COSMOTECHNICAL COSMOPOLITICS

Inheriting Latour after Anthropology

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Abstract: This essay examines how Bruno Latour's cosmopolitical project can be reinterpreted in light of contemporary debates on technology, anthropology, and planetary transformation. Latour's actor-network theory provides a powerful framework for analysing how heterogeneous actors participate in the composition of collective life. By reconceptualizing the social as a network of mediations among human and nonhuman actors, Latour challenges the modern distinction between nature and society and proposes a cosmopolitical perspective in which collective life emerges from dynamic processes of association. Yet the growing importance of technological infrastructures and environmental transformations raises questions that extend beyond the relational analysis developed within actor-network theory.

To address these questions, the essay brings Latour's cosmopolitics into dialogue with Yuk Hui's concept of cosmotechnics, which emphasizes the historical and cultural plurality of technological orders and the ways in which technological systems are embedded within particular cosmological and ethical traditions. Anthropological perspectives developed by Philippe Descola and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro further illuminate how different ontological regimes structure relations between humans, nonhumans, and material environments. Finally, McKenzie Wark's analysis of informational infrastructures highlights how contemporary technological systems organize new forms of power, knowledge, and governance.

By situating Latour's cosmopolitical project within this broader theoretical constellation, the essay argues that inheriting Latour today requires extending cosmopolitics toward an analysis that integrates cosmotechnical plurality, anthropological ontology, and the infrastructural conditions through which technological systems shape contemporary collective life.

Keywords: cosmotechnics, cosmopolitics, Latour, technology, anthropology

1. The Problem of Inheriting Latour

Contemporary political thought increasingly confronts a transformation in the conditions under which collective life unfolds. Environmental transformations, technological infrastructures, and scientific practices now participate directly in shaping the possibilities of political action. Climate change, digital networks, and planetary

ecological systems no longer appear as external contexts within which human societies operate. Instead, they emerge as actors that intervene in the organization of collective life itself. Politics therefore unfolds within assemblages composed not only of human agents but also of technological systems, material environments, and biological processes whose interactions shape the conditions of shared existence. Understanding these transformations requires conceptual frameworks capable of describing how heterogeneous actors participate in the formation of political collectives. One of the most influential attempts to address this challenge can be found in the work of Bruno Latour. Over several decades, Latour developed a critique of the modern division between nature and society that has structured much of Western political and scientific thought. Modernity, in Latour's account, rests upon the assumption that natural processes belong to a domain governed by objective laws, while politics concerns the organization of human institutions and interests. This division obscures the complex networks through which humans, technologies, and material environments continuously interact. Actor-network theory (ANT), the analytical framework developed by Latour and his collaborators, reconceptualizes the social not as a pre-existing domain but as the outcome of relations among heterogeneous entities. As Latour famously writes, «the social is not a domain but a movement of associations ».[1] From this perspective, collective life emerges through networks linking humans, nonhuman organisms, technical artefacts, and institutional arrangements. Latour's later work extends this relational ontology into a political project that he describes as cosmopolitics. Rather than restricting politics to the negotiation of interests among human actors, cosmopolitics seeks to describe how political collectives are composed through associations among heterogeneous beings. Environmental processes, scientific instruments, technological infrastructures, and institutional procedures all participate in shaping the relations through which collective life is organized.[2] [3] The planetary transformations associated with the contemporary climate crisis make this insight particularly visible. As Latour argues in his analysis of the "new climatic regime," ecological systems can no longer be treated as stable backgrounds for human action

[1] Bruno LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, p. 71.
[2] ID., *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 2004.
[3] ID., *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2017.

but must be understood as dynamic participants in political life. The challenge of politics therefore becomes the problem of composing collectives capable of negotiating relations among multiple kinds of actors within an increasingly unstable planetary environment.[4] Yet the expansion of politics beyond the human also reveals a conceptual difficulty within Latour's framework. Actor-network theory provides powerful tools for tracing the associations that link heterogeneous entities within networks of action. Through concepts such as mediation, translation, and inscription, Latour demonstrates how scientific instruments, technical artefacts, and institutional arrangements participate in shaping the relations through which collectives are assembled.[5][6] At the same time, this relational analysis tends to treat technical systems primarily as mediators within networks rather than as historically and culturally differentiated traditions of technical practice. The question that emerges is therefore not only how heterogeneous actors become associated within networks but also how technics itself participates in shaping the worlds within which such associations occur. Addressing this question requires situating Latour's cosmopolitical project within a broader field of theoretical developments that have examined the relation between technology, cosmology, and political order. Yuk Hui's concept of cosmotechnics proposes that technical practices cannot be understood merely as instrumental operations applied to a neutral world but must instead be interpreted within the cosmological and moral frameworks through which societies organize their relations with the cosmos.[7] Contemporary analyses of technological infrastructures have similarly emphasized the role of large-scale informational systems in structuring the environments within which knowledge and political coordination occur. McKenzie Wark, for example, argues that contemporary societies are increasingly organized around the control of informational vectors through which data and communication circulate.[8] At the same time, anthropological research has demonstrated that the ontological assumptions underlying modern technological development represent only one configuration among many possible ways of organizing relations between humans

