

International Conference

**AFFECTIVE
TRANSFORMATIONS**
Politics. Algorithms. Media.

November 1–3, 2017

University of Potsdam, Am Neuen Palais

**affective
media
studies.de**

Program

**Affective Transformations:
Politics. Algorithms. Media.
November 1–3, 2017**

Conception: Marie-Luise Angerer, Bernd Bösel, Kathrin Friedrich, Mathias Fuchs, Gabriele Gramelsberger, Irina Kaldrack, Andreas Kaminski, Dawid Kasprawicz, 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

Location: University of Potsdam, Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam, House 8

Contact: info@affectivemediastudies.de
www.affectivemediastudies.de

The event is open to the public, registration requested

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, reli-

gious 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.

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)

Program

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

Program

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)

Program

1:00 pm: Lunch

2:30 pm: Panel 4 Ambiguities of Algorithmic Care

Gabriele Gramelsberger (Aachen):
Promising Care, Longing for Data
Irina Kaldrack (Braunschweig):
Distributed Autonomy
Serjoscha Wiemer (Paderborn):
Affective Robots that Care
(Chair: Bernd Bösel)

4:00 pm: Coffee Break

4:30 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)

Program

PERFORMANCE LECTURE AND INSTALLATION

Dina Boswank, Timo Herbst, and Irina Kaldrack
Transforming Political Gestures through a Chain

The transformation of protest gestures during public protests, both within the motion itself and through media circulation, is to be exemplified with an installation. How do moments of affect, imitation and simultaneity come together? Working with a collection of visual, sonic and textual reflections of these gestures, we create a chain of translations: Out of descriptions of media images and drawings, specific movement instructions are formed and re-played via headphones. The spoken instructions are inviting for imitation which are simultaneously scanned by a motion recognition system (Leap Motion) which uses the gathered data to re-compose the sound recordings of the original protest sites. By separating the single medial and spatial elements of gestures, the correlations in-between the elements of the chain become perceptible and interactive access points open up.

Dina Boswank is a Berlin-based artist following a Ph.D. in Media Art at Bauhaus University, Weimar, Germany. She wanders through practices of creative access to technology and its defining media cultures both by researching and re-enacting them. Since December 2016 she has been involved in two projects in the scope of the funding initiative “Art and

Science in Motion” by Volkswagenstiftung—“Imaginary Fitness” at Bauhaus University Weimar and “The entanglement of Gesture, Media and Politics” at Braunschweig University of Art. <http://www.schnittmengen.de/>

Timo Herbst received his diploma at the University of Arts in Bremen and Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig 2013. In his research he has cooperated with the Overseas Museum of Bremen, Museum of Natural History in Leipzig and the Egyptian Collection Georg Steindorf in Leipzig and has shown his work in several museums and galleries in and outside of Germany. Since 2016 he has been involved in two projects in the scope of the funding initiative “Art and Science in Motion” by Volkswagenstiftung—“Motion together” at Freie Universität Berlin and “The entanglement of Gesture, Media and Politics” at Braunschweig University of Art. He currently lives and works in Leipzig and Berlin. <http://www.timoherbst.org/>

Irina Kaldrack is Guest Professor for “Knowledge Cultures in the Digital Age” at Braunschweig University of Art. She holds a diploma in Mathematics and a Ph.D. in Cultural Studies. Since 2009 she is teaching and researching in the field of Media Studies, since 2015 in transformation design. Her work focuses on the theory and history of digital cultures, knowledge cultures and their technological conditions, algorithmic cultures, the scientific history of motion and research methods between Design and Media Studies. Recent

publications include *There is no software, there are just services* (with Martina Leeker, meson press 2015), and *Bühne. Raumbildende Prozesse im Theater* (with Norbert O. Eke and Ulrike Haß, Fink 2014).

OPENING LECTURE

Marie-Luise Angerer

**Paradoxes of Becoming Intense. On ‘Smart’
Companionship, Significant Selfies and Animojis**
(Chair: Bernd Bösel)

Like affect, intensity has attracted great attention over the last years. Thus, it’s not a surprise that some of the latest theoretical tendencies explicitly equate affect with intensity. For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari both—affect and intensity—point to something beyond the subject, in Brian Massumi’s definition affect marks the territory of an autonomous zone. But with Tristan Garcia’s *La vie intense*, intensity returns as a Foucauldian force of power marking explicitly the “modern” subject. In other words, even on a theoretical level many ambivalences, ambiguities, and contradictions accompany the discussion on affect/intensity. In practical terms, the paradoxes of becoming intensive are even more striking. Whereas Donna Haraway has argued in her work on companionship and significant others that our bodies are entangled with other bodies, thus opening the border for new intense ways of experiencing life, Apple’s recent introduction of Animojis (which help to animate emojis with our emotions through our facial expressions) marks a key moment

where becoming intense has radically lost its emancipatory perspective—to run into an *intensive bondage* instead.

