Not Belonging to one's Self: Affect on Facebook's Site Governance page

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Abstract

This article makes a contribution to a growing number of works that discuss affect and social media. I use Freudian affect theory to analyse user posts on the public Site Governance Facebook page. Freud's work may help us to explore the affectivity within the user narratives and I suggest that they are expressions of alienation, dispossession and powerlessness that relate to the users' relations with Facebook as well as to their internal and wider social relations. The article thus introduces a new angle on studies of negative user experiences that draws on psychoanalysis and critical theory.

Introduction

This article applies Freudian affect theory to qualitatively analyse a number of user posts on a public Facebook page: the so-called Facebook Site Governance page that was set up in 2009 (https://www.facebook.com/fbsitegovernance). On it, Facebook employees occasionally post about new features or policy changes. Many users use the site to express frustration at all sorts of problems they experience, such as identity theft, rows with other users, harassment from users, features that are not working for them and statements concerning the ownership of their data that is shared on Facebook. 'What is lacking is a deeper investigation into how and why users have negative experiences on Facebook' (Fox and Moreland, 2015: 169), Fox and Moreland have recently noted. I propose one angle on such an investigation that theorises and analyses them using Freudian psychoanalysis. The Facebook posts that form the basis of this research were obtained in June 2014 when an update about new data policy was posted https://www.facebook.com/fbsitegovernance/posts/10152840679374323 and in January 2016 after another update regarding revised terms, data policy and cookies policy had been rolled out in 2015 https://www.facebook.com/fbsitegovernance/posts/10153018633659323. It is those two updates that formed the basis of this article. While the posts are

publicly accessible, the names of the users are not reproduced in this study. Many hundred posts were read that were posted as replies to the two updates and 11 were selected in order to provide an in-depth discussion of their affective dimensions. Based on the material a particular kind of relationship between Facebook and its users is theorised and for that reason a small sample was used. 'Qualitative studies tend to work with small sample sizes in depth, which means that they can generate insights about the dynamics of particular cases' (Willig, 2008: 158). While not all user posts on the page are negative in nature, only comments that describe negative or frustrating experiences were selected for this study. Posts with a minimum number of 150 words were selected in order to adequately analyse potentially rich data. The posts were analysed in their entirety and not coded into different fragments in order to examine their overall tone and affective qualities. A detailed coding procedure potentially 'strips any remaining context' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000: 8) of qualitative data and I therefore examined posts as whole. Additionally, shorter posts and some fragments taken from longer posts were also analysed and are incorporated into the discussion of the longer posts as appropriate in order to take account of additional content. The following question guided the research process and selection of data: how do users communicate frustrating experiences on a public Facebook page? The research question therefore

shaped the selection of the material for analysis (Mayring, 2000). Upon reading the material, categories were drafted inductively that corresponded to the different Facebook posts that were analysed. Drawing on Hollway and Jefferson's (2000), approach to examining particular data as a whole, qualitative content analysis was used that drew on psychoanalytic theory in its reading and interpretation of data (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000) The data was analysed in drawing on psychoanalytic affect theory that is situated and outlined in the next two sections.

While the posts analysed all share similar characteristics (e.g. frustration, affectivity), each may also represent an ideal type category with its own characteristics. While a large sample may have been beneficial, the scope of this article allows for limited discussion and therefore a limited number of posts were included for analysis. Future research could allow less space for theoretical introductions and more scope for empirical analyses.

Category Name:	Number of Posts:	Coding Rules/ Summary of Content:
Affect and (Non)-Sense	3	Post is illogical and in tension with discourse.
A Shattered Sense of	5	Post is about the articulation

Subjective Coherence		of a fragile and threatened subjectivity in relation to Facebook.
Discharging the Affect	3	Post is about rational demands to Facebook that contribute to discharging the affect.

