making us know what we know and know what we know, for in it being and thinking are one and the same thing. Through metaphor, man discovers the divine in himself, having direct access to the thinking that thinks thinking. What is sought to be achieved by means of demonstration, metaphor, as intellectual

²⁴ *La pensée saint-simonienne et les réseaux*, <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/reseaux-philosophie-de-l-organisation/4-la-pensee-saint-simonienne-et-les-reseaux/> consulted on 11 November 2022.

²⁵ Michel Chevalier, *Letters on North America*, tom. II, Gosselin, Paris, 1836, p. 3.

²⁶ Thus, Professor Millard, who intends to oppose an empirical theory of the hierarchy of norms to the normativist theory, does not understand by the hierarchy of norms "the vulgate often used by jurists [...] who [assimilate it] to a pyramid of legal acts which are ordered in a coherent manner, because the lower acts would be perfectly in conformity, materially, with the higher acts" (Eric Millard, "La hiérarchie des normes. Une critique sur un fondement empiriste", *Revus - Journal for Constitutional Theory and Philosophy of Law*, no. 21/2013, p. 3).

²⁷ François Ost, Michel Van de Kerchove, *From pyramid to network? pour une théorie dialectique du droit*, Presses de l'Université saint-Louis, Brussels, 2002, p. 14.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁹ The Austrian author, for his part, implicitly rejects the idea of network law: law 'is not a complex of rules in force side by side' (Hans Kelsen, *Théorie pure du droit*, 2^e éd. revue et mise à jour, adapted from the German by Henri Thevenaz, followed by *L'influence de Kelsen sur les théories du droit dans l'Europe francophone*, by Michel van de Kerchove, Éd. de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, 1988, p. 266).

³⁰ Jean Molino, *Anthropologie et métaphore*, in *Revue Langages*, Larousse, Paris, no. 54/1979, pp. 103-126.

³¹ Renaud Barbaras, *Le tournant de l'expérience. Recherches sur la philosophie de Merleau-Ponty*, Paris, Vrin, 1998.

intuition, grasps directly, for in its case the grasping is the arising, and vice versa. This will only be possible by going beyond the rational and focusing on the intuitive-noetic, intuition being responsible for creativity. Metaphors arise spontaneously, as revelations underlying all rational justification.

Taking the metaphor of the network as the basis of the analysis and understanding of the world, man is emptied of his interiority, "the notion of interiority, perceived as the insurmountable limit of the intimacy that ensures the autonomy of the subject loses ground to an informational representation of the individual that corresponds to what Philippe Breton called "the subject without interiority", the subject thus becoming a being totally engaged in a communicative exchange with his environment"³².

Alongside these uses, new ones have emerged, popularised by the development of information technology and modern means of telecommunications, the term being used for complex sets of virtual pathways, the Internet being referred to by this very term "Network" or "network of networks". The term 'social networks' is used to refer to relations between people via the Internet, without its pejorative meaning (originally 'network' was a secret society, a clandestine organisation, an occult power), and the focus is not on individuals and their individual attributes, but on the relations they maintain between themselves, which change their individual behaviour and thus help to shape social structures.³³ The concept of a network makes it possible to describe the social structure of a community. Thanks to nodes and arcs, networks can be illustrated graphically and abstractly.³⁴ Nodes can represent individuals, groups, families, collectivities, businesses, states, etc., while links can represent flows of all kinds, from information and resources to relationships involving respect, friendship, influence, power, domination.³⁵ The best expression of the network is an image, not a definition, which has led to its widespread use.

