

## Foreword

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All programmatic structures (cultural and informational) are composed of determinates that when analyzed from a specific perspective describe their objects and processes of being. One way to discover or reveal the determinates of any complex structure is to collide it with another. It is a tried and true technique of creativity and innovation. Any consideration of the evolution of media necessarily must account for productions of such schemas.

A medium is a medium is a medium.—*Friedrich Kittler*

*Media Ecologies* by Matthew Fuller is, in one way, an analysis of the determinates of radio, telephones, cameras, surveillance, computational media, and networks. It is also, critically speaking, a read on the culture of the standard object—a culture based on systemic incorporation of the recombinant production of media objects that are abstracted, layered, and infinitely customizable.

This is a text that addresses innovation as defined by getting strange and interesting things to come out of the wrong end. A process that necessarily demands a better understanding of the mutability of media objects, the constraints of memetics, the language of modifications, the limits and excess of protocol, the implications of numericalization, and the nature of serial media scaling. By example and through theoretical consideration, Matthew Fuller explicates art as the challenge of a compositional dynamic of irresponsibility that engages with the language and context of standard objects through their

self-reflexive character, a challenge out of which emerges production of something in excess of their combinations. He further describes art as necessarily involving productions of innovative schemas of confrontation and insertion. For Fuller, creativity and innovation operate as realization processes outside of the misplaced concreteness of the standard objects of culture.

Media ecology is a very slippery term. It is often used to refer to both an interlaced topological analysis of media objects, as an environ, as well as an accounting of their function. It can also be an address of the materiality and immateriality of media objects, devices, and systems in terms of their form as both pattern and presence including the relative nature of their function. The term also refers to the multiplicity of meanings associative to the constituent binding relations of information objects contained within the ecology, its language. And, as Matthew Fuller illuminates, media ecology is also a descriptor of the parallel histories and affordances of context. Within the multiplicities of these ecologies, complexity reigns supreme. Nonlinear, self-organizational, and transpositional systems behavior combine autopoietically at the intersection of media collisions.

Complementing Manuel De Landa's reading of the *phase space* model and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's poetics of the *machinic phylum*, Fuller directs our attention toward aesthetics of layering composed of multiple relations of media dimensionality. These are dimensionalities operating as self-referencing structures that cooperate to produce something in excess of themselves and emerge in new structures of political, material, and aesthetic combination. Fuller's *Media Ecologies* stresses an appreciation of the nature of these processes and their compositional terms. It is an understanding that the ontogenic capacity of the media object lies outside of any embedded character of a particular context of being. Nothing is easy.

Presented here is an important and necessary discourse, one that informs a more critical vocabulary of the compositional terms of artistic practice involving new media. The Leonardo Book Series is very pleased to include *Media Ecologies* by Matthew Fuller.