Affect and Digital Media

Recently, there is a growing number of publications on affect in specific relation to digital media (Gibbs 2011; Paasonen 2011; Sampson 2012; Clough 2013; Garde-Hansen and Gorton 2013; Hillis, Paasonen and Petit 2015). These accounts all emphasise the affectivity at stake in networked forms of communication. In their introduction to the edited volume *Networked Affect*, Hillis, Paasonen and Petit note that online user practices in the broadest sense (e.g. surfing the Internet, searching for something on Google, posting an update on Facebook) make for intense 'affective investments' (Hillis, Paasonen and Petit, 2015: 7) that may be 'repetitive, frustrating, and potentially rewarding' (Hillis, Paasonen and Petit, 2015: 7) for subjects. Networked communication

may be at times not 'merely instrumental' (Hillis, Paasonen and Petit, 2015: 10) and about goal directed actions but also beyond rationality and conscious control on part of the users. It is this idea of an intense form of embodied engagement with the Internet that I will draw on in this article. In doing so, I contribute to user experience studies, particularly to discussions of Facebook usability and users expressing frustration or anger (Hart *et al.*, 2008; Koroleva, Krasnova and Günther, 2010; Light and Cassidy 2014). While these studies have theorised different dimensions of what can be broadly termed negative or frustrating aspects of usability on social media, I pay particular attention to user narratives as they are expressed on social media by drawing on psychoanalytic affect theory. Such a combination has not been made previously. Fox and Moreland (2015) note in their focus group study on Facebook users and psychological stress that 'fewer studies have examined the nature of negative outcomes' for users (Fox and Moreland, 2015, 168). While they conducted interviews, I address this gap in the research field by specifically focussing on affect and user discourses.

In the past years, a growing number of diverse works commonly referred to as 'affect theory' has begun to emerge (e.g. Massumi, 2002; Sedgwick, 2003; Ahmed 2004; Brennan, 2004; Clough, 2007; Thrift, 2008; Gibbs, 2011; Blackman, 2012). Broadly speaking, the term 'affect' refers to an analytical

angle on relational processes of becoming that embrace human and non-human bodies and entities (see Hemmings 2005; Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Leys 2011; Wetherell 2012 for detailed overviews). It is often used to describe an excess that cannot be adequately captured by textual or linguistic analyses alone (Hemmings 2005; Hillis Petit and Paasonen 2015). 'Most definitions of affect highlight the central role of intensity and agree on the presence of a quality of excess, a quality of "more than"' (Hillis, Petit and Paasonen, 2015: 1). Often, affect is invoked to signify processes that go beyond the singular subject and are instead of an intersubjective or relational nature between human and non-human entities. Rather than theorising and treating affect as a concept that goes against the individual subject and discourse, this article takes a different turn by arguing for a relevance of Freudian affect theory. Rather than being about ideas of non-representation and pre- or past-discursiveness, as some affect theories argue (e.g. Massumi, 2002; Lorimer, 2008; Thrift, 2008; Sampson, 2012), affect in the Freudian tradition is understood as being in tension with consciousness, agency and reflection. There is, however, a small common denominator between contemporary affect theories and Freudian affect theory. Affect is a process that involves sensations, intensities, bodies and excess. Margaret Wetherell (2012, 2013) has maintained that a combination of affect and discourse may be useful. She argues that such a

combination may pay attention to 'the feel and patterning of bodies in action, the lively flow of social life and sticks closely to participants' perspectives.' (Wetherell, 2013: 364). Rather than treating affect and discourse as separate categories, they should be combined as 'affective-discursive practice[s]' (Wetherell, 2013: 363). How such practices may look like will be outlined more in the course of this article in drawing on Freudian affect theory.

Affect and Freud

Freud's work on affect is complex and was subject to many changes throughout his life (Freud, 1981a, b, c, d, e). His approach has been clarified and developed by the psychoanalysts André Green (1999) and Ruth Stein (1991). For Freud, affect designates a bodily experience in a circuit-like movement that occurs inside the body and moves outwards (Freud, 1981a). This can be a reaction to a shocking image someone might have posted on Facebook for example or as a reaction towards a mental activity such as a fantasy or a thought. The subject responds affectively and in that response the affect is discharged. Only the moment of discharge is conscious to the subject, the preceding moments that led to the build-up of an affective response remain unconscious. An affect as such can be of a pleasurable or unpleasurable

nature. While Freud did not provide an exhaustive definition of the term, he explained it in the following manner in 1917 in his *Introductory Lectures* book:

> And what is affect in the dynamic sense? It is in any case something highly composite. An affect includes in the first place particular motor innervations or discharges and secondly certain feelings; the latter are of two kinds—perceptions of the motor actions that have occurred and the direct feelings of pleasure and unpleasure which, as we say, give the affect its keynote (Freud, 1981d: 395).

