International Conference

AFTER AGENCY

RESISTANCE   ADAPTATION   SPECULATION

Book of Abstracts

Conference Program

Organizing Committee:

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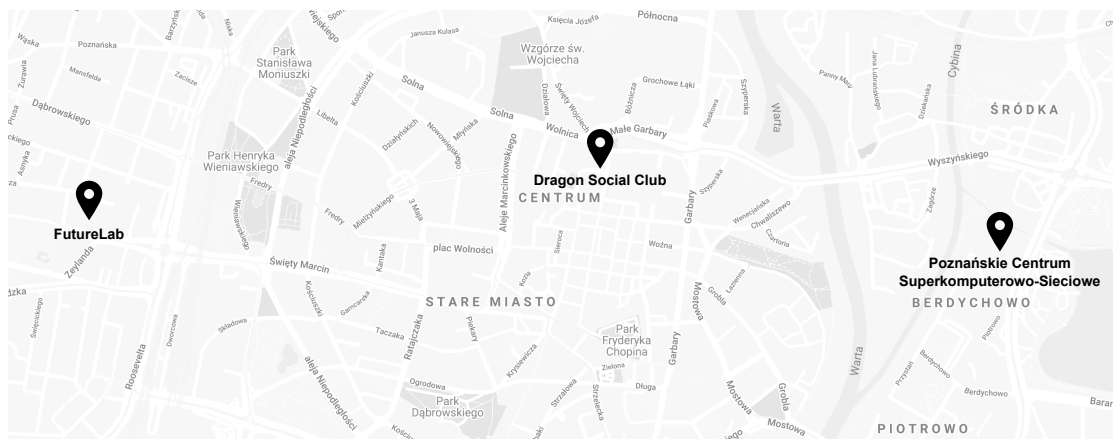
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Venue:

Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center, street Jana Pawła II 10

FutureLab, street Zwierzyniecka 20

Dragon Social Club, street Zamkowa 3

Tuesday 12 November

8.00 - 9.00: Registration/coffee

9.00 - 9.30: Welcoming. Rector of AMU, prof. Andrzej Lesicki. Director of PSNC, dr. Cezary Mazurek. Dean of Anthropology and Cultural Studies Faculty AMU, prof. Jacek Sójka. Organizing Committee.

Stream#1 SPECULATION, Chair: Harshavardhan Bhat

Panel I

9.30 - 9.50: Sara Raimondi (New College of the Humanities, London), What Is Left of (Human) Agency? Resistance and Revolution In an Entangled World

9.50 - 10.10: Ignasi Torrent (University of Hertfordshire, School of Humanities, Hatfield (London), Reframing Agency in Complexity-sensitive Peacebuilding

10.10 - 10.30: Stefanie Ortmann (University of Sussex), Rethinking 'State Agency': the Global Circulation of the 'State Effect'

10.30 - 11.10: discussion

11.10 – 11.30: coffee break

Panel II

11.30 – 11.50: Monika Jaeckel (University of Westminster), Staying with Agency's Trouble

11.50 - 12.10: Yael Eylat Van-Essen (HIT- Holon Institute of Technology, Israel), Adaptation In an Unpredictable Reality - Resilience and Vulnerability

12.10 - 12.30: Artyom Kolganov (National Research University Higher School of Economic, Moscow/University of Manchester), Unshaping the Visual: Imagination and Control

12.30 - 13.00: discussion

13.00 - 14.00: lunch break

Panel III

14.00 – 14.20: Michaela Büsse (The University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland FHNW, Academy of Art and Design), Sand Stories

14.20 - 14.40: Kendall Grady (University of California, Santa Cruz), BOOTY: Semio-Desire in Poetic Practice and Theory

14.40 - 15.00: Ágota Ábrán, (History and Art Museum, Zalau), Making the Unethical Edible

15.00 – 15.40: discussion

15.40 - 16.00: coffee break

Stream #2 ADAPTATION, Chair: Agnieszka Jelewska

16.00 - 16.20: Damian Niemir (Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center), Technological Adaptation. Questions about own, social, false and artificial intelligence in the era of ubiquitous technology

16.20 - 16.40: Paweł Janicki (WROCenter, Wroclaw), How to Remain Alien to Your Own Environment Using Black Magic to Predict and Bypass Odious Adaptations

16.40 - 17.00: discusssion

17.00 – 18.00: open presentations Mediated Environments Research Group

1. Aleksandra Skowrońska (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Aleksandra Brylska (University of Warsaw), Franciszek Chwałczyk (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Maksymilian Sawicki (independent researcher), Maciej Kwietnicki (Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń), Baltic Sea voivodeship – Pacific 2050

2. Jakub Alejski (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Przemysław Degórski (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Anna Paprzycka (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Mikołaj Smykowski (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Palm Oil Footprint

3. Anna Adam (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, University of Toronto), Michał Gulik (independent researcher), Bogna M. Konior (University of Amsterdam), Jakub Palm (Pedagogical University of Cracow), Cyber-Agriculture: Nascent Phenomenon and Its Integrative Future

20:00: Evening events and meetings: Dragon Social Club. TRIO Oleszak / Jacobson / Jørgensen – concert (free entry with the conference badge)

Wednesday 13 November

Stream #2 ADAPTATION, Chair: Agnieszka Jelewska

Panel II

9.30 - 9.50: Minna Saariketo (Aalto University), Fostering Imagination for Alternatives in the Landscapes of Code

9.50 – 10.10: Younes Saramifar (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Adaptive Speculation or Speculative Adaption: Exploring Simultaneity of Adaptation and Speculation in Asylum Seeking Trajectories, Robotic Labs, Urban Gardens, Pious Sexualities and Battlefields

10.10 - 10.30: Allison Leigh Holt (independent artist), The Conversation - Feedback Structures, Ways of Knowing, and Neurodivergence

10.30 – 10.50: Alexander Koutamanis (Delft University of Technology), The Symbolic Hut Comes Alive

10.50 - 11. 30: discussion

11.30-12.00: coffee break

Panel III

12.00 – 12.20: Jukka Hautamaki (independent artist), Future of Anthropocentric Art

12.20 - 12.40: Julian Jochmaring (University of Potsdam), Lyrebird and Tick. Nonhuman Agencies Beyond Adaption

12.40 - 13.00: Beyza Toptal (Özyeğin University), Cyborg Seas of Bosphorus

13.00 – 13.20: Egor Kraft (independent artist), Content Aware Studies

13.20-14.00: discussion

14.00 - 15.00: lunch

Stream#1 SPECULATION, Chair: Harshavardhan Bhat

15.30 - 17.00: Keynote presentation: Rosi Braidotti (Utrecht University), Knowledge Production in Posthuman Times

Stream #2 ADAPTATION, Chair: Agnieszka Jelewska

17.30 – 19.00 Keynote presentation: Peter Kahn (University of Washington), Technological Nature: Adaptation and the Future of Human Life

20.00: Evening events and meetings: PostHuman Data – exhibition + perfromance/Future Lab

Thursday 14 November

Stream#3 RESISTANCE, Chair: Brett Zehner

9.00 - 10.30: Keynote presentation: Julian Reid (University of Lapland), The Image of Resistance

10:30– 11.00: coffee break

Panel I

11.00 – 11.20: Jens Schröter (University of Bonn), The Automatic Subject. The Non-Human Agency of Capital

11.20 – 11.40: Macon Holt (independent scholar), Sherilyn Hellberg (University of California, Berkeley), Alexander Buk Swienty (independent scholar), How to Refuse the Apocalypse: Or What can a Critical Theory of Climate Change do?

