COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND SPACE SUITS FOR MODERNITY: AN IMMUNOLOGICAL READING OF MEDIA ADDICTION

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The eighties and nineties were a busy couple of decades for cyberspace and cyberculture studies. What began as an American federally-funded military research program in 1973 slowly began to seep into the fabric of everyday life on a global level, seemingly fulfilling Marshall McLuhan's predictions of a 'global village' to come (McLuhan 1962). With a few exceptions, popular culture as well as a few select clusters of academia imagined 'cyberspace' as a potential utopia that would put everyone on an equal footing. Services such as MUDs[1] formed a grand metaphysical soup of iterative, self-generative becomings, where identities dissolved into constructive difference—the empirical version of Deleuzian planes of immanence. However, this sincere enthusiasm was short lived. As it became obvious that web technologies and the machinery of postindustrial capitalism were eminently compatible, critical thought grew increasingly aware of the untenability and inconsistency of the cyberspace myth.

The Internet was exposed as a mechanism governed by colonialist logic (Gunkel and Gunkel 1997), prompting a 'loss of the real' (Turkle 2003), and by the "self-serving ideology of an emerging 'virtual class'" (Turner 2006, 2). The term cyberspace itself became obsolete and philosophically banal. Technoutopianism was thus succeeded by a more nuanced discourse on digital media, especially in the academe. However, that has not stopped the synchronic emergence of a double-sided biopolitical discourse of immunity and contagion, reflected both in sociopolitical practices and texts, and theoretically, as a form of cultural critique of the community space created by technologies of media. To illustrate: Sherry Turkle lamented the destruction of traditional communities through the infiltration of digital communication media into what she considers 'traditional' ways of life (Turkle 2011), while Nicholas Carr has written extensively on the same topic (Carr 2010; Carr 2008). Various self-identified former Internet and media addicts narrated their experiences under the yoke of digitality's destructive fascination (Roberts 2010; van Cleave 2010; Young 1998; Sieberg 2011; Greenfield 1999). At the same time, Internet Addiction as a medical category is being assessed based on the necessity of its inclusion into the DSM-V. All these examples suggest that postindustrial capitalist culture has marked media technologies as a potential source of social problems, problems which are intimately interlinked with the valuing of community, of maintaining an

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[1] MUDs, or multi-user domains, are text-based virtual world platforms that were especially popular in the 90's. Very simply put, MUDs are a combination of online chat and role-playing games, in which users interact with each other through textual commands.

ontological separation between 'real' space and 'cyber' space, and of seeing certain types of technology use as conflicting with proper social roles. Discourse on technology and media 'addictions' such as Internet Addiction, as well as convergent medical categories like Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), can be seen as a symptom of this contemporary anxiety over digital technologies. These conditions are constructed on the premise that the individuals suffering from them become unable to fulfill their roles as (re)productive members of society: they can neither function as producers of economic and social value, nor can they fit into the binary-gendered paradigm of hetero-reproductive life. When it comes to the link between technology use and pathology, many popular and scientific inquiries gravitate towards key terms such as isolation, anti-social behaviour, or sociophobia—all of which invite a biopolitical understanding of cases such as Internet Addiction.

This paper approaches media addiction as a key term in modernity's relationship with technology, as well as an expression of a tense yet inseparable bond between technology and notions of life and humanity. Immunity and contagion, as Donna Haraway demonstrates, are an intrinsic part of the dialectics of Western politics, expressing its reliance on the recognition and misrecognition of self and other, of normal and pathological (Haraway 1991, 204). Media and technology are no strangers to the powers exerted by these metaphors, which not only reinforce the otherness of technology in the face of an imaginary of what counts as human, but also reinscribe 'proper' life as something that must be distinctly unaffected by media. In theory as well as practice, notions of immunity and contagion are used to identify and critique that which is seen as harmful and external to the self, the community, the social in general. But would it be possible to reverse the negative connotations of the immunity/contagion figuration, and rework media addiction in such a way that it no longer relies on practices of exclusion, isolation and ontological separation of media and their users?

IMMUNITY IN MEDIA-SPACE, MEDIATION AND 'BUBBLES'

Attempting to provide a definitive account of media is often an exercise in futility, mainly due to the concept's tendency to travel across multiple disciplines. As a point of clarification, the present article avoids a 'traditional' classification of media into individual technical mediums, such as television, radio, film, and instead follows in the footsteps of Sarah Kember, who argues that in the age of 'new media', mediation is a far more useful concept. As opposed to 'media', mediation avoids the separation between media representations, the matter of media, their reception, context, etc. (Kember 2012) Mediation is not a simple relationship between an audience and a medium. It is far more fluid, unstable and malleable than that: it is a process. It involves both media technologies as material assemblages (the technical object in itself, the substances and materials that compose it, the operations of production that lead to it, the human and nonhuman elements involved in this production, the global and regional socioeconomic conditions and structures that create the context of

production, etc), as well as processes of world-making—of sharing, transmitting and participating in affective assemblages (online communities, games, websites). Precisely because media can be configured in such a complex way, social issues such as media addictions also become difficult to grasp. What is the Internet Addict actually addicted to? Is it the act of physical interaction with a particular piece of technology, or is it certain aspects of this technology? Is the gaming addict dependent on the story of a game, its intellectual or emotional stimulation, the sense of community, or does it also have to do with the physical activity of fingers tapping on a keyboard? And if these kinds of addictions are potentially infectious (spreading from machines to humans), then what exactly is it that spreads?