An affective experience may thus consist of two aspects: discharges (in the physiological sense) and feelings. The feelings denote a perception by the subject that an affective experience took place and, secondly, feelings of pleasure or unpleasure. Ruth Stein defined the psychoanalytic understanding of affect in the following manner. In an affective experience,

> '"my body speaks itself to me"; when I am feeling, I possess my body, but at that same moment, the body is also its own speaker, and the three terms join together and link my possession ('my'), the object of this possession ('body'), and that which denies my possession ('it

speaks' - and in that it is its own master, or speaker, thereby denying my possession of itself) (Stein, 1991: 127).

The Freudian conception of affect is about a sudden and momentary loss of control or bodily agency. The subject experiences something beyond their conscious control and their body is experienced as an other in that moment.[i] Freud made a distinction that is followed in this article between an 'idea' and 'affect' (Freud, 1981a, c). He understood 'idea' explicitly as the content of a thought; as something that is perceived externally or thought about internally (i.e. in the thought *about* a perception). Both aspects essentially refer to an inner and mental act. Affects have their own qualities and tonalities but they are in relation to an internal or external idea. While the two are different concepts, they are nonetheless interlinked. I return to this notion in my discussion of the first Facebook post.

For Freud, affect is not outside or excluded from language but in tension with it. In an attempt to verbalise or write about an affective experience, the subject can say nothing about the affect as such but about its unpleasurable or pleasurable nature and what might have triggered it, as shown in the earlier quote by Freud. An affective response is structured by an 'energic upsurge that invades language and may destructure it to the point that it becomes

unintelligible' and it marks a 'return of the corporal raw material into language' (Green, 1999: 174). Hillis, Paasonen and Petit explain that writing about an affective experience is 'an act of mediation where bodily impressions, modulations, arousals, and motions are translated in order to be brought into the representational of the text' (2015: 12). This idea of translating is also present in Freudian affect theory. As parts of an affective response are consciously experienced, the subject may reflect on it in a delayed manner.

Affect and (Non)-Sense

Principally, the affective experiences discussed in this article may be adequately theorised as such by drawing on Freudian ideas because they may present a momentary experience as a diffuse state. Such an experience is part of the wider user experience of using Facebook. It suddenly occurs and fades away again. It is argued that the quotes that will be discussed refer to experiences that the users may not quite understand, they may not make sense to them and that is why they respond in such affective manners. In writing about them and getting them off their chest, they also rationalise something that is beyond them and look for explanations elsewhere. This is evident in the following quote:

I do not want to be contacted AT ALL BY SCAMPER. When I go to my privacy settings there is not any "block" app available. He has now also contacted me as "Nibbles" because when I reported Nibbles You said I already had made a report.

THIS IS HARASSMENT. THEIR SITES HAVE A MECHANISM THAT PREVENTS ME FROM DELETING THEIR COMMENT FROM MY POST, WHICH IS PREVENTING ME FROM MANAGING MY OWN PAGE. I MUST ASSUME THAT FACEBOOK HAS ENABLED THEM TO DO THIS, OTHERWISE___HOW IS IT POSSIBLE!

I will contact the federal authorities if this sort of HARASSMENT of me continues, for the amount of good it will do, since You guys are in tight with the FascIst-in-Chief___that piece of shit DESPOT OBAMA.

I will briefly remain on a level of understanding before interpreting the post in terms of its affective qualities. The user expresses a very understandable wish: not to be contacted and harassed by another Facebook user. The user 'Scamper' seems to have created another profile ('Nibbles') and also contacted them through that profile. The above user informed Facebook about the

unwanted messages but it failed to respond and the user's attempts of blocking the user seem to have been unsuccessful. Facebook is the only agent here that could do something about the user's problems, but it has failed to act. As with many other comments on the site, there is no response by Facebook to the problems outlined. The context of this post is thus an experience of being harassed by other users that moves from a factual description into rage, threats and insults midway through the post.