11.40 - 12.00: Paige Treebridge (College of Computing and Digitial Media, Depaul University), Jess Westbrook (College of Computing and Digitial Media, Depaul University), How to Disappear Completely: Avoiding Computer-Mediated Superimposition

12.00–12.40: discussion

12.40 –13.40: lunch

Panel II

13.40–14.00: Stephen Dersley (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan), Ernst Mach's Monism as an Act of Resistance

14.00 - 14.20: Maria Dada (Goldsmiths, University of London), Distant Media: Materiality an the Digital

14.20 - 14.40: Rebecca Uliasz (Duke University), Represented to Pieces: Facial Recognition Technology as Proxy Politics

14.40 –15.20: discussion

15.20– 15.40: coffee break

Panel III

15.40 - 16.00: Pepe Rojo (The University of California, San Diego), Speculative Experimental Fiction and the US-Mexico Border

16.00 - 16.20: Adela Goldbarth (Rhode Island School of Design), Performing Subversion: Carnival Against Power

16.20 - 16.40: Ramon Amaro (Goldsmiths, University of London), Race, Surveillance and the Autopoetically Instituted Being

16.40 - 17.20: discussion

17.20 – 18.00: sum up, closure discussion and plans for the next meeting

19.30: Evening events and meetings: Dragon Social Club. Xyn Thi & Fonoleptic (Rafał Zapała + Patryk Lichota) – concert (free entry with the conference badge). Receive - interactive performance (Przemysław Degórski, Anna Kamińska)

Book of Abstracts

Keynote Presentations

Rossi Braidotti

Knowledge Production in Posthuman Times

Peter Kahn

Technological Nature: Adaptation and the Future of Human Life

Two world trends are powerfully reshaping human existence: (a) the degradation if not destruction of large parts of the natural world, and (b) unprecedented technological development, both in terms of its computational sophistication and pervasiveness. In response, some people say: „Don't worry, adaptation is how we evolved, and adaption is good for us; we'll be fine." But adaptation is not always good for a species. An African elephant can adapt and live „sustainably" in zoo confines the size of a parking lot, but that doesn`t mean the elephant is flourishing given its evolutionary capacity. We could all adapt to living in a prison, but that doesn`t mean we would do well. With this conceptualization in hand, I bring forward four complementary lines of research. One focuses on the importance of people interacting with nature for their physical and psychological wellbeing ("biophilia"). The second focuses on whether "Technological Nature" – technologies which in various ways mediate, simulate, or augment nature – can substitute psychologically for interactions with actual nature. My research platforms include technological nature "windows," a Telegarden, robotic animals, and humanoid robots. The third focuses on what I call Environmental Generational Amnesia: that each generation of children construct their conception of what is environmentally normal based on the natural world they encounter in childhood. The crux is that, with each ensuing generation, the amount of environmental degradation increases, but each generation tends to take that degraded condition as the non-degraded condition. Environmental Generational Amnesia may be one of largest psychological problems of our lifetime. Toward a solution, and fourth, I bring forward a new design methodology for urban sustainability and human flourishing based on what I call Interaction Pattern Design.

Julian Reid

The Image of Resistance

Resistance today has an image problem. Coopted and impoverished by political power, resistance has become a byword for work, resilience, subjection and the adaptation of human life to a world beyond its control or capacities to shape and transform. How did resistance become so degraded and what can be done to breathe life back into it? In this lecture, Julian Reid will address some of the problems which resistance is faced with today and discuss some of the ways in which the degradation of resistance has been achieved and made manifest, on the Left, and by critique itself. In particular he will discuss problems with the increasing influence of 'indigenous' forms of thinking and acting within nominally leftist critique; forms which have less to do with enabling resistance to hegemonic forms of oppression than with a new consensus on the need to adapt to perceived natural limits and constraints beyond human control. As Reid argues, the indigenizing of resistance has little do with empowering indigenous peoples either, or learning from them how better to resist, and everything to do with destroying the powers of human agency and conditions for political subjectivity. The life of the political subject itself is at stake in the struggle to resist dominating images of resistance as mere resilience, adaptation and perseverance. Political subjects do not live by merely surviving and adapting to existing conditions, or by desiring the sustainability of those conditions. In contrast they resist those conditions, and where successful, overcome them, transforming time into that which it was not; a new time in succession of an old and destroyed time. Such a mode of resistance requires the wholesale renovation of the image of resistance, and of the powers of human imagination for the making and destruction of images.

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Sara Raimondi

What is left of (human) agency? Resistance and revolution in an entangled world.

Issues like environmental crises, climate change and ecological sustainability appear as daily concerns in international and global debates preoccupied with how a future for and beyond humanity can be accomplished. The 'Anthropocene' (Cruzten 2002) has increasingly captured the relationship of humans with the natural world in light of the above-mentioned problems. Anthropocenic discourses remain characterised by a constitutive ambivalence: while foregrounding the impact of human action on the planet at a geological scale, they also accommodate a new appreciation for more-than-human agencies (Haraway, 2008; Bennett, 2010; Tsing, 2015) and creative agential becomings (Connolly, 2010, 2013), well captured and expressed by the ontological and posthumanist turns advanced in theory and conceptual analysis. Posthumanism (Wolfe, 2010; Braidotti, 2013) in particular has questioned the assumption of the human monopoly of agential capacities and invites to rethink agencies as distributed within a wider material-incorporeal (Grosz, 2018) cosmos of interactive processes, and the ensuing renegotiation of ethical ways of being-with the world (Barad, 2010; Haraway, 2016). However, these approaches are not themselves exempt from reproducing an inner contradiction. As critics have highlighted, posthumanisms run the risk of 'inventing the "post-human" for ethical reasons, wilfully pretending thereby to have demonstrated its lack of will'. Nevertheless, 'it is a massively willed and historically determined effort to be done with will and history' (Cornell and Seely, 2016: 12). In other words, it seems not possible to put aside the centrality of human will and agency without subtly but inevitably bringing it back from the backdoor.

The paper takes issues with debates that question the role and place of human agency in the context of the newly rediscovered world of entanglements (Barad, 2007, 2010). The paper explores dissonant voices in the conversation that do not esclude possibilities for revolutionary action and politics (Cornell and Seely, 2016) and reimagine it in the context of a collective endeavour of resisting and acting in the world and with others where the 'human' still plays an active role (Connolly, 2017; Epstein, 2017; Spencer, 2017). The analysis engages with the legacy that multiple forms of humanisms can play in inspiring forms of contemporary struggles and imagining of political possibilities. In other words, humanism as a diverse and complex tradition (Alderson and Spencer, 2017) can still be an interlocutor in how we think through ideas of subjectivity, agency and politics in the contemporary Anthropocenic condition. The paper thus concludes by wondering whether it is human agency that needs to be rethought and, arguably, got rid of or, rather, whether what is at stake is rather a remagining of the dominant trajectories through which this agency has been narrated, digested and understood.

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Ignasi Torrent

Reframing Agency in Complexity-sensitive Peacebuilding

This article examines how the growing complexity of peacebuilding settings is transforming the classic notion of purposeful agency into a non-purposeful, adaptive form of being in these contexts. Through an analysis of critical peacebuilding literature and a reflection on UN's peacebuilding practices in the field, the article first argues that complexity has been gradually replacing linear, top-down strategies with approaches seeking to sensitise with interdependencies, relationality and uncertainty. The paper then suggests that, surpassing the governmentality critique, which conceptualises the complexity turn as a strategy to extend control over post-conflict societies, engaging with complexity has critical implications for the traditional understanding of purposeful agency in the peacebuilding milieu. Complexity is eventually conceived of in the paper as a performative contextual quality stemmed from the non-linear, co-emergent and unpredictable entanglement of interactions between actors in peacebuilding processes. This absence of isolation hinders the autonomous, purposeful agential condition of these actors in war-torn scenarios -and in this paper, peacebuilding implementers specifically-, in which agency seems more and more restricted to an adaptive nature.