Marie-Luise Angerer is Director of the Brandenburg Center for Media Studies (ZeM) and Professor of Media Theory at the University of Potsdam. The focus of her research is on affect and neuroscientific reformulations of desire and sexuality, intensive milieus and sensing. She is the author of numerous books, including among others *The Body of Gender* (Passagen 1995); *Body Options* (Turia & Kant 1999); *Vom Begehren nach dem Affekt* (diaphanes 2007); Translation (with a new chapter) as *Desire After Affect* (Rowman and Littlefield Intl. 2014); *Ecology of Affect* (meson press 2017). She is the co-editor of *Timing of Affect* (with Bernd Bösel and Michaela Ott, diaphanes 2014) and *Choreography—Media—Gender* (with Yvonne Hardt and Anna-Carolin Weber, diaphanes 2013).

EVENING LECTURE

Richard Grusin

Counter-Mediation
(Chair: Marie-Luise Angerer)

The conference description for “Affective Transformations” sets out a double logic of affect, which on the one hand is “measured, calculated, [and] controlled” by forms of technoscientific management and on the other hand is “mobilized, fomented, [and] unleashed” by politics and social media. In this paper I argue that

such affective transformations can best be countered through techniques of counter-mediation. In the 2016 US presidential election the Trump campaign deployed tactics of affective transformation through a company called Cambridge Analytica, which describes itself a “global election management agency.” Insofar as such tactics operate independently of “a problematic of representation, with its associated postulates about meaning, truth, falsity, and so on,” we will, I believe, need to heed the advice of Berit Anderson and Brett Horvath to “build better automated engagement systems” to counter these weaponized propaganda machines and contest these techniques of evil mediation. But as important as it is to use automated manipulation systems against this affect management, we need other forms of counter-mediation as well, including denunciations of false messages through both automated and voluntary human means. To argue that we must fight mediation with counter-mediation, however, is not to argue against the continued use of the power of the masses—in marches and protests, non-violent and violent demonstrations, or riots and strikes—to counter the workings of evil mediation. Such collective actions can operate themselves as forms of counter-mediation, through transforming the circulation of affect within formal and informal print, televisual, and socially networked media.

Richard Grusin is Director of the Center for 21st Century Studies and Professor of English at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has authored numerous

chapters and articles, including “Radical Mediation” (*Critical Inquiry* Autumn 2015). He has published four books, including, with Jay David Bolter, *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (MIT Press 1999); *Culture, Technology, and the Creation of America's National Parks* (Cambridge University Press 2004); and *Pre-mediation. Affect and Mediality After 9/11* (Palgrave Macmillan 2010). He is editor of three books *The Non-human Turn* (Minnesota University Press 2015); *Anthropocene Feminism* (Minnesota University Press 2017); and *After Extinction* (forthcoming Minnesota University Press 2018).

LECTURE 1

Andrew A. G. Ross

Digital Humanitarianism and the Cultural Politics of a Planetary Nervous System

(Chair: Michaela Ott)

This paper reflects on the cultural politics of affective media in the area of global humanitarianism. Specifically, it addresses not only the sensitivities but also the precarities and resentments emerging from digitally enhanced forms of liberal humanitarianism. The Internet is indeed, as former U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton proclaimed, “a new nervous system for our planet.” But, contrary to the liberal dream of global dialogue, there is growing evidence that the affectivity sustained by digital media bears no necessary relation to freedom, justice, or ethics. Digital humanitarian campaigns are forging not only moral sensitivities but

also new forms of digital labor, data gathering, and control. For example, crisis mapping technologies expand opportunities for liberal institutions to manage distant populations according to specific rationalities of governance. And, while video advocacy campaigns such as “Kony 2012” are accelerating and intensifying popular involvement in humanitarian response, the algorithms that circulate them are also translating distant experiences of conflict into new sites for spectacle and enjoyment. This paper uses these and other examples from global humanitarianism to assess the unintended political effects of the planetary nervous system.

Andrew A. G. Ross is a broadly trained scholar of International Relations, International Law, and Political Theory. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, has taught at the Universities of Oregon and Puget Sound, and has been a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at Ohio State University. He is the author of *Mixed Emotions. Beyond Fear and Hatred in International Conflicts* (University of Chicago Press 2013).

