

Technophobia / technophilia debate

- Angelic viewpoints
 - Futurologists (Negroponte, Rosnay)
 - Technological determinists (McLuhan)
 - Optimists (Castells, Lévy)
- Pessimists
 - Luddites
 - Pessimistic technological determinists (Ellul, Baudrillard, Virilio)

Technophilia

- Borderless world of communication → sense of global community / cultural revolution
- Freedom of expression → social participation – no elites (classless society)
- Easy access to info & knowledge → free learning
- Democracy → open political debate → direct & transparent link betw citizens & govt – dilution of role of intermediaries (media, unions, associations)
- Control over consumer choices → customised & flexible production
- New way of addressing urban / rural pb (*spacelessness*)
- Efficient & mobile worker

Reign of the techné

- Technological determinism
 - Mythic father → McLuhan → *Global village* + *Extension of our senses*
- Technical ideology
 - Tech change = progress in communication
 - Must adapt rapidly & at all costs
 - Criticism = fear of change / archaism

Technological determinism

- Optimistic technological determinists --> naive faith in "progress" (and in those initiating technological change).
- Technological "revolution" dramatic and "inevitable" driving force--> prophetic tone
- Marshall McLuhan (d. 1980) argued that communication technologies such as television, radio, printing and writing profoundly transformed society and "the human psyche." - "the medium is the message" --> "reification"

Pierre Lévy

- *Cyberdémocratie* (2002)
- Global governance, transparent govt, culture of diversity, ethics of collective intelligence
- Interactive media, virtual communities & freedom of expression --> new public comms space that is inclusive, transparent & universal --> modify public space with more freedom + more civic responsibilities
- *“Ces nouvelles technologies nous permettront de tisser à nouveau un lien social déchiré depuis l'Holocauste et Hiroshima. C'est un espace de liberté et de conscience qui s'ouvre à l'homme”.*

Joël de Rosnay

- *L'Homme Symbiotique (1995)*
- Introsphère --> *“une sorte de conscience réfléchie résultant de l'interconnexion physique, mais tout autant de la capacité de penser en commun. Ni surhomme, ni biorobot, ni superordinateur, ni méga machine, l'homme du futur sera simplement un homme symbiotique en partenariat avec un nouveau système sociétal qu'il aura lui-même généré. Un super-organisme nourricier vivant de la vie de ces neurones de la terre que nous sommes en train de devenir”*
- --> *Gaia hypothesis???*

Joël de Rosnay

- *La Révolte du Proletariat* (2006)
- = true democracy through new mass media
- new modes: massive & distributed
- digital collaborative creation, connection & exchange
- More participative organisation
- Parallel commercial universe

Technophobia

- Totalitarianism of technology – inescapable – choking effect - positive publicity media discourse projecting image that surpasses reality of technology (powerful impact)
- Corporate stronghold – consumerist ideology
- Simulacra or substitute of reality – loss or dilution of real community values
- Digital divide – leading poles: USA, Europe & Japan vs rest of the world
- Superficial participation in political debate
- Youth obsession

Jacques Ellul

- Pessimistic technological determinist --> conspiracy thesis
- Technology = totally autonomous entity with a will of its own --> Technological tyranny over humanity--> a new religion → *"that which desacralizes a given reality, itself in turn becomes the new sacred reality"*
- Tech → effacing nature and society
- Creates an artificial system which "eliminates or subordinates the natural world."

Ellul

- Extreme productivism - efficiency no longer an option but a necessity imposed on all human activity - rationality, artificiality, automatism of technical choice, self-augmentation, monism, universalism, and autonomy.
- Enforcement of logical and mechanical organization through division of labor, the setting of production standard, etc.
- Instead of technology being subservient to humanity, "human beings have to adapt to it and accept total change"

Paul Virilio

- *Speed & Politics (1986), The Lost Dimension (1991)*
- “*Internet sera la pire des choses avant d’être la meilleure*” --> virtuality & universalism will generate integral accident
- Shift from geo-politics to chrono-politics - whoever controls means of instant information, communication, and destruction = dominant socio-political force.
- Loss of key human capacities and powers under the influence of always accelerating technology.
- Decline of the city - loss of the object, of the very concreteness of lived experience in a new world of technologically-generated representations and modes of vision --> substitution (vs Baudrillard's *simulacrum*)