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Stefanie Ortmann

Rethinking 'state agency': the global circulation of the 'state effect'

The link between agency and sovereign subjectivity has produced a particularly problematic variant when it comes to ideas about state agency in International Relations, which are implicitly or explicitly based on ideas about the state as modern sovereign subject. In the European tradition, the link between state-ness and subjectivity has far reaching roots in the body of the king, later transposed to a body politic. However, current ideas about the sovereign subjectivity of 'the state' have a surprisingly recent origin, and one that is deeply intertwined with the history of colonial expansion. State subjectivity as a legal and political concept fully emerged in the context of the racialized reading of (white, male, Western) subjectivity in colonial relationships during the 19th century (Anghie 2007, Grovogui 1996). This racialized reading of 'the state' underpinned the 19th century geopolitical imaginary and has been preserved in ideas about state agency, not only securing the idea of the state as individuated acting subject, but imbuing it with racialized assumptions that stabilize the supreme sovereign agency of the West and Western states. The response has often been to move away from state agency altogether, thinking beyond and outside of 'the state', locating agency in transnational movements, everyday life etc. However, this leaves the link between sovereign subjectivity and agency in place and perpetuates an imaginary that makes the state thinkable as individuated sovereign subject or not at all.

At the same time, stories and imaginaries of state-ness are resurgent across the globe. These imaginaries have concrete effects and agential force (the 'state effect', see Mitchell 1991). They are produced across different sites, in concrete, situated relations, blurring the supposed binaries and distinctions that stabilize the imaginary of the modern, Western state. The power of these imaginaries likewise is not simply transmitted from a powerful West to a passive or unruly Rest (as the racialized 19th century imaginary at work in IR presupposes), but is much more multi-linear and entangled, with the current return of statist imaginaries resonating from East to West, while also activating racialized assumptions inherent in these imaginaries in the West. As this paper argues, there is a need for rethinking ‚ state agency' in conjunction with this resurgent state-ness, reproduced in assemblages of material forms and stories. This paper attempts to think 'the state' as a form of non-human agency, exploring in particular the way that stories of state-ness circulate globally and produce powerful effects, drawing on Barad's formulation of agency as intra-action (Barad 2003, 2007). It will argue that reading state-ness as non-human agency is a productive way of understanding the current resurgence and reproduction of racialized imaginaries of the state in the West, but also allows a much more differentiated reading of the ways in which the 'state effect' is produced in concrete, situated relations and particular forms outside of the ‚ core West' – forms that do not correspond to the racialized spatial imaginary underpinning conventional ideas about state agency and which elucidate forms of non-Western agency and power associated with ‚ the state'.

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Monika Jaeckel

Staying with agency's trouble

Picking up on the call's provocation - regarding the connotations that are encompassed in a universalist understanding, I indeed hope that the notion of agency, as we know it, is in trouble. However, there is no getting 'beyond or after agency', as this would fit a continuation remaining tethered to universalist traits of linear progression. Such move would implicate connotations resting on the centrist worldview where agency is a one-sided carte blanche for what is regarded as steady advance, where never any response/ibility must be heeded. Other actants, no matter human or non-human, are deprived of the ability of expressing meaningful (re)actions of mutual affectivity. Or are regarded as not complementing with the current system.

Universalism's claim of pervasiveness conceals the inability to discern other system aside of it. Its self-defined modes of in- or exclusion further diminish the possibility to consider itself as encapsulated within a system. There is a congruence in the definition of agential action that allows the agent's side to claim all action by dismissing response. Agency in this interpretation has to deny or neglect reverberating effects. Denial of climate change is its ' natural' answer. To learn response-ability is to face the messy center (Manning 2016) of which we are effectively engaged in its production and affectively hit by it in manifold and each in different ways.

Adaption generally happens inconspicuously: it is a constant developmental process that is multilateral and iteratively interfering. Its slow change acknowledges that the other side influences and needs to be listened to. Never just gain or loss, adaption's subconscious affirmation contradicts the universalist understanding of agency.

It is errant to assume a response can be avoided by exclusion and neglect. Whatever one declares as of other nature or culture and thus as not belonging and insignificant, it still responds in its limited, mutated and redirected ways. Exclusion, ignorance, neglect, all of these are deeds as well and thus part of Barad's interpretation of agency as a being-doing (2007). Decline, flourishing, as well as the many areas in the between all are responses. Crucial is to understand agency as something that is never done alone or solely by what humans call will. Whether agency understood as one-sided neither elevates the human above any response/ibility nor does the insight of situatedness subvert any adjustable response-ability.

Throughout my practice-based PhD project I am working through and with motion as the fundamental concept to think body and mind, world and self as intertwined. Of special interest is the movement practice of Parkour and ADD, due to their engagement with the (urban) environment based on their philosophy. One of the aspects here is adaption as an ability to get invested with an environment not just as a conforming attitude, but as one that intervenes based on own experiences.

Adaption from this perspective shifts exclusionary demarcation settings as those set between nature and culture opening towards the question: how can adaption, be turned into a critical response questioning the enlightened responsibility (Kirby 2014) of sole action.

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Yael Eylat Van-Essen

Adaptation in an Unpredictable Reality – Resilience and Vulnerability

The beginning of the 21st century is characterised by a high degree of uncertainty resulting from the unpredictable and destructive forces of both, natural disasters and human activities. It is to a large extent a consequence of a new reality of networked mediated systems that transforms the paradigm of pre-structures organisations with complex systems comprised of artificial edifices and living organisms whose performance cannot always be predicted.

In his seminal paper from 1973, "Resilience and Stability of Ecological Systems", Holling referred to the concept of resilience in relation to ecological issues, devised many of the principles underlying thinking about resilient systems today in the era of the Anthropocene. He argued that the ability of a system to change, through adaptation processes, without necessarily maintaining its stability has a greater advantage for its productivity. Holling replaced the simple idea of dynamic stability with abstract ideas derived from systems theory and cybernetics, based on the fact that complex systems have a multiple equilibriums and that the transition from one to the other does not necessarily cause the system's collapse but rather an adaptive cycle. The theories of resilience that continue Holling's concept originating in environmental issues, propose to see the advantages derived from situations of change, insecurity, and even vulnerability and harm.

This proposed paper explores current resilient mechanisms, based on 'smart' systems, in which, natural phenomena' are mediated with technological agency, on the one hand, and artificial systems are acquiring natural characteristics, on the one hand. They connect between body and mind, ecology and urban infrastructures, public and private, local and global, security and military apparatus, and civic organizations.

These mechanisms are grounded on parametric systems that maintain the principles of efficiency and optimization and in many contexts reflect the values of neoliberal economics and governance. As Neoliberalism preserves states of instability as an engine for growth and development, taking risks and absorbing harm becomes a legitimate factor within this equation. In this paper I would like proposes to consider speculation as a critical tool for examining the ethical aspects of these mechanisms, as well as the potential for the restructuring a new human-nature relations. I will relate to artworks dealing with these issues.