[4] *Ivi*, p. 3.
[5] ID., *Reassembling the Social*, p. 6.
[6] ID., *Politics of Nature*, p. 51.
[7] Yuk HUI, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, Urbanomic, Falmouth 2016.
[8] McKenzie WARK, *Capital Is Dead: Is This Something Worse?*, Verso, London 2019.

and nonhumans.[9] [10] [11] This essay argues that inheriting Latour today requires situating cosmopolitics within this broader constellation of problems. While Latour provides an indispensable framework for understanding how heterogeneous actors participate in the composition of collective life, the contemporary technological condition reveals dimensions of technics, infrastructure, and ontology that exceed the scope of actor-network theory alone. The concept of cosmotechnics highlights the cultural and cosmological plurality within which technical practices emerge, infrastructural analysis reveals how contemporary technological systems reorganize knowledge and power at planetary scales, and anthropology demonstrates the diversity of ontological regimes through which societies conceptualize relations between humans and nonhumans. Taken together, these perspectives extend Latour's project by situating cosmopolitics within a world characterized simultaneously by cosmotechnical plurality, anthropological diversity, and infrastructural mediation. The argument unfolds in several steps. Section 2 examines the ontological framework of actor-network theory in order to clarify how Latour reconceptualizes the social as a network of associations among heterogeneous actors. Section 3 turns to the political implications of this framework through the concept of cosmopolitics and Latour's analysis of the contemporary climate regime. Section 4 introduces Yuk Hui's concept of cosmotechnics as a way of situating technics within broader cosmological and moral orders. Section 5 analyzes the role of informational infrastructures in organizing contemporary forms of knowledge and power. Section 6 examines anthropological perspectives on ontological plurality, focusing on the work of Philippe Descola and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. Section 7 then returns to Latour in order to reconsider the problem of political composition within a world structured by cosmotechnical plurality and planetary infrastructures. Through this trajectory, the essay seeks to clarify what it means to inherit Latour's cosmopolitical project under the technological and ecological conditions of the present.

[9] Philippe DESCOLA, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2013.
[10] Eduardo VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, *Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia*, Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 4, 1998, pp. 469-488.
[11] ID., *Cannibal Metaphysics*, Univocal Publishing, Minneapolis 2014.

2. Actor-Network Ontology

If Latour's cosmopolitical project expands the political horizon by insisting that collective life involves heterogeneous actors drawn from multiple domains of existence, a further question arises concerning the mechanisms through which such actors become associated. Bruno Latour addresses this problem through the analytical framework known as actor-network theory (ANT). Developed as part of a broader critique of sociological explanations that treat "the social" as a preexisting domain, actor-network theory reconceptualizes the social as the outcome of relations among heterogeneous entities. Rather than assuming that social structures determine the behavior of actors, ANT proposes that collective life emerges from networks of associations linking humans, nonhuman organisms, technical artefacts, and institutional arrangements. This definition reflects Latour's rejection of explanatory models that treat social phenomena as the expression of underlying structures such as institutions, cultural norms, or economic systems. In conventional sociological accounts, such structures are often invoked as causes that explain the behavior of individual actors. Actor-network theory reverses this explanatory direction. Instead of treating structures as prior realities, ANT examines how relations among actors generate the networks through which collective life is organized. The "social" therefore does not exist independently of these relations but is continuously produced through the interactions that connect heterogeneous entities. From this perspective, sociology becomes the task of tracing the associations through which actors become linked within networks of action.[12] A central implication of this approach is the extension of agency beyond human subjects. In Latour's analysis, agency does not belong exclusively to intentional actors but emerges through the capacities of entities to affect one another within networks. Scientific instruments, technical devices, environmental processes, and material infrastructures can therefore participate in shaping collective outcomes. ANT does not claim that nonhuman entities possess intentions comparable to those of humans. Rather, it recognizes that their material properties and operational capacities influence the course of action within networks. Technologies mediate relations between actors, infrastructures coordinate interactions across distributed environments, and environmental processes impose constraints and opportunities that shape human

[12] LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social*, p. 7.

decisions. Agency thus appears as a distributed property of networks rather than as an attribute located solely in human subjects.[13] The concept of mediation plays a crucial role in this analysis. Networks do not simply connect actors in a neutral manner but transform the relations through which actors interact. When Latour describes scientific instruments, technological artefacts, or administrative procedures as mediators, he emphasizes that these elements actively modify the interactions they enable. A measuring device translates environmental phenomena into numerical data, computational models transform complex systems into interpretable simulations, and communication infrastructures reorganize the circulation of information across institutions and societies. Mediation therefore involves processes of translation through which entities become linked within networks of action. Through these translations, heterogeneous actors are brought into relations that would otherwise remain impossible or invisible. This emphasis on translation highlights the dynamic character of networks. Actor-network theory does not treat networks as fixed structures but as provisional configurations that must be continually maintained through the alignment of actors. Scientific facts, technological systems, and political institutions persist only insofar as the relations supporting them remain stable. When these relations change, networks may be reconfigured or collapse entirely. Latour's analysis of scientific practice illustrates this point by showing how laboratories, instruments, inscriptions, and institutional arrangements must be coordinated in order to stabilize knowledge claims. The durability of networks therefore depends on the continuous work required to sustain the associations that constitute them.[14][15] This perspective has significant implications for political analysis. If collective life emerges from networks linking heterogeneous actors, then political conflicts increasingly revolve around the composition and stabilization of such networks. Disputes over environmental regulation, technological development, or scientific knowledge often involve competing attempts to assemble networks that support particular interpretations of reality. Scientific models, measurement devices, regulatory institutions, and technical infrastructures become central participants in these processes because they mediate the relations through which actors coordinate action and interpret shared conditions of existence. Actor-network theory thus provides an analytical vocabulary for