PANEL 1

Aufklärung 2.0/Enlightenment 2.0

(Chair: Jutta Weber)

Underneath buzzwords like “fake news” or “alternate facts” there is a much more profound history of ideas at play of which these recent developments are just epiphenomena. Since the beginning of the 20th century the critique of western rationality has been one of the defining movements in philosophy and for very good reasons. The catastrophes of the 20th century have shown that to think of humankind to be “inherently good” or that there is a kind of rational path that history and mankind follows to better itself were illusions of early enlightenment that proved not only to be too optimistic but even dangerous. By deconstructing western rationality from Descartes to Kant the notion of truth has been made problematic as well but what is left is the burning question of what is left *at all* after all of this.

Current affective politics are a rude awakening for all those who thought that the deconstruction of western rationality is still exclusively attached to the project of enlightenment itself. It sometimes seems that we are about to plunge into a new dark age of irrationalism and that *affect* is one of the main driving forces behind it. Affect seems to have replaced rationality but this is not only true for Trump/Bannon etc.: For theory affect has been attractive for similar reasons: to be a substitute for reason and rationality. Therefore, one of the most important questions seems to be, if affect is indeed just

the “other side” of rationality, the ir-rational, that is still parasitically attached to rationality or if there is a possibility for affect to be an ingredient for a post-metaphysical kind of neo-rationality that is able to incorporate the lessons of the critique of rationality of the 20th century, or in short: Is there a possibility for a “reboot” of enlightenment (Aufklärung 2.0)?

Markus Rautzenberg

Alien Thinking. On the Return of the Sublime

Adorno once cautioned that the concept of the sublime is defective for politics, because it already contains tyranny in itself. Nowadays, the sublime once again enjoys great popularity, albeit under different names. Taken as the prerational force of affect, it is deployed by all sides of the political spectrum as a counterprogram to rationality which is purported to have collapsed. This conception is not new in itself, but rather belongs to a whole tradition of anti-rationalistic thought. Still, there is a novelty to be found in some strands of this thinking—like speculative realism—that try to approximate the ideal of scientific thought.

Markus Rautzenberg has been Professor of Philosophy at Folkwang University of the Arts since April 2017. Prior to that he represented the Chair of Media Cultures at the Leuphana University Lüneburg in 2016 and was research fellow at the MECS and DCRL (both Lüneburg). His most recent research interests include speculative realism, theories of photography, aesthetic

decisionism and ethics of affect as well as the philosophy of design.

Mathias Fuchs

Affect Esoterics

Not all attempts to construct systems of affect control are legitimised by technological rationality. It is on the contrary striking, yet well traceable that purely speculative, irrational, esoteric, and at some point, reactionary ideas contribute to affect theory as we know it. Even Massumi, with all conceded care to avoid stepping on hot tin roofs, gets into muddy waters when he theorizes on “affective attunement” and “affective alter-politics”. When Massumi states in his “Keywords for Affect” (in: *The Power at the End of the Economy*, Duke University Press 2015) that affective politics could be understood as aesthetic politics, he promotes what Walter Benjamin warned us of almost a century ago. For Benjamin “The aestheticization of politics” was a key ingredient of fascism, and “the politicization of aesthetics” would rather have to be looked for. Massumi comes very close to what Leni Riefenstahl promoted in her films when he says that “aesthetic politics brings the collectivity of shared events to the fore [...] a multiple, bodily potential for what might come.” Who would not be reminded of and alarmed by the proximity to Riefenstahl’s “Olympia—Fest der Völker”. There is no doubt that Massumi is on the good side and he mentions Obama’s success in using affective politics without hiding his sympathies

for the latter. If we follow, however, the line of influences that the notion of “affect attunement” has been built upon we will not only find Deleuze and Daniel Stern, but healer-gurus like Lloyd Arthur Meeker and contested pseudo-scientists like Albert Ackerley. The impulse statement will trace the roots of concepts like “affect attunement” and look at the dark side of affect theories.

Mathias Fuchs is an artist, musician and media scholar. He pioneered in the artistic use of computer games and has exhibited work at ISEA, SIGGRAPH, transmediale, futuresonic and the Greenwich Millennium Dome. In October 2012, he was appointed Professor at Leuphana University in Lüneburg and is currently Professor at the Institute of Culture and Aesthetics of Media (ICAM) at Leuphana University.