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Artyom Kolganov

Unshaping the Visual: Imagination and Control

The paper provides an attempt to conceptualize the political imagination under the conditions of 'control society' (Deleuze, 1994). The first part of the work represents a critical genealogy of a control society, basically understood through universal modulation which functions as a core principle of every material technology of surveillance. From Burroughs (1978) to Tiqqun (2001), this principle is regarded as the process of evolution of 'abstract machines' based on digital binaries; from the perspective of media archeology, it can be perceived as the reverse side of cybernetic development. Therefore, the political implications of certain basic concepts of cybernetics are outlined (e.g. positive and negative feedback loops) in order to emphasize the role of code as a linchpin of abstract machinery, shaping heterogeneous mechanisms in the concept of control society. The author regards the complex temporality as a distinctive feature of contemporary control as the machinery of surveillance turns from a persistent presence to prediction and prevention. This account of control makes this concept more resistant to any forms of critique and puts emancipatory strategies of the future under the question. In the second part of the paper, the author designs a speculative theory of political imagination through the notions of time-image (Deleuze) and hauntology (Fisher), demonstrating how the visual can be subject to an alternate temporality following the totalizing logic of 'cybernetic vision' (Parisi, Terranova, 2001).

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Michaela Büsse

Sand Stories

Along the planetary medium of sand, I investigate how material transformations of a seemingly elusive material are shaped by infrastructures of power and in return affect human lives. Sand in the context of my research acts as an interscalar vehicle, it combines geological time with human time, ecology with economy with politics. Sand is a finite geological resource with a formation process that exceeds human life span many times over. It is one of the five resources with the highest global demand being in the centre stage of political, economic and ecological warfare; in the form of quartz and silica it is essential to the technological infrastructures shaping our everyday life; as cement and steel it acts as the literal building block of modernity; in the form of land mass it demarcates the poor and the rich—those who mine and export land and those who import and "recover".

Through an analysis of different scales of transformation, in different places and by including multiple voices, not a complete but multi-facetted approach aims at challenging the monism at play in discourses related to new materialism. Combining film footage from my research trips with spoken word my presentation highlights the ruptures that occur when navigating between micro and macro scales, human and nonhuman, Europe and South East Asia.

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Kendall Grady

BOOTY: Semio-Desire in Poetic Practice and Theory

Supplant the dialectic of individual freedom and social bondage with baroque micro-practices of intimacy? Demonstrate that, unlike other forms of knowledge production, poetics is interested in contact?) BOOTY is a series of poems, coupled with introduction, to enunciate a creative/critical translation of Bruce Springsteen's 1984 album Born in the USA.

The translator grasps at language like a lover scorned. The lover labors like a translator at the opaque clockwork of another. From the perspective of Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, communication galvanizes the vitality, evolution, and threat of entropy for the social systems of translation and love alike. Communication is their common denominator. Communication is a problem. Without recourse to the absolute solvency of the other, social systems function by semiotic selection, customizing the parapets they cannot overcome.

Against this context, I examine the concept of coupling as defined by Luhmann's social systems theory and mobilized by Peter Sloterdijk's theory of microsphereology to reveal how intimacy emerges as a praxis of complexity by foraging bonds between relational entities. This is an exercise in delimiting, not resolving, what can be translated and what can be loved.

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Ágota Ábrán

Making the unethical edible

Doing anthropology in Romania on cooking, eating, and tasting (food and plant medicines) one inadvertently finds people trying to grasp the ethical and health problem of ingestion. From apocalyptic visions of tasteless food that poison bodies, chicken soups being thrown away for their 'poisonous colour' because of the factory chicken, and untrustworthy herbal teas, to food that spiritually corrupt bodies, food is far from being nourishing. This presentation singles out such examples from the presenter's year and half fieldwork (2014-2015) on how plants become medicines in Transylvania and her more recent work on cooking and eating. It does so in order to showcase the way people try to ingest or throw away 'not good' food, a process through which they become aware of and negotiate how they enter into 'relations with multiple others'. Ingestion, as an intimate relationship between bodies that heal or sicken each other, forces people to grasp their interrelatedness to others, raising awareness of their bodies being geographically and socially spread out (see Annemarie Mol).

Proposing this presentation for Stream #2 Speculation, I will then focus on one particular practice that negotiates unethical, 'not good' food in order to transform food that makes bodies sick into food that makes healthy bodies: they thank for the work and toil (human and non-human) involved in the food on their table. Thanking here, however, is not a simple utterance but it is a spell that needs an active thought, a deep acceptance of the eating body's involvement in unethical food making. As such, the presentation argues that this spell is meant to reverse commodity fetishism and unearth relational subjects, inter-connections 'between self and others', trying to 'remake the obstacle of self-centered individualism' (Braidotti 2013, 50) by making unethical foods edible.

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Damian Niemir

Technological Adaptation. Questions about own, social, false and artificial intelligence in the era of ubiquitous technology

Referring to Peter Kahn's recognitions about the future of human nature, I look at the current era of digital technologies from the point of view of an engineer, programmer and observer of the trends of the evolving internet.

I ask questions about the cyber adaptation of modern human, his ability to expansion in the world of technological discoveries and fashions, the ability to make choices, personal and group interactions, the ability to think intelligently and shape his views in the ubiquitous world of info-junk. I try to critically look at the definition of transhumanism given the human desire to be distinguished and unique.

In the end, I also observe the fascination of machine learning and artificial intelligence, on the one hand, noticing its development and possible applications, on the other, seeing in it mostly only ordinary sets of rules and algorithms that are not intelligence itself, but fit into the smart-everything fashion, constituting pretense only: false intelligence. I try to present all this through the prism of several good and real examples of projects implemented at PSNC that fall under the definition of technological adaptation.

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Paweł Janicki

How to remain alien to your own environment using black magic to predict and bypass odious adaptations

„How to remain alien to your own environment using black magic to predict and bypass odious adaptations." is a statement about a devolutionary anti-survival strategy consisting in placing your own activity in unfavorable contexts and through the warping of meanings and purposefulness.*

Looking from a historical perspective adaptation in the evolutionary dimension is a positive phenomenon and ambiguous (is adaptation in culture the same as opportunism?) in the cultural dimension. But nowadays, even in the evolutionary dimension, human adaptation skills have long been an obstacle in the understanding of the world and its dangers, and not a mechanism allowing them to compensate. Adaptation abilities are rather a mechanism that allows gradual and prolonged zombification, not the mechanism of recovering élan vital (according to the otherwise correct idea that in the face of the approaching annihilation, it is better to save even remnants).

The speech is constructed on the basis of the effects of the author's own practices and selected cultural references - the material selected for presentation is related to art and its negation as well as new technologies and their negation. It treats the category of incompatibility as a kind of quality, not a demonstration for the entourage, but a private research tool.

* The author will not take responsibility for any effects of applying the strategy by other people (some projects are better left to the professionals).

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Minna Saariketo

Fostering imagination for alternatives in the landscapes of code

This paper discusses results of a PhD dissertation, Imaginaries of Agency in the Landscapes of Code, which is an interdisciplinary research between media studies, science and technology studies, and software studies. In the dissertation, I studied human agency in the increasingly networked technological everyday life. The context of the case is studies is 'softwarization', the process through which software has obtained its current ubiquity (aManovich 2013). In the empirical cases, I explored with qualitative methods both interpellations to agency in current technological society as well as "ordinary" people's experiences and negotiations on their everyday networked digital technology. The cases were 1) a narrative analysis of interpellations to agency in European Union's Digital Agenda for Europe, 2) an analysis of the pre-domestication of Google Glass in the Finnish press, 3) an analysis of user and non-user negotiations on the power of Facebook's technical architecture, and 4) a research intervention and rhythmanalytical study on the experiences of daily life infused with software by avid social media users. The key concept connecting the cases is 'imaginaries of agency', building on the conceptualisations of social and sociotechnical imaginaries (Jasanoff 2015; Jasanoff & Kim 2009; Taylor 2004).

