

# Rousseau meets Azuma

## A Fictional Discourse on the ‘General Will 2.0’

Martin ROTH (Leiden University) and  
Fabian SCHÄFER (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg)

After seven days of rain, at last, a sunny afternoon. It is warm enough at least to go outside. Azuma Hiroki left the hotel and started walking the streets of Geneva, where Jean-Jacques Rousseau had formulated the ideas for his *Social Contract* a long time ago. After several hours of intellectual stroll, he was mysteriously drawn to a small park. It was a square park with a fountain in the middle. An old man with white, curly hair was engrossed in an e-book on his tablet, surrounded by pigeons. But it was neither the man nor the pigeons that caught his attention when he sat on the bank, right next to the old man. It was the book, the old man was reading on his tablet—an older model with leather binding. This was the automatized English Google-translation of his own 2011 book, entitled “General Will 2.0: Rousseau, Freud, Google”, in which he discussed nothing less than the reason for his trip to Europe.

He hesitated a little, but eventually approached the man.

Azuma Hiroki: “Monsieur, this is my book...ce livre est à moi!”

The old man looked up with puzzlement.

Old Man: “Young fellow, I admit that I never liked the idea of private property, but I am too old to hack candle-book accounts and steal your books!”

AH: “No, I’m sorry, I meant that I am the author”, he was relieved that the old man seemed to be fluent in English.

The old man nodded.

OM: “Oh, I see! It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. I find your attempt at thinking about new ways for political participation in our contemporary information societies, with their trend towards what you describe in the words of a well-known Japanese sociologist as desocializing ‘islandization’, very compelling.”

The old man, despite his age, obviously seemed to be aware of many of the recent developments in contemporary societies, like the increase in non-public communication limited to peer-groups or subcultures, which had been one of the starting points for Azuma’s thought experiment.<sup>2</sup>

AH: “The starting point for my project is the observation that in what I call non-teleological, non-idealist post-modern times,<sup>3</sup> people are neither interested in progress, nor in communication with the abstract ‘Other’ (*tasha*) of the public sphere. On the contrary, we more

and more observe a trend towards ‘immediately-virtual’ online communication with a concrete individual other (*tanin*).<sup>4</sup> The Internet, and the so-called web 2.0 in particular, have accelerated this trend away from a public sphere based on centralized, vertically organized mass media, towards the ‘village-like’ (*sonraku-teki*) space of horizontally connected subcultural communities.<sup>5</sup> This influences the character of contemporary communities and the communication among their members. In the words of my colleague Kitada Akihiro, a sociologist, once might describe this kind of communication as ‘connective sociality’ (*tsunagari no shakai-sei*).<sup>6</sup> He claims that the obligation towards a value system based on an overarching, abstract Other has gradually been weakened and replaced by the ‘connection’ (*tsunagari*) to close friends since the mid-1990s. Crucially, such ‘connections’ are based on an autotelic use of communication media. Autotelic because, according to Kitada, this kind of this kind of communication is not aimed at communicating a message, but rather at the act of communicating as such.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the function of communication lies more and more in being connected and maintaining relations, instead of content-oriented dialogue.<sup>8</sup> May I ask now what you think of the ideas I developed in my book?”

OM: “I must admit that some sections gave me a lot of trouble, particularly the understanding of digital (autotelic) communication your assumptions are based on. But it became clearer to me when I coincidentally read an example of twitter in a book edited by the two German communication theorists Andreas Hepp and Friedrich Krotz.<sup>9</sup> They claim that functions in twitter are activated via specific functional communication operators. In other words, in the case of these operators (@, #, RT, http://), the user input provokes a technical operation, which addresses a specific communicative function. From this perspective, Kitada’s analysis implies that all communication can be replaced by such operators, because it gains meaning not through its content, but due to the fact that it addresses somebody—everything becomes an ‘@.’ This made me understand what you and Mr. Kitada meant by autotelic (or connective) communication.”

