

Call for Papers

Engaging the Elsewhere**Affective politics and political aesthetics across Muslim and Christian life-worlds**

A workshop with

Annalisa Butticci (Utrecht University) and Amira Mittermaier (University of Toronto)

Friday, 1 June 2018 | 9.30 – 16.00 | Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, FU Berlin

Organizers: Hansjörg Dilger, Omar Kasmani, Dominik Mattes, Nasima Selim

The recent focus in anthropology and religious studies on mediation is strongly concerned with how relational possibilities open up and are organized between experiencing subjects and the Transcendental. Scholars point to the instrumental role that practices, bodies, objects, images, senses, substances etc. assume in this process of establishing a relationship or connectivity between the seemingly disparate realms of the ordinary and the extraordinary. With this workshop, we encourage participants to ask the wanting question of the affective politics of engaging “the Transcendental”, which is to query the entanglements of such engagements’ immaterial strategies and material consequences. By working toward a common ground of analysis involving both Muslim and Christian life worlds, we wish to go beyond religion-specific aesthetics to consider the overarching ways in which ethical, moral and political claims are affectively realized, exceeding in effect the sphere of the religious.

Amira Mittermaier’s conceptualization of an ‘Elsewhere’ points to the dialogic ways in which dream stories among Sufi Muslims in Cairo “not only are affected by political conditions but are also themselves of political relevance in that they affect how people live in the world and how they relate to others” (Mittermaier 2011, 4). Speaking to comparable concerns is Annalisa Butticci’s discussion of how divine presence is realized among African Pentecostals in Italy. Transgressing its religious salience, she illustrates how believers employ a particular “aesthetics of presence” as a way to “contest their assigned political, social, and economic marginality” (Butticci 2016, 137). Both of these works help build the argument that affective dynamics, even when they unfold in particular religious settings, have a direct impact on greater processes of moral claim-making and forms of political participation.

We invite presentations from doctoral and post-doctoral scholars working on Muslim and/or Christian contexts. Questions and issues that contributors to the workshop might address but are in no way limited to include: How do material and non-material worlds come to be bridged through religious practice and experience? How do notions like an Elsewhere or the Transcendental shape how believers act and are acted upon in the world? How might we conceptually define and analyse what lies beyond people’s immediate material and social worlds? What analytical opportunities are to be found in cross-religious perspectives? How do mediation’s affective shapes point towards an interface of sensing and knowing? Finally, how do believers’ complex and continuous conceptualization of space and time make room for the mutual affectivity of the political, social and the religious?

The day-long workshop will be jointly led by Amira Mittermaier and Annalisa Butticci. We invite 10 presentations (15 min + 15 min discussion) and 10 additional participants. Should you wish to present a paper at the workshop, kindly send us an abstract of max. 300 words. For those who wish to attend without presenting, please send us a paragraph outlining your affiliation, current research, and the nature of your interest in the workshop (max. 200 words). Annalisa Butticci and Amira Mittermaier will also give an introductory co-keynote to the workshop on **Thursday, 31 May** (6-8 pm).

Please submit your applications to dominik.mattes@fu-berlin.de by **10 March 2018**. Selected presenters and participants will be notified by 15 April 2018.

Annalisa Butticci (2016). *African Pentecostals in Catholic Europe. The politics of presence in the twenty-first century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Amira Mittermaier (2011). *Dreams that matter. Egyptian landscapes of the imagination*. Berkeley: University of California Press.