[13] *Ivi*, p. 63.
[14] *Ivi*, p. 7.
[15] ID., *Politics of Nature*, p. 29.

understanding how political controversies are structured by the heterogeneous associations through which collective life is organized.[16] At the same time, the ontological framework proposed by ANT reveals certain limitations when applied to the technological condition of contemporary societies. While actor-network theory successfully demonstrates that technical artefacts participate in networks of association, it tends to analyze these artefacts primarily as mediators within networks rather than as expressions of historically specific technological traditions. The emphasis on relational mediation highlights how technologies shape interactions among actors but leaves relatively underexplored the broader cosmological frameworks within which technical practices emerge. In other words, ANT shows how technologies operate within networks but does not fully address how technological systems themselves may embody particular conceptions of order, nature, or human existence. This limitation becomes particularly visible when considering the historical diversity of technological practices across different civilizations. Technical systems are not merely neutral mediators connecting actors within networks, they often reflect culturally specific understandings of the world and of humanity's place within it. Agricultural techniques, architectural traditions, and systems of measurement are embedded within broader cosmological narratives that shape how societies organize their relations with environments and material resources. Recognizing this dimension requires expanding the analysis of technics beyond the relational framework offered by actor-network theory. It is precisely this problem that motivates the concept of cosmotechnics developed by Yuk Hui. While Latour's analysis demonstrates how technical artefacts function as mediators within networks of association, Hui asks how technical practices themselves emerge within particular cosmological and moral orders. Cosmotechnics therefore shifts attention from the role of artefacts within networks to the cultural and ontological frameworks that shape technological development. By situating technics within specific cosmological traditions, Hui opens a comparative perspective on technological history that reveals the plurality of technological worlds. The following sections turn to this concept of cosmotechnics in order to explore how technics participates in shaping the worlds within which networks operate. If actor-network theory explains how heterogeneous actors become associated within collective life, cosmotechnics investigates how the technological practices mediating these relations

[16] *Ivi*, p. 52.

are themselves embedded within broader cosmological orders. Understanding this dimension of technics is essential for analyzing the historical diversity of technological systems and for situating contemporary technological infrastructures within the plurality of cosmological frameworks that anthropology has documented.

3. Cosmopolitics and the Climate Regime

Latour's concept of cosmopolitics begins from a fundamental reconfiguration of the political domain. Rather than treating politics as an activity restricted to human societies, Latour argues that collective life must be understood as emerging from the interactions of heterogeneous actors that include humans, nonhuman organisms, technological artefacts, and environmental processes. Political collectives are therefore not composed solely of citizens or institutions but of assemblages in which multiple kinds of beings participate. From this perspective, the task of politics is not merely the negotiation of interests among human actors but the composition of associations among heterogeneous entities whose interactions shape the conditions of collective existence. This reconceptualization of politics develops out of Latour's broader critique of the modern separation between nature and society. Modern political thought traditionally assumes that human communities deliberate within a social domain that is analytically distinct from the natural world. Nature appears in this framework as a background environment governed by objective laws, while politics concerns the organization of human interests and institutions. Latour challenges this division by demonstrating that scientific knowledge, technological systems, and environmental processes are deeply entangled with political life. The distinction between nature and society, he argues, obscures the networks through which humans and nonhumans continuously interact and transform one another. Political collectives therefore emerge not within a purely social sphere but through associations that traverse the boundaries between natural and social domains.[17] The political implications of this argument become particularly visible in Latour's later work, where cosmopolitics is increasingly articulated in relation to the planetary condition that he describes as the "new climatic regime." Contemporary societies are confronted with environmental transformations, such as climate change, ecological degradation, and atmospheric instability, that reveal the extent to which human activities are entangled with geological and ecological

[17] *Ivi*, pp. 34-36.