AH: “I couldn’t have explained it better. In a similar way, Facebook’s ‘I-like’-button is more a way of connecting to others, than of communicating specific content.

The communicative space generated by this functional connectivity, in my opinion, differs significantly from a Habermasian public sphere based on rational discourse. You connect to your digital friends, but such connections may quickly spread and be visible and effective far beyond, especially through indirect connections to friends of your friends. And still, for the outsider, who does not visit a specific website or use a specific service, this public sphere remains invisible. What emerges here is what I would call now, after having written my book, a new kind of ‘semi-public sphere,’ which can be located somewhere in-between the press-based public sphere Habermas described, and the intimacy of the private realm.”

OM: “D’accord! But I am struggling more with the way you make use of Rousseau. I can tell that you generally seem to share Rousseau’s concern with the relation between freedom, political participation, consensus and community, and that you try to rethink these terms in our digital age of fragmented semi-public spheres and autotelic media use. But I have to admit that I have some doubts about two main aspects you adapt from Rousseau. Firstly, you discuss a section of *The Social Contract*, in which Rousseau outlines the conditions of his general will. In French, the passage reads ‘Si [...] les Citoyen n’avaient aucune communication entre eux...’<sup>10</sup> You take this to mean that, if citizens were well-informed but didn’t communicate among each other, the many little differences between them would generate a just general will and just politics. On this basis, you argue that the fragmented, isolated semi-public spheres of the web 2.0 today approach a situation in which such ‘just’ politics is de facto possible. Please correct me if I misunderstood you.”

AH: “No, you’re absolutely right. I believe that the latent, semi-public, functionally-communicative space of the web 2.0-connected subcultures rather based on connective sociality can be understood as the emergence of a kind of ‘politics without communication’ (*komyunikēshon naki seiji*) or a ‘politics outside of communication’ (*komyunikēshon no gaibu ni aru seiji*)<sup>11</sup>, because it emerges outside of the public, mass-mediated deliberative arena of party politics.”

The old man started to type into his pad, as if searching for something.

OM: “I found this very interesting and, in itself, rather convincing. But don’t think that it is what Rousseau meant. You see, in his time, ‘communication’ in French did not mean the same as the English term means today. In fact, I just looked up the German translation of Rousseau, and here the sentence you just quoted is translated as ‘Wenn die Bürger keinerlei Verbindung untereinander hätten [...]’.”<sup>11</sup>

Now it was Azuma’s turn to take out his tablet...an AI-phone, of course.

AH: “But this term appears in the Japanese version of Rousseau as well, where it is translated as ‘*komyunikēshon*.’ I just checked it.”

OM “Probably a neologism, taken over from the English translation of Rousseau’s book. ‘*Verbindung*’ fits the context better. In French, communication at the time meant ‘to have a relation/connection (*Verbindung*) to somebody.’ My guess is that this passage addressed the problem of political relations and lobbying, which he regarded as a way of influencing the individual towards making decisions in favor of a small part of society rather than the general public, and hence a threat to the general will. This is quite clear from the passage following this sentence, which reads ‘[b]ut when factions arise, small associations at the expense of the large association, the will of each one of these associations becomes general in relation to its members and particular in relation to the State; there can then no longer be said to be as many voters as there are men, but only as many as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and yield a less general result. Finally, when one of these associations is so large that it prevails over all the rest, the result you have is no longer a sum of small differences, but one single difference; then there is no longer a general will, and the opinion that prevails is nothing but a private opinion.’<sup>13</sup> For Rousseau, ‘communication’ refers to the lobbyist relations in party politics not unlike ours today, in a phase that some observers have rightfully called ‘post-democracy’.”

AH: “I see.”

