

Quality

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Fantastic, a week's holiday! Plenty of options. A plane ticket Groningen - London (€ 25) is even cheaper than a public transport Groningen - Emmen (Wildlife, € 49) in the neighbouring province. We are going to Luxembourg, where my eldest son Camiel currently lives. We have a great weekend, guided through the beautiful city by Camiel. In the evening time I read the farewell speech of Professor Wim van Gemert, in which he compares the current economy - full of waste and surpluses - with the pubertal phase of "binge -drinking": more is better than enough. He describes how he currently enjoys the few moments he spends with his son, who also lives abroad. At their scarce moments together, he and his son enjoy a glass of old and rare whiskey. According to van Gemert, a non-economic economy (because it's full of waste and surpluses) must make room for a reciprocal economy; use what you need, but give time to the sources to recover. Dry the laundry when the sun shines and sleep when it's dark. Reciprocal techniques are for example solar and wind energy.

Reciprocally technology, when integrated into the natural course of being, can certainly make our lives easier. But subsidising air travel - huge waste - until tickets are offered for dumping prices, does not seem wise. Again, a non-economic economy of waste and surplus will certainly break us up sooner or later. We decide to extend our days with Camiel with a few days of camping. With our 15-year-old Volkswagen, we drive from one of the European capitals to a nature camping site. In the evening it's pretty cold, but with warm sweaters and sleeping bags we enjoy reading aloud by candlelight, about knights and the Middle Ages. On the e-reader. Reciprocal economy, far away from the world where everything is always fully available, independent of season, time of day, climate and nature.

Investing in AI

In the News app, I see that Europe is going to invest billions in AI technology to keep pace with the US and China. At the same time, one after the other ex-employees of Google, Facebook and YouTube confesses that he / she didn't know what they were doing and that they have done a lot of damage with the technology they have developed. One of them even says that they have massively programmed the audience with smart algorithms to like or dislike things. Although I think that it's not that bad, it's a fact that technology helps to globalize. Technology unifies, and that is not good or bad in itself. But the idea that technology is the only way to the future is stupid.

Take the pop stages for youth culture or any other form of culture, literature, or art which can never be local anymore, because the social platforms immediately align each expression with the rest of the world. And the algorithms place it in line with success, which is certainly not the same as original, or innovative, let alone ingenious. So in fact the algorithms program who is worshipped by whom on which stage, by reprogramming internet users to "fans", taking into account their original preferences. With algorithmic "hand" (suggestions for looking further), the metal-fan is neatly guided at the most successful metal acts of the moment. So what is successful is the result of data mining algorithms. The big ones are getting bigger and that ultimately leads to mediocrity.

Driving home again, I reflect on the wonderful week and the conversations with my son about politics, technology and progress. Granted, unintentionally, the "guilty" former employees of the high-tech giants are quite right: technology also makes stupid. Above the apartment of my son the very large planes flew very low over and over again. That is where the European government is. Interesting position. One speaks of technological progress as if it is already (autonomous AI) an autonomous process, of which it is self-evident that much / everything is invested in, but it is often downright dehumanizing (Kierkegaard saw that very sharply). But for me, my time with my son is quality time with a capital Q!