The key finding in the dissertation concerns the almost resigned sense of agency that many people share in relation to the conditions of their technologically mediated everyday life. It seems that people have become accustomed with the idea that they have little chances to influence the structures of their everyday digital environments, and this in turn serves as a powerful legitimation to the platform capitalist operational logics of digital technology (see also e.g. Andrejevic 2014; Kitchin & Dodge 2011; Srnicek 2016; van Dijck et al. 2018). The way my research participants positioned themselves in relation to the conditions of their technological everyday settings could be interpreted as an illustration of how people have become schooled to ignore the conditions of the mundane software in their routinised use (Thrift & French 2002, 311). Based on these findings, I argue that there is an urgent need for radical and creative imagination on the kind of technology we want to live with and on the relations between human and non-human agency.

My point of embarkation is the proposition that the code-based infrastructures are not merely background in our daily lives, but people contribute to their production, maintenance, and legitimation with mundane activities and interactions (see also Kitchin & Dodge 2011; Ridell 2013). In the paper, the results of the dissertation are discussed in terms of different types of resistance (and lack thereof) identified in the empirical case studies. As the results of my dissertation show, networked media technology is not an invisible part of people's daily routines: they can articulate and reflect its role in the daily life. Yet, what seems to remain invisible is the sociotechnical power of software and especially the role data plays in 'hooking' the users and steering their actions. As a conclusion, ideas for enabling reflexivity and fostering imagination on alternative imaginaries of agency in the techno-society are outlined.

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Younes Saramifar

Adaptive Speculation or Speculative Adaption: exploring simultaneity of adaptation and speculation in asylum seeking trajectories, robotic labs, urban gardens, pious sexualities and battlefields

Agency has been always in trouble. It has been in trouble since Euro-American anthropology has claimed it in order to reveal agentive trends among every form of imagined social actor, especially agency of underdogs and oppressed. Agency abundantly has been applied on Muslim women (Gole 1996), of objects (Ingold 2012), of infrastructures (Dalakoglou 2017), and of domestic workers (de Regt 2010) without efficient and sufficient conceptual portrayal . Any form of cultural expression and mode of social existence that pushes against a social structure (Giddens 1976) is celebrated by anthropologist as agency, subversion and preservation of human dignity. Anthropologists have put agency in trouble through structural thinking, limitations of performance theory, worldmaking notions, obsessive lip-service to Anthropos and ignoring the emergence of agency. The overemphasis on socially constructed and epistemologically drenched agency has forgotten to ask the ontic evocations of agency and accordingly what comes after agency. Therefore, I, an anthropologist by training and profession, ask what if anthropology would try to locate agency in simultaneity of adaptation and speculation instead of incessantly searching for resistance.

I reframe speculation as the flow with multiple others (Braidotti 2016) and critique adaptation as the multidirectional set of actions to portray ontic evocations and transient configuration of agency. I locate agency in-between adaptive speculation and speculative adaptation by portraying how agency is enacted not through speculative expansion toward multiple others but it is an adaptive shrinkage to define boundaries of self, rediscover materiality of body, reclaim precarity, and finally reimagining oneself as large as the ecology of life. In another words, speculation is a mode of self-re-assertion that shrinks an individual to her survival mode by adapting an expansive consciousness, maybe even false consciousness, as large as Anthropocene.

It is in the rhythmic beats of expansion and shrinkage that we should trace the entanglement of adaptation and speculation. This entanglement allows us to re-adjust the notion of harm in adaptation and ask how harmful speculations encourage taking risk during asylum seeking trajectory, eliciting pleasure in piety and religious compliance, finding oneself while shaping a robot, nurturing gardens or shooting at the enemy. Through an overview of the projects that I have undertaken since 2013, I explain the simultaneity of speculation and adaption while critiquing the anthropological approaches to agency. I highlight participant-observation as a speculative method of research and adaptive speculation as an alternative to the concept agency by referring to the relationship amongst engineers and their robots in USA robotic labs, the relationship between Middle Eastern militia and their weaponry, risk calculation and future speculation among Afghan refugees and pursuit of sexual pleasure among pious and religiously conservative Iranian women.

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Allison Leigh Holt

The Conversation – Feedback Structures, Ways of Knowing, and Neurodivergence

This paper outlines general theoretical implications of feedback systems for framing the interrelated nature of living agents and systems. The model of feedback is identified as forming an ideal conceptual structure for visualizing the sensing, processing, and exchanging of information occurring perpetually, at all scales of life, including within human cognition. Along with the constructs of the Neurodiversity Model, enactive/expanded media, and 4E cognitive theory— embodied, embedded, extended, and enacted mind—this paper presents research with experts across disciplines and discusses the results of over six years of teaching experimental film/video to autistics individuals. Written at the invitation of PUBLIC Journal #59: Interspecies Communication (pub. July 2019).

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Alexander Koutamanis

The symbolic hut comes alive

In architectural mythology, the built environment is born out of a dual origin: the primitive hut (the fundamental, functional shelter) and the decorated hut (the decoration of one's surroundings, initially aesthetic and later, with the development of architectural memory, referential). Archaeological research refines the latter by suggesting that prehistoric rock 'art' was not decorative or even iconographic but had a symbolic and mnemonic function, rooted in rituals that still exist in some societies. The purpose of this 'decoration' was to connect altered states of consciousness with the physical environment, frequently making ingenious use of features in the physical objects [1]. This goes beyond conventional architecture, design and buildings, and encompasses practically everything our symbolic species constantly does to align, adapt and augment its environment.

In recent years, such actions have taken a revolutionary turn through the incorporation of virtual, digital elements into the built environment: computational devices and the information they convey are all around us and constantly present in our interactions with the world. However, technological innovation is not merely enriching our environment; it is radically changing it in a pervasive manner we often take for granted in both design and use. We appear to be used to treating new elements as enabling technologies that either enhance our existing capacities or complement them with new ones [2]. Interestingly, this anthropocentric view contrasts with expectations from AI or the IoT: it reduces machine intelligence to human support and considers sensors, actuators and displays merely for the benefit of human action and communication.

An alternative view is to go beyond the functional and aesthetic aspects and focus on how the symbolic dimension is changing in our hybrid environments. The IoT is developing into not just a decentralized network of smarter things, it aspires to making things wiser, with an understanding of their context, thus also creating an internet of places [3]. As ever, things are carriers of information but computational technologies make them active: custodians of its meaning and conscious embodiments of symbols. A book may no longer require a human reader to interpret the stories it contains and be fully aware of its own cultural significance. Similarly, the built environment of the future may not be passive structures of bricks and mortar with overlays of deterministic electronics but groups of autonomous, hybrid entities that interact with us, as well as with each other, towards common goals. Being endowed with consciousness, these finite, coherent entities [4] could also develop fuzzy and chaotic relations, possibly leading to antagonism, power struggles or fights for the rights of artificial organisms, with the danger of dystopia constantly lurking in the shadows.

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Jukka Hautamaki

Future of Anthropocentric Art

Could artificial intelligence replace artist's own aesthetics selections? Could it get enjoyment from viewing art? Would it be possible to measure this gratification and save it as digital memory stamp? What are those tools and parametres, for being able to read and interpret these future memory traces and who will be there, for the interpretations?