3. Democracy and networking techniques

Postmodernity is underpinned by reticular techniques. The philosophical foundation of political modernity as democracy in the West was established on the dualistic logical chain that begins with Lutheran thought, continues with Cartesian philosophy (thinking in the singular) and evolves with Rousseau, who forms the synthesis. Democracy is concerned with the formation of an individual as an autonomous subject and the permanence of unity between individuals, each of whom is an end in itself. With the philosophy of the subject, the ideas of freedom and individuality develop, evolving synthetically in Rousseau's thought, giving the ideal foundation of modern democracy, the principle of pluralism and otherness, conceived in terms of the general will. It is plural thinking that makes possible a genuine existential dialogue and alternative.³⁶ "Democracies are, in their own way, living systems. But it is not enough for them to live: they must survive."³⁷ For this survival, democracy needs mechanisms that make it robust and complex. Today's democracies suffer from a lack of altruism (the duty of solidarity), a lack of real dialogue between the participants in democratic life, and a lack of efficiency in achieving well-being.

If science is based on objectivity of facts and rationality, democracy is essentially a different regime of truth, based on opinion and majority vote. Democracy needs science as its compass³⁸, but science does not participate in political decision-making, it rules on the "possible". Democracy needs science, because the only argument of authority about what is possibly comes from science. It gives, about itself, the image of a neutral and objective knowledge, whose task is to remove prejudices by

³² Céline Lafontaine, "Nouvelles technologies et subjectivité: Les frontières renversées de l'intimité", *Sociologie et sociétés*, vol. 35, nr. 2/2003, p. 204.

³³ Pierre Mercklé's work, *Sociologie des réseaux*, Repères, La Douverte, Paris, 2011, revisits the founding works of network sociology and the social sciences' scientific uses of social network notions.

³⁴ Julien Pacotte, *Le réseau arborescent, schème primordial de la pensée*, Paris, Herman, 1936.

³⁵ Henry Bakis, *Les réseaux et leurs enjeux sociaux*, PUF, Que sais-je?, Paris, 1993.

³⁶ Fusakazu Asano, *Trois origines de la subjectivité: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau: fondement de la démocratie moderne*, PhD thesis in political science, Paris, 1991.

³⁷ Philippe Kourilsky, *De la science et de la démocratie*, Odile Jacob, Paris, 2019.

³⁸ Denis Guthleben, "Does Democracy Need Science? ", *Histoire de la recherche contemporaine* [Online], vol. IX - no. 2/2020, <http://journals.openedition.org/hrc/5260> consulted on 03 November 2022.

revealing the truth.³⁹ But this identification between power and science is false, even though science and democracy are crucially linked, as rationality has always been built on challenging authority relations and dominant modes of legitimation. In democracy, science is no longer just an instrument of power, but it is also not devoid of any political stakes.

The advent of the digital, even if it promised huge leaps in knowledge, did not bring a net contribution to the great discoveries, this contribution must be relativized, because apart from accelerating the production of knowledge, it did not produce anything extraordinary. Today, with the emergence of cybernetics and the redefinition of the relationship between interiority and exteriority⁴⁰, the network represents the purest democratic form that would allow direct democracy to be achieved on a planetary scale⁴¹. Politics thus becomes "network art", and virtual networks, like agglomerations, maximise the collective intelligence of associated citizens and democratic transparency. Networks are seen as indispensable supports of "technical democracy"⁴² against representative democracy, through the appropriation by civil society of reticular techniques (peer to peer, wiki, logiciels libres...). There are theorists who reformulate the communist ideal of pure democracy "in the light of the "multitudes" connected in computer networks"⁴³ which would allow, beyond the market, in total freedom and complete gratuitousness, to give, collaborate and change institutions and territorialised national frameworks.⁴⁴

