De-definition of media

A telegraphic postscript

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In my view, the question raised by this short and sharp Dossier concerns the relationship of the 'regime' of German media philosophy to the contemporary philosophy involved in its major operation: the de-definition of media. This is shown, immediately, by the very un/common notion used by Professors Lorenz Engell and Bernhard Siegert: *not* 'Philosophy of Media', but *Media Philosophy.* (Note, in the very title of the IKKM – the International College for Cultural Research and Media Philosophy – the *mediate* presence of a Cultural Research philosophically distinguished, by the grace of the coming 'and', from Cultural Studies). The telescoping is in fact so im/mediate – between the de-definition of (mass) media, classically understood as means of production/control (i.e. *creative reproduction*) of social representations, and contemporary philosophy, defined by the de(con)structive critique of representation – that the extensive cultural intensification of the latter becomes the reality condition and the *ontological purpose* of media philosophy as such.

Nevertheless, a mediation, and more precisely a mediation between the cultural extension and the ontological intens/tion, is needed to *realize* the media-philosophical plane. Once it cannot immediately be politics – and this point engages the German identity/alterity of this media philosophy, in so far as it cannot play the Guattarian post-media card as a local answer to the biopolitical crisis of philosophy qua philosophy (whatever its 'thousands' of re-actualizations may be)[1] – it must go through the radical cultural sociology named ANT, whose oxymoronic form (Actor/Network Theory) will *tense* the whole process in a constructivist deconstruction of the subject/object time–space of representation. We move from the historical 'subject constitution' (Siegert's Foucauldian centred detour) to the network 'thingness of things' (Engell's Latourian decentred tour) – with Groys playing the insider outlaw part, when he regresses to Media *Theory*/Cultural *Studies* doxa better to restage an avant-gardist servant/server *Aufhebung* of the mediatic subject.

On the one hand, Actor/Network Theory is invested in its maximal contemporary philosophical 'complexity', problematizing from the semiotic-performative turn the heterogenetic engineering of an essentially relational materiality. However, on the other hand, following the topo-logic of our three texts, media philosophy projects itself as *the* AFTER ANT,[2] in the very movement where it invests and historically redefines power relations as the *medium of the media*, translating ontological montages into aesthetic operations. This *aesthetic translation* is de facto the 'fundamental' mediating process for the media-philosophical logic, which will consequently investigate film (Engell), painting (Siegert) or sound poetry (Groys) as an *ontological laboratory.*

anlogo bung
blago bung
blago bung

At this ontological level of experience, the philosophical de-definition of the media depends on a political de-definition of aesthetics, which affirms the very contemporary complex *standard* of German media philosophy. This is closer than we could have expected to a certain kind of Guattari-Effect, *if and only if* the translation of the political de-definition of aesthetics into a meta- (or para-) aesthetic re-definition of politics is – at any cost – *verboten.*

Notes

1. See Félix Guattari, 'Vers une ère post-media' (1990), published in *Chimères* 28, Spring–Summer 1996; http://biblioweb.samizdat.net/article.php3?id_article=26.
2. Following John Law's formula, 'After ANT: Complexity, Naming and Topology', in John Law and John Hassard, *Actor Network Theory and After*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1999, 2004.