processes. These transformations challenge political frameworks that assume a stable natural background for human action. The climate crisis instead demonstrates that environmental systems actively participate in shaping political possibilities. The atmosphere, oceans, and biosphere are no longer passive contexts but dynamic actors whose transformations condition the future of human societies.[18] In this context, cosmopolitics proposes a redefinition of political composition. If the conditions of collective life are shaped by interactions among humans, technological systems, and planetary processes, then political institutions must address the presence of these heterogeneous actors within the collective. The challenge becomes how to compose political arrangements capable of negotiating shared conditions of existence across different forms of agency. Latour therefore describes cosmopolitics as an attempt to reassemble political collectives in ways that acknowledge the participation of nonhuman entities. Political conflicts increasingly revolve around the question of how these entities are represented, how their effects are interpreted, and how their interactions with human societies are organized.[19][20] The climate regime makes this problem particularly visible because it exposes the inadequacy of political frameworks that treat environmental processes as external constraints rather than active participants in collective life. Atmospheric dynamics, oceanic currents, and ecological systems operate at temporal and spatial scales that exceed traditional political institutions, yet their transformations directly affect economic production, territorial governance, and social organization. As a result, political disputes increasingly involve scientific models, technological infrastructures, and environmental indicators that mediate the interpretation of planetary processes. Cosmopolitics thus emerges as an attempt to rethink political composition under conditions in which human societies must negotiate their coexistence with complex ecological and technological systems.[21] At the same time, the cosmopolitical perspective raises a further question concerning the mechanisms through which these heterogeneous actors become associated within collectives. If political life unfolds through networks that include humans, nonhumans, and technical artefacts, then the processes that connect these actors become central to

[18] LATOUR, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, p. 3.
[19] ID., *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*.
[20] ID., *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2018.
[21] ID., *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2017, pp. 145-147.

understanding political composition. Latour's work repeatedly emphasizes that associations among actors are mediated through material devices, institutional arrangements, and technical systems that enable interactions to occur. Scientific instruments translate environmental processes into measurable data, technological infrastructures coordinate the circulation of information and resources, and institutional procedures organize the representation of different actors within decision-making processes. These mediations shape the relations through which collectives are assembled.[22] The presence of such mediating structures introduces an important tension within cosmopolitics. On the one hand, Latour's framework successfully expands the scope of politics by demonstrating that collective life involves heterogeneous actors drawn from multiple domains of existence. On the other hand, the mechanisms through which these actors become associated are often embedded within technical systems that structure the conditions of interaction themselves. Scientific instruments, computational models, logistical infrastructures, and digital networks increasingly function as the mediators through which humans encounter environmental processes and coordinate collective action. The composition of political collectives therefore unfolds within technical environments that shape the possibilities of association among actors, a dynamic that bears some resemblance to what Gilbert Simondon described as transduction, the process through which relations propagate across heterogeneous domains.[23] This observation suggests that cosmopolitics alone does not fully account for the role of technics in organizing collective life. While Latour's work demonstrates that nonhuman entities participate in political processes, it leaves relatively open the question of how the technical systems mediating these relations influence the formation of collectives. The infrastructures that translate environmental processes into data, coordinate communication across distributed networks, and regulate the circulation of information increasingly structure the environments within which political composition occurs. As a result, understanding contemporary cosmopolitics requires attention not only to the actors involved in collective life but also to the technical systems through which their relations are organized. The following section therefore turns to the concept of cosmotechnics in

[22] ID., *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, p. 38.
[23] Gilbert SIMONDON, *L'individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1958.

order to examine how technical systems participate in shaping the cosmological frameworks within which collective life unfolds. While Latour's actor-network theory demonstrates how heterogeneous entities become associated within networks of mediation, it leaves largely unexplored the question of how technics itself emerges within historically specific understandings of order, nature, and the cosmos. The concept of cosmotechnics developed by Yuk Hui addresses this problem by situating technical practices within the cosmological and moral structures that organize relations between humans, nonhumans, and the world. From this perspective, technics does not merely mediate relations among actors within networks but participates in configuring the ontological environments within which such relations become intelligible. Understanding technics in this sense provides a necessary bridge between Latour's analysis of association and the broader technological conditions that structure contemporary collective life. It also prepares the ground for examining how technical systems increasingly operate through large-scale infrastructures that reorganize the circulation of knowledge, power, and coordination in the present.

4. Cosmotechnics

However, cosmopolitics understates how technics shapes the worlds of these networks, treating technical systems merely as components rather than culturally inflected orders. The question that remains is how technics participates in shaping the worlds within which these networks operate. Yuk Hui addresses this problem through the concept of cosmotechnics. Hui emphasizes that technics is historically embedded within specific cosmological and moral orders, not merely a domain of instruments. As Hui writes, «Cosmotechnics refers to the unification of the cosmic order and the moral order... ».[24] This formulation shifts the analysis of technology from questions of efficiency or instrumental rationality toward the broader cultural frameworks within which technical practices are embedded. Cosmotechnics therefore names the conjunction of technical activity with a particular understanding of the cosmos and humanity's place within it. Technical systems are not neutral instruments but manifestations of historically specific relations between cosmology, morality, and material practice. Seen in this light, technological development cannot be treated as a universal trajectory unfolding uniformly across cultures. Hui emphasizes instead that

[24] HUI, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, p. 19.