Sandra Wachter

Law and Ethics of Big Data, AI, and Robotics

Big Data, AI, and robotics are increasingly used by both the private and the public sectors. Medical professionals use expert systems and surgical robots, police officers use predictive policing software and patrolling robots, and GPS is either used to guide us or is already imbedded in (semi-)autonomous vehicles. Even though Big Data, AI, and robotics share obvious similarities, the current legal framework does not address them together as seen with Europe’s new General Data Protection Regulation and the Resolution

on Civil Law Rules on Robotics. This talk will shed light on the current legal accountability gaps owned to the lack of a holistic regulatory view and propose a solution on how to close them.

Sandra Wachter is a lawyer and Postdoctoral Researcher in Data Ethics and Algorithms at the Oxford Internet Institute at the University of Oxford. She is also a Turing Research Fellow at the Alan Turing Institute in London, a member of the Law Committee of the IEEE and serves as a policy advisor for governments and NGO’s around the world on regulatory and ethical questions concerning emerging technologies. Sandra’s research focuses on the legal and ethical implications of Big Data, AI, and robotics as well as governmental surveillance, predictive policing, and human rights online. Recent publications include “Transparent, explainable, and accountable AI for robotics” (2017, with Brent Mittelstadt and Luciano Floridi) and “The ethics of algorithms. Mapping the debate” (2016, with Brent Mittelstadt et al.).

LECTURE 2

Pierre Cassou-Noguès

The Synhaptic Monster

(Chair: Mathias Fuchs)

In his *Dioptrics*, Descartes describes a blind man exploring the path with his cane: touching at a distance, as it were, the obstacles on the ground. It is as if—adds Descartes—the blind man could “see with his

hand” or the cane was the organ of a sixth sense that had been given to him instead of sight. Through various stories relating to B. Stiegler, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, I will argue that technology indeed gives us a sixth sense, which I will call synhaptic.

Synhaptic because it requires the synchronization of a multiplicity of perceptions that are essential haptic, or whose properties are closer to touch than to sight. Synhaptic also because this regime of perception is opposed to the kind of visibility that underly the panopticon. In Bentham’s prison, a guard is standing at the center of the circular building, in a tower which enables him to see all and remain himself unseen. But we no longer need to see all: we only need relevant parameters.

Is there a guard in the synhapticon? If so, it can only hide, in between our hands and what we perceive on the other side of the screen, itself intangible, as the cane which, in Descartes’ story, the blind man forgets, no longer feels in his hands, and which disappears the organ of a sixth sense, enabling the human to touch at a distance.

Pierre Cassou-Noguès is a Professor of Philosophy at the Université Paris-VIII. He is also co-editor of the journal *SubStance*. His research concerns the relation between reason and imagination. Pierre Cassou-Noguès holds that all conceptualisation by reason, in the sciences as in philosophy, deals with imaginary

scenes. His research deals with French philosophy (Jean Cavaillès, Maurice Merleau-Ponty), the history of logic (Kurt Gödel, Alfred North Whitehead), new technologies (notably issues in neuroscience and cybernetics), and the modifications these induce in the representation of the self as well as in the apprehension of the external universe.

PANEL 2

Techno(Ir)Rationalities

(Chair: Serjoscha Wiemer)

In hindsight, the extension of the ability to detect and generate affects or emotions from humans to machines and automated systems (via “Affective Computing,” “Mood Tracking,” “Sentiment Analysis”) will probably seem like a logical or even necessary step in the process of technicization. Rationalization, in the sense of making calculable and manageable the world we live in, thus advances into a realm that had seemed immune to it, precisely because it had been conceptualized as the epitome of irrationality for such a long time. But, of course, this rather teleological view has been attacked from several sides. The “Ir” within the purported TechnoRationality (and has there ever been another form of rationality?) has been brought into the foreground so often (by theory as well as by history) that it is way more realistic to conceive of an intrinsic (instead of a dichotomic) relation between the rational and the irrational. The panel will approach this entanglement from three different sides.

Jutta Weber

Techno(ir)rationality and Technosecurity

Post-relational databases and learning algorithms can be regarded as paradigmatic media of a new Post-Newtonian (ir)rationality. They do not follow a cause-and-effect logic and traditional norms of scientific rigor but rely on the technical exploitation of surplus processes of “emergent” behaviour reintroducing imagination via systematized tinkering and formalized processes of trial and error. Keep adding bits and bytes into the system, permanently enlarging the search space, and the number of possible combinations produces more “results,” which are no longer evaluated in regard to their reliability and probability, but only in respect of their possibility. In my paper, I will show how this fits into a security dispositif in which risk discourses are increasingly enlarged and risk is re-enacted as limitless.

