

ON TRANSLATING 'SHAKTI' AND THE WESTERN CULT OF 'ENERGY'

The following extract from an article by Jonathan Tennenbaum is included to help show the huge historical and linguistic distortion concealed behind modern translations of the Tantric term 'Shakti' as 'energy' – itself a Greek-derived Aristotelian concept out of which a modern scientific 'cult of energy' was created - one further reinforced by American New Age cults with their pseudo-sciences of 'energy' and 'energy medicine'.

FROM 'DYNAMIS VS. ENERGEIA'

by Jonathan Tennenbaum

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Aristotle writes, for example (*Metaphysics, Book IX*):

"Since all abilities (powers) are either inborn, as are our senses; or are acquired by practice, as the ability to play a flute; or are acquired by learning, as the powers of the sciences; in all cases one can gain such powers, as are acquired by practice or learning, only through the aid of something that was already realized (actualized)...."

"For from the potentially existing, the actually existing is always produced by an actually existing thing, e.g., man from man, musician by musician; there is always a first mover, and the mover already exists actually. We have said in our account of substance that everything that is produced is something produced from something and by something, and that the same in species...."

"Obviously, then, actuality (energeia) is prior both to potency (dynamis) and to every principle of change."

Rather than get entangled in the ins and outs of Aristotle's theory of existence and becoming, focus on the systematic, axiomatic flaw in Aristotle's whole manner of argumentation: He rejects— or at least disregards, as if it were nonexistent— the power of human creative discovery, of human reason, and of a creative principle underlying the Universe as a whole. In other words, Aristotle denies the possibility of a self-developing, or self-actualizing potential, that which Nicholas of Cusa later called the *posse-est* (*posse* corresponding to Plato's *dynamis*). Lurking behind Aristotle's notion, that existence can only flow from what he calls "actually existing things," is a mind-set which can

attribute "actual existence" only to such objects and motions, as have the quality of objects of sense perception.

These points require more elaboration. For the present purposes, however, as a short-cut and in order to throw the issue of "**dynamis vs. energeia**" into strategic perspective, I propose turning to one of the more effective British operations of the 19th century, one which— as so much British wickedness— drew originally from Aristotle.

THE CULT OF ENERGY

From the early decades to the middle of the 19th century, parallel with operations leading to the unleashing of the Confederacy and the U.S. Civil War, a scientific cult was launched by Lord Kelvin and the Thomas Huxley-Herbert Spencer "X-Club" circles, Hermann Helmholtz, Rudolf Clausius et al., directed against the influence of Leibniz and his successors, including Gauss in particular. Although that cult involved several interrelated "theme parks"— such as the so-called Darwinian theory of evolution and Herbert Spencer's fraudulent concept of an "iron law of progress" — we might fittingly refer to it as "the Cult of Energy."

Crucial to the operation was the relative success, achieved by the conspirators, in foisting two fraudulent formulations on the scientific community: the "First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics," and their monstrous corollary, the supposedly inevitable "heat-death of the Universe."

The utopian political thrust of the operation was more or less obvious from the beginning, but became luridly explicit, among other things, in the "Energeticist Movement" associated with Wilhelm Ostwald around the turn of the 19th century. Ostwald advocated a World Government based on the use of "energy" as the universal, unifying concept not only for all of physical science, but also for economics, psychology, sociology and the arts.

Although the energeticists and the myriad, competing materialist (including "diamat," "dialectical materialism"), reductionist, and positivist movements and countermovements of the late 19th century and early 20th century, are now mostly forgotten, the axiomatic germ of the Cult of Energy remains deeply embedded in European culture, like the modified genome left over in the tissues of a patient after an acute lentivirus infection has subsided. In particular, for over a century nearly everyone has been miseducated to believe, that "energy" is an objective scientific reality, and the First and Second Law constitute proven scientific truths.