The above quote is difficult to decipher: what exactly are the user's problems? They seem to be receiving unwanted messages from a user or multiple users and were unable to block them. It is not clear who those users are or what is meant by 'their sites'. The exclamation 'otherwise how is it possible' points to the incomprehensible experiences the user writes about. They give the explanation (to themselves) that Facebook has actually 'enabled' 'them' to do certain things that the user has no access to.

This post is similar to many on the Site Governance page and it shows that the user *tries* to express something here. The first lines are comprehensible but the post quickly slips into an affective mode of expression that is in tension with sense, logic and appropriateness. The user articulates having no control over who contacts them and Facebook has not helped. The user has no power over what has happened to them on Facebook and they situate this in more general

narratives about a world where corporations such as Facebook are bedfellows with governments and have conspired against ordinary citizens like them. However, they still write that they will resort to the 'federal authorities', an arguable contradiction of their discourse for, in their logic, the authorities would also be 'in tight' with Facebook. It is here that we can see how affect and its immediate aftermath are translated into words. It is an attempt to translate and express something that is intersected by an affective dimension and was first experienced as a bodily state. Affect shows itself here in inconsistencies, contradictions and a free flowing discourse without much structure. The threat of contacting the federal authorities is also an articulation of powerlessness in itself because it symbolises the last hope for the user and it is questionable if the federal authorities would respond to their demands. Going back to Freud's (1981a) distinction between 'affect' and 'idea', one may argue that the post begins with affective descriptions about the user's experiences and then moves to narratives that are more structured and might be results of more reflexive processes that come closer to the concept of 'idea'. The user offers a reflection that Facebook has enabled 'them' (other users) to do certain things and relates the SNS to the US president. The post thus moves from affective dimensions to a narrative about rationalisation in a free flowing manner. The user argues that other users, Facebook, and even the US president have conspired against

them. The user attempts a logical (although we might perceive it as illogical) rationalisation. They experienced harassment and concluded that such practices were enabled by Facebook because their attempts to block or report were in vain. Similarly, another user has also commented on the Facebook Site Governance page:

Are 100 posts too many for a week? I can't NOT do something if I don't know exactly what I'm not supposed to do! The notification doesn't even define exactly what I did wrong. How are you teaching me not to do this thing you consider wrong if you don't explain what I did and tell what I need to do to avoid it happening again? It makes no sense! Of course, I know because the only thing I've done today is work by posting new stuff in my groups. This is how I make my living btw so you really hurt me when you do this.

What affects the reader of such posts the most is its sense of anger and incoherence. Sense and non-sense are somewhat aligned in the users' 'affective-discursive practice[s]' (Wetherell, 2013: 363). Ellis, Tucker and Harper describe the act of talking or writing about affect as follows: 'Affective experiences that have yet to be fully symbolized by the individual figuratively or linguistically entail speech which tends to be vague, imprecise, and incoherent,

but nonetheless distinguish a certain something.' (Ellis, Tucker and Harper, 2013: 726). This may be exemplified further by the quote below.

I do not like it that your FACE BOOK COMPANY is actually putting my life at risk.. several times my account has been hacked into and personal info has been divulged. And where does it stop , your FB seems to keep askng me things I do not want to divulge are you saying that it your right as well and all FB users rights/? WELL it is not.. so QUIT ASKING ME THINGS THAT I HAVE NOT ALREADY ANSWERED BECAUSE IF I WANTED TO ANSWER THEM I WOULD HAVE A VERY LONG TIME AGO> THIS SEEMS VERY DANGEROUS TO ME> AND NOT TO MENTION YOU THINK ITS OKAY FOR OTHERS TO SHARE OUR FINANCIAL INFORMATION THAT SOME OF US HAVE TO WRITE ON FB TO MAKE PAYMENTS ETC> ?? THAT IS LUDICROUS AND I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU HAVE THAT RIGHT NOT DoES ANYONE ELSE ON FB !! WHEN WE CHOOSE PRIVATE FOR INFo THAT IS HOW IT SHOULD BE!!

