

Workshop on Post-X Politics

November 21-23, 2017, Lueneburg, Germany

This workshop is a follow-up event to a workshop on Media Ecologies which took place in November 2016 at Concordia University, organized by the Global Emergent Media Lab and a reading group on Readings Around Media in Japan. In bringing this unique style of a reading group seminar to Lueneburg we aim to extend the network of scholars and respective institutions, that is the GEM Lab, the Centre for Digital Cultures, and the Research Training Group »Cultures of Critique« – the last two all based in Lueneburg. We find it to be a great constellation and place to examine current blendings of critical media and political theory and to ask the question of what kind of politics we want to enunciate at a time in which vocal conservative and liberal-progressive critics within the humanities have declared studies of race, class, gender, and sexuality passé.

Present discussions about 'post-truth politics' and 'alternative facts' indicate a rupture in public debates. Even though modern mass media (the press, radio, television) have always been suspected of manipulating the public sphere, their position as a general frame of reference – one that the public could affirm, silently accept, or openly contest – has hardly been called into question in Western democracies. Digital media and their networked publics have fundamentally changed this situation. Today, the failure to constitute a public sphere indicates a "decline of symbolic efficiency", that is, a collapse of a common frame of reference. Along with the Internet partial publics have emerged which are characteristic of the transition from mass media to social media. We can therefore witness a growing tension between the idea of an open and heterogeneous public and homophilic tendencies of "filter bubbles", fostered by algorithmic technologies that work by segmenting people according to closed sets of interests, political views, classist and racist categories, sexual orientation and gender.

This workshop is interested in the articulation of politics in times of data driven publics, including their off-line, lo-tech, and piratical formations as well. It looks at the status of critique vis-à-vis media debates which seem to return in a twisted form of Big Data, social networks, and the (re-)emergence of right-wing populism. It aims to reassess terms of critical humanities, such as class, race and gender, in order to better address the political and technological conditions of possibility for these echo chambers and filter bubbles. Furthermore, it brings into question the current longing for a new ontological grounding in cultural and media theory, characterised by discussions and theory production around the Anthropocene, non-human agency, and technological environmentality. Discussions which seemingly transcend critical humanities with its "dirty" entanglements in the social, sexual, violent, political and technological human reality. The post-x status of a lot of these debates seems to suggest a shift or even a breakdown of political discourse: post-facts, post-truth, post-race, post-gender, post-rights, post-democracy, and numerous related issues are symptomatic not only for the technological transformations taking place, but also for the ideological systems by which we construct reality.

Programme:

DAY 1, November 21, 2017

- 6-8pm »Pattern Discrimination - How to Queer Homophily?«
Discussion with Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Hito Steyerl & Nishant Shah,
moderated by Clemens Apprich
Wasserturm (Bei der Ratsmühle 18)
- 8pm Booklaunch of Technotopia: A Media Genealogy of Net Cultures
Food & drinks will be provided
CDC Office (Am Sande 5)

DAY 2, November 22, 2017

- 10am-12.30pm Panel I (chaired by Joshua Neves)
Kunstraum (Leuphana University, Campus Halle 25)
Intro (20min)
Yuriko Furuhashi: »The Geopolitics of Cultural Techniques« (Reading A)
Coffee Break (10min)
Oliver Lerone Schultz: »trans.design: existential modelings and new ends of 'design' looking at collective creation of change, transformation and world re-sourcing« (Reading B)
- 12.30-2pm Lunch
- 2-5pm Panel II (chaired by Miglė Bareikytė)
Kunstraum (Leuphana University, Campus Halle 25)
Maya Ganesh: »What Algorithms Know« (Talk)
Oleksiy Radynski: »Feeding Truth Into Machine? Exploring the Legacies of Viktor Glushkov« (Reading C)
Coffee Break (10min)
Telekommunisten: »Beyond Truth and Fable: Audience Territory and the Social Cybernetics Economy« (Talk)
- 5-6pm Break
- 6-8pm »Theaters of Reality - Deep Politics and Cultural Intelligence«
Lecture Performance by Konrad Becker
Kunstraum (Leuphana University, Campus Halle 25)
- 8pm Food & Drinks

DAY 3, November 23, 2017

- 10am-12.30pm Panel III (chaired by Nelly Y. Pinkrah)
Kunstraum (Leuphana University, Campus Halle 25)
Diana McCarty: »From C to X – cyberfeminism to xeno-feminism?« (talk)
Marc Steinberg: »Media Reflexivity Post-X« (Reading D)
Coffee Break (10min)
Heba Y. Amin: »Techno-utopian Fantasies and Digital Nation-States: A New Visual Lexicon for Spatial Emancipation in the Middle East« (talk)
- 12.30-2pm Lunch
- 2-5pm Panel IV (chaired by Clemens Apprich)
Kunstraum (Leuphana University, Campus Halle 25)
Daphne Dragona: »Face Value« (talk)
Zeeraq Waseem: »Gaps in Understanding: Algorithmic Discrimination in Natural Language Processing« (Reading E)
Coffee Break (10min)

Closing/Roundtable with Students