

## **Data and Technics**

**Workshop, 24.–25.04.2014, Leuphana University of Lüneburg**

Organized by: Scott Lash, Yuk Hui, Götz Bachmann, Paul Feigelfeld

With: Francesca Bria, Elena Esposito, Bernard Geoghegan, Scott Lash, Maurizio Lazzarato, Thomas Macho, Bernard Stiegler

The workshop addresses Technics and Data each in its broadest sense, as intertwined and analytically separated. Technics conjures the tripartite scheme in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which *techne* is juxtaposed, to on the one hand *praxis*, and on the other, *episteme*, or theory. But what sort of logic is at stake in today's technological, even 'bio-political' societies? Is the *episteme* of science, who seemed to have been incorporated into a logic of representation, taken over by a engineering or technics type logic of performativity? What would 'data' be in such a framework, and how is it, if it is, different from 'facts'? Does science and social science deal with facts, while data is more an engineering or technical entity? The origins of data or *les données* would seem to stand in connection to the given (*donnée*) or the gift (*don*). Social scientists and scientists search for and get data. In the age of GAFA (Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple) and Prism, people not only give, but also leave data, as traces or data footprints. Does data make us need rethink the relationship between the universal and the particular? If the origins of the particular are in the gift, or *le don*, then Ancients may have encountered particulars as substances, moderns as facts and contemporaries as data itself? If Aristotle's categories are the predicates of substances, then what are the categories, how are we going to categorize in an age of data and metadata? What kind of communications and systems are at stake? Can there be a technics (and data) beyond systems?

## **Workshop Program**

### **24 April**

*13:15 – 14:00 Welcome, Concept Note*

Yuk Hui, Scott Lash, Götz Bachmann

*14:00 – 16:00 Panel 1: Data Infrastructures*

Data, as a cycle of the given, facts and machine mediated information, is fuelled by a rapid development of infrastructures. In social media, for example, users materialize thoughts, monologues, conversations and friendships. Mobile phones, digital cameras, RFID systems and sensors detect, record and transmit data, based on software infrastructures. Algorithms in Google's and Facebook's server farms harvest data with exactitude and granularity. How can we understand these infrastructures? What is the *infra-*, and what is the *-structure*?

Bernard Stiegler  
Florian Sprenger  
Responses: Erich Hörl

*16:30 – 18:30 Panel 2: Data Temporality*

Data is memory. As Plato famously wrote, storage is also forgetting. At stake is a third term, too: Imagination. Imagination is a form of protention, supplementing by different forms of retentions, and it can lead us into. What consequences does this excess of memory and forgetting, of protention and retention, and of imagination and synthesis lead us into?

Elena Esposito  
Thomas Macho  
Responses: Markus Burkhardt

**25 April (Friday)**

*11:00 – 13:00 Panel 3: Technics*

If we follow the concept of technics into our times, we need to abandon the reduction of technics to instrumental reasons in Aristotle's tripartite scheme. We need to place technics within an understanding of data. At the same time, data as seen from a perspective of technics would have to focus on the processes of bringing something forth to presence, moving beyond notions of taxonomies and schemas.

Scott Lash  
Bernard Geoghegan  
Responses: Christina Vagt

*14:00 - 16:00 Panel 4: Data Politics*

As data is rapidly becoming one of our most precious commodities, new forms of properties and value arise. How can we analyse our data-driven political economy? At the same time, governmentality becomes computer aided-data processing, and power takes algorithmic form. "Open data" promises alternatives, but might well produce "open washing". What kind of redistribution of power is desirable?

Maurizio Lazzarato  
Francesca Bria  
Responses: Armin Beverungen