

*The typewriter as historical means of rationalization is taken ad absurdum, since the production of drawings is cumbersome and slow.*

Economy, of production and consumption, of productive consumption, of time consumption and production in time, is the great transcendental notion of our time. It is transcendental in the exact sense that Kant gave to this word: it is the condition of possibility of... Economy of means is the condition of possibility of production, economy of ends the condition of possibility of consumption. Waste, excess, and drivel must be abandoned in the ceaseless quest for economy of means and ends. It is not the ends that justify the means, nor the means the ends, but their economic relation justifies both. Consumption is economic if it is productive, production is economic if it engenders consumption. And consumption in turn engenders production, and production consumption. Yet while endless continuation of this cycle, and accumulation of its results, may be the teleological horizon of production and consumption, their understanding cannot proceed without a notion of economy. Before and outside of notions of accumulation, both as a means and as an end, is an economizing of means and ends.

Economy as a transcendental engenders a rationality and a critique of that rationality. As a rationality, economy manifests in a system of weights and measurements, plans and processes with regards to means, and a system of priorities, goals, and projections with regards to ends. It weighs means within their ends, adjusting or justifying them, economizing resources. It plans processes, deployments of means within their ends, projecting and morphing both, economizing time and space, energy and expenditure. And yet it also weighs the ends, systematizes and projects their gains, goals, and ripple effects, calculating

their productivity for future projects, adjusting or discarding them, economizing outcomes. This system of economic rationality is omnipresent and planetary; it is the great edifice of our time. It is 'the economy', ostensible servant and palpable master of creature, time, and fate.

Yet as such the rationality of economy, system of the conditions of possibility of creature, time, and fate, also includes its own critique. Indeed, its critique of itself is its condition of possibility. Means can always be economized further, placed and deployed more effectively, arranged and organized better. Ends can always be more sustainable or more immediate, more gratifying or more moral, further reaching, less ostensible, more satisfying. To economize is to critically evaluate means and ends. And to do so within the rationality of economy is to criticize rationally; which is to say, to criticize economically. Economy is critical in both senses. There is a critique of economy, of means for ends and ends for means, of both means and ends in themselves. Yet there is also an economy of critique. Critique must remain rational or, as the phrase is, 'constructive'. Critique, too, is production and thus has means and ends. Deploying the former must remain within rational distance - that is, must remain economically adjusted - to the latter, just as the latter must never go so far as to question the former in its entirety. Critique is economic critique: it cannot criticize the very economy from which it derives its critical edge. Its condition of possibility is the rationality of economy - and thus, this rationality cannot be questioned.

A triumph of production is thus an economic triumph: a triumph of economy, a triumph within the economy of rationality and the rationality of economy. A triumph of a means of production - such as a typewriter - is a triumph within the condition of possibility of production and consumption: it is a triumph of economy and its rationality, that is, of the system and within the system of economic means and economic ends. The typewriter triumphs by economizing. As such, its triumph is an economic triumph: sober and rational, furthering economy of means and ends, rational deployment of means and rational accumulation of ends. The typewriter

implements an economy: lightly bruising the page, it imprints a moderate amount of ink, deploying a sparse array of lines to construct precisely delineated figures. It is itself a means, and the figures it constructs – text or otherwise – are its ends. Rational, they remain economic. Economic, they remain rational. A sober triumph.

And yet: is a triumph not also a moment of ecstatic joy? Is it not, as originally conceived, a moment of excessive display, but also of inverted hierarchy, of reminders of mortality? Is a triumph not an excessive gesture, gloriously going beyond the confines of economy and its rationality, to an expenditure of means and an excess of ends no longer tethered to economy? Outside of the condition of possibility of contemporary rationality: outside of the deployment of creature, time, and fate?

Is this more ancient, less restrained, less economic triumph still the triumph of a typewriter: of this modest means to a precise end? Of this 'historical means of rationalization'? Can the typewriter become excessive? Can its lines, the imprints it leaves on the page, become excessive? Can either go beyond the economy of means and ends? Can the lines cease being ends? Can the typewriter cease being a means? Does it become excessive by becoming an end? That is, can it abandon its accuracy and precision, its economic rigor: can it be 'taken ad absurdum'? Can it cease economizing time, can it cease economizing production? Can it produce excessively? That is, can it become 'cumbersome and slow', no longer economically implementing deployments within time, no longer facilitating economies of production, no longer enabling delicacies of precision? Can the typewriter triumph beyond economy: triumph not as an economic triumph, but as excess beyond all economy? Can it become an end in itself: implement itself beyond itself?

Is it still a typewriter that triumphs here? What does this modest means become when it moves, not just to the status of an end in itself, but beyond means and ends altogether, into excess? How does a typewriter *manifest* excess? What becomes of the lines which it deploys, the imprints it leaves on paper, the ink it

distributes: its patience and precision? If the typewriter's triumph results, for example, in 'new characters', is it the typewriter which triumphs? Does it not continue to serve an end: does it not still facilitate the triumph of the characters? Typewriter and lines on the page cannot both triumph excessively at the same time. Either the new characters on the page exceed economy, but then the typewriter remains their humble servant, typing, imprinting, producing - economically. Or the typewriter itself exceeds economy - but then how could it continue to produce, how could it continue to imprint - where both production and imprint cast it back into its humble status as means to an end? The typewriter may well produce 'a line representing itself', it may well give birth to the merger of 'abstract and figurative expressions', it may well 'generate sensual qualities'. Yet in each of these, it serves yet again as means to an end. It continues to economize, to deploy itself economically.

A typewriter's triumph beyond economy remains unthinkable. The lines it produces triumphantly defy economization; become cumbersome and slow, uneconomic and excessive. But the typewriter retains an economic relation to paper and ink; it remains within plan, process, and rationality. It is not the triumph of the typewriter, then, that we witness here. Indeed, the very existence of a product which can be witnessed, of lines on paper, is the result of the typewriter's modest retreat. Its triumph remains sober and economic: a series of gestures implemented in veiled excess, to an oblique end. Bearing the marks of its economy, the typewriter obeys the imperatives of the only triumph open to it: within the condition of possibility of its rationality.

And who are we to criticize its modesty? Were we to triumph, we who write, we who read, would we not likewise gloriously cease our production? Is not the excess of triumph the very absence of economy and thus productivity: the very absence of the production of this text and of all texts? Who are we hypocrites, who expose the typewriter's retreat: do we not also bear the marks of our economy?