«different cultures have historically developed distinct cosmotechnics».[25] Each civilization integrates technical practices with particular cosmological narratives, ethical norms, and social institutions. What modern discourse typically calls "technology" thus represents only one historically specific configuration among many possible ways of relating technical activity to a broader order of the world. The concept of cosmotechnics therefore pluralizes the technological condition. Instead of assuming a single path of technological modernity, it reveals a multiplicity of technological worlds structured by different cosmological assumptions. This pluralization of technics also resonates with the recursive relation between technical systems and the cultural orders that sustain them. Hui describes recursion as processes that «refer back to themselves».[26] Cosmotechnics thus introduces a recursive dynamic in a way that cosmologies shape technical practices, while technical systems in turn stabilize and transform the cosmological frameworks that organize them. Technology, in this sense, cannot be separated from the cultural and ontological regimes within which it is embedded. Anthropology provides a comparative horizon for this claim. Long before the emergence of modern technology studies, anthropologists documented the plurality of ontological frameworks through which societies organize relations between humans, animals, spirits, and material objects. These frameworks structure not only cosmological beliefs but also the technical practices that sustain everyday life. From this perspective, cosmotechnics can be interpreted as the technical articulation of these ontological regimes. The concept therefore establishes a bridge between Latour's cosmopolitics, concerned with the composition of collectives among humans and nonhumans, and anthropological analyses of the worlds within which such relations are embedded. This connection becomes particularly clear in the dialogue between Hui and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, where the relation between cosmology and technics is formulated in symmetrical terms: «every technics is a cosmotechnics... every cosmology is a technics.»[27] The statement highlights the inseparability of cosmological frameworks and technical practices. If cosmopolitics expands political collectives to include nonhuman actors, cosmotechnics reveals that the technical infrastructures mediating these relations are themselves rooted in particular cosmological orders.

[25] *Ivi*, p. 23.
[26] ID., *Recursivity and Contingency*, Rowman & Littlefield, London 2019, p. 31.
[27] Eduardo VIVEIROS DE CASTRO – Yuk HUI, *For a Strategic Primitivism...*, "Philosophy Today", Online First, 20 April 2021, DOI: 10.5840/philtoday2021412394.

Anthropology therefore becomes indispensable for understanding the plurality of technological worlds. The implications of this framework extend beyond historical comparison. In contemporary societies, technological systems increasingly function as the infrastructures through which knowledge, governance, and economic power are organized. Understanding these systems therefore requires attention not only to their technical operation but also to the epistemic and political orders they sustain. The following section turns to these infrastructures in order to examine how the technics of the present shape contemporary forms of power and knowledge.

5. Epistemic Infrastructures

While the previous section demonstrated that cosmotechnics emerges within a plurality of ontological regimes, contemporary technological systems introduce a new problem. Many of the technical operations that structure modern societies no longer appear as localized practices embedded within particular cosmologies. Instead, they increasingly take the form of large-scale infrastructures that organize the circulation of information, commodities, and social coordination across vast geographical and institutional spaces. These infrastructures do not merely support technological activity but define the conditions under which knowledge is produced, distributed, and governed. Understanding contemporary technics therefore requires shifting attention from individual artefacts or practices to the infrastructural systems that structure the organization of collective life. Infrastructure in this sense refers not simply to physical installations such as roads, cables, or data centers, but to the complex technical networks that enable the continuous circulation of information and communication within modern societies. Digital networks, algorithmic platforms, logistical coordination systems, and data infrastructures form the material basis through which contemporary economies and institutions operate. These systems function as the technical substrate of social organization, structuring how information moves between actors and how decisions are coordinated across distributed environments. As a result, infrastructure increasingly becomes an epistemic apparatus which determines what can be known, how knowledge circulates, and who exercises authority over the flows of information that sustain collective life. As Wark notes, power increasingly lies in controlling the digital infrastructures through which information circulates, giving rise to a 'vectoralist'

class.[28] These vectors include the technical channels that enable the transmission, storage, and processing of data across digital networks. Those who control these channels do not simply possess technological resources but occupy strategic positions within the infrastructures that govern the circulation of knowledge itself. Power thus increasingly takes the form of infrastructural control over information flows. The significance of this shift lies in the way it reorganizes relations between knowledge, technology, and economic power. Where industrial capitalism centered on controlling production, today's informational economies hinge on controlling communication vectors. As Wark notes, the central question becomes who controls the vectors along which information travels, since this control determines the organization of economic and social relations within digital environments.[29] This infrastructural transformation is not limited to economic organization. It also reshapes the epistemic conditions of contemporary societies. Digital infrastructures do not merely mediate communication; they constitute epistemic environments that shape what can be known and by whom. Wark emphasizes that contemporary informational systems increasingly function as environments rather than tools. Digital infrastructures shape the conditions within which cultural, political, and economic activity occurs, often operating invisibly beneath the surface of everyday interactions.[30] Platforms and networks do not simply mediate communication between actors but structure the environments within which communication becomes possible. This dynamic can be illustrated by the global standardization of digital platforms and data infrastructures. Systems such as cloud computing environments, platform APIs, and algorithmic recommendation architectures impose uniform protocols for the organization and circulation of information across diverse cultural contexts. Control over these infrastructures entails control over the vectors through which information moves, thereby determining the conditions under which participation in technological systems becomes possible, and often unavoidable. These infrastructures do not merely mediate local practices but actively reshape them by enforcing standardized formats of interaction, visibility, and coordination. As a result, locally embedded cosmotechnical arrangements are increasingly required to operate within technical environments that privilege specific

[28] WARK, *Capital Is Dead: Is This Something Worse?*
[29] *Ivi*, pp. 23-27.
[30] ID., interview, "McKenzie Wark", *TANK Magazine*, 2019, https://tankmagazine.com/issue-80/features/mckenzie-wark/.

