



International Conference

Affective Transformations: Politics. Algorithms. Media.

November 1 – 3, 2017

University of Potsdam, Campus Am Neuen Palais, 14469 Potsdam, House 8

Conception: Marie-Luise Angerer, Bernd Bösel, Kathrin Friedrich, Mathias Fuchs, Gabriele Gramelsberger, Irina Kaldrack, Andreas Kaminski, Dawid Kasprowicz, Oliver Leistert, Markus Rautzenberg, Sandra Wachter, Jutta Weber, Serjoscha Wiemer

The conference is part of the Network “Affect- and Psychotechnology Studies. Emergente Techniken affektiver und emotionaler (Selbst-)Kontrolle” funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Organisation: Marie-Luise Angerer, Bernd Bösel, Naomie Gramlich

The affective turn has recently come under pressure. The fascination with all things affective that emerged during the 1990s and peaked in the first decade of the 21st century has lost its former innocence and euphoria. Affect Studies and its adjacent disciplines have now to prove that they can cope with the return of the affective real that technology, economy and politics entail.

Two seemingly contradictory developments will be picked up as starting points for the conference. First, innovations in advanced disciplines such as affective computing, mood tracking, sentiment analysis, psycho-informatics and social robotics all share a focus on the recognition and modulation of human affectivity. Mechanisms like individual affect regulation or emotion management are being increasingly transferred onto personal digital devices. These algorithmic technologies collect affective data, process them and nudge users into normalized behavior and patterns of feeling. Affect gets measured, calculated, controlled.

Secondly, recent developments in politics, social media usage and journalism have contributed to an conspicuous rise of hate speech, cybermobbing, public shaming, “felt truths” and resentful populisms. In a very specific way, politics as well as power have become affective. In light of the rise of neo-nationalisms, religious and conspiratorial fanaticisms and presidentially decreed patriotism, the question what affective politics does, can or should mean attains an unparalleled urgency. Affects gets mobilized, fomented, unleashed.

We thus witness, on the one hand, the emergence of what we propose to call “affective media”, i.e. technologies and applications that rationalize affects by processing them algorithmically. On the other hand, we observe that (social) media affects become irrational and seem to have disruptive effects on the political as well as social order of (not only)

Western democracies. These two developments appear to be linked. For example, while social media echo chambers are part of the affective media spectrum, their effects are very real and are radically altering our socio-political landscapes (e.g. Brexit, US election). What was invented to control affect has furthered uncontrollability on a potentially global scale.

By assembling scholars from different fields of research, we want to examine this apparent paradox and put the emphasis on its historical, transformational nature. When the ways we deal with our affectivity get unsettled in such a dramatic fashion, we obviously have to rethink our ethical, aesthetical, political as well as legal regimes of affect organization. This is not just a purely academic task, but rather an issue of responsibility.

The event is open to the public, registration requested.

Preliminary Program

November 1, 2017

2:30 pm: Registration

3:30 pm: Bernd Bösel (Potsdam): **Welcome and Introduction**

3:45 pm: Performance Lecture and Installation

Dina Boswank (Berlin), Timo Herbst (Berlin/Leipzig), Irina Kaldrack (Braunschweig):

Transforming Political Gestures Through a Chain

4:30 pm: Opening Lecture

Marie-Luise Angerer (Potsdam): **Paradoxes of Becoming Intense. On Smart Companionship, Significant Selfies and Animojis**

(Chair: Bernd Bösel)

5:30 pm: Coffee break

6:00 pm: Evening Lecture

Richard Grusin (Wisconsin-Milwaukee): **Counter-Mediations**

(Chair: Marie-Luise Angerer)

November 2, 2017

10:00 am: Lecture 1

Andrew A. G. Ross (Ohio): **Digital Humanitarianism and the Cultural Politics of a Planetary Nervous System**

(Chair: Michaela Ott)

11:15 am: Coffee break

11:30 am: Panel 1 **Aufklärung 2.0 / Enlightenment 2.0**

Markus Rautzenberg (Essen): **Alien Thinking. On the Return of the Sublime**

Mathias Fuchs (Lüneburg): **Affect Esoterics**

Sandra Wachter (Oxford): **Law and Ethics of Big Data, AI, and Robotics**

(Chair: Jutta Weber)

1:00 pm: Lunch

2:30 pm: Lecture 2

Pierre Cassou-Noguès (Paris): **The Synhaptic Monster**

(Chair: Mathias Fuchs)

3:45 pm: Coffee break

4:00 pm: Panel 2 **Techno(Ir)rationalities**

Jutta Weber (Paderborn): **Techno(ir)rationality and Technosecurity**

Oliver Leistert (Lüneburg): **Effective Affects with Social Bots**

Bernd Bösel (Potsdam): **Affective Media Regulation**

(Chair: Serjoscha Wiemer)

5:30 pm: Coffee break

6:00 pm: Evening Lecture

Michaela Ott (Hamburg): **Affective Media Politics**

(Chair: Markus Rautzenberg)

8:00 pm: Conference Dinner

November 3, 2017

10:00 am: Lecture 3

Paul Stenner (London): **Affect on the Turn. Liminal Media for Affective Transformation**

(Chair: Thomas Slunecko)

11:15 am: Coffee break

11:30 am: Panel 3 **Conceptualizing Interfaces of Affection**

Dawid Kasprowicz (Witten-Herdecke): **Encoding Proximity. Intuition in Human-Robot Collaborations**

Kathrin Friedrich (Berlin): **Interfacing Trauma. Virtual Resilience Training in Military Contexts**

Lisa Schreiber (Berlin): **Empathy in Human-Machine Interaction. A Concept of Interpersonal**

Relation in *Affective Computing*

(Chair: Oliver Leistert)

1:00 pm: Lunch

2:30 pm: Lecture 4

Felicity Colman (London): **The Informatic Affect of Algorithmic Conditions**

(Chair: Marie-Luise Angerer)

3:45 pm: Coffee break

4:00 pm: Panel 4 **Ambiguities of Algorithmic Care**

Serjoscha Wiemer (Paderborn): **Affective Robots that Care**

Irina Kaldreck (Braunschweig): **Distributed Autonomy**

Gabriele Gramelsberger (Aachen): **Promising Care, Longing for Data**

(Chair: Bernd Bösel)

5:30 pm: Coffee break

6:00 pm: Closing Lecture

Jean Clam (Paris): **Witnessing the Dismantlement of a Proven Structure of Belief. Renews the Actuality of a ("Pathological") Grammar of Assent**

(Chair: Gabriele Gramelsberger)

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