

---

# Cybernetics, control and Big data

Teresa Numerico\*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Rome III – Italy

## Abstract

The advent of "Big data" raises new questions about the cyber-utopia of a brave new open cyberspace. In this talk I propose a genealogy of the network starting from cybernetics: the idea of concentrating on the special case of communication represented by control left only a little hope that cyberspace could allow a special freedom experience, with respect to real life.

Wiener played an ambivalent role in the development of communication technologies: he allowed the idea of obtaining control tools by developing communication devices, while suggesting that these machines could be very dangerous because they can favour concentration of power, and mechanization of human behaviour.

Cybernetics' crucial point suggested that there was no boundary and no relevant difference between a biological organism and a mechanical device as far as they shared a similar structure to interact with the environment. I will argue that negative feedback and the black box attitude permitted a new perspective on the machine as a communication device which could control information production. The control device crucial for the communication technologies reproduced the ideology of the laplacian machine within the network, by the use of cloud computing, a central tool for the organization of information typical of the Web 2.0.

---

\*Speaker