

Participatory Networks – and the Decline of the Social

Dieter Mersch, Vortrag Lissabon

Participation is one of the key-words pertaining to theories of computerization and social media. Both are considered to be techniques of interaction and communication based in cannels of mutual exchange which allow for true political participation. Therefore networks of the so-called web 2.0 are regarded to be genuinely social so that technology today supports the creation of communities and new alliances. However the claim of the lecture will be the opposite: Participation leads only to a 'bisected' or 'shrunk version' of the social, because through participation basic cooperative conditions such as 'trust' or 'justice' cannot be fully reconstructed. The crisis of the social today is related to this.

Dieter Mersch studied mathematics and philosophy at the Universities of Cologne and Bochum and made 1993 his dissertation on Umberto Eco and 1999 his habilitation on the limits of semiotic reasoning, both at Technical University of Darmstadt. 2000-2004 he was director of the 'forum for theory' at the Muthesius Art School in Kiel, 2004-13 full professor for Media Theory and director of the Department for 'Media and Arts' at the University of Potsdam, and since 2013 director of the Institute for Critical Theory at Zurich University of the Arts, Switzerland. Main publications are: *Was sich zeigt. Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis*, München 2002, *Ereignis und Aura. Untersuchungen zur einer Ästhetik des Performativen*, Frankfurt/M 2002, *Medientheorien zur Einführung*, Hamburg 2006, *Posthermeneutik*, Berlin 2010, *Ordo ab Chao/Order from Noise*, Zürich/Berlin 2013, and *Epistemologies of Aesthetics*, Zürich/Berlin 2015 as well as several articles on semiotics, art theory and aesthetics. Between 1981 and 1993 he also worked as a mathematician at the University and University of Applied Science in Cologne and wrote during the same time broadcasts for German radio broadcastings (ARD).