AI Aesthetics and Creativity

Aesthetics are always in relation with time and history. If artificial intelligence doesn't have it's own bodily sensation and knowledge, memory of the past and experiences of aesthetics pleasures. How it then could position single image in the canon of art history or cultural history? For certain, it is possible to teach art history for a machine, like it has already been successfully done, but can it connect conceptual relations between history and current time.

Can creativity exist without bodily knowledge and intelligence, and emotions? Can we even except creativity without achieving these conditions? Should creativity be redefined due presence of artificial intelligence in artistic processes and artworks.

Thematically my research is related to questions about the future of human civilisation and post-humanism. Are we facing a future where AI is merged seamlessly into hybrid AI-human creative processes. Is the role of art viewer also shifting towards post-anthropocentric, yet undefined?

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Julian Jochmaring

Lyrebird and Tick. Nonhuman Agencies Beyond Adaption

Ever since Ernst Haeckel coined ecology as the study of relations between an organism and the environment, the discipline has been directly linked to notions of adaption. While for Haeckel adaption is a reaction to mechanical forces superimposed upon the organism, in later approaches by philosophers of science like Georges Canguilhem as well as in cybernetics and systems theory, the concept is understood dynamically, allowing the organism to act upon the environment and its constantly changing demands. However, all these attempts still rely on the premise that the aim of adaption is to bring about a state of equilibrium, whether presupposed or characterized by processuality and metastability. In my talk I seek to investigate modalities of relations that make way for harm, negativity and nonagentiality not as something to be overcome through adaption, but rather as crucial for thinking environmentality beyond the scope of stability, immunity and normality. Drawing on Timothy Morton's notion of ‚dark ecology', I want to ask how the ‚strange strangeness' of environmental relations is performed by two nonhuman (non-)actors, the lyrebird and the tick, thus suspending the logic of adaption within environmental discourses.

The Australian superb lyrebird has become famous for its appearance in David Attenborough's documentation series BBC Wildlife, where the bird is shown mimicking a car alarm, the clicking of a camera shutter and chainsaw noises. Attenborough's sequence has been appropriated by artist Kader Attia in his video installation Mimesis As Resistance (2013). Thereby Attia suggests understanding the lyrebird's imitation as a form of ‚repair'. For Attia, ‚repair' is not oriented towards fixing broken relations to attain conditions of relative integrity, but rather towards making tangible traces of harm and violence. Within the non-natural ecology of the rainforest, the lyrebird's agency can then be regared as a negative adaption, inseparable from its vulnerability and the destruction of its living conditions. A similar structure of negativity within nonhuman agency can be derived from Giorgio Agamben's reading of the tick in his essay The Open. From the perspective of an adaptive logic, the tick's reported ability to persist over a period of 18 years without any food would be understood as an adjustment to an adverse environment. In contrast, Agamben argues for a speculative un- derstanding of the tick beyond the binary of agency and nonagency, therefore expanding the concept of the living by integrating moments of radical passivity. While coming from different fields of visual arts and philosophy, both Attia and Agamben not only conceive of new forms of ethico-political relations of human and nonhuman animals, but also do so by means of an epistemological shift. Rather than drawing upon a predetermined scientific knowledge about animals (and its implied humanist conception of agency), their respective practices are informed by what Donna Haraway calls a ‚knowing with' other animals.

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Beyza Toptal

Cyborg Seas of Bosphorus

Macrofaunas constitute the bottom of the food chain and they live underwater in the sediments. This research has been conducted in the Ecology of Lab of (A) University in Istanbul where marine biologists are analyzing sediment samples and identifying polychaetes in order to; understand biodiversity, build indices and monitor the health of the Bosphorus, comparing with seasonal and pollution data (such as heavy metals). Within the methodology of Grounded Theory, through a lab study, field analysis and interviews with a marine biologist and three undergraduate students; this paper is proposing a feminist technoscientific approach (Haraway, 2006) to examine the human non-human relations and questioning speculative futures. 'Cyborg seas of Bosphorus' is acting as a response to the dark futurology of pollution in The Anthropocene, and taking its inspiration from The Cthulucene (Haraway, 2016). Looking at the critters scientist brought home (Cetina, 2006), and observing their labor-intensive ritualistic workflow; the identification and agency of the critters will be defined as alive data which abstracts to cryptography (Haraway, 2006). This paper also speculates whether environmental changes will evolve the post-nature bodies for survival. This examination of the well-being of cyborg seas in this article is part of ongoing research for an artistic reflection as well, with the aim of overcoming the imperceptibility between humans and nature, by offering the solution in a question: Is art 'a missing mass'? (Latour, 1992).

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Egor Kraft

Content Aware Studies

The Content Aware Studies series initiates an inquiry into the possibilities AI and machine learning technologies hold, both as tools for speculative historical investigation and means of emerging aesthetic formation. The process, developed for over a year now by an artist together with a data scientist engaged in training artificial neural networks, replenishes lost fragments of sculptures and friezes of classical antiquity and generates never before existing, yet authentic objects of that era. The research examines how our custom developed AI, utilizing the largest recent advancement in computer vision and cognition, operates when trained on datasets consisting of thousands of 3D scans of classical sculptures from renowned international museum collections (i.e., British Museum, Metropolitan, National Roman Museum etc.). The algorithm generates models, which are then 3D printed in various synthetic materials, filling the voids in the eroded and damaged marble sculptures. Some of these algorithmic outputs are turned into new entirely marble sculptures uncanny in their algorithmic integrity. They render the work of synthetic agency that lends a faithful authenticity to the forms, while also producing bizarre errors and algorithmic normalizations of forms previously standardized and regulated by the canon of Hellenistic and Roman art. Recent research in General Adversarial Networks (GANs, a class of machine learning systems) has shown outstanding results in hyper realistic image rendering. The technology is already in use for both investigation of historical documents (ex., Voynich Manuscript) as well as predictive instrument for modelling futures. However, we might want to critically examine a role of such form of knowledge production beforehand; how do we distinguish between accelerated forms of empirical investigation and algorithmic bias? Will this question survive, when such forms of knowledge production become ubiquitous governing agencies? The work examines questions and topics of bias, authenticity, materiality, automation, authorship, knowledge and history. It inspects what visual and aesthetic qualities for such guises are conveyed when rendered by synthetic agency and perceived through our anthropocentric lens. What of our historical knowledge and interpretation, encoded into the datasets will survive this digital digestion? It examines new forms of historical knowledge and artistic production and calls into question the ethical implications of such approaches in relation to culture and the notion of endangered anthropocentric world.

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Jens Schröter

The automatic subject. The non-human agency of capital

One of the most enigmatic ideas of Karl Marx is that capital has to be understood not as a sum of money or the class of capitalists, but as an ‚ automatic subject'. This notion was long over-looked except in recent neo-marxist theoretical currents like the ‚ Critique of Value'. We can understand the automatic subject of capital on the one hand in quite Luhmannian terms as a kind of autopoietic movement of money, on the other hand this poses quite complicated theo- retical problems of how to understand this radical non-human agency which actually rules the planet. In the capitalocene the world is always already robotical. How can we understand re- sistance against this automatic and abstract agency? After a reconstruction of Marx' radically posthuman argument about the non-centrality of humans in capitalism (therefore the notion of 'anthropocene' is plainly wrong), recent readings of this quite complex arguments have to be discussed. It seems to be the only strategy of resistance to overthrow value as such, which means that resistance has necessary to lead to a society after money – a society in which agency is redistributed between human and non-human agents.

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Macon Holt, Sherilyn Hellberg, Alexander Buk Swienty

How to Refuse the Apocalypse: Or What can a Critical Theory of Climate Change do?