OM: “The misunderstanding is a widespread one<sup>14</sup>, and you seem to have contributed to its perpetuation. I just stumbled over another philosopher who goes as far as to criticize the German translation to be mistaken, probably on the basis of your very text.<sup>15</sup> Admittedly, Rousseau does not make this point clear enough in his own text, because the idea of the general will and its relation to individual differences remains somewhat vague. On the one hand, he seems to believe that the existence of disagreement is an indicator for a potential decline of the community; on the other hand, ‘the unanimity required by the general will seems compatible with substantial political disagreement’.<sup>15</sup> I think Rousseau’s suspicion towards party politics comes from his belief that the foundation of a society is more solid, the more individual differences there are. Rousseau writes that ‘[t]here is often a considerable difference between the will of all and the general will: the latter looks only to the common interest, the former looks to private interest, and is nothing but a sum of particular wills; but if, from these wills, one takes away the pluses and the minuses which cancel each other out, what is left as the *sum of the differences* is the general will’.<sup>16</sup> In an enlightening footnote, he adds that ‘the agreement

between all interests is formed by opposition to each one's interest. If there were no different interests, the common interest would scarcely be sensible since it would never encounter obstacles: everything would run by itself, and politics would cease to be an art'.<sup>18</sup>

AH: "It is interesting that you mention this passage, because I consider it as very important to support the most fundamental idea of my book. I know that many scholars have commented on the controversiality of this mathematical conception of the general will. But in the context of our present, which is so deeply permeated by mathematical algorithms, this passage suddenly makes sense to me. In contrast to the 'desire of the majority,' which drives representative democracy, the general will could, in mathematical terms, be understood as a social equilibrium, or a 'leveled wish of all' (*narasareta minna no nozomi*).<sup>19</sup> With the help of contemporary methods of software analysis, this sum of all differences might in fact be extracted from the data gained in the web 2.0, which, as we have already discussed, is based on forms of autotelic or functional communication. Scholars of the new field of digital humanities, particularly from a direction called 'computational social science,' argue that, put in my own words, the citizen's 'unconsciously communicated intentions and desires' could be 'collected and systematically processed' with the help of adequate software.<sup>20</sup> Today, for the first time, we find ourselves capable of determining the 'general will' exactly—not just as an artificial normative value system based on consensual agreement to shared ideals, but rather as its opposite: a strictly 'material order' (*mono no chitsujo*), which only exists mathematically (*sūgaku-teki sonzai*).<sup>21</sup> We live in a 'ubiquitous recording society' (*sō-kiroku shakai*), in which personal data and opinions are voluntarily published and permanently stored in the semi-public space of the Internet. The gigantic database of latent desires and non-verbally expressed attitudes is nothing but the 'general will' in a new shape, the 'general will 2.0' (*ippan ishi 2.0*), so to speak.<sup>22</sup> Without any effort on our own part, algorithms can extrapolate 'unconscious desire patterns which exceed the thoughts of any individual by far'.<sup>23</sup> This is a great opportunity for turning the web 2.0, in which our mathematical general will is recorded and stored, into an 'apparatus for visualizing the unconscious' (*mu-ishiki wo kashi-ka suru sōchi*).<sup>24</sup> If we base political decisions on the unconsciousness political opinions and attitudes of the people expressed in the general will 2.0 in a direct-democratic manner, we would be able avoid the power politics of political parties which Rousseau himself had so severely criticized.

OM: "This is indeed an interesting direction and certainly a stimulating idea for discussions about digital media and contemporary politics. And yet I'm torn for

an obvious reason. To me, it is questionable, to say the least, if Rousseau thought of it in this way when he conceptualized the general will. In fact, I would interpret this passage rather as a way of saying that a minimal consensus is necessary for the continuous existence of a society, and that this consensus only becomes visible because it exists in contrast to or in spite of the individual differences among the members of this society. This lowest common denominator is nothing else than a will to live together and shape a common future, shared by all individuals of a community despite their differing views and ideas. It plays a 'regulative role'<sup>25</sup> which generates 'unity through ordering'.<sup>26</sup> For Rousseau, the general will is a voluntarily shared commitment to a safer and better life in a community, and in this sense a conceptual attempt at solving the general problem of balancing individual freedom against the security of a well-defined community.<sup>27</sup> Such society, my friend, is not fragmented, temporary, and unconscious, but requires a commitment to a strong yet 'free community of equals,' despite or maybe even as a result of individual diversity.<sup>28</sup>