The user may have been a victim of someone who hacked into his account multiple times. Just like the first post that was discussed, the one above consists of a highly affective mode of writing that is difficult to understand. The

user may criticise Facebook for responding inadequately to their experience of being hacked. Personal information may have been disclosed and in not responding, Facebook has put their 'life at risk'. The rest of the post can be seen as being in tension with discourse and logic. The user demands Facebook should quit asking things that they have 'not already answered'. This may refer to notifications or requests by Facebook that the user does not wish to follow or respond to. It is unclear if the last sentences of the post refer to financial information that the user communicated to others via private messages that had been exposed because of someone hacking into their account. The user may accuse Facebook of being behind the hack, or regard Facebook as having failed to secure their privacy. The post may be read as an affective expression of powerlessness and of a hierarchy on the social networking site that is skewed. The user responds to this by stating that it is not Facebook's right to do certain things with their data.

Drawing on a Freudian model allows one to conceptualise the term of 'affect' as articulating itself in fleeting and vague moments that come and go in a rhythmic manner. The users on Facebook are not permanently frustrated or face unpleasurable experiences but it is specific experiences that are felt bodily and affectively which may push a wider sense of being and feeling powerless back into consciousness and lead to heated and often incoherent posts and

reflections on the wider social and cultural surroundings. Such as the above quotes being about questions of security, the state, cooperation between governments and corporations, as well as issues of privacy, hacking and online rights. Part of the posts may read as incomprehensible free associations and '[y]et it is here that we are most likely to discover the affective impacts' (Ellis, Tucker and Harper, 2013: 727) of the structural relations on Facebook. In other words, the above passages illustrate how affect 'lends the color, the nuances, and the modulations to the verbal sign' (Stein, 1999: 134).

A Shattered Idea of Subjective Coherence

Fuchs and Sevignani (2013) argue that many Facebook users stress the useful and important functions of the website and disregard troubling questions of data ownership and lack of control in their everyday use. The possible – even if involuntary – role that users play in reproducing their own state of powerlessness by using and feeding Facebook with data that is appropriated and sold for profit maximization is seldom mentioned in the posts on the Facebook Site Governance page. The underlying aspects of the dark site of Facebook: inequality, commodification, lack of transparency and control are mostly hidden behind the social use value of the SNS. They may become visible when users experience situations that are discussed in this article. In

experiences that are about sections of Facebook that do not work according to the users' wishes and demands, a specific experience may acquire such a momentary power over the user that all useful functions of Facebook are overshadowed. One user frustratingly expresses that Facebook should stop violent content from being posted: 'you don't care but there are way to many who do and you shouldn't let the forum you make all your $$$$ from leave a bad taste in ppls mouths:' The next quote exemplifies a dominance of a negative experience further:

> If my posts are glitched anymore..I mean they are actually taken away from me..I will file.a lawsuit against Facebook..my son is a former Atty General..and he is fantastic prosecutor..I WILL FILE CHARGES WITH THE FED. TRADE COMM...I WILL HAVE THEM MONITOR MY POSTS AS I TYPE THEM..AND SEE FOR THEMSELVES..SICK OF YOUR LIBERAL CRAP..ARE YOU EVEN AMERICAN??????????????/

One may read this post as being about a specific experience. In this case Facebook posts that the user has made are disappearing. They feel that they are 'taken away' from them by Facebook and the user wishes to act against this injustice by filing a lawsuit and contacting the federal trade commission.

Particularly the mentioning of the latter evokes notions of consumer capitalism, customer service and the corporate nature of Facebook that can only be combated by an emphasis of consumer and citizen rights. The context of this post is thus marked by a sense of powerlessness over something that belongs to the user and is actually of their own making (the posts). The user makes reference to the notion of American citizenship and the federal trade commission that is part of (consumer capitalist) US society is called upon by them for help. In the same move, they question if the Facebook owners' are actual American citizens.

The post, like the previous ones, starts with a factual description of the experience but quickly slips into an affective mode of articulation that is characterised by the all caps writing, threats against Facebook and graphic words such as 'sick' or 'crap' that exemplify a verbalisation of affect's bodily ontology.