modes of abstraction, quantification, and optimization. The tension between cosmotechnical plurality and infrastructural uniformity therefore emerges not only at the level of theory but as a concrete condition of contemporary technological life. This results in a technological condition in which power operates through the design and control of the infrastructures that organize informational circulation. Cosmotechnics emphasizes culturally specific technics, yet global infrastructures impose a seemingly uniform technological regime, creating a tension between plurality and uniformity. Digital networks, computational platforms, and logistical coordination systems extend a particular configuration of technics associated with modern naturalism. The infrastructures of the contemporary technological order thus function as mechanisms through which a specific cosmotechnical arrangement expands beyond the cultural contexts in which it originally developed. This expansion does not eliminate the plurality of cosmotechnics identified by anthropology, but it reorganizes the conditions under which different technological worlds interact. Local cosmotechnical practices increasingly coexist with global infrastructures that structure economic exchange, communication, and governance. The resulting configuration is not simply a homogenization of technological cultures but a layered system in which multiple cosmotechnical regimes intersect with infrastructural systems that operate at a planetary scale. In this sense, contemporary technics emerges at the intersection between anthropological plurality and infrastructural integration. The concept of cosmotechnics developed by Yuk Hui provides an important framework for understanding this tension. Hui argues that technics cannot be separated from the cosmological and moral orders within which technical practices emerge.[31] From this perspective, modern technological infrastructures should not be understood merely as neutral systems of efficiency or optimization. They embody particular assumptions about the relation between humans, knowledge, and the world. Informational infrastructures therefore extend not only technical capabilities but also specific ontological and epistemic configurations. This insight also complicates the political implications of Latour's cosmopolitics. If political collectives are composed through networks that include both human and nonhuman actors, contemporary infrastructures function as powerful mediators within these networks. They structure the relations through which actors encounter one another, coordinate action, and produce knowledge. Latour's account

[31] HUI, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics*, p. 20.

of the social as a network of heterogeneous associations therefore acquires a new dimension when these associations are mediated by large-scale informational infrastructures.[32] The problem that follows is no longer simply how heterogeneous actors assemble into collectives, but how the infrastructures through which these assemblies occur shape the conditions of political composition. Informational networks, algorithmic systems, and data infrastructures organize the environments within which collective life unfolds. As a result, political composition increasingly takes place within technological systems that already structure relations between humans, nonhumans, and institutions. Infrastructures thus appear as the contemporary terrain upon which the relation between technics, knowledge, and power unfolds. They organize the circulation of information that sustains modern societies while simultaneously concentrating control over these flows within specific institutional and economic structures. The analysis of contemporary technics must therefore account for the infrastructural systems that shape the organization of knowledge and authority. Thus, the next section turns to anthropology in order to clarify the ontological plurality within which cosmotechnical arrangements emerge.

6. Anthropological Recursion

If cosmotechnics links technical systems with particular cosmological orders, then the concept requires a comparative horizon capable of describing the plurality of these orders. Anthropology provides precisely such a perspective. Long before the emergence of contemporary debates on technology, anthropological research documented the diverse ways in which societies conceptualize relations between humans, animals, spirits, and material objects. These relations are not merely symbolic or religious. They structure the practical organization of life, including the technical practices through which societies interact with their environments. From this angle, the plurality of cosmotechnical arrangements described by Yuk Hui corresponds to a broader plurality of ontological regimes. A systematic account of this plurality has been proposed by Philippe Descola, whose work offers a comparative framework for understanding the different ways societies organize relations between humans and nonhumans. Descola outlines animism, totemism, analogism and naturalism as distinct

[32] LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, p. 5.

ontological regimes structuring relations between humans and nonhumans.[33] The significance of Descola's typology lies in the fact that it reveals the historical specificity of the modern Western ontology that underlies contemporary technological development. Naturalism, the ontological regime characteristic of modern Western societies, assumes a shared physical nature governed by universal laws while reserving interiority for human subjects.[34] Within this framework, technology tends to appear as a neutral set of instruments applied to an objective world. Anthropological comparison, however, shows that this configuration is only one possible way of organizing relations between humans and their environments. Other ontological regimes generate different understandings of agency, personhood, and material interaction, and these differences inevitably shape the technical practices that emerge within them. Viveiros de Castro's perspectivism extends this insight by arguing that different beings inhabit distinct experiential worlds, producing a form of multinaturalism.[35] Instead of one nature interpreted by different cultures, Viveiros de Castro proposes a form of multinaturalism in which a plurality of natures corresponds to different perspectives.[36] This perspectival ontology has significant implications for understanding technics. If beings inhabit different experiential worlds, the relations through which they interact cannot be reduced to a universal set of technical operations applied to a common environment. Technical practices must instead be understood as emerging within the ontological relations that structure how beings perceive and interact with one another. Tools, artefacts, and techniques are embedded within cosmological frameworks that define the roles and capacities of different beings. From this perspective, technics appears not as a universal domain of instrumental rationality but as a culturally and ontologically situated practice. Cosmotechnics can therefore be interpreted as the technological dimension of these ontological regimes. Hui's concept describes the conjunction of technics and cosmology, but anthropology provides the empirical horizon within which this conjunction becomes visible. Different cosmological orders give rise to different technological worlds. What appears as a universal technological trajectory from within modern naturalism is, from a comparative perspective, only one configuration among many possible cosmotechnical arrangements. The plurality of ontological regimes

[33] DESCOLA, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, pp. 173-205.
[34] *Ivi*, pp. 303-330.
[35] VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, *Cosmological Perspectivism in Amazonia*.
[36] ID., *Cannibal Metaphysics*.

documented by anthropology thus reinforces Hui's claim that technics is inseparable from the cosmological frameworks within which it develops.