The response to the findings of the 2018 IPCC report has been to declare that action needs to be taken and agency needs to be exerted to prevent the disastrous effects of 2C° of global warming. In short, it is claimed that an ambiguously defined "we" needs to act to prevent the end of the world. However, this paper contends that such a personalized notion of direct action is in part what caused this mess in the first place (Wark 2015; Morton 2013). Instead, it is argued that the legacy of critical theory as both a critique of naive notions of subjectivity and agency needs to be taken seriously as a way to more fully contextualize the disparate scale of abstraction and intimacy at which phenomena such as climate change operate (Bratton 2016; Esterling 2016; Berlant 2011; Tsing 2017). Only by refusing the idea that the impending end of the world that capital built through the current climate crisis is akin to the apocalypse propper will it be possible to establish to some understanding of kinds of agencies at play in the formation of world that is to come. This paper illustrates the contours of this perspective through three areas with examples that each illustrates a different facet of the problem of agency under climate change; scales; expressions and subjectivity.

Scales

This area starts from the injunction of Diann Bauer, to "get cosy with deep time" as a model for developing the "synthetic how" (Bauer 2019) to deal with the present crisis. By analyzing the work by the collectives of which Bauer is a part, The Alliance of the Southern Triangle (2015) and Laboria Cuboniks (2017), it is argued that any notion of agency in relation to problems on the scale of climate change must be secondary to an understanding of the differential relationship between the abstract facts of the situation, the affective conditions they produce and the "disposition" that result.

Expressions

In this area, the mode of expression most commonly associated with climate change, the popular science/politics paperback, is deconstructed as a reproduction of the anthropocentrism that such texts nominally critique. Drawing on, This Changes Everything (Kline 2014) and The Uninhabitable Earth (Wallace-Wells 2019), these texts are read as attempts to induce the agencies of individuals to action through the evocation of scale and as examples, the axiomatics capitalism themselves engaged in the process of valorization through the incorporation of externalities.

Subjects

In this area, "we" explore the evacuated and distributed subject proper to this geological epoch. This will be illustrated by a consideration of the novel The Drowned World by J.G. Ballard (1962), which sees the articulation and experience of ecological disaster become infused by the non-human agencies that manifest it. Here again, the tension of the different scales at play are seen to work not only against the possibility of the agency but also the ideological insistence of the stability of the subject itself.

Taken together, these three areas provide a schematic diagram of the problems for the development of a critical theory that can engage with the cultural productions of climate change while resisting the kind of anthropocentric notions of agency that helped lead to the current crisis.

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Paige Treebridge, Jess Westbrook

How to Disappear Completely: Avoiding Computer-Mediated Superimposition

Our lives online are tracked and archived, often with consent. This now collectively extends to our neighborhoods, communities, and interpersonal relationships. The world is covered in data and online space extends into physical space. Computer networks are superimposed on top of homes, businesses, spaces, entire neighborhoods, and cities via social media and review sites that become permanent, shifting records. With our bodies and spaces existing under this not only all-seeing but all-recording umbrella, surveillance becomes a quaint historical concept. Panopticism has been recursively distributed to a degree that structure no longer applies. Our bodies are permeated with plastic residue, traces of control, if currently only of the negative, pollution sort. This first wave of invasion brings us orders of magnitude closer to potential, more complete exploitation. Whether nature, in energy consumption and waste alone, will prevent that remains uncertain. It is a nightmare, potentially humanity-ending, Moore's Law.

The panoptic tower can remember video for at least a week, but artificial intelligence and machine learning may mine data to predict our futures far beyond what is currently done with test scores, genetics, and medical history. In this essay, we explore what Phil Agre called "imperialism" of computers that aim to "reinvent virtually every other site of practice in its own image,". In relationship to this technological superimposition that has already reached into our conception of reality and the possibilities for realities, we discuss whether we can, at our core, develop and maintain an internal life that remains individually private.

Particles of plastic waste invade our bodies, including our brains. Whatever their effect, we can imagine, via science fiction, sensing-particles that extend the current trend toward customization. What can these particles learn and can we even have a private thought, queer thought that does not match normative constructs to bodily data? Or can we experience love at an unexpected time, in an unexpected way? What would these thoughts look like in a neurological map? A mapmaker can trace the patterns that make up our connection to the world, but we are developing chronologically queered „escape and evasion" strategies as they relate to the cybersecurity concepts of vulnerabilities and exploits. Our goal is to ferret out opportunities to shield our (secular) souls from exploit, even as we become more and more vulnerable in our loss of privacy—risking the loss of even the concept of non-public information.

Our recent work in social engineering explores linguistics as a code library to alter semantic structures and manipulate individual perspectives on reality. We have preliminary research that shows small hacks to linguistic politeness dramatically alter readers perceptions of power dynamics, and could influence whether the reader feels the sender is trustworthy. These results are in a paper that will be presented at the New Security Paradigms Workshop (preliminary acceptance) 2019. Based on those results, we are developing concepts related to what is recordable in data, and what avoids, or queers, deflection. This paper will argue that tactical vulnerability is a basis for a life outside continuous control.

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Stephen Dersley

Ernst Mach's Monism as an Act of Resistance

Following McKenzie Wark's reactivation of Ernst Mach's monism in Molecular Red, this paper has three aims. The first is to explore the extent to which Mach's epistemology provides tools for resisting philosophy's attempts to demarcate the cognitive domain of science—briefly analyzing Mach's critique of the Kantian 'thing-in itself'. The second aim is to reflect on Mach's assertion that scientific theory is riddled with and hindered by metaphysical dogma, and to assess Mach's monism as a response to such tendencies. The third and final aim is to consider whether, following Paul Feyerabend, Mach's historical critique of science—when viewed as an attack on the tyranny of expertise and scientific orthodoxy—can be redeployed as a robust basis for normative, humanistic criticism of the role, goals and practice of contemporary science.

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Maria Dada

Distant Media: Materiality and the Digital

The following paper will show that critical writers and thinkers on the conditions of digital media consider it to be akin to a prison. Some thinkers, such as Antoinette Ruvroy, explore the confinement of digital media by echoing work that deals directly with the conditions of the prison such as the work of Giorgio Agamben in relation to his notion of the Muselmann and Auschwitz or Michel Foucault, his description of the Panopticon in Discipline and Punish. Others, including recent accounts such as Jackie Wang's Carceral Capitalism, address the relationship between algorithmic policing and prisons directly. And although some such as Maurizio Lazzarato don't directly reference the prison, nonetheless, they insist on the control or confinement that digital media places on its subject whereby it's clear that there is no escape and no alterity to its logic. Transgression can only occur as a form of subterfuge while in custody.

According to these thinkers, digital media in all its variants, algorithms, data, or networks, produces and reproduces itself as a fascist detention centre with no outside. In its cells it aims to capture and render calculable everything that it can recognise from language and symbols to behaviours, mechanisms and affect, as Alexander Galloway, taking great influence from Gilles Deleuze, claims in his self-proclaimed control trilogy that digital media is synonymous with the control society, a society that is closed in on itself, without walls, and yet without any possibility for political action. Despite this, however, many digital media theorists, through ideas around aesthetics, singular beings or filmmaking in the case of Bernard Stiegler, manage to find the trapdoor from within the prison.

What has not been considered in all these accounts, however, is that not everyone is allowed to thrive in the prison-house of the digital. Not everyone is entitled to flourish as an artists, filmmakers or whatever singularity. Some subjects suffer the prison of the digital not as a place to endure and attempt the escape from within but as one of banishment, excommunication and exile. This paper will discuss the distant materiality of these subjects.

