

Symposium

The Socio-technical Unconscious

Tyler Reigeluth

is assistant professor in Philosophy at the Université Catholique de Lille, and a member of the ETHICS lab. He received his PhD in Philosophy from the Université Libre de Bruxelles in 2018 where he worked with the Algorithmic Governmentality FNRS-funded research project, and he subsequently carried out postdoctoral research at the Université du Québec à Montréal, the University of Chicago, and the Université de Grenoble-Alpes' Institute of Philosophy, within the framework of the Ethics & AI Chair. His research combines political theory, philosophy of technology, and STS, and has focused most recently on the relationships between human and machine learning, as well as smart city discourse. He co-edited the book *De la ville intelligente à la ville intelligible* (2019), co-authored with Thomas Berns *Ethique de la communication et de l'information* (2021) and published *L'Intelligence des villes. Critique d'une transparence sans fin* (2023).

Magdalena Krysztoforska

is currently an ICI Fellow and an interdisciplinary scholar interested in the philosophical and socio-political implications of data-driven technologies. Her doctoral research proposed a framework for addressing the blind spots of critical and computational approaches to high-stakes implementations of machine learning (such as predictive policing), drawing on perspectives from generic epistemology, critical AI studies, and the philosophy of science. More recently, her work has been exploring issues around data imaginaries, generative AI art paradigms, and the politics of measurement in machine learning. She received her PhD in Critical Theory and Cultural Studies from the University of Nottingham in 2024, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

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Workshop + Lecture

The Socio-technical Unconscious

Organized by
Magdalena Krysztoforska
26 March 2026
15:00–21:00
ICI Berlin
In English

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Workshop
15:00 - 18:00

Beyond the User
Figures of Human-Machine Interaction at Play
with Tyler Reigeluth

Within the fields of human-machine interaction design and the philosophy of technology, debates tend to revolve around the user – the reductive, instrumentalist figure who determines the value and purpose of a technical object through its use. The prevalence of this figure is clear in contemporary discussions that continue to treat complex systems (such as AI) as tools that people must learn to ‘use’ correctly. This workshop challenges the notion that the user is the only or most effective means of accounting for the various forms of practical knowledge and expertise involved in human-machine interaction, and proposes that a more diverse range of figures is needed. The discussion will focus on selected readings on play and the ludic paradigm, in order to help understand the ambivalence of contemporary technological interactions, where people are both masters and mastered, users and used, players and played. Play offers ways of thinking about technological interaction that moves beyond the determinism of a means-end relationship, and embraces the open-ended and recursive dimension of performances in which one acts through things that one does not fully control.

Lecture
19:00

Tyler Reigeluth

The Socio-technical Unconscious
of ‘Smart’ Environments

As technological systems become increasingly distributed, embedded, and multiscalar, an ever-larger part of how they function seems to escape human perception and understanding – at least at an individual level. This growing lack of ‘technical culture’ (Gilbert Simondon) reinforces forms of alienation towards technical objects wherein the latter would function automatically and independently. A prevalent critical response to this post-cybernetic situation is to open the black boxes that surround us and mediate people’s lives, in order to reveal how they work, and to reclaim control over them. However, this talk will offer an alternative perspective, inspired by anthropology (André Leroi-Gourhan), geography (Nigel Thrift), and philosophy (Gilbert Simondon, Landon Winner). This approach can help to understand and to work through the ‘socio-technical unconscious’ that underpins and innerves ‘smart’ systems, and reveals itself through lags, lapses, and breakdowns. Reigeluth will argue that the answer does not lie in the unreasonable and impossible technological expertise and mastery at an individual level, but rather in articulating the ‘geographies of intelligence’ (Simon Schaffer) that these complex technological systems involve yet obfuscate. Drawing on work from infrastructure and maintenance studies, the talk will highlight the collective dimensions that the socio-technical unconscious takes.