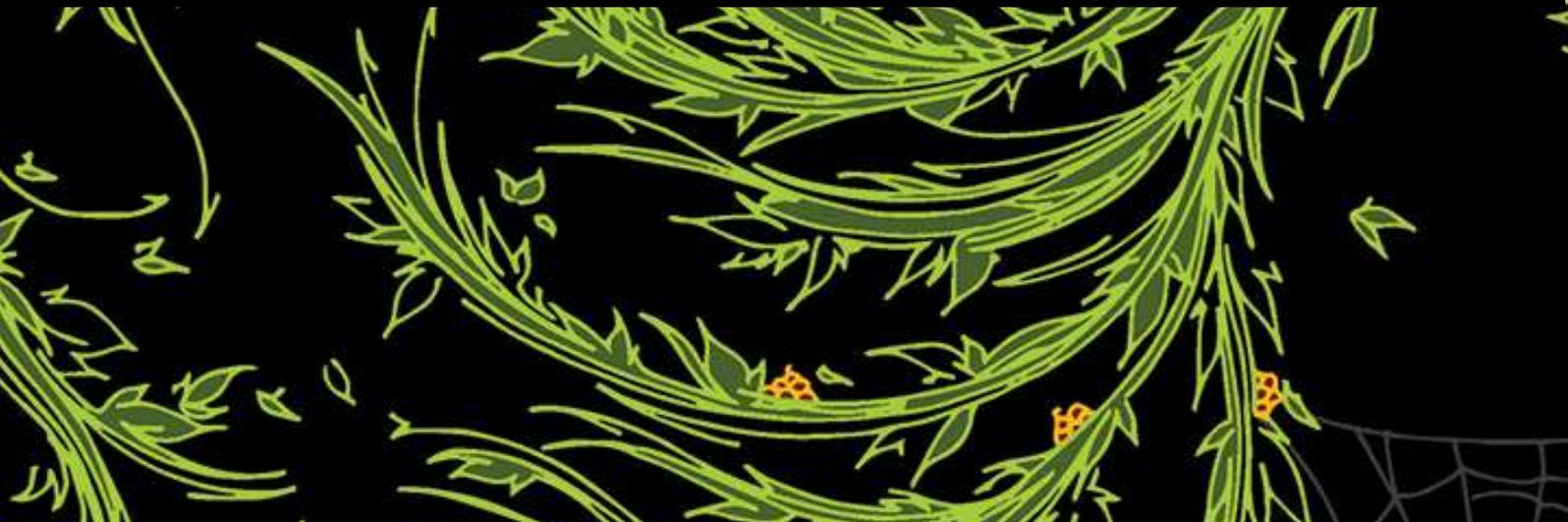




# Digital Craft & Dark Ecology

Connecting ourselves to Dark Ecology & Agrilogistics by making



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A written statement by Nikki Vieler

In this statement I shall form my thinking concerning the connection of Digital Craft and Dark Ecology through 5 principles. Each principle is substantiated (according to my views and philosophies) with an explanation.

### Making can connect us to the Dark Ecology which we are currently forming.

We are living in an ecology which is becoming darker as each day passes. The increasing amount of concealed surveillance<sup>(1)</sup>, Trump mania<sup>(2)</sup>, Erdogan's accusations of Nazism, Fascism and organised genocide against Germany and The Netherlands<sup>(3)</sup>, Russia's involvement in the annexation Crimea and involvement in war in the Donbass<sup>(4,5)</sup>, further development of Nuclear weapons by North Korea<sup>(6)</sup>, increasing world-wide food shortages<sup>(7)</sup>, migration issues<sup>(8)</sup> and an ongoing ecological devastation<sup>(9,10)</sup> are some reasons to believe that we are living in an ecology which is becoming darker. The light on a clean and healthy future has become increasingly dim and darkened. In light of these developments, the scholar Timothy Morton has come up with a term which, for others and myself, typifies these times and conditions, namely Dark Ecology<sup>(10)</sup>.

In these dark times we need to seek a future by finding a way of thinking which helps us understand our time and the flawed thinking this has created. A most intriguing approach would be to build tools which may help us with this task. After all, didn't we eventually develop computers to break through the dark code which emanated from the Nazi's Enigma machines? This code which Nazi Germany used to throw a dark veil over Europe during World War two<sup>(11)</sup>.

Considering that technology from that period eventually has formed our view of the world and is involved in shaping this Dark Ecology, it seems to me that we need to craft something in the digital realm to deal with the Dark Ecology we face. After all, if we crafted ourselves into this Dark Ecology, then surely we should be able to craft ourselves out of it.

### Making allows us to create an intimacy with our ecology through material experimentation.

One could suggest that Western Liberal Society is a society of the mind<sup>(12)</sup>. Consider the way which the academic, liberal and the digital world's enormous influence on the development of society over the last 20 years is finally fading<sup>(13)</sup>, it may be wise for human beings to try to reconnect to the sensuous, sensual and material world<sup>(14)</sup>. So as to reconnect each person in the world. This might break down the academic and human barriers that have grown under liberal beliefs.