I believe that there is a difference between this commitment and an 'I-like'-statement on Facebook, for instance. Come to think of it, the two concepts of general will almost seem in opposition: Rousseau's general will was intended as a solution to the problem of how to provide the basis for a community that leaves individual freedom and the diversity of 'healthy differences' as intact as possible. Don't you risk brushing over these individual differences by claiming that they can be reduced to an average value or a visualized sum of big data?"

AH: "I see your point, and agree that more needs to be done to solve this problem. But I would like to clarify that my main intentions were to contribute to a search for ways to make visible those opinions which are usually hidden from the perception of those who make politics on the one hand, and to think a democracy beyond representation on the other."

OM: "Rousseau would certainly be sympathetic to your intention, because, like you, he has an aversion against representative democracy. He writes: 'Sovereignty cannot be represented for the same reason that it cannot be alienated; it consists essentially in the general will, and the will does not admit of being represented: either it is the same or it is different; there is no middle ground. The deputies of the people therefore are not and cannot be its representatives, they are merely its agents; they cannot conclude anything definitively'.<sup>29</sup>

AH: "Yes, I share this criticism and I have tried to radicalize and adapt Rousseau's ideas to our contemporary environment. I believe he rejected political parties not only because he supports direct democracy, but rather because he rejected debate and other influences on

the formation of individual opinion in general.<sup>30</sup> For me, this connects well with the new opportunities for political participation that arise from the Internet. The idea of the general will 2.0 aims at nothing else than at ‘confronting (*taiketsu*) the unconscious instead of repressing it [from the start]’.<sup>31</sup> In this sense, I want to stimulate a discussion of what the public sphere is and what or who belongs to it. The general will 2.0 could be seen as a something like a principle for visualizing already existing but not yet represented parts of a broader public sphere. Moreover, at the beginning of this project, my aim was to conceptualize a radical version of a ‘democracy 2.0’ entirely based on the ‘aggregated privately-animalistic actions’ in the semi-public sphere of the Internet.<sup>32</sup>”

OM: “I see. And yet, I have to say that this dimension of your book left me with puzzlement. Although I appreciate your radical approach, I wonder if it does not risk to blur the idea of political action and political thought beyond recognition. Firstly, because it is not clear to me why we should regard what you call ‘unconscious’ functional communication in a semi-public space as political. On the contrary, I suspect that the quality and content of such communication and their emotional charge is not unrelated to the awareness of the participants that they are not contributing to a political discourse in a public sphere. I know that many studies prove that particularly younger generations have not lost their political interest, even though they do not commit to party politics any more. However, I am not convinced that those who express themselves in what one might also call semi-public spheres of the Internet rather than in the public sphere, do so because they are searching for a new forum for political participation.<sup>33</sup> If the rise of semi-public spheres, on the other hand, indicates a loss of faith in or an indifference towards the commitment to a political community—which yet needs to be proved, of course—Rousseau himself finds rather clear words: ‘As soon as someone says about affairs of the State What do I care? The State has to be considered lost’.<sup>34</sup>

And secondly, because it is not clear to me how such unconscious, emotionally charged communication can lead to political decisions based on reasoning and discussion. Although I agree with you that emotion plays an important role in all thought and communication, be it private or public, I also think that on some level, content has to play a role in the political. But maybe I am simply too old to understand the potentials of the web 2.0. Would you be so kind to explain to me how political decisions are made under the conditions of a general will 2.0 and how emotional, unconscious, and anonymous opinions are related to reasoned, conscious, intentional, and signed ones?”