7. Latour after Anthropology

The preceding sections have examined a series of conceptual transformations that reshape the terrain upon which Bruno Latour's cosmopolitical project operates. Latour's work represents one of the most influential attempts to rethink the relation between humans, nonhumans, and the collective structures through which political life unfolds. By challenging the modern separation between nature and society, Latour demonstrates that collective existence cannot be understood as the exclusive domain of human actors. Political life instead emerges from networks of associations linking humans, technological artefacts, environmental processes, and institutional arrangements. The task of cosmopolitics, in this sense, is to describe how heterogeneous actors participate in the composition of shared worlds. The significance of this argument becomes particularly evident in the context of the planetary condition that Latour describes as the "new climatic regime." Contemporary ecological transformations demonstrate that human societies are inseparable from the environmental systems within which they operate. Atmospheric dynamics, oceanic circulation, and ecological processes increasingly appear not as passive backgrounds but as active participants in shaping the possibilities of political life. Cosmopolitics therefore proposes a framework in which political collectives must account for the agencies of multiple kinds of beings whose interactions determine the conditions of shared existence.[37] From this perspective, the problem of politics becomes the problem of composing collectives capable of negotiating relations among heterogeneous actors under conditions of planetary interdependence. Yet the analysis developed in this essay suggests that Latour's cosmopolitical framework leaves an important dimension insufficiently explored. Actor-network theory successfully demonstrates how heterogeneous entities become associated within networks of action. Through concepts such as mediation and translation, Latour shows how scientific instruments, technological artefacts, and institutional procedures participate in shaping the relations through which collective life is organized.[38] However, this relational analysis tends to

[37] LATOUR, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*.
[38] ID., *Reassembling the Social*; ID., *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*.

approach technical artefacts primarily as mediators within networks rather than as elements embedded within historically specific technological traditions. The question that remains concerns how technics itself participates in shaping the worlds within which these networks operate. This limitation is clarified by Yuk Hui's concept of cosmotechnics, which situates technics within specific cosmological and moral orders rather than treating it as neutral instrumentation.[39] At the same time, as the analysis of epistemic infrastructures has shown, contemporary collectives are increasingly organized through large-scale technical systems that structure the circulation of information, knowledge, and power. Cosmopolitics therefore unfolds not only within a plurality of cosmotechnical worlds but also within global infrastructures that mediate relations among them. In this context, control over informational vectors becomes a central locus of power. McKenzie Wark describes this transformation as the emergence of a vectoralist class defined by its capacity to control the infrastructures through which information circulates.[40] These infrastructures shape the conditions under which knowledge is produced, transmitted, and validated, thereby reorganizing the epistemic foundations of contemporary societies. The expansion of such infrastructures raises important questions for the cosmotechnical plurality described by Hui. While different cultures may sustain distinct cosmotechnical traditions, global technological infrastructures increasingly impose a shared technical environment across diverse societies. Information networks, computational systems, and logistical platforms extend a particular configuration of technics associated with modern naturalism across planetary space. As a result, cosmotechnical plurality now unfolds within a technological landscape structured by infrastructures that mediate relations among actors at a global scale. The problem of cosmopolitics therefore becomes inseparable from the infrastructural systems that organize contemporary technological life. At this point it becomes necessary to clarify the sense in which this essay has used the term nonhuman. The category does not designate a single ontological class but gathers together several distinct modes of participation in collective life. Animals and other organisms introduce questions of perception, cognition, and perspective while technical artefacts and infrastructures mediate relations among actors and organize environments of action, and planetary processes such as atmospheric or ecological systems shape the

[39] HUI, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics*.
[40] WARK, *Capital Is Dead: Is This Something Worse?*