Jutta Weber is a Professor of Media Studies at the University of Paderborn. Her research focuses on epistemological, ontological and sociopolitical dimensions of digital technoscience cultures asking how and for whom the non/human actors work. She is co-editor of *Tracking and Targeting. Sociotechnologies of Identification*. Special Issue of “Science, Technology & Human Values” (with Karolina Follis and Lucy Suchman, forthcoming).

Oliver Leistert

Effective Affects with Social Bots

Trained machine-like as we are, social bots have acquired a prominent place in the list of uncertainties who we are speaking to. Nonetheless, algorithmic alienation makes bodies do things. Social bots induce noise and blatant nonsense into conversations to cause stress or resignation. I will present some minor speculations on the discursive functions of social bots and their disruptive/productive forces.

Oliver Leistert's research topics focus on power relations and productions of subjectivities in digital cultures. Beyond an application of Foucauldian/Guattarian concepts he focuses on cultural theories of affect, investigations of recent technological developments, such as blockchain technologies or social bots, and has developed a sustained interest in ontogenetic thinking as proposed by Simondon.

Bernd Bösel

Affective Media Regulation

The emergence of affect-responsive media almost certainly will have some lasting effect on the way how its users' affects and emotions are being regulated. But what can be said or hypothesized about these effects? Is this just a further technology that plays into the normalization scheme already described by Foucault? Or does it even enable or facilitate a renewed

standardization of affective responses, feeling rules and emotional pursuits?

Bernd Bösel has been Assistant Professor at the Chair for Media Theory at the University of Potsdam since October 2015. Prior to that he was a stipendiary of the Austrian Academy of Sciences with the project "The Art of Producing Emotions. Philosophy as Critical Psycho-technology." His research interests are affect regulation, theories of moods and emotions, and the history of enthusiasm. He is co-editor of *Timing of Affect* (with Marie-Luise Angerer and Michaela Ott, diaphanes 2014).

EVENING LECTURE

Michaela Ott

Affective Media Politics

(Chair: Markus Rautzenberg)

One of the characteristics of contemporary media politics is their affective charge which became commonly accepted and is even called for by public media organs with regard to democratic progress. Affective speech has become fashionable thanks to digital communication; recently even the newspaper FAZ asked for more affective arguments from academic elites in order to bridge the gap with the less fortunate parts of the population.

My contribution therefore wants to delve into this multifacetedness of affective media politics today. It wants

to sketch the semantic fluidity and the rapid media transformation of certain affective terms such as "terrorist" and "terrorism" along some striking examples. Whereas in actual Turkey political opponents are discriminated as terrorists, the so-called IS, mediated in the West as the most dangerous terrorist group of today, situates itself in the renowned tradition of the Roman Empire. It uses the "Global Islamic Media Front" for the affective promotion of its ideology and publishes different brands according to the languages and the media it addresses. And it tries to attract followers by using the aesthetics of video games, of US horror films and of TV-series such as "Game of Thrones."

As the long history of the so-called terrorism has demonstrated it has often been supported and financed, but also destroyed by Western political interests and interventions as the case of Al-Qaida has proven. I would like to shed some light on the vacillating delimitations of "terrorism" as symptomatic affective media politics in the era of globalization.

Michaela Ott is a Professor of Aesthetic Theories at the Academy of Fine Arts in Hamburg. Her research focus is post-structuralist philosophy, aesthetics and politics, aesthetics of film, theories of space and affection, knowledge of the arts. She is the co-editor of *Timing of Affect* (with Marie-Luise Angerer and Bernd Bösel, diaphanes 2014) and author of *Dividuationen. Theorien der Teilhabe* (b-books 2015) and *Affizierung*.

Zu einer ästhetisch-epistemischen Figur (edition text + kritik 2010).

LECTURE 3

Paul Stenner

Affect on the Turn: Liminal Media for Affective Transformation

(Chair: Thomas Slunecko)

For some influential advocates of the “affective turn” the concept of affect stands for a spontaneous, collective, asubjective and progressive *becoming-other* that promises “new possibilities” that are never quite articulated. This perspective has great potential, but risks lapsing into a naïve celebration of affect that is ill equipped to grasp the negative aspects and uses of liminal experience (including the manipulation of affectivity to influence political attitudes, consumption practices, work behaviour, etc).

