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SCREENS AND THE DIGITAL MEDIASCAPE
(IN PANDEMIC TIMES)

The Phenomenotechnics of Experience, or What is Knowing (on) the Internet (of Images)?

The Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated a process already underway well before its advent: the shift of social life onto the internet. As a philosopher of media and technology, I am interested in how this shift impacts the ongoing technogenesis of the human (by which I mean the coupled co-evolution of the human as a form of life and of the technical exteriorization of the living). What characterizes this shift today is the specific way it imbricates human knowledge and consciousness – including self-consciousness – within technical operations: in our activity online, the production of consciousness is not just mediated by images but is mediated by images that are themselves the result of algorithmic operations which have already taken place behind the scenes. Consciousness and knowledge are thus doubly mediated, and this double mediation involves a split between what we can directly encounter or experience (images) and what we cannot directly encounter or experience (the algorithmic engineering of images). Building on my argument in *Feed-Forward*, my talk will explore this contemporary situation in relation to a more general, Bachelard-inspired thesis that humans are originarily phenomenotechnical beings – that our knowledge, including our knowledge of ourselves and our experience of ourselves, is and has always been a result of a sensible-technical co-functioning to which we are (to some extent) operationally blind. How, I shall ask, does this phenomenotechnical condition inform our contemporary being-on-the-internet? How, specifically, does it condition our vulnerability to fake news and deep fake images as well as any politics we might adopt to contest it? And how, more broadly considered, can it help us update philosophical conceptions of subjectivity and, at the limit, of reality itself, so that we can better address the technicity of experience in our world today?



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