

ReOrient: The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies

Call for Papers

Special Issue: “The Decolonial Question Concerning Technology”

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ReOrient: The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies is publishing a special themed issue exploring alternative understandings of technology from a decolonial perspective.

In 1954, German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) published an important essay entitled “Die Frage nach der Technik” in which he attempted to explicate the historical essence of technology – in particular, its modern essence as ‘Enframing’ (*Ge-Stell*), a ‘challenging forth’ or ‘setting upon’ nature and the human world which Heidegger envisaged as culminating in a ‘cybernetic totalism’ of seemingly endless transformation. An English translation of this work – “The Question Concerning Technology” – appeared in 1977, prompting numerous responses to, and critical engagements with, its various claims.

Notwithstanding the seminal importance of the original essay for philosophy of technology and other areas of inquiry, there is a need to subject it and other works – including those of Heidegger’s contemporaries such as Mumford, Ellul and Simondon, and ‘post-Heideggerians’ such as Borgmann, Feenberg, Winner, Postman, Stiegler and Latour among others – to interrogation along decolonial lines on account of the Eurocentrism of Heidegger’s oeuvre and philosophy of technology more generally. In short, there is a need to *decolonially* question concerning technology – that is, to think about technology vis-à-vis the relation between ‘the West’ and ‘the Rest’ – with a view to effecting a ‘clearing’ of the technological imagination as a precursor to thinking – or ‘dreaming’ – about technology *otherwise*.

Such decolonial *questioning* takes on a sense of urgency in light of late modern developments associated with digitalization such as the emergence of a global networked ‘information society’, the ubiquity of mobile and social media, and the onset and increasingly widespread deployment of ‘disruptive’ technologies such as Big Data, AI, robotics and the Internet of Things (IoT) etc. This sense of urgency is reinforced by the assertion, whether purely rhetorical or at least partially grounded in technical fact, of an ostensible ‘convergence’ of such technologies with others such as genetic engineering and nanotechnology vis-à-vis an imminent global shift to a ‘posthuman’ future: consider, in this connection, the idea of ‘the technium’, viz. the concept of technology as a force that is not only as powerful as man and nature, but able to subsume and evolve them in some way, as espoused by former WIRED magazine founding editor and technology futurist, Kevin Kelly.

In this special themed issue of *ReOrient*, we seek to explore alternative ‘answers’ to Heidegger’s question concerning technology from a decolonial perspective including those which engage with post-Heideggerian developments in the philosophy of technology, and in light of the aforementioned developments within the technological sphere.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implications of Heidegger's Eurocentrism for his understanding of technology
- Decolonial interrogations of post-Heideggerian philosophy of technology
- Heidegger, technology and 'the other': East Asian and Islamicate thought
- Islamicate alternatives to the later Heidegger's 'poetic' orientation towards technology
- Essentialist and anti-essentialist conceptions of technology
- Technological inevitability as a rhetorical strategy for deferring decolonization
- 'Entanglements' of race, religion, politics, economics, science and technology
- Technologically-mediated conceptions of time and temporality
- Body-politics, geo-politics and ego-/theo-politics of technology
- Non-Eurocentric technology and the 'ontological turn'
- 'Enframing', the coloniality of Big Data / 'datafication' and 'the algorithmic turn'
- Transhumanism/Posthumanism and decolonial conceptions of the human

In line with the journal's inter-disciplinary remit, we invite submissions which explore and critically engage with one or more of the above topics among others.

Abstracts (300-500 words) to be submitted by **31 May 2018**.

Full articles to be submitted by **30 November 2018**.

More information about the journal and its intellectual orientation can be found at <http://www.plutojournals.com/reorient/>

For details on how to submit see: <http://www.plutojournals.com/reorient-guidelines/>

Those wishing to further discuss a possible topic for an article submission please email the Guest Editor at s.m.ali@open.ac.uk.