

Patricia Reyes

Rethinking the technological mediation of climate action through post-anthropocentric politics

Postphenomenology has the potential to reveal the role that technological mediation plays in shaping political developments. But in order to fulfill this potential, we must actively engage with current debates within the field of political theory. In such debates, the once seemingly uncontested liberal democracy is found now under harsh scrutiny and alternative ideologies for running open democratic societies abound. These alternatives, such as decolonized democracies, agonistic pluralism, and even Latourian's parliament of things, are rooted in political ontologies that reject the rationalist, universalist, and individualist character of liberal democracy. Instead, they suggest that political dynamics are better understood as performed by relational beings, which may be human or nonhuman. Engaging with post-anthropocentric politics that are built upon the recognition that, in their relations, things exert a political role opens an opportunity to employ postphenomenological thought to revisit concepts like political engagement, power, and representation. In doing so, it allows us to conceptualize technological mediation as a prevalent condition for political agency.

This paper explores these opportunities, offering an introduction to recently proposed alternatives to liberal democracy and attempting to align our current understanding of technological mediation with these novel political theories. The findings of these reflections are landed on empirical observations of the appropriation of digital technologies by climate activists. A 'political postphenomenology' is thus envisioned to understand how the use of digital tools like encrypted messaging, location tracking, live mapping, and communication platforms mediate environmental action, shaping the evolution of political conflicts around climate change.