The critical questioning of the network sees in the emergence of networks the vector of the disappearance of the common world that will lead to "decivilization" through the dissolution of the social bond operated by networks and the theoretical and symbolic disappearance of society, along with new forms of domination and exploitation in the spirit of the "new capitalism" connectionist⁴⁵. The process by which the political-institutional disappears in favour of flexible reticular operational systems is called the "operational-deciational mode"⁴⁶ of systems independent of any common norm of collective action. The Western world today is experiencing new political-symbolic forms that radicalise utilitarianism and weaken democracy, with the "reticular individual" and "reticular capitalism" societies engaged in "asthenic rhythms"⁴⁷, which considerably weaken democratic rhythms, even speaking of "impolitic counter-democracy"⁴⁸ with harmful consequences for subjectivisation and democratic dynamics.⁴⁹ The fundamental diagnosis of contemporary mutations is the emergence, before our eyes, of a virtual "world-society"⁵⁰ which would bring together, deterritorialised, individuals with different ethnic, identity and cultural horizons in the form of multiple and conjunctural associations. In this society under construction, it is a question of staying in touch with the communities to which one belongs, but also of connecting with others across conventional borders.⁵¹

The dominant ideology of the network draws from the same source of metaphors and myths that relate to the continuity of thread and flow and the craft techniques of weaving. If originally the myth was the creator of the cultural object, we see, on the contrary, that today it is the cultural object

³⁹ Isabelle Stengers, *Science and Power. La démocratie face à la technoscience*, Paris, La Découverte, 2002.

⁴⁰ Guillaume Blum, Mehran Ebrahimi, "From network knowledge to knowledge networks. Vers de nouveaux modèles d'organisation innovants", *Management & Avenir*, 2014/1 (No. 67), pp. 207-223, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-management-et-avenir-2014-1-page-207.htm>, accessed 12 February 2023.

⁴¹ Pierre Lévy, *Cyberdemocratie: essai de philosophie politique*, O. Jacob, Paris, 2002.

⁴² Michel Callon, Pierre Lascoumes, Yannick Barthe, *Agir dans un monde incertain, essai sur la démocratie technique*, Seuil, Paris, 2001.

⁴³ Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Multitude. Guerre et démocratie à l'âge de l'Empire*, La Découverte, Paris, 2004.

⁴⁴ Simon Borel, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Le coût humain de la mondialisation*, Hachette littératures, Paris, 1999.

⁴⁶ Michel Freitag, with the collaboration of Bonny Yves, *L'oubli de la société: Pour une théorie critique de la post-modernité*, PUR, Rennes, 2002.

⁴⁷ Pascal Michon, *The rhythms of politics. Démocratie et capitalisme mondialisé*, Les prairies ordinaires, Paris, 2009.

⁴⁸ Pierre Rosanvallon, *Counter-democracy. La politique à l'âge de la défiance*, Seuil, Paris, 2006.

⁴⁹ Simon Borel, *op. cit.* p. 21.

⁵⁰ Denis Duclos, *Société-monde: le temps des ruptures*, Ed. La Découverte/MAUSS, Paris, 2002.

⁵¹ Simon Borel, *op. cit.* pp. 23-24.

that creates the myth by inverting cultural codes⁵², the network becoming a symbol of universal association with the development of communication networks. The network is today a political fact by being detached from the national territorial frameworks and by being part of transnational forms of organisation of interconnected actors. As the dominant form of social structure, the network is giving rise to a new social morphology, with the network society being used as a metaphor but also as a model for understanding the social, cultural and political aspects of the information age.

4. Conclusion

We cannot fail to see that both contemporary democracies and reticular techniques are at an impasse. And this is due to the inadequacy of *logos*, which is political, and which is the cause of the emergence of individualism that denies everything except an interiority that wants to be sufficient in itself. In order for there to be a relationship with the real, logos must be grasped in its entirety, as *ratio* (principle) et *sermo* (word), as that which binds and preserves all that exists. Democracy and reticular techniques emphasise *sermo*, denying the unifying principle. This principle must be a moral one. The loss of the capacity for moral being is due to the fracture that has been created between ethical rules, coming from outside, and the moral responsibility that belongs to the intimacy of the human being. The alienation of the contemporary human being is the result of his inability to translate his inner disposition to do good into rules. Rules must not be invented, but discovered as such, for they revolve around moral responsibility.⁵³

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