

# ACEPS PRESENTS



**ACEPS**  
THE AFRICAN INSTITUTE  
FOR EPISTEMOLOGY AND  
PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

## AFFECTIVE STATES, EPISTEMIC OPPRESSION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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The case has been made that our feelings are important to our epistemic practices (Alcoff, 1999, Ahmed 2004, Jagger, 2014). Social media can be an abrasive, inspiring, traumatic, heartwarming and anxiety inducing place. All of these feelings are facilitated not just by the content posted online but through the structural design of the digital spaces themselves. In this paper I make the case that we cannot epistemically improve the landscape of social media without attending to the affective dimension of it, focusing on the design features of social media such as moderation practices. I use the conceptual tools of affective numbing (Rogers, 2021) and affective scaffolds (Marin, Roesner & Steinert, 2021) to explore case studies across social media platforms of flagging, moderation and policing. I show how feelings that uphold white supremacy and patriarchy are facilitated whereas feelings that call these oppressive systems are silenced. I demonstrate how this affective landscape is entangled with epistemic oppression and injustice that ultimately detract from our epistemic communities.

Content Warning: mentions of rape, murder, racism, misogyny, transphobia



Danni Deans is a PhD researcher and artist at the University of Glasgow working within Epistemology and Feminist Philosophy. They have written on topics around Epistemic Injustice, with a focus on social media and online spaces, combining six years of tech industry experience with feminist epistemologies to comment on social identity in the virtual world. Their current work explores the entanglement of the affective and epistemic in oppression.

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