Additionally, we are already living in Post-Digital times<sup>(14,15,16,17,18)</sup>, although this remains a quite fiercely contested term<sup>(19)</sup>. It would therefore be wise to reconsider what the Digital means and how we can re-engage with the "real" world and ecology through a new understanding of how the material world and the digital world relate to each other. In order to do this, I propose we take an older understanding of the "digital" - that everything that is digital is related to our fingers<sup>(20)</sup>, rather than binary thinking or computer screens, touchscreens, 3d-4dprinting, laser cutters and other "digital" technology - by making objects that we touch with our fingers to form an aesthetic & kinaesthetic understanding<sup>(21)</sup>. With this understanding we could possibly progress forwards. To date we have not been able to truly replace them with digital technology, and the intimacy we gain through touching things still remains a more enjoyable mode of experiencing the world<sup>(16)</sup>. After all, don't we want to touch our most beloved objects and loved ones?

In the end I yet again, propose that we engage with the world and Dark Ecology, by reaching out into night and regain a sense of reality through touch and the making objects with our bare hands<sup>(21)</sup>.

## **Making is part of the Agrilogistic process with which we keep ourselves (Humans) alive to kill ourselves later.**

We are becoming a species which has a significant claim upon the making of the Anthropocene and the Dark Ecology that comes with it. While these contested terms leave much space for debate, I would like to point out the darker sides of the Anthropocene<sup>(22)</sup>, namely Dark Ecology. Timothy Morton's term is based upon a viewpoint that the system we are in, Agrilogistics, is the system which is causing our flood of problems<sup>(10)</sup>. Seeing that we have many agricultural issues (the effect of meat production on global warming, the destruction of ecosystems in order to grow crops etc. etc.<sup>(23)</sup>), it seems that his theory may explain our troubled times. When one reflects upon this system and how it permeates our decisions and our shaping of the planet (we build buildings, transportation structures, state-of-the-art farming equipment etc. to carry on living) we can see that this can be very problematic.

Now, if Morton is correct (and Agrilogistics is the system we have never been able to deal with, hence the problems of our time), then we need artists, designers and other living creatures to mediate this idea to all other beings. After all, don't we want to avoid the proverbial Animal Farm condition<sup>(24)</sup>, which highly authoritarian governments and immoral corporations have used to oppress innocent people into working for a system which only benefits the plutocrats and autocrats at the top<sup>(24,25,26)</sup>?

Perhaps we need to push the rich, powerful and selfish evil at the top of the chain to feed the other living beings fairly and decently?

## **Making can help us make up with our ecology in which we live.**

The ecology which we live in is problematic and remains problematic. Eating meat these days has become more polluting than driving a car<sup>(27)</sup>. Now that we have realised that the Agrilogistic system, in which we have lived for approximately 12,000 years, has been churning up and destroying the planet, one can just wonder; How can we make up to Planet Earth for the damage we have caused during the past 12,000 years? Well, we can do this by remaking the Ecology. I believe that we should start this out by making artefacts which communicate the problematic thinking and manifestation of Agrilogistics within our society. Once we have done this, we can then start to deal with the Agrilogistic problems which we are all part of. I propose to do this by making a digitally crafted scythe which acts as a symbol for the death and destruction of Agrilogistic essentialism which has swept the planet. This scythe also forms the materialisation of the Agrilogistic carving up of the planet's ecosystem at the expense of the future of humanity and all living beings on the planet.

What we can try to do in the end, is try to make the Dark Ecology habitable for as many living species as possible. If we work towards this on our planet, we could then say to ourselves that we have made the most out of a situation into which most of us have been unjustly thrown.

## **Making is realising that the digital ecology and planet earth's ecology are connected.**

As a final artefact with which I wish to materialise all these thoughts, I have decided to make a scythe with mostly handcrafted elements. I have included an element that has been carved with digital technology. With this object I wish to point out that we need to rethink what the digital and the digital ecology really is. I consider the digital ecology to be the ecology that has come through the digital factor in our lives (our fingers). Digital technology is a part of this, but the fundamental point is the fact that the digits on our hands (we derive digital from the Latin word *digitus*, which means finger or toe) are the things that actually shaped these ecologies. Digital electronics have flowed through the creation of objects by the human hand and are still partially being made by hand on the conveyor belts in countries all over the world. In the end these production processes are also almost always started or stopped by the pressing of the button by a human hand.

If we also realise that companies such as John Deere are looking to create farming machinery which is increasingly digitally controlled<sup>(28)</sup>, we should also realise that our digital future world will still be deeply involved in Agrilogistics. Then we shall see the end of the "digital", electronic yet binary revolution as it will still be embedded in old fashioned Agrilogistics.

Considering that our entire digital world and digital thinking comes from the existence of the human hand, we should give up the traditional binary definition of digital<sup>(20)</sup>. When this definition is done, we shall see that digital ecologies are the ecologies in which we physically exist. We shall then have a need for an object which shows us how our deluded view of digital progress has led us straight to the old fashioned broken game of Agrilogistics<sup>(9)</sup>.

We shall therefore need an object which warns us of this problem. I propose making<sup>(29)</sup> a scythe with which a human being can have a material experience of a game which the “digital” revolution has yet to beat.

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