

Exhaust(ed) Entanglements

Overcoming the auto-self of the Anthropocene

Humans taking up too much space, blocking each other's ways while emitting way too many toxic gases. A description of an everyday traffic jam can equally be read as a metaphor for the catastrophic predicament some call the Anthropocene. In this symposium, various scholars are invited to discuss the car as a main factor of a toxic entanglement to modern lifestyles.

Many contemporary discourses stress the need for *new* alliances and utopian speculations that can help to foster a future of more planetary thriving. Likewise, the question arises which *old* alliances, fantasies and collective dreams need to be abandoned to actually get there without falling into the pitfalls of green-washed eco-capitalism.

What affective entanglements, subjective investments and pragmatic as well as economic compromises tie us to the status-quo of fossil-fueled late capitalism? How resilient are our environmentally damaging lifestyles even in the face of more and more visible catastrophe?

In this three-day symposium, academics, activists, artists, journalists and other scholars are brought together to discuss these pressing questions with a focus on the car and car-centered mobility, urbanity, rurality and lifestyles. We propose that it is no wonder that the German word for car, "auto", means "the self" in its etymological root.

The damage of an over-identification with *this kind* of auto-self goes way further than the direct environmental damage of the vehicles exhaust pollution and soil sealing, but are the cause for our being dead-locked into a dynamic of ever-more precarization, globalization, fossilization of and alienation and detachment from sustainable livelihoods. The self-identification with the auto does not only make us chose the wrong means of transport, but leaves us trapped within our limiting logics and outlooks of anthropocentrism and modern exceptionalism that seduce us to homogenize the planet ever more. In the car we simply can't see (let alone feel, smell or hear) many of the less loud but more nourishing alternatives of going about with and on the planet.

Even though the awareness of our ecological predicament and the politicization of carbon-intensive life-styles has risen significantly in the last years, the car and its centrality to modern human ideas of the good life seems almost impossible to overcome. As such, we regard the car as the signature device of a much larger problem: Namely, that of the "Homogenocene" and our highly resilient attachment to it. By investigating the material compositions, economic dynamics, cultural imaginaries and affective histories around car-culture, this transdisciplinary symposium seeks to speculate about which utopian, no-longer-modern fabulations might help us to get out of this raging deadlock. In overcoming the auto-self of the Anthropocene, we seek to not only to find more ecological ways of transportation, but also less self-referential and anthropocentric ways of sharing, reasoning and dwelling on the planet.