The fact that one has created something that appears on Facebook that is of one's own doing but is then deleted or disappears may fundamentally shatter the idea that one can possess, master and control one's own data and, ultimately, that one is in full control of one's self. That is why one can interpret the above post from a psychoanalytic angle as having affective qualities that

could be described as unpleasure, rage, anger, powerlessness. Another user post also exemplifies this:

When I google anything it appears on my newsfeed. Articles pertaining to private sites that I've been on. Take for instance today, ovarian cancer. How PATHETIC YOU ARE to invade my privacy!!! Many times I've also set my page to private,!only to be told it's viewable to the public!!!!!

Another user remarked:

How can Facebook like a page for me? The thumb is mine! Only I can use it! Stop using my name in vain, on pages that I don't even know!

The affective dimensions of powerlessness and a lack of control and that the users might possibly have anything to do with them are expelled in the above posts. This act of exclusion is achieved in posting on the Facebook Site Governance page about the affective experience. In their narratives, the users have excluded themselves from playing any, even involuntary, part in their relation with Facebook. In their narratives, the users dissociate themselves from their relation with Facebook and argue that solely Facebook is to blame for their

experiences (see also Fox and Moreland, 2015 for a similar discussion based on focus group data).

Affect, one may argue, is thus attached to specific experiences and 'ideas' in the Freudian sense. The affect re-emerges from time to time in experiences that are symptomatic of it: incomprehensible experiences, loss of data, lack of identification and control, harassment. Such a lack of control may be further visible in the following quote:

> You have continued your actions of tearing my page apart, and writing comments that would no more have come from my mouth than me announcing that I am the Christ!! How dare you! That is as slandering as you can get, bigoted, and down right destructive. I intend to put this out for all to see how you are running this site and for them to watch out for the very company that we have all trusted to share thoughts, and news. […] If I were to have written something like that against a country, a belief or a people, I would expect that I would be hung. I don't have any bigoted beliefs, do not take part in them, and do not come in on my page and write information.

The users may be seen as articulating a sense of broken trust and a feeling of betrayal. The above quote seems to take issue with Facebook administrators who have modified a page. An implicit lack of transparency on part of Facebook is articulated and the user wishes to share their dissatisfaction with Facebook so that everyone may see how Facebook is run. The quote may actually illustrate that the way Facebook is run remains largely hidden and unaccounted for for many users. The user addresses Facebook directly and expresses a double standard in relation to how Facebook may act and how they may act with regards to the actions Facebook is accused of. It may be argued that Facebook could do the things the user accuses the site of doing (whether they really did occur or not is beyond the scope here) because the relationship is rooted in material inequalities. Facebook owns the infrastructures and website itself and controls the power to delete, modify or add content to a page as they please and the user may feel that they cannot do the same without grave consequences ('would be hung'). The post, like the one about the disappearing posts, may be seen as an expression of an awareness of powerlessness. In both, the state of being aware is primarily an affective one that points to fleeting moments that underscore it. There may thus be an affective disruption of the very idea that data on Facebook belongs to the users.

This is expressed in feelings of betrayal in the above quote. The fact that the user actually plays a part in the relation that is betrayed is not mentioned but all actions are put to Facebook and the user essentially expresses a powerless frustration.

Discharging the Affect

What is so unique about the Facebook Site Governance page, then, is that a space is offered where users can respond to the posts by Facebook officials and express their opinions. As discussed, many use the site to share frustrating or unpleasurable experiences. In all cases that were discussed, Facebook does not work for the users and aspects of powerlessness have come to the fore. The users feel so strongly about such experiences that they have to go somewhere and post about them. The affect speaks and demands discharge. It finds an outlet on the Facebook Site Governance page where it is rendered into representation: an external, objective written account that is for everyone to see. This conscious act of writing about the experience and its wider consequences marks the last sequence in the affective experience. It further suggests that the affect has been discharged and neutralised through the act of writing. The existence of the Site Governance page therefore may contribute to appeasing users and guarantees in many instances that they have stayed on

Facebook and continue to use it. Facebook has thus created a space within the SNS where affects can be discharged and users may return to a more calm and tranquil state after posting about their experiences. The act of posting may thus constitute an additional way of discharging the affective experience that occurred in the moment the posts disappeared, for example. In posting on the page and in fully discharging the affect after the post has been written, the user responds by telling Facebook that they 'will' file a lawsuit, contact the federal trade commission and so on. The user whose page was modified similarly expresses that 'I intend to put this out for all to see how you are running this site […]'. Another user's post is similarly about specific actions in response to Facebook:

The deletion of my personal or business account before Jan 1, 2015 or deletion of this post that I will be taking a screenshot of, Facebook agrees to pay restitution in the amount of $100,000 USD per hour to a maximum of $1 Million USD a day.