conditions under which both human and technical activity unfold. These forms of agency cannot be reduced to one another, yet each destabilizes the modern assumption that politics concerns human actors alone. The concept of the nonhuman therefore functions less as a unified ontology than as a critical device for identifying the heterogeneous actors that participate in the composition of collective worlds. Taken together, these arguments suggest that inheriting Latour's cosmopolitical project requires extending its analytical horizon. Political collectives are not only assemblages of heterogeneous actors but also formations shaped by cosmotechnical traditions and infrastructural mediations. However, the analysis of technics developed by Hui, the examination of infrastructural power articulated by Wark, and the anthropological perspectives advanced by Descola and Viveiros de Castro reveal dimensions of the contemporary world that exceed the scope of cosmopolitics alone. Technical systems are embedded within cosmological traditions, shaped by global infrastructures, and situated within plural ontological regimes that structure relations between humans and nonhumans in different ways. To inherit Latour after anthropology therefore means recognizing that cosmopolitics unfolds within a world characterized by cosmotechnical plurality and infrastructural mediation. Political collectives are composed not only through networks of heterogeneous actors but also through technical systems that embody particular cosmological assumptions and through infrastructures that organize the circulation of knowledge and power at planetary scales. Cosmopolitics must therefore be understood as operating within a landscape in which multiple technological worlds intersect with global technical systems that structure the conditions of association among actors. Under these conditions, the task of inheriting Latour's project is not simply to repeat the analytical framework of actor-network theory but to situate cosmopolitics within the broader transformations shaping the contemporary technological order. Cosmotechnics reveals the cultural and cosmological diversity of technological practices, infrastructural analysis exposes the concentration of power within global technical systems, and anthropology demonstrates the plurality of ontological regimes through which societies organize relations with the world. Together, these perspectives extend Latour's project by showing that the composition of collectives today takes place within a planetary environment structured simultaneously by heterogeneous actors, cosmotechnical traditions, and infrastructural systems. In this sense, Latour after anthropology does not signify the abandonment of cosmopolitics but its transformation. The challenge is no longer simply to assemble

collectives that include nonhuman actors but to understand how such assemblies unfold within a world where technological infrastructures mediate relations among plural cosmotechnical traditions and ontological regimes. Inheriting Latour therefore means recognizing that the politics of association he described now operates within a planetary technological condition that demands new forms of cosmopolitical reflection. As McKenzie Wark has suggested in a different register, the expansion of political concern beyond the human also implies a transformation in the forms of solidarity that sustain collective life: «Collective activity outside of exploitation is comradeship. It has to be practiced not only with all other subordinated people, but with all subordinated agents, living and non-living. Otherwise the world ends».[41]

8. Conclusion: Cosmopolitics in a Cosmotechnical World

The transformations examined throughout this essay arise from a shared problem, that is, the growing difficulty of understanding political life within conceptual frameworks that assume a stable separation between human societies, technological systems, and the natural world. Contemporary conditions increasingly reveal the inadequacy of this separation. Environmental transformations, technological infrastructures, and scientific practices now participate directly in shaping the conditions of collective existence. Politics therefore unfolds within assemblages that include humans, nonhuman organisms, technical artefacts, and planetary processes. Understanding these assemblages requires conceptual tools capable of describing how heterogeneous actors interact within shared structures of action. Here 'nonhuman' refers broadly to diverse animals, technical artefacts, and planetary processes rather than a single category. The point is not to collapse these forms into a single ontological class but to resist the modern assumption that only human beings properly belong to politics or world-making. Throughout this essay, the term therefore functions as an analytical shorthand for multiple modes of participation in collective existence rather than as a unified category. As argued above, cosmopolitics must be complemented by cosmotechnics, since actor-network theory treats technical artefacts primarily as mediators within networks rather than as historically and culturally differentiated traditions of practice. The question that arises concerns how technics itself contributes to shaping the worlds within which such networks operate. Addressing this question

[41] WARK, interview, "McKenzie Wark".

requires extending the analysis of technics beyond the relational framework of actor-network theory. The concept of cosmotechnics developed by Yuk Hui offers a decisive step in this direction. Hui argues that technical practices cannot be understood merely as instrumental operations applied to a neutral world but must instead be situated within specific cosmological and moral orders that structure how societies relate to the cosmos. Cosmotechnics therefore refers to the conjunction of technics with culturally specific conceptions of order, nature, and human existence.[42] From this perspective, technological development cannot be interpreted as a universal trajectory shared by all societies. Different civilizations have historically produced distinct cosmotechnical arrangements that integrate technical practices with particular cosmological narratives and ethical frameworks. The technological condition of the modern world therefore represents only one configuration among a plurality of possible technological worlds. Latour's work provides an indispensable framework for understanding how heterogeneous actors participate in the composition of collective life. However, the analysis of cosmotechnics developed by Hui, the anthropological perspectives articulated by Descola and Viveiros de Castro, and the infrastructural analysis proposed by Wark reveal dimensions of the contemporary technological condition that exceed the scope of cosmopolitics alone. Technical systems are embedded within cosmological traditions, shaped by global infrastructures, and situated within plural ontological regimes that structure relations between humans and nonhumans in different ways. To inherit Latour today therefore means extending cosmopolitics into a framework capable of addressing these transformations. Cosmopolitics must therefore be understood as operating within a world characterized simultaneously by cosmotechnical plurality, anthropological diversity, and infrastructural mediation. Under these conditions, the task of political thought is no longer simply to assemble collectives that include nonhuman actors. It is also to understand how such collectives emerge within technological environments that structure the relations through which actors encounter one another. Inheriting Latour's project therefore requires situating cosmopolitics within the broader transformations shaping the contemporary technological order. The politics of association described by Latour now unfolds within a planetary environment where multiple cosmotechnical traditions intersect with global technological infrastructures. Recognizing this condition opens a new horizon for

[42] HUI, *The Question Concerning Technology in China: An Essay in Cosmotechnics*.

cosmopolitical reflection in which the composition of collective life must account simultaneously for heterogeneous actors, plural technological worlds, and the infrastructural systems that mediate relations among them.

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