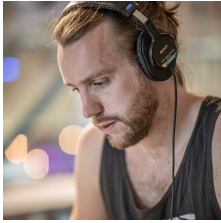


Abstract



Ole Thijs

Our place on Earth. Locality as an existential condition in the age of planetary technology

- Over the past centuries, technology has increasingly become a planetary phenomenon: technologies are linked into global networks and reduce away the relevance of local environmental and cultural factors, in order to facilitate the smooth exchange of resources, products and information. This planetary character seems to persist in the new generation of technologies meant to deal with the climate crisis, from renewable energy to geo-engineering and from cellular agriculture to electric mobility: they remain dependent on global supply chains and digital systems. However, planetary though these technologies may be, they also remain insistently reliant on particular locations for resource extraction, production and deployment. Prima facie, this dynamic may be easily explained in terms of something like ‘Gestell’: nothing has fundamentally changed in ‘green’ tech, and the essence of technology is still to only encounter beings – in this case, places – in terms of one-dimensional techno-economic utility. Here, however, we wish to turn the proposition around, and investigate whether the insistence of locality points towards the possibility of technological, but non-planetary, ‘Earthbound’ existence in the Anthropocene. We use a framework of milieus, derived from Stiegler, Simondon and Leroi-Gourhan, to propose tentative answers to the questions: does technology necessarily tend towards planetarisation, how does technology relate the local to the planetary, and how might non-planetary technologies be conceived?



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