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Engineering seen in a critical and phenomenological perspective

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Abstract – Society for Phenomenology and Human Sciences (SPHS)

The End of Engineering.

Engineering seen in a critical and phenomenological perspective.

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The paper will elaborate on the discussions that the American historian of technology Rosalind Williams introduced in: *"Retooling. A Historian Confronts Technological Change"* (2002), and furthermore frame the provocative stance of: 'The End of Engineering' in a critical Post- Phenomenological perspective where I mainly draw on the ideas and concepts of Don Ihde, Andrew Feenberg, Carl Mitcham and Andrew Jamison.

Williams wrote: "Engineering is 'ending' only in the sense that nature is ending: as a distinct and separate realm. The two processes of disintegration are linked" (Williams 2002:31). What is meant is that for engineering to become a new it has to engage and intertwine with the social and cultural context. The paper will discuss how this is possible in a critical and post-phenomenological perspective, where actions and assessments are made with an outset in what has been coined as: 'hybrid imagination of technology' (Jamison 2011). A 'hybrid imagination of technology' that becomes through construction of curricula and practice where the cultural and societal context is taken seriously. There is in the construction of the 'imagination' a focus on learning from practice in context and the ability to reflect on the actual and situational learning. The notion of practical and critical hermeneutics is central in the possible resurrection and regeneration of engineering.

Keywords: Hybrid imagination, engineering, social and cultural assessments of technology, post-phenomenology

Main references:

Williams, R. (2002): *Retooling. A Historian Confronts Technological Change*.

Jamison A., Hyldgaard Christensen, S. and Botin, L. (forthcoming 2011-12). *The hybrid imagination. Science and technology in cultural perspective*. Morgan and Claypool Publisher