A liminal occasion is an occasion of passage between categories during which, for whatever reason, the forms of process associated with modes of being are subject to metamorphosis. A focus on liminality, it will be argued, has two chief advantages. First, it allows us to see that many of the positive, exciting, desirable features attributed to “affect” are characteristics of liminal occasions. Bergson's distinction between two types of emotion, for example, can be viewed as a distinction between the emotion and affect typical of stable circumstances, on the one hand, and liminal affectivity,

on the other. Spinoza too suggests just this contrast (and draws attention to the negative aspects). A second advantage is that it encourages us to recognise the long history in which different media have emerged to manage, generate and communicate the liminal affectivity typical of liminal occasions. I will call these the *liminal media for affective transformation* and the oldest of these (ritual) dates back to pre-historic times. This is not to deny the distinctiveness of the present moment in which affectivity is routinely summoned and manipulated by a host of new technological means. Rather, it locates our present (in which “permanently liminal” social systems presuppose and demand continual change) within a broad genealogy.

Paul Stenner has held a Chair in Social Psychology at the Open University since September 2011. Prior to that he was Professor of Psychosocial Studies in the School of Applied Social Science at the University of Brighton. He has contributed to the development of a critical and reflexive approach to social psychology that takes *process* and *relationality* as keynotes at what is known as a transdisciplinary psychosocial approach. He has co-edited *Emotions. A Social Science Reader* (with Monica Greco, Routledge 2008) and has authored numerous articles on affectivity and liminality.

Thomas Slunecko is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Vienna and Research Director of the Institute for Cultural Psychology and Qualitative Social Research (ikus). His research interests include psychol-

ogy of religion, media theory, psychotherapy and the history of science. His most recent publication is the volume *Kulturpsychologie in Wien* (edited with Martin Wieser and Aglaja Przyborski, facultas 2017).

PANEL 3

Conceptualizing Interfaces of Affection

(Chair: Oliver Leistert)

Entanglements of humans and media technologies deal with the fundamental dilemma of interfacing living and deterministic systems. The concepts that shape the design of visual and haptic interfaces, accordingly practices of interaction and context-specific purposes reside on very peculiar notions of affection on the side of humans as well as what might be called *operative effectivation* on the side of technological systems. The panel presentations will try to entangle exemplary human-media technology ensembles by focusing on design practices and discourses that aim to shape both affective and effective modes of interfacing.

Dawid Kasprowicz

Encoding Proximity. Intuition in Human-Robot Collaborations

In the last ten to fifteen years, research in human-robot collaborations played an increasing role, not only in engineering sciences but also in the humanities. The question of the robots' agency, their anthropomorphic design as well as the formalization of gestures

has brought up numerous concepts that originally stem from humanities and that are now widely used in robotics. One of these concepts is intuition. Reminding us, in a general sense, of our daily use of "intuitive interfaces" on our mobile phones, intuition points to the paradox of a mediated immediacy. This is even more the case in robotics, where the process of coding haptics and gestures is deeply interwoven with models of non-verbal communication as well as the materialization of the robots' body. The presentation describes the practices behind so called "intuitive human-robot collaborations" and asks for a material approach to the concept of intuition as *algorithmic proximity*.

Dawid Kasprowicz is a Research Associate at the Institute for Philosophy of Digital Media at the University Witten-Herdecke. Prior to that he worked at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Media Cultures of Computer Simulation in Lüneburg. His research interests are the media history of immersion, media theory of embodiment and digital media and human-robot collaborations.

Kathrin Friedrich

Interfacing Trauma. Virtual Resilience Training in Military Contexts

Recent developments in the realm of virtual therapy in US-military contexts use virtual simulations and head-mounted displays not only for therapeutic purposes but also for virtual resilience training prior to missions.

For example, the application Strive is described as a “story driven approach to using virtual reality (VR) for understanding and training psychological resilience in service members prior to combat deployment.” (<http://ict.usc.edu/prototypes/strive/>) This approach anticipates traumatic symptoms and pre-emptively addresses it as resilience training for soldiers against trauma carries the promise of reduced indications for PTSD therapy post mission.

The presentation will address the idea of encoding traumatic scenarios and related emotional and affective reactions by the application of digital media technologies and in particular their visual and haptic interfaces.

Kathrin Friedrich works as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Cluster of Excellence “Image Knowledge Gestaltung. An Interdisciplinary Laboratory” at Humboldt University in Berlin. Prior to this position and after studying Media Studies, Law and Sociology at the University of Marburg she was a Research Associate at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne.

