



Call for papers for an *ephemera* special issue on:

Affective capitalism

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This special issue aims at describing and understanding the regime of 'affective capitalism'. In cultural theory, affect is a useful concept for analysing how something stimulates our body and mind. Affect makes us act, exceeding or preceding rationality. In our daily lives we are constantly affected by a plethora of things: our work, our friends, our surroundings, our technologies (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, we are seeing attempts to capture affect in different fields of contemporary culture, from labour to social networks to politics. In these contexts, affect and affection are extensively organized, produced and maintained for the needs of capitalism. Affective capitalism is lucrative, tempting and even devious. The notion of affect dovetails with operations of power (Kenny, Muhr and Olaison, 2011). It merges with established therapeutic discourses and blurs the limits of intimacy at work (Ross, 2004; Illouz, 2007; Gregg, 2011). We are being induced to act in order for companies to make profits in a market economy. Affective capitalism transforms us into assets, goods and services by appealing to our desires, needs and social relationships, or by making us act on mere gut-feeling.

There is no single definition of affect theory; on the contrary, affect theory builds bridges between humanities, neurosciences, emotion studies and organization studies. It goes from Spinoza's philosophy to Tomkins' psychology and beyond (Sedgwick, 2003; Figlerowicz, 2012). Similarly, affective capitalism operates in different areas of sense and experience,

human and non-human alike. By mapping different areas where affective capitalism operates, we therefore hope to contribute to understanding its form and function and the relations of power it currently maintains.

In contemporary management theory, a fulfilling relationship towards vocation is usually described through affects such as love and passion. In feminist and cultural studies, however, there has been a growing interest in the question of how love and capitalism are connected (Illouz, 2012; Berlant, 2008; 2011). Elsewhere, Michael Hardt (2011) and other autonomist Marxist theorists have suggested that love nonetheless has the potential to overcome capitalism. It seems, then, that affect is a productive tool for critically discussing the contemporary 'spirit of capitalism' and its ways of merging with managerial techniques (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2007). The concept of affect helps us to examine how our intimate dreams, hopes and fears work as a fuel in the cycles of production.

Understanding how different forms of media and popular culture move us affectively is crucial for understanding how they function to produce economic value (Kavka, 2008; Skeggs and Wood, 2012). For example, social media is a part of affective capitalism to the extent that it raises questions about user engagement, targeted advertising, user-generated content and consumer profiling based on big data (Coté and Pybus, 2007; Gehl, 2013; Hearn, 2010a; Paasonen, 2011). But it is also important to find instances where affects are not subsumed within the sphere of exchange but may offer the potential for disrupting the dominant symbolic order with 'its economic and legitimating function' (Skeggs, 2010: 34). Theoretical concepts such as affective labour (Hardt, 1999), free labour (Terranova, 2000) and immaterial labour (Lazzarato, 1996) have been used for making sense of work in the cultural industries, including the work performed by users and audiences. At the same time, the usefulness of these concepts has been questioned and their application has been criticized for a lack of proper empirical engagement with the specificity of cultural production (Dowling, 2007; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2008; Hearn, 2010b; McRobbie, 2011).

These fields above are only a few examples where affective capitalism plays a particular role. In each of them affective capitalism has its own ambivalences and complexities. By analysing how affective capitalism appears in different contexts and frameworks, we are seeking new ways to understand and conceptually grasp it. At the same time, we ask how we could resist it and develop alternatives to it. We therefore welcome studies that explore affective capitalism in various forms and contexts. We invite contributions that critically engage with related concepts such as immaterial, affective and

emotional labour, grounding their usage in specific contexts and empirical case studies. Possible topics include, but are not limited to the following:

- The affective dimensions of value creation, cultural production and resistance
- Affective capitalism, actor-networks, and human and non-human agencies
- The limits of the immaterial/affective labour theory (e.g. feminist critique)
- Performance measurement and affect in contemporary management theory
- Therapy culture, capitalism and organizations (e.g. human resource management)
- Commodification of social media users and networked relations
- Connections between affective capitalism and sharing economy
- Selfies, peer-2-peer financing systems, digital currencies, self-quantifications and other technological mediations of affective capitalism
- Ways of harnessing the experiential and affective qualities of the arts (e.g. music, dance, visual arts) to enhance the productivity of employees or marketing
- Forms of resistance and micropolitics in the networks of artists, activists and researchers
- Branding the global university: affect, knowledge and capitalism

Deadline for submissions: 31 December 2014

All contributions should be submitted to the special issue editors at affcap@utu.fi. Please note that three categories of contributions are invited for the special issue: articles, notes and reviews. Information about these types of contributions can be found at <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/call-for-papers>. All submissions should follow *ephemera's* submission guidelines which are available at: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/how-submit>. Articles will undergo a double blind review process. For further information please email affcap@utu.fi.

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