DIGITAL SUSTAINABLE FUTURE?: A CHAT WITH SCIENTISTS

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Scene

Scientist arguing amongst themselves about climate change. A student overhears them talking, and joins their discussion (the rhythm of the poem is based on Billie Eilish's "Your Power" [6]).

Scientist	**Student**	**Scientist**

"Science, science is power" [13]
So much "violence done in its name" [4]
"Try not to abuse your power" [6]
But how to stop climate change?

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"In the name of reason and humanism:
technological advancements, progress: they help!" [2]
"Technologies end suffering." [15]
"Societies and politics,
technologies change them!" [15]

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I am a believer!

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Stop "throwing
technology
at problems to 'fix' the issues!" [4] "Time and
time again we have seen technologies

reify 'xisting power,
white supremacy and mysogyny." [1]
"A comic faith in technofixes," [8]
having it's so strange.

"Everything from racism to climate change - "

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"Technologies ameliorate!" [15] Try optimism.
"Digitalisation can help
women partake in democracy." [7]
"Educating girls reduces vulnerabilities - (to natural disasters) ." [16]

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Enough.
"This techno-utopic
worldview where technology is seen to
emancipate rather than oppress -" [1]

If anything then "climate change
abatement! Educating girls
impacts family planning,
reduces overpopulation." [9, 14]

Digitalisation and education
as a means to population control? That's power.

"Too controversial" for you? [10]

It remains to be mentioned that
"the perceived neutrality
and universality of tech
renders its
own unsus-
tainability invisible." [18]

All these unsatisfactory endings ...

"Ev'rything is connected to
ev'rything else." [3] "Nature knows best." [3]
"Ev'rything has a cost." [3]

What to do?
How to strike balance?

No to "(m)anthropogenic climate change!" [11, 12]
We need "alternative ways of thinking." We need -

"R'jection of technology!" [5]
feminism.

Of science!

We need a new narrative:
"Life in the ruins of capitalism." [17]

Future
through ruins?
"A crisis created by lack of respect for
nature, nature ...

will most likely not solve the problem." [19]
But how to stop climate change?

"Science, science is power" [13]
but having it's so strange.

The quotes originate from the cited references. However, the quotes are taken to fit the above narrative and may not represent the authors' opinion.

MESSAGE

This poem highlights many issues:

- Lines 6-7: the (un)intended harm done in the name of progress / science;
- Lines 8: researchers' (designers') lack of questioning own positionality and the creation of potential dual research;
- Lines 12-14: the notion that technological advancement is a necessity for humanity and humanity's survival; linear growth is the only mode forward; and that therefore, our current mode of action is 'technological solutionism' which is a rejection of non-Western sciences / knowledges / etymologies;
- Lines 15-16: the concept that technologies allow us to change societies and politics - fast;
- Lines 18-26: the strange / absurd idea we hold that technology will come to our rescue to solve problems that were created by technologies in the first place;
- Lines 18-26: technologies highlight problems in our society and amplify them;
- Lines 29-32: digitalisation emancipates and educates; education helps farmer women to reduce their risks to natural disasters;
- Lines 34-37: dangers of a techno-utopic/optimistic worldview as it continues to allow for the centering of whiteness and white identity; through digitalisation and globalisation, 'technological solutionism' exports Western ideologies and etymologies;
- Lines 39-42: digitalisation (i.e. education) can be used to reduce population growth in the Global South;
- Lines 44-45: colonial thinking that allows Western societies to 'population control' the Global South through digitalisation rather than reduce their own carbon footprint;
- Lines 48-53: invisibility of technology's impact on the planet; technologies are perceived as 'neutral' in their physical carbon footprint and their impact on societies;
- Lines 56-58: necessity for a steady-state economy e.g. circular economy;
- Lines 62-63: current way of thinking and operating has lead to the climate crisis; alternative solutions / etymologies are required;
- Lines 64, 66: rejection of Western science i.e. 'mechanical reduction' as well as rejection of the necessity for technological progress and advancement to solve complex problems;
- Lines 65, 67: historically, feminism has offered new and alternative lenses;
- Line 68: linear growth beyond planetary boundaries is not feasible; end to capitalism is required;
- Lines 70-71: fear of the unknown which leads to inaction;
- Lines 72-75: disrespect for nature, an attempt at dominating nature; nature cannot recover from this by itself;
- Lines 76-end: confusion on the modus operandi; **human intervention is required?**

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

I am a post-doctoral research associate in Human-Computer Interaction at the Carl Ossietzky University Oldenburg, Germany. My research interests focus on Sustainable Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), using behaviour change intervention science to create interfaces that support online shoppers in purchasing sustainable products. My work has a strong experimental focus, applying multidisciplinary evidence to create rich, natural, and sustainable interaction between human and technology.

Previously, I was a post-doctoral research associate at the School of Computing Science, University of Glasgow where I worked on the RadioMe project. I defended my Ph.D. thesis successfully in spring 2020.

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