

The God of Small Devices

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In the acclaimed novel *The God of Small Things*, Indian writer Arundhati Roy explores the consequences of religious laws and customs on the life of common people, particularly concentrating on those “small things” that seem to be insignificant and yet end up having a tragic impact on the existence of individuals. Paraphrasing that title, the paper will exhort to a reflection on ‘invisible technology’ and how it may impact human life. The ethical and social reflexes of most critical theory about technology have been shaped during the 19th and 20th century, which was mostly characterized by large and macroscopic technological infrastructures. It is still very straightforward, today, to protest a new railroad project that threatens to bring about a massive change in the landscape. But is there a “visibility bias” in the critical awareness about technology? Are people as aware of the potentially momentous changes that could be introduced by invisible technological infrastructures, such as the mysterious black box of artificial intelligence or the development of those nanotechnologies that, by definition, exert their effects in total invisibility? What are the unseen ethical risks, but also the unexplored philosophical prospects, of a technology that more and more escapes the human senses but acts around and within the body and the mind? Is a new “god of small devices” being born in advanced nanotechnology?