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**NONCOGNITIVE CAPITALISM
IN TIMES OF NEUROCULTURE**

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RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM, HÖRSAAL GABF 04/611, 18:00 UHR

LEITUNG: PROF. DR. ERICH HÖRL

INSTITUT FÜR MEDIENWISSENSCHAFT, RUHR UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

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GEFÖRDERT DURCH:



Alfried Krupp von Bohlen
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ABSTRACT

In this talk I will expand on the idea of noncognitive capitalism briefly introduced in my book *Virality* (Minnesota, 2012). There I attempted to grasp some of the conditions of network capitalism through a „resuscitation“ of Gabriel Tarde's imitation thesis. In short, Tarde was fascinated by the brain sciences of his day, and as such, he theorized base social relation (repetition-imitation) as „unconscious associations“, or in other words, social networks of mostly hypnotized brain cells. Here I will rethink what we might now call neuroculture and ask to what extent avenues of current brain science are coming together with capitalist enterprise to shape contemporary social relationality.

I will contend that the looming shadow of neuroculture provokes a series of questions. The first (what can be done to a brain?) explores the interwovenness of often conflicting cognitive and behavioural neuroscientific research, the attention economy and work in the digital industries. The second (what can a brain do?) asks if a brain can be liberated from the objectifying forces of neuroculture. And finally (what is it that thinks?) struggles to look beyond the objectified brain to nomadic assemblages of sense making.

BIOGRAPHY

Tony D. Sampson is a London-based theorist, writer and Reader in Digital Culture and Communications at the University of East London. A former musician, he studied computing and digital culture before receiving a PhD in sociology from the University of Essex. His ongoing interest in contagion theory is reflected in his publications, including *The Spam Book*, co-edited with Jussi Parikka (Hampton Press, 2009) and *Virality: Contagion Theory in the Age of Networks* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012). He is currently writing his next book on noncognitive capitalism and neuroculture. He occasionally blogs at: <http://viralcontagion.wordpress.com/>