Furthermore, if Facebook does not personally reply to my request to be waived from any updated agreements, Facebook agrees to to remove ALL my information, including my IP from all their servers and the servers of any

3rd party company on or before Jan 1, 2015 once I close/deactivate my account.

Failure to do so, Facebook agrees to the same penalties as above of $100,000 USD an hour up to $1 Million a day until all personal information is removed.

It is not my responsibility to make sure Facebook is notified of my new terms of service. By simply waving me and making me exempt from any future terms or policy changes I will cancel my new Updated Terms & Conditions.

Here, the user has turned the relationship on its head. Whereas the preceding posts were all written from the point of view of the users and detailed their experiences and possible future actions, the user in the above post has actively assumed a role that Facebook normally holds. 'Facebook agrees to pay restitution in the amount of $100,000 USD per hour to a maximum of $1 Million USD a day', was written for example. In that narrative, the user (discursively) makes Facebook do and agree to specific actions and demands. Such a narrative is similar to Facebook's own logics of running the site, in so far as users are made to do certain things without real choice or alternatives (e.g.

agreeing to new terms and conditions) if they wish to stay on the SNS (Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013). Another user similarly expressed: 'I would also like to point out that my information on facebook is private unless i wish to share it as public, therefore no government agency can use information on my facebook in any court of law in the united kingdom or brussels.' A third user's post may be seen as a similar attempt to render Facebook accountable or equal in its relationship to the user(s):

So basically,what you're saying is that you collect ALL of the information about me.
How about a quid pro quo and you owners and administrators give me ALL of your information about your families,photos,friends...? No? Didn't think so.

While there may be a sense of irony in the quote, it nonetheless shows a demand for a relationality that could be grounded in more equal terms. Rather than pathologizing the quotes discussed in this article as being about irrational demands, megalomania or simple weirdness, I am interested in exploring what their psychological functions for the users may be. The promises and demands expressed by the users signify consciousness, possession, agency, visibility and transparency – all qualities that both the Facebook – user relationship and

the user's individual affective experience (that is the relationship to themselves) lack. As a way of discharging, it is thus not surprising that the users resort to *naming* who they will contact, what they demand Facebook to do, or what their specific actions will be. In doing so, they have also, literally, ascribed themselves with agency and power both in relation to their affective experience (that has left them feeling beside or alien from themselves momentarily) and in relation to Facebook. The question whether they really hold that power, or if they really did contact the listed authorities, or were paid by Facebook as the other quote demands, do not matter here. It is the act of writing that establishes a momentary tranquillity. A psychoanalytic angle on the posts thus suggests that in writing the users have reassured themselves that they both own and control their body and data. The user, who experienced modified or added posts to their page, similarly writes that they wish to show how Facebook is really run by telling other users of the site's actions. In that way, they have recaptured a sense of agency that is about unmasking unjust and uncontrollable measures taken by Facebook. This agency is expressed through the act of posting and specifically of writing about the purposes of the post: to inform other users.

Conclusion

The main intervention this paper makes is to argue for Freudian affect theory as an analytical tool in relation to questions of user experiences on corporate social media. 11 user posts from the public Site Governance Facebook page were used to illustrate the conceptual values of Freudian affect theory with regards to social media. While the Facebook Site Governance page may contribute to feelings of (momentary) appeasement in users, it does not change the fact that Facebook users 'do not have the decision power to influence Facebook's rules and design, such as the content of the terms of use and the privacy policy' (Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013: 258). The underlying tone of the affective experiences that I discussed in this article could thus be defined as one of alienation in the Marxist sense. The classical term 'alienation' (Marx, 2009) has recently been revived in critical works on digital media and questions that concern data ownership and privacy on social networking sites (Comor, 2010; Andrejevic, 2011, 2014; Fuchs, 2012; Fisher, 2012, 2015; Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013; Sevignani 2013; Krüger and Johanssen 2014). Critical theorists argue that users are alienated from commercial social media because they do not own the websites and cannot fully control the data they have generated. Users are alienated from Facebook because their data (e.g. posted

content) are also extracted for advertising and profit maximization (Fuchs and Sevignani, 2013).