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Rebecca Uliasz

Represented to Pieces: Facial Recognition Technology as Proxy Politics

This presentation will critique contemporary facial recognition technology, arguing these automated surveillance systems use the face as a proxy for what Hito Steyerl calls "post-representational politics." I argue that with the proliferation of face recognition, digital imaging and computer vision techniques, the face has become post-representational— a "floating texture-surface-commodity" — where automated processes of decision-making play out in overlapping and often contradictory ways. Writes Steyerl, in the age of proxy politics, a proxy is a "mask, person, avatar, router, node, template or generic placeholder," that is "authorized to act for another person or a document which offers the agent to act." Within the post-representational regime of facial recognition technologies, the facial image functions as a proxy for citizen that at once commodifies the subject and authorizes automated sovereign decision, as seen in the violent military policing of Uighurs in rural China. It is argued that facial recognition technologies are a form of neoliberalism as a technology—operating under an illusion of neutrality, they allow for the amplification of politics by other means. If proxy politics distort, twist and rearrange the spatial and temporal relations classically determined by an undivided sovereign force, it does so through ad hoc decision making, plurality, and paradoxes that change the meaning of citizenship according to algorithmic logics in the service of capitalist interests. The facial image as proxy automates citizenship differentially across bodies, rationalizing exploitative surveillance practices, predatory financial mechanisms and violent predictive policing techniques against marked populations.

Facial recognition technologies perform what McKenzie Wark, following Donna Haraway, calls "code causality," whereby the accumulation and commoditization of certain types of information— facial features, textures, skin colors— frame the way subjects access information about the object world. They produce ontologies in accordance with market-driven logics, obfuscating discursive production and producing determinate "truths" through their techniques of sensing, perception, and processing. If proxy politics uses am image of the face to stand in for the commodified citizen-subject, what forms of representation—in the aesthetic and political sense— are made possible through its technical affordances? What does it mean when the facial image becomes post-representational, misrepresentational or obfuscated? How is agency implicated when the conditions of representation are automated, algorithmically produced, and often invisibilzed in through what Ramon Amaro calls the "coded gaze"? Moreover, unless it is presumed that there is no outside of the total subsumption of contemporary technocapitalism, how might the post-representational facial image be activated as a practice of resistance? Turning to sites where the facial image fails to produce an ontological truth or produces alternative truths, I propose contemporary media art practice as a space where the interfaces between apparatus, human labor, and knowledge production become objects of play and speculation. I will discuss "Deepfakes", and the works of artists Adam Harvey, Hito Steyerl, and Agnieszka Kurant as case specific studies where the labor or practice of engaging with post-representational politics takes on aesthetic dimensions, presenting both challenges and tactical resistance strategies against the colonization of the facial image by machinic vision.

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Pepe Rojo

Speculative Experimental Fiction and the US–Mexico Border

This paper analyzes how a border functions by studying the strategies of a six-part program of science fiction interventions in 2011, "You can see the future from here", where 200 students from the State University of Baja California conducted, during 7 weeks, a series of science fictional experiments in the most crossed-over border in the world, the Tijuana-San Ysidro border dividing Mexico and the United States. There are three lines of analysis in the paper. One is the exploration of the future as a field of possibilities and it's relation with the present, in terms of speculative fiction. The second is the experiential fiction genre, where the suspension of disbelief usually reserved for passive entertainment is used on the street, as an act. And the third is the border as a mise-en-force, a fiction backed up by the use of force.

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Adela Goldbarth

Performing Subversion: Carnival Against Power

Through the discussion of 3 recent collaborative artworks I will argue that the shared aesthetics of protest and the carnival subvert the aesthetics of power through excess, laughter, destruction, reenactment, catharsis and sacrifice. Allegorically reproducing, embodying and collectively laughing about and effacing the oppressor (and his tools) subverts —not only transitorily— power structures within and beyond the performing community. Carnivalization entails a festive celebration, but also a vibrant —and many times violent— protest embedded with critical thinking. The performers take the power back not only symbolically; subversion transforms tools of oppression into tools of liberation that allow resilient communities to remember suppressed events, purge social ills, correct official narratives, bridge dislocated communities, envision new futures, and resist the coloniality of power together. Aesthetic disobedience is a form of radical community agency.

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Ramon Amaro

Race, Surveillance and the Autopoetically Instituted Being

In this talk, I build on Sylvia Wynter's notion of autopoetically instituted living to establish a critical link between the construction of what Lewis Gordon argues is the prototypical white human, and contemporary modes of algorithmic governance. Gordon defines white prototypicality as a standard by which whiteness is epitomised as the ideal model of species. On the other hand, Wynter posits that autopoetically instituted living systems are ontological and epistemological frameworks that divorce human knowledge from their physical and biological realities. In addition, they substitute reality for order-stabilising and order legitimating codes that constitute symbolic — prototypical — forms of life. While algorithmic surveillance techniques — such as smart devices, biometric profiles, and drones — promise new unseen world views, I argue that they also articulate a wider logics of autopoetic relation that are predicated on the organisation of black life, as well as the preservation of white prototypical being.

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Mediated Environments Research Group

Anna Adam, Michał Gulik, Bogna M. Konior, Jakub Palm

Cyber-Agriculture: Nascent Phenomenon and Its Integrative Future

Cyber-agriculture, also known as controlled environmental agriculture, vertical farming, or urban farming, is one of the latest emerging technologies that connect the computer science background with the global changes in food management. As Caleb Harper, researcher from OpenAg (MIT-based), convinces, their aim is to design open-source technology at the intersection of data acquisition, sensing and machine learning. Digitising the plant's experience, its phenotype, the set of stress it encounters, and its genetics lets them build networked tools, open for everybody and fully useful. Even though the aforementioned enterprise is just dawning, one can somewhat forecast its development and potential branching using philosophical and futurological tools. Anne-Françoise Schmid proposed an intriguing method for conceptualising new inventions, structures, etc. To define a given object is to recognise all of its constitutive characteristics—and as Schmid puts forward, the interdisciplinary approach begets means of transcending the limiting aspect of current definitions. To progress, an integrative object is to be created—a one that is conjured by speculation through elimination of certain constitutive parts. From the technical point of view, vertical farming is a plant-growing format that employs contained environments where light, water, nutrients, temperature, and other climate variables are provided artificially under computer control. By recognising the technologies used in cyber-agriculture and analysing them as integrative objects, various development scenarios for the titular phenomenon are to be proposed.

Aleksandra Skowrońska, Aleksandra Brylska, Franciszek Chwałczyk, Maksymilian Sawicki, Maciej Kwietnicki

Baltic Sea voivodeship – Pacific 2050

When considering the phenomenon of Deep Sea Mining we paid attention to the issue of byproducts accompanying the exploration of the ocean floor and its remediation.

By creating a speculative, dystopian project of geopolitical post-catastrophic transformations, we predict a return to modernist poetics and exploitation policies; to models of radical exploitation producing new, post-catastrophic environments.

Jakub Alejski, Przemysław Degórski, Anna Paprzycka, Mikołaj Smykowski

Palm Oil Footprint

The speculative cloud we present deals with the issue of global networks of palm oil distribution. Our intention is to show the entanglements between ecological, political and economical aspects of palm oil production and worldwide dispersal of products based on it. To illustrate this seemingly unsolvable problem, we present the possible alternative scenarios concerning world dealing with the problems from ecosystem degradation and species extinction to obesity and foreign trade legislation.

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