Lisa Schreiber

**Empathy in Human-Machine Interaction.
A Concept of Interpersonal Relation in *Affective Computing***

The development of robots that should perceive the user's affective state and act in response to such perceptions has been of great interest in the research field

affective computing within the last decade. So-called “empathic artificial agents” are supposed to make the human-machine interaction more effective by displaying emotional behaviour, such as the “expression of empathy.” This includes the mimicry of facial behaviour of the user's emotional states or the expression of positive support in order to foster companionship, attachment, and long-term interaction with robots. This presentation investigates the career of the concept of empathy in *affective computing* that is widely used to enhance the communicative aspects in human-machine interaction. However, the idea of empathy carries very diverse meanings, from a “human capacity” to a “social attitude,” and relates to terms such as sympathy or animation. In this regard, I will demonstrate how the concept of empathy is shaped and realized in human-machine interaction which mainly focusses on the design of the visual interface of non-human agents and practices of media technologies.

Lisa Schreiber works as a Research Associate at the Cluster of Excellence “Image Knowledge Gestaltung. An Interdisciplinary Laboratory” at Humboldt University in Berlin and the Centre for Literary and Cultural Research, Berlin. She studied Cultural Sciences at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) and Media Culture at the Bauhaus-University in Weimar. Currently she is working on her dissertation project about automatic emotion recognition in *affective computing* and its prehistory.

PANEL 4

Ambiguity of Algorithmic Care

(Chair: Bernd Bösel)

The panel discusses the problematic relation between algorithmic care and algorithmic control. Four questions and hypotheses, respectively, address this problematic relation from different perspectives.

Serjoscha Wiemer

Affective Robots that Care

Cultural imaginations of robots are undergoing a substantial transformation: From calculating, “cold-heard,” programmed machines to sensitive, caring and often traumatized entities. My hypothesis is that recent pop-cultural representations of affective robots are part of a current regendering of computer-technology under a combined regime of “care” and “control.”

Serjoscha Wiemer is Lecturer for Digital Media/ Mobile Media at the University of Paderborn. His research interests include Game Studies, algorithmic cultures, Moving Image Studies and biomedica. Recent publications include “Rewriting the Matrix of Life. Biomedica Between Ecological Crisis and Playful Actions” (with Christoph Neubert, 2014), and “Videospiele als Zeitkristallisationsmaschinen. Aspekte einer temporalen Bildtheorie” (2017). <http://www.serjoscha.net>

Irina Kaldrack

Distributed Autonomy

In the context of eHealth, the development of smart homes aims to enable older and sick people to live in their own home environment. This includes the detection of “abnormal” behaviour as well as a specific infrastructure of medical and care services. The paper focuses on the relations between behaviour, autonomy and care emerging in this socio-technical environments. How smart are homes designed for medical contexts? What are the (affective) transformations of these concepts? (Irina Kaldrack see page 9)

Gabriele Gramelsberger

Promising Care, Longing for Data

The combination of mobile-IT and sensors has established IT as care-IT. However, it is not yet decided, if care-IT cares or controls us. My hypothesis is that “care” leads to an unseen externalization of internal conditions (feelings, affects, health), which introduces new control regimes.

Gabriele Gramelsberger is a Professor for Philosophy of Science and Technology at the RWTH Aachen. Her research is focused on the digital transformation of science and technology. Her most recent publication is *Cultures of Prediction in Atmospheric and Climate Science* (edited with Matthias Heymann and Martin Mahony, Routledge 2017).

CLOSING LECTURE

Jean Clam

Witnessing the Dismantlement of a Proven Structure Of Belief. Renews the Actuality of a ('Pathological') Grammar of Assent

(Chair: Gabriele Gramelsberger)

