

Beyond Babylon?!

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Smart technology unifies, mainly because it globalises (or rather, colonises). Its biggest disadvantage may also be its biggest advantage. While cultural diversity is under pressure, we are approaching the world worldwide through the same streaming services and social media apps. As a result, we increasingly communicate through the same images, music and even speak the same language: English. English together with German and Dutch make up the group of closely related West Germanic languages and so, slightly less than the English-speaking countries, even the Dutch are practically handed the world on a silver platter. Off with the Babylonian confusion of tongues!

Let's leave it open for now whether, in the words of the late Dutch football icon Johan Crujff, "every disadvantage has its advantage" - technology reduces diversity, with the advantage of a united humanity - or whether "every advantage has its disadvantage" (technology ensures prosperity and unity, but decreases diversity). Around the world we can also express ourselves in English and our mobile devices can be charged. The same (smart) technology and internet infrastructure is available everywhere. In the same vein, we are exploring the possibilities of solar and renewable energy around the world, to store it in batteries or as potential energy, which can be converted into kinetic energy and thus electricity when there is no sun or wind available. We don't realise how special it is that practically all young people (say under 30) understand English. Both English and technology are colonising forces, that have achieved what seemed impossible for thousands of years: Babylonian confusion of tongues is now largely evaporating! What a fantastic time!

In a 1952 interview by Romney Wheeler, 19th- and 20th-century mathematician/philosopher Bertrand Russell argued that war would become obsolete if and only if a world government controlled both weapons and new technology (which was then mainly developed in science). According to him, this would be an absolute precondition for a safe and happy life in an industrial society. In his own words: "If war is not impossible, every advance in scientific technique, means an advance in mass murder and is therefore undesirable". According to Russell, both economic equality between regions and stable (controlled) population numbers per region are also preconditions. Currently there is enough food for every inhabitant of the earth, although the distribution is very problematic. Annually, three times as much food is produced as the world's population needs. Unfortunately, much remains untouched and due to population growth there is now more hunger than ever before.

Unlike in Russell's time, technological innovations now mainly take place outside the scientific labs. Politics also lost ground; Russell's world government now consists of a number of "shams", increasingly colonised by Big Tech and Big Pharma. But both the English language and technology have achieved what the Bible (religion) proved unable to. Virtually all human cultures have been colonised by both the global language English and (smart) technology. Both "settlers" are seeping into every human soul around the world, economically driven by Big Tech's marketing formulas.

Russell could not yet see that many boundaries would eventually blur, shifting both political governance and science from the front lines to the rear. Our world is increasingly ruled by multinationals, which have gradually taught humanity to dream, play and speak in one world language through a lot of (smart) technology. Big Tech plays a superhuman role in the lives and dreams of every citizen of the world. Just like in ancient times, where devout people felt God in every aspect of their existence, technology has become an integral part of our existence. While the Babylonian confusion of tongues has been razed to the ground, a new - Big Tech - Babylon has arisen. While we take advantage of the products that multinationals serve, we are increasingly colonised by them. Will it ever be time for apologies and reparations, as it was for our slavery past? What a wonderful time!