Not accidentally, the Kelvin-Helmholtz doctrine of "energy," became a key feature of Anglo-American geopolitics, from the British launching of Middle East "oil politics" at the beginning of the 20th century, to the orchestration of the so-called "energy crisis" of 1973-74, and, not least of all, the present march toward a new Middle East war. This is not to say that "energy" per se (or "oil supplies") has anything really significant to do with the present war drive. Rather, the reasons that people permit themselves to be manipulated into tolerating actions leading to perpetual war and a new "dark age," are inseparably connected to those axiomatic flaws in thinking, that underlie popular belief in the cult doctrine of "energy."

The common origins of the "energy" doctrine and utopian geopolitics go much farther back than the launching of the modern energy cult itself, by Helmholtz, Kelvin et al. From the standpoint of economics, the energy doctrine represented nothing but a rewarming, under "scientific" guise, of old feudalist, and specifically physiocratic, doctrines of supposedly fixed "natural resources," ignoring the function of the human mind in discovering and realizing new physical principles. On the other hand, anyone who has thought through what Lyn and others have written on Gauss's early work concerning the "Fundamental Theorem of Algebra," should immediately recognize, in the so-called "First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics," exactly the same essential fallacy, that Gauss refuted in his 1799 attack on the "utopian" mathematics of Euler and Lagrange. Not accidentally, the Euler-Lagrange doctrine of "analytical mechanics" created the mathematical foundation for the Helmholtz-Kelvin energy doctrine. Conversely, the manner in which Gauss generates the algebraic "powers," in the cited 1799 work, by principles lying entirely outside the mathematics of Euler and Lagrange, is characteristic of the way Man acts as an instrument of the anti-entropic development of the Universe.

On one level, the fallacy of the "First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics" is simply this: These laws have never been demonstrated to be properties of the real Universe, but only properties of certain closed mathematical-deductive systems, which ignorant or malicious physicists claim to represent the real Universe, but which manifestly do not. On this level, the fraud is identical to that of so-called economists, who claim to be able to deduce theorems about the real economy, from supposed self-evident properties of "money." In fact, the elementary error, revealed in the very title of Newton's famous *Principia Mathematica Philosophiae Naturalis* (Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy) finds itself reproduced, countless times, in textbooks dealing with non-existent "Financial Principles of Economics."

Contrary to popular academic belief, there are no actual experiments establishing the validity of the "First and Second Laws of

Thermodynamics" as universal physical principles. To the extent those "laws" have a certain empirical correlate at all, they are both circumscribed by a purely negative principle, identified already by Leibniz long before the Kelvin-Helmholtz gang came along: the impossibility of a so-called perpetuum mobile or "perpetual motion machine"— a hypothetical subsystem of the Universe, able to generate a net surplus of power in the course of a closed cycle, in which the system is supposed to return to its exact original state, without any other net change in the surrounding Universe.

Just as in the case of so-called "impossible" or "imaginary" numbers, the source of the supposed "impossibility" involved is not a limitation of the real physical universe. The limitation is located rather in the notion of a "machine," as a system describable by the "utopian" Euler-Lagrange form of analytical mechanics. To put it another way: To the extent a physical system is either chosen or forced to mimic the characteristics of a "machine" in the indicated sense, it will appear to obey the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics. But the Universe as a whole is not a machine; the Universe not only never returns to an earlier state, but its successive states are strictly incomparable with each other from a formal-mathematical standpoint. Thus, the extrapolation of the so-called "First and Second Laws" to the Universe as a whole constitutes the crudest, most elementary sort of scientific error.

If "Universe" refers to the most generalized form of Man's action upon Nature— no other Universe could be known to us!— then the "state of the Universe" changes fundamentally with each discovery, by some human mind, of a new universal physical principle (power). A formal-mathematical system, which (to a first, "engineering" approximation) may have more or less adequately described Man's physical-economic activity up to that point, now breaks down, as technologies, based upon the new principle, transform the physical economy to the effect of increasing the relative potential population-density of the human species beyond any a priori "limits."

The very fact of the successful increase in human population potential, by some three orders of magnitude over documented history and prehistory, attests to the existence of a self-developing "power," lying entirely outside the domain of visible or visible-like objects, but commanding the visible Universe to an increasing extent.

This brings us back to the fundamental flaw of Aristotle's *energeia*.

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