AH: “You have identified two crucial problems. I must admit that I have not considered the first one in depth. However, regarding the second one, you might have noticed that I have changed my perspective during the course of working on the book, which is a collection of serial essays written for a monthly journal over the period of more than a year. I saw the need to reconcile the two opposed sides in my proposal for a ‘politics 2.0.: the public sphere based on deliberation, and the unconscious, emotional communication of the semi-public sphere.’ On page 141 of my book, you will find a model of what I call the ‘government 2.0’ (*seifu 2.0*) (see figure 1, our translation).

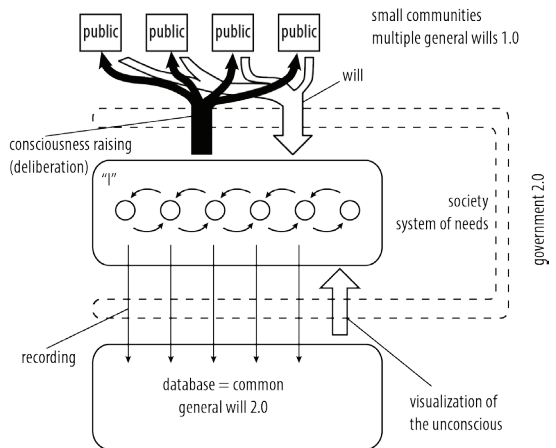


Figure 1.: The novel relationship of state, society and the database. Source: Azuma (2011: 139, translation ours).

In this model, the government 2.0 functions as a kind of interface in-between the general will 1.0, which represents the conventional public sphere consisting of the multiple publics of the many communities in a society, and the visualized unconscious general 2.0, extracted from the common database of the Web 2.0. The task of the government is thus not only to mediate the deliberative general will 1.0 and the unconscious will 2.0, but also to make sure that the two are balanced and checked against each other. The members of the government 2.0 thus replace the organs of representative democracies, such as parties, and become ministers in the Rousseauian sense (therefore not representatives). I envision a political system in which ‘the expanding database [of the general will 2.0] compensates for the restrictions of a deliberative politics, while logical deliberation prevents a dominance of the database’.<sup>35</sup> The two forces would compete with each other in parliament. In my opinion, it must thus be the task of a future state 2.0 (*kokka 2.0*) to endure the seeming superficiality of the immediate desires just as well as the seemingly endless, in-depth debates in the processes of opinion formation in the public.<sup>36</sup> I call this mixture not direct or indirect, but rather an ‘unconscious democracy’ (*mu-ishiki minshu shugi*).<sup>37</sup>

OM: “I can’t deny that I am intrigued by the idea that intentional public utterances and opinions are complemented with latently, unconsciously and anonymously expressed desires. But still, I am not entirely convinced by your treatment of unconscious communication as political statement. The question, for me, is whether anybody has the right to patronize those who communicate functionally with friends and evaluate their semi-private communication as political statements without consulting them. But more generally, I also wonder if this model actually leads to a broader participation in political processes. The so-called ‘digital divide,’ meaning that different parts of society have different possibilities and abilities to access the Internet due to financial, educational, or other reasons, as well as the problem of hierarchical and often closed spaces within the social web, suggest that including those who communicate online could mean to exclude those who do not participate in the web 2.0.

A second question that arises from your discussion concerns the practical realization. You refer to the fact that data can be visualized today in various ways, but seem to ignore the fact that visualization is man-made and thus is subjected to decisions and politics itself. Software-based information is, in most cases, characterized by a dual structure of data and algorithm—the second organizes, configures, sorts, and presents or visualizes the first. This means that the way in which something is presented, as well as what is presented, is influenced by the human creator of the algorithm. Lev Manovich calls this politics of mapping, in which specific actors decide on what data is converted in what ways, and how it is presented to the user.<sup>38</sup> Maybe this could be a starting point for further elaborations in this direction. It could prevent your political project from being turned into a tool of marketing departments, secret services, public relations campaigning, and populism—another problem you have only superficially dealt with in your book, despite its actuality.

