Detech technology, who participates?

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OK. Well anyway. For months, maybe years, I have been avoiding this column. Why? Because it will tell you that everything I identify with - my blogs, my music, my contributions on Spotify, YouTube and also on LinkedIn - can no longer exist in a sustainable world. No AI, no surveillance systems, no algorithms, not even an internet, and probably at most very simple local digital systems. Car mobility on the current scale? No way! Railways literally and figuratively only on main lines. The jobs we know now? Most are not sustainable! What does that world look like then?

Don't know. What I do know is that we will have to make choices. What can we keep and what not? We will no longer be able to spare the elephant in the room: technology, which has gradually evolved into technocracy, governing our day-to-day behaviour without being consciously/politically chosen. We do this on a large scale and meanwhile worldwide. For example, who knows the Jevons Paradox, dating back to 1865? Or the Khazzoom–Brookes postulate? The rebound effect perhaps? All observations that showed that technologically more efficient applications irrevocably lead to an increase in the use of resources and thus to a decrease in ecology and ecological diversity. In other words, technology and sustainability are in a paradoxical relationship (Jason spoke of an oxymoron, so two terms that exclude each other, such as an uncrowned king, or the chaos that reigns). Unbridled technological growth, in every conceivable direction (often greenwashed under the heading of necessary innovation), is not sustainable.

Again, I don't know what a sustainable world looks like. I do know that to achieve it, we are all needed. Students, artists, writers, analysts, thinkers, philosophers, mathematicians, engineers, food experts and marketers. To become less dependent on technology – to DeTech our future – we could set up a new highly multidisciplinary field: Detech Technology. Gradually we will discover that we mainly need each other and the blossoming nature / ecology and discover that we have come to believe in many illusions.

Unrestrained development

Economists will discover that it was not a (neo)liberal economic system that caused the downfall of ecology, but that the (liberal) economy is a consequence of the way in which technology has developed unrestrained in all directions. Technologies became more or less autonomous complex systems, which in order to survive demand all resources (ecological materials, energy, human brainpower and labour) in their ever-increasing size; exponential growth in all directions. Some people get rich from this (often coincidence, the right person, in the right place at the right time, see this blog). The capitalists - the (neo)liberals - are seen as the cause of the current polycrises, and the masses are seen as those condemned by them to indifference and/or misfortune. And the unhappier, the greater the need to consume, resulting in the wealthier the rich. Economists will see that all this is a result of rampant technocracy, which has come to replace democracy as it became less and less constrained by national borders. So it is not a result of a capitalist model; although they rightly point to its existence, capitalism or (neo)liberalism is an epi-phenomenon. As much as the illusion of infinite growth from finite resources is an expression of this epiphenomenon, so are my writings.

Complex systems theorists have known this for a while, but keep a low profile, fearing the loss of powerful computers that are so much fun to play with. Shouting that things need to change, that a system change is needed, it's become a new pastime, straightening the seats on the Titanic. But change has to start somewhere. David must challenge Goliath. Alone we can't, alone we don't dare, who would challenge a giant? We can do it together, and just like with the demolition of a house, you can initially use the stairs to get to the top, where you can start stripping and sorting for reuse. DeTech technology. Who is in?