

## Call for Papers: Special Issue on *Post-Mass-Media and Participation*

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Félix Guattari follows a clear agenda with his notion of post-mass-media: his entire project of the three ecologies aims at «human relations with the socius, the psyche and «nature»» (Guattari, 2000, p. 41; see also 2013, p. 26–27). Those deteriorating relations, ignored by «[s]tructuralism and subsequently postmodernism» in all their passivity, will have to be thought in new and different ways (ibid.). In order «to «kick the habit» of sedative discourse, particularly «the fix» of television» Guattari suggests to view the world «through the interchangeable lenses» of the three ecologies: social ecology, mental ecology and environmental ecology (p. 41–42). Post-mass-media, as an «essential programmatic point for social ecology», is a goal of working both with and on the three ecologies (p. 61). This goal would be reached when «the media will be reappropriated by a multitude of subject-groups capable of directing its resingularization» (ibid.). Guattari’s intention is for the term to be programmatic and understood as a concept for political action. The focus of the term – that is, the «post-» of post-mass-media – lies in the active appropriation of the spaces of mass-media through subject-groups. To Guattari, this seems to become possible on the basis of «sudden mass consciousness-raising», a changed role of class struggle after the end of Stalinism, the «technological evolution of the media» itself as well as on a «reconstitution of labour processes on the rubble of early twentieth-century systems of industrial production» (p. 62). The notion of post-mass-media, abbreviated to post-media, emerged precisely at a time which had to emphasise the problems of *global* developments. Guattari aimed at the early 1990s, without having any concrete idea about the transformation that the media would undergo. The term, as Hörl and Hansen remark in their summary, has been developed «on the basis of new media from video to computer» (Hörl/Hansen, 2013, p. 10). Back then, the appropriation of a new mass-media through subject-groups still seemed possible and desirable to Guattari.

It is not hard to see that a lot has changed in the 30 years between 1989 and today, in which «post-media» oscillated between being a term of euphoric celebration and an epitome of crisis. Clearly, we are no longer living through the technological, political and social formation of the 1980s. Yet, more interesting and perhaps more surprising is the fact that the term itself still appeals to new generations of scholars and finds its way into their work. For many, the broadcast of the first Gulf War, which imbued Guattari’s development of the term with a sense of urgency (see Genosko, 2013, p. 17), is beyond their own lifetime and their own experience is often limited to the Iraq War, which, under the conditions of a post-9/11 world, developed fundamentally different media-technological forms and strategies (see i.e. Crogan, 2017; Gruisin, 2010; Massumi, 2015). The consciousness-raising of the masses that Guattari hoped for has not occurred or at least looks very different (fascistic, nationalistic,...), the end of Stalinism has not brought about the predicted new class struggle, new technologies did indeed emerge, but they are appropriated by states and global corporations for data mining and surveillance, and whether the end of industrial work ends up producing a «creationist» subjectivity instead of simply extending work to all spheres of public and private life remains an open question (see Guattari, 2000, p. 62).

Yet, in spite of historical and theoretical shifts, Guattari’s vocabulary and thought has remained an important part of the discourses around media-technological formations. It is no coincidence that the engagement with those formations as well as the discussions of different notions of mediality developed precisely since the 1980s, which also saw Guattari formulate his concept of post-mass-media. It can be found in media-theoretical approaches in fields such as art (Krauss, 2008; Dittler/Selke, 2010), political theory (Brunner/Nigro/Raunig, 2013), sociology (Irrgang, 2009) and of course in media theory itself (Hansen/Hörl, 2013; Apprich et al 2013, 2014). While this plurality of applications points to the term’s appeal, it simultaneously brings with it a vagueness that opens different questions in relation to (amongst others) the notion of mediality (see Broeckmann, 2013). If one operates, as the research unit *Media and Participation* suggests, on the basis of «a process-related understanding of media» (Bippus/Ochsner/Otto, 2016, p. 261), which functions as the condition that enables – or hinders – the relational assemblages and sociotechnical configurations of participation, then medial participation has to be seen as a key issue where questions of economics and politics intertwine in the problematic of participation. By taking up and expanding Guattari’s concept of post-media, the question of medial participation can be understood as one of the central political, social and economic questions of the present. This thought is possible if post-media

is seen as part of those post-fordist efforts that expand the regime of exploitation from the workday to all aspects of common life. Those transformations in the mode of production have been described numerous times (Federici, 2012; Lazzarato, 2012; Marazzi, 2005; Boyer, 2002; etc.), and can be exemplified in the work of Hardt/Negri (2009). As part of the «biopolitical turn of the economy», the transformation places «[l]iving beings as fixed capital» at the centre, thereby making the «production of forms of life [...] the basis of added value» (p. 132). Consequently, post-media can no longer solely be, as Guattari intended, a programmatic point for a social ecology, but has to be grasped as a moment of the contemporary mode of production.

This call for papers is aimed at **early career researchers**, whose work draws on the notion of post-media after Guattari. The aim of the issue, which surveys the relevance of an originally programmatic term for scholarly projects developed 30 years after Guattari, is also to uncover sociological, political and economic expansions of the term. In doing so, we want to address – amongst others – the following questions:

- Which problems can the term still address today?
- Which strategies of re-formulation or resignification are necessary to productively adopt the term in a description of the media-technological formation of our present? What is its use for the description and appropriation of current social, medial, artistic, political and economic assemblages?
- How can a contemporary technical and technological formation no longer placed between video and computer be addressed in this way?

Please send us your **500-word proposal** as well as a short biographical note to [stuermer@leuphana.de](mailto:stuermer@leuphana.de) by **September 30, 2019**. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. For more information visit [www.litwiss.uni-konstanz.de/medienwissenschaft/zeitschrift-augeblick/](http://www.litwiss.uni-konstanz.de/medienwissenschaft/zeitschrift-augeblick/)

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