Given the interest in questions of subjectivity with regard to contemporary media culture you displayed in your publications on the *otaku*,<sup>39</sup> I also wonder if your project could not be substantiated fruitfully by redefining the concept of the subject as to incorporate these unconscious and emotional elements more centrally. As a starting point, Nigel Thrift’s remarks on the importance of unconscious “non-representational” contents of affects could be interesting.<sup>40</sup> Other than you, Thrift regards the non-representational side as a “modest supplement” to conventional politics.<sup>41</sup> I believe you prepared the ground for such analysis, despite or maybe because of your ‘healthy differences’ from Rousseau’s theory. I think the fact that you raise all these questions makes your experiment successful and qualifies it as a stimulating reading. Chapeau!”

AH: “Thank you very much for your opinion. You’ve certainly pointed to several crucial difficulties I have to face in the future. If my work can contribute to more thinking in these directions, it has served its purpose. You see, in Japan, we have a special genre called *hyōron*. It is hard to translate, but think of it as critical essay or commentary. Various graduations exist, of course, but I tend to think of it as a genre of popular intellectual discourse, in which scientific rigor is less central than provocative propositions. In a way, that is quite similar to our open conversation today. If my contribution helps to keep the conversation going, I have achieved more than what I had hoped for. But now, I’m afraid I have to go. I have to catch my train to Paris. My next destination is Tschernobyl, where I hope to find inspiration for future projects. Thank you again for your time. Adieu.”

## Endnotes

1. All direct quotations from Azuma’s book are our translations.
2. Azuma is influenced by sociologist Miyadai Shinji. Miyadai’s (1994) *Seifuku shōjo-tachi no sentaku* (“The Choices of Girls in Uniforms”) suggests that, along with the fragmentation of a common, national culture into subcultural “island universes” (*shima uchū-ka*) since the 1980s, Japanese society has displayed a desocializing tendency (*datsu-shakai-ka*). This tendency is strongly related to the “informatization” (*jōhō-ka*) of social relations and the everyday in general, which, according to Miyadai, has furthered an individualization of media consumption and media communication. He remembered this so well because Miyadai had used the catchy metaphor of the convenience store (*konbini*) to describe this trend. He himself had adapted this metaphor in the very book the old man was holding up. He had described the *konbini* as a “universal store,” which “creates the impression that everything is alright.” It was a symbol of “indestructible everyday,” in which everybody could “live their life in peace and without any noteworthy nuisances.” (Azuma 2011a: 21).
3. Ōtsuka and Azuma (2008: 281-282).
4. Ōtsuka and Azuma (2008: 285-286).
5. Ōtsuka and Azuma (2008: 248, 280).
6. Kitada (2005).
7. Kitada (2005: 206).
8. Kitada (2011: 138-141) distinguishes between a connective sociality and a “orderly sociality” (*chitsujo no shakaisei*). While the latter is directed towards a mutual understanding between those involved in a communication process, the former is more focused on the fact that both are connected by communicative means. In his view, the intricate interrelation between both dimensions opens up our social space. At the same time, the two dimensions of sociality correspond to two directions in contemporary media culture, namely the mass media directed towards a dominated public sphere, in which the sender (the media) try to convey a message or truth on the one hand, and the connective sociality created by “exhibitory” websites (*nozokare kei saito*), on which the fact that one sends messages is more important than the content of the messages.
9. Thimm, Einspänner, and Dang-Anh (2012: 292).
10. Rousseau quoted in Azuma (2011b: 53).
11. Azuma (2011b: 68).
12. Rousseau (2010: 63). In full, the passage reads: „Wenn die Bürger keinerlei Verbindung untereinander (*communication entre eux*) hätten,

