



*Processual aesthetics. Thinking contemporary subjectivations - between medium, simulacra and apparatus - with Pierre Klossowski*

This thesis follows a twofold approach. The first is a textual genetic analysis of Pierre Klossowski's unpublished manuscripts for *The Living Currency* (1970), accompanied by a theoretical and historical contextualization. On the basis of previously unpublished material, the aim is to enrich and complicate the situation of Klossowski's thought in relation to his contemporaries, particularly from the perspective of a general economy of subjectivation that can be placed in dialogue with the works of Georges Bataille, Walter Benjamin, Günther Anders, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault and Gilbert Simondon. Moreover, Klossowski's cross-disciplinary thinking and multifaceted activities place him at a strategic point in the relationship between 20th-century German and French thought. As a translator of Walter Benjamin, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, Max Scheler and Johann Georg Hamann, among others, Klossowski exerted a considerable influence on his contemporaries Foucault and Deleuze. Our contextualization takes into account the relationship between the French theoretical field of structuralism and the American field of cybernetics, two interdisciplinary approaches with notorious links to the genealogy of German media thought.

Secondly, this research involves adapting and translating Klossowski's theoretical proposals in their interdisciplinary dimension, with a view to their implementation in contemporary discussions within media thinking. In this sense, the aim is to address the relationships between Klossowski's economy of affects, insofar as it outlines a processual or general aesthetic articulating processes of subjectivation applicable to a computerized context, and recent transformations in media thinking: ecotechnics and relational thinking, media archaeology, analysis of cultural techniques. Indeed, insofar as it addresses processes of subjectivation from the point of view of the materiality of industrial and pulsional devices, Klossowski's general economy resonates with the various areas of media thought that have recently addressed the environmental, anthropological and materialist dimensions of media use. Ultimately, such an approach aims at a theoretical updating, in order to enable a novel analysis of productions of subjectivity inscribed in various computerized devices. In so doing, our analysis mobilizes and explores genealogical and theoretical relationships between three contexts, to observe the richness and complexity of recent developments in media thinking in Germany through the prism of its international roots and a particular Franco-German dialogue.

This doctoral research is therefore about bringing up to date a set of concepts and notions from Pierre Klossowski's theoretical work. Several aspects of this cryptic work have had a considerable impact on and influenced authors close to Klossowski, and far more visible and influential than him, such as Foucault and Deleuze. Klossowski's updating of his work is therefore emblematic of a theoretical attitude that has now had a considerable impact. With contemporary devices, and in particular new media, as the objects of analysis, this updating is achieved through contemporary media theories. The challenge of this work, through a theoretical translation, is to bring Klossowski into dialogue with the fields of German media studies and the philosophy of technology, and ultimately to adopt the perspective of a media aesthetic. This Franco-German dynamic can be observed in many theoretical questions. It is notable, for example, that German media theory has taken considerable account of the aforementioned French postmodernists, and their more recent

legacy. Such passages across the Rhine encourage us to establish a broader dialogue between two intellectual fields that are not always in tune with each other's developments. Within these cross-disciplinary perspectives, an additional level of interrelations can be observed. This concerns the reception, constitutive of the French and German intellectual fields, of American cybernetics and information theories.

The work of Wiener and Shannon, as well as the aggregated research around the Macy conferences, have experienced various points of contact with the aforementioned structuralism and post-structuralism and with German media theory. The final objective is to create a conceptual framework enabling an up-to-date translation of an influential and under-appreciated work, shared between French and German cultures. In addition to the historical data mentioned above, this actualization takes as its objects various contemporary devices related to new media, and consequently tends towards an aesthetic we call processual. This processual aesthetics takes into account both the dynamics at work in current regimes of simulacra production-consumption, and the processor as the material substrate of computerized media. A psychological and social dimension is therefore associated with a media-technical or techno-environmental factor. Klossowski's numerous and scattered contributions on the notion of simulacra are linked to a reflection on forms of subjectivation, which in this work draw as much on data from psychology as on socio-economic considerations. Our corpus is also unusual in that the edition of *La monnaie vivante* involved a radical selection, leaving out unpublished pages that today amplify and complicate Klossowski's theoretical work. There is consequently a need to connect what might be called Klossowski's thought to a contemporary field of reflection, taking as its object the devices and regimes of subjectivity production, and to do so from the perspective of a media aesthetics. Ultimately, this approach sheds new light on various aspects of the relationship between French and German thought.

By exploring new genealogies and building bridges between different cultural, linguistic and theoretical areas, this thesis offers future extensions within media archaeology and Science and Technology Studies, by mobilizing and nurturing precise relations between German and French thought. Moreover, contemporary developments in the analysis of cultural techniques in Germany, within posthumanities and their theoretical extensions, gain an additional interlocutor thanks to Klossowski, who represents an original position within contemporary debates inherited from philosophical anthropology. In other words, Klossowski's approach to the archaeology of technological apparatuses of subjectivation opens the way to theoretical developments that are essential to contemporary thought. The richness of this Franco-German dialogue opens up new avenues of contemporary analysis, capable of enriching our understanding of the processes of computerized subjectivation, and more generally of the issues linked to technologies of the self and information societies, whether in terms of data production or behavioral control. Such openings are made possible precisely by an amplification of media archaeology as it emerged in Germany, through the lens of theoretical contributions offered by Klossowski.