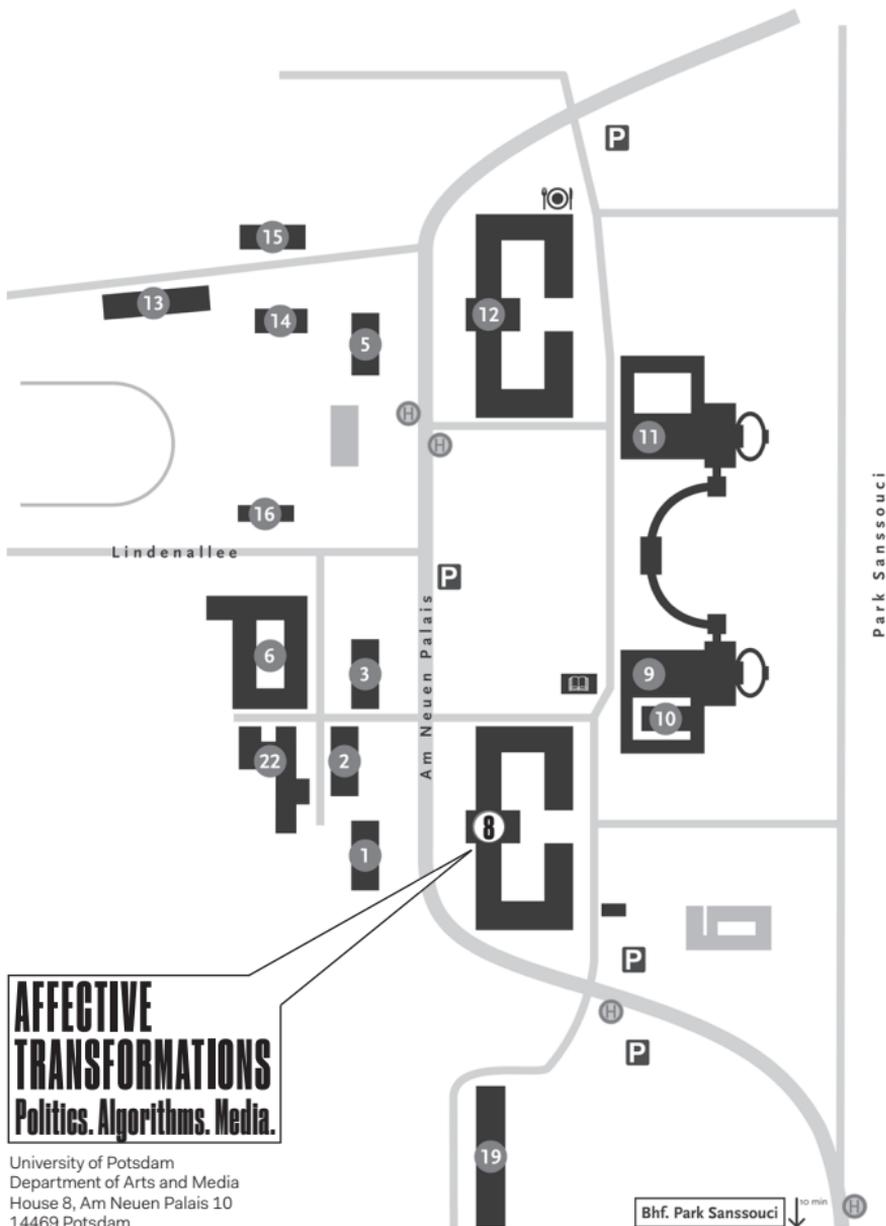
Liberal political orders require a decisive measure of functional differentiation of society. As well such orders as functionally differentiated societies are highly improbable realities. They both require a psychic capability of living in a constant state of cognitive as well as of normative flux in which no knowledge, no belief, no collective feeling can enjoy any form of stability nor firmness. In order to consist in such an environment of continual and all-engulfing processuality individuals have to learn to confide in the creativity of high contingency, the counterintuitive benefits of complexity and the foundational superiority of dissensus over consensus. They have to adopt and persevere in a posture of relentless cognitive openness which is a trying psychic experience putting extreme pressure on any sense of identity, belonging and biographic as well as historic consistency.

Against this well-known background—which constitutes the core assumptions of any theory of modernity and post-modernity—, liberal democracies are today facing a new challenge: while the structural social and psychic setting remains unchanged, a crucial compo-

nent of it has been strongly “affected” by a re-ordering of the function of belief within the cognitive dimension of social communication. It seems as if a major shift has occurred in the very same “grammar of assent” which has made possible the evolution towards an ever growing, poly-contextual, almost heterotopical differentiation of autonomous/autopoeitic spheres or fields of social meaning. A form of diffusive narrative cognition, challenging any common knowledge and sane prime assumptions, has been invented which transforms the structure of “credibility” (capability to be believed and assented to) of contemporary reality indication (deixis of facts of the world). Such an evolution constitutes a challenge to any theory of liberal democracy and social differentiation: it brings to the fore the question of the dismantlement of a belief structure which has been formed under the combined action of disciplined scientific cognition and convictionally weak normation.

It makes it clear that if liberal democracy has to be vindicated, the most urgent task is that of the hedging of its doxological structure. Such a task is a theoretical programme which has to renew the question about the conditions under which a affectively complex deixis of worldly facts can be believed and assent can be given to courses of action which build on such credibility potentials.

Jean Clam is ... →



**AFFECTIVE
TRANSFORMATIONS**
Politics. Algorithms. Media.

University of Potsdam
Department of Arts and Media
House 8, Am Neuen Palais 10
14469 Potsdam