The dynamics between Facebook and its users show themselves as relations that are characterised by inequality with regards to power, website ownership, the treatment and control of data and general support of users. On Facebook, such relations may be felt as vague ideas that articulate and manifest themselves in specific user experiences (e.g. of disappearing posts or unwanted harassment). The knowledge of such experiences that can be characterised as ones of alienation that users may have may remain lurking in them and what is left is the affective quality of the vague *idea* that cannot be eliminated and attaches itself to specific experiences. These experiences are then written about on the Facebook Site Governance page. In other words, users may be kind of aware of their state of alienation and powerlessness that is enforced in specific affective experiences and respond to it by means of writing about them which can be seen as a reflexive act.

The users' state of being kind of or vaguely aware of their relations with Facebook has been researched in an empirical studies with Facebook users about privacy (Sevignani, 2013). Sevignani writes that 'users are kind of aware that people who own and control the SNS are appropriating societally-produced surplus' (Sevignani, 2013: 331). There is a kind of general awareness on parts

of many users but it may be essentially unconscious or denied. It is then re-actualised and re-emerges in specific experiences that are then hastily, affectively posted on the Facebook Site Governance page in an almost free associative manner. As discussed, the feeling of dispossession of user generated content is mirrored in a general (bodily) dispossession. Any affective experience bears witness to a kind of fundamental dispossession in relation to the self-other relation that is laid bare by affect. A Freudian angle on affect and alienation thus allows us to go beyond a political economy perspective that mostly discusses the structural characteristics of alienation on Facebook with regards to ownership and exploitation of user generated content. It further suggests that the authors of many of the posts discussed are not aware of what exactly happened or why e.g. their posts disappeared. The problems the users report are solely attributed to Facebook in a relation that is uphold through posting and staying on the site but is essentially characterised by a one dimensional relation because there are no replies by Facebook. While Facebook cannot respond to the hundreds of comments, its administrators could respond to some that occur again and again and touch on the same issues. They could further give the users more facilities to control their data and privacy settings and would of course need to stop selling user data without offering anything in return apart from a free website to its users. Instead,

Facebook has created a space with the Site Governance page that signifies transparency and user involvement but in reality upholds alienation and mere appeasement. While the establishment of the page may be seen as a first step towards visibility about Facebook's policies, users could additionally be provided with real agency and opportunities to shape the website and take part in a dialogue about its future changes. In that way, the relationship between affect and idea that I have theorized as uneven with regards to negative user experiences could be rendered more even. Many user posts are characterised by affectivity and representational ideas are deployed by users to make sense of their unpleasurable, affective experiences and situate them within wider social contexts (e.g. the US president, the federal trade commission, Facebook being a corporate website, general fears about surveillance, online harassment and hacking) that are entangled with but also go beyond Facebook. In that way, we may also read the affective experiences that are turned into narratives as momentary testimonies of the users' (un)conscious anxieties of living in a world that is growing ever more complex, (media) technologically saturated and more difficult to understand and control for individuals. In offering some sort of response to the user posts, Facebook would not be able to erase such wider anxieties but may at least to acknowledge and recognise them on a smaller level. Such a recognition may contribute to a sense in the users that they are

listened to and valued by Facebook beyond mere economic metrics. Such a sense of feeling both valued and powerful may be something many have lost with regards to contemporary politics and social developments in capitalism.

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[i] It should be noted that the term 'affect' is not synonymous with 'emotions', 'moods' and 'feelings' – both in affect theory in general and in Freudian theory in particular (see Gorton

2009; Diamond 2013 for a discussion of the differences). As noted, feelings are a component of an affective experience for Freud.