- würde, wenn das Volk wohlunterrichtet entscheidet, aus der großen Zahl der kleinen Unterschiede immer der Gemeinwille hervorgehen, und die Entscheidung wäre immer gut.” (Rousseau 2010: 63).
13. Rousseau (2010: 60).
  14. Azuma falls into a common trap, described by Rousseau-critic Joshua Cohen as follows: “So it seems clear from the context – and from the contrast signaled by „But when faction arise...“ – that his concern is not with communication as such but with factionalization. [...] Here, Rousseau is best understood as expressing hostility not to communication but to factionalization, which leads individuals away from expressing their own judgments, and pressures them instead to express the opinions of the faction to which they belong, which arguably implies a reduction of information. (Cohen 2010: 76, cf.: 138-139) This may be a result of the Japanese translation, which states: “*shimin ga tagai ni ikanaru komyunikēshon mo toranai no deareba*” (so in: Azuma 2011: 53).
  15. The philosopher Byung-Chul Han writes: “The German translation deviates a great deal from the original due to the strangeness of this idea [of a communicationless politics, *fsmer*]. [...] Here, Rousseau has a *délibérer* (negotiation) without communication, without discourse, in mind. The translation of ‘aucune communication’ as ‘with no binding relation’ (‘keine feste Verbindung’ in German, *FSMER*) is caused by the translator’s estrangement.” (Han: 21-22).
  16. Cohen (2010: 70).
  17. Rousseau (2010: 60, our emphasis).
  18. Rousseau (2010: 60).
  19. Azuma (2011b: 69-70).
  20. Azuma (2011b: 81).
  21. Azuma (2011b: 47).
  22. Azuma (2011b: 139-142).
  23. Azuma (2011b: 83, 86).
  24. Azuma (2011b: 129).
  25. Cohen (2010: 20).
  26. Cohen (2010: 40).
  27. For Rousseau (2010: 49-50), the problem is “[t]o find a form of association that will defend and protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force, and by means of which each, uniting with all, nevertheless obey only himself and remain as free as before.”
  28. „[F]ree, because it ensures the full political autonomy of each member; a community, because it is organized around a shared understanding of and supreme allegiance to the common good; and a community of equals – a democratic society – because the content of that understanding reflects the good of each member“ (Cohen 2010: 16). However, Rousseau is rather explicit about the intentionality of the general will. He writes, “while the opposition of particular interests made the establishment of societies necessary, it is the agreement of these same interests which made it possible. What these different interests have in common is what forms the social bond, and if there were not some point on which all interests agree, no society could exist” (Rousseau 2010: 57).
  29. Rousseau (2010: 114).
  30. Azuma (2011: 51-52, 54).
  31. Azuma (2011b: 183).
  32. Azuma (2011b: 202-203).
  33. The Japanese artist collective CHAOS\*LOUNGE, which experiments with the expressive possibilities of popular culture in what they, in reference to Azuma, call the “animalized postmodern,” for example, offers a decisively critical account of the *otaku* subculture that is at the center of Azuma’s discussion of new online communities. “Otaku are going about their normal lives with no connection to the disaster. It is this never-ending ordinary life that is venerable. [...] After 3.11 what has become clear is that there are aspects of the otaku that will not change even after the catastrophe, a rather regretful part of digital Japan where an indigenous system becomes simply peer pressure.” (Kurose Yōhei, <http://chaosxlounge.com/chaosexile/chaosexile.html>, accessed 18-10-2013)
  34. Rousseau (2010: 113-114).
  35. Azuma (2011b: 143).
  36. Azuma (2011b: 142).
  37. Azuma (2011b: 181).
  38. Manovich (2002). In his Google-commissioned expertise about Google *page rank*, jurist Eugene Volokh concluded that algorithms are human-made artifacts and as such are protected by the right to free speech (vgl. Volokh 2012: 10). Eli Pariser (2011) writes about Facebook’s algorithmic *edge rank* that it creates a “filter bubble” around us, which shuts out dissonant opinions and attitudes and surrounds us with our preferred attitudes and ideas.
  39. Azuma (2009 [2001]).
  40. Thrift (2008).
  41. Thrift (2008: 20).

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