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## **Situated Affectivity in the Age of Empathic AI**

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Debates within the phenomenology of emotions appear to reconcile in the concept of situated affectivity or 4e. In other words, affective states do not merely reside in a person's body but are extended, embodied, embedded, and enacted by way of extra-psycho/corporeal processes and (im)material artifacts. Things such as fine art, film, music, books, drugs, computers, and photographs (to name a few) can enable emotional-cognitive responses in an agent. Proponents of situated affectivity go as far as to contend that some artifacts can be experienced or perceived as such an integral part of the self to the point where their presence or loss can profoundly alter or reshape their subjective being. They also argue that as people age, they begin to build a web of sentiment-laden objects around them which they use to navigate their affective life. Although the advent of generative AI has catapulted intelligent machines to the forefront of public attention, this fastest-growing subfield of emotionalized AI remains little-known. The technology involves computer vision, deep-learning algorithms, big data, natural word processing, voice-tone analytics as well as advanced biometric sensors and actuators. Unlike other forms of AI, emotionalized AI can adapt its behavior and tailor responses to suit the emotional context of human interaction. Still in its nascent stage, affect-recognition algorithms can already be found in healthcare robotics and medical chatbots, wellness apps, advertising billboards and digital menus, smart cars, automated HR systems, online learning platforms, security/crime prevention, music apps, videogames, and children's toys. Thus, we ask what happens when affective artifacts transform into intelligent machines capable of inferring, simulating, and regulating a person's affective life. How does the discourse on situated affectivity change when the artifact transforms into an algorithmic proxy, and humans begin to delegate their emotional life experience to a machine? Such philosophical and empirical ponderings are the pretext of this article.

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