But the apparent distinction between the matter of the addictive object and its form is not necessarily one that must be upheld. Media theory has taken a decidedly neomaterialist turn, and much ink has been spilled in order to argue for the inseparability of natures and cultures, of matter, discourse and affects entailed by media. The thought of Gilles Deleuze, and his theory of assemblages in particular, advance the idea that there is no separation between nature and culture, matter and representation (Deleuze 2006, 176-9), while Bruno Latour maintains the same, emphasizing that it is modernity's obsession with purification and hybridization that allows these binaries to exist (Latour 1993). The influence of Deleuzian assemblage theory and of Latourian Actor-Network theory is felt in the writings of media scholars like Joanna Zylinska, Sarah Kember, or Jussi Parikka, according to whom media theory is now doing a work of blending distinctions between human and nonhuman bodies, perceptions, affects, and processes. For Parikka, "New materialism is already present in the way technical media transmits and processes 'culture', and engages in its own version of the continuum of natureculture (to use Donna Haraway's term) or in this case, medianatures" (Parikka 2012). This approach to media also has the important side-effect of dismantling the distinction between 'real' space and 'cyber' space in the case of Internet studies, a dualism which has been the foundation of both cyberutopianism and cyberdystopianism in media studies.

The crux of the problem, then, is how to interpret the discourse of contagion and immunity that has been woven around media technologies. This is a point on which Peter Sloterdijk's so-called vitalistic spheric geometry as a form of life can be useful. In his three volume series titled Spherology (Spheres I: *Bubbles*, Spheres II: *Globes*, Spheres III: *Foam*), Peter Sloterdijk elaborates a philosophical rereading of human history. The core idea of *Bubbles* is that humans use technology to create protective spaces (spheres or bubbles) through which to explore and control their environments by separation and interiorization. Life, viewed in such terms, is ordered and constrained through the geometry of spherical environments. Timothy Campbell compares the human as envisioned by Sloterdijk to an astronaut, whose protective suit creates around her a safe, immunized space isolated from the outside (Campbell 2011, 87-8). In my reading, this so-called outside seems to be similar in nature to a Deleuzian plane of immanence, of absolute differentiation, upon which, as Elizabeth

Grosz notes, the individual and her identity is nothing more than a temporary coagulation of flows (Grosz 2011). In this context, the bubble as a figuration is a precondition for western modernity to sustain its own illusion: as Campbell comments, "modernity essentially consists of the struggle to create these metaphorical space suits, immunitary regimes ... that will protect Europeans from dangerous and life threatening contact with the outside" (Campbell 2011, 88).

Sloterdijk's bubbles organize existence and determine the limits of experience. They create "complex intertwined intimacies which forms us and interpenetrates us" (Ferguson 2012). But instead of insulating, they are porous and open to the affects, matters and representations of the outside. As Ferguson aptly summarizes, the intention of the spherological project is to counteract the presumption of an autonomous modern subject. Immunity and community seem to be inseparable for Sloterdijk: one is not immune within one's own personal bubble of individuality, but can be protected from the 'outside' through forming 'foam', systems of bubbles which provide some element of security. Bubbles, according to Sloterdijk, are protective technologically-mediated spheres that humans construct around them, and which allow them to explore and interact with their environment through isolation and separation (Herbrechter 2013, 218). It seems that bubbles, in Sloterdijk's view, are auto-immunitarian rather than immunitarian, as they turn the subject against herself by making it impossible for her to belong to what he sees as an 'authentic' community. This form of isolation, Sloterdijk claims, could be averted through the formation of foam, which creates a space for non-repressive community and the embracing of pluralistic forms. Closely related to spheres is the concept of anthropotechnics—the process through which humans are shaped into being through artificial spheres of existence. Social institutions like schools, modes of organization like the family or the couple, or sexual norms can count as anthropotechnics. But just as well, the mediations of television, art, music, computer games or Internet communications can also function in the same way.

As Campbell also demonstrates, Sloterdijk's vision of media falls back on distinctly Heideggerian divisions of proper and improper uses of technology. In *The Question Concerning Technology*, Heidegger argues that modern technologies (and he uses the example of the typewriter) leads to "the human being cut off from a more authentic relation to the natural world, [and] also cut off from an authentic relationship to itself" (Wolfe 2013, 4). Not all technologies are equally harmful in his view: the typewriter might sow the seeds of improperness within the user, but handwriting, a far older technology, does not. Sloterdijk, despite his attempt to approach the potentially positive way in which media can create communities, still relies on the tired Heideggerian trope of some technologies being better, purer, more human-friendly than others. It is important to note that only some media are improper, while others are safe. Kees Winkel observes that for Sloterdijk, bubbles are not necessarily harmful, but that media can disturb this process though their potential to cause a misuse of the affects, ideas and desires that they transmit (Winkel 2012). It is clear

that certain types of bubbles lead to the loss of authentic community—and this notion is definitely no stranger to many detractors of modern technologies of communication. Sherry Turkle, for example, asserts that what users of online social media experience is "not community"(Turkle 2011, 201). For her, the perceived isolation that results from mediation prohibits any authentic affective bonds and experience, whereas 'real' communities "are constituted by physical proximity, shared concerns, real consequences, and common responsibilities" (Ibid. 202).

It is difficult to deny that the relation between media and their human users can pose certain practical as well as theoretical problems. But simply condemning certain media as inherently 'proper' or 'improper' does nothing but further entrench a kind of thinking that eventually leads to a categorization of users themselves into good and bad, fit and unfit. This is not to say that media spaces cannot be seen as bubbles, but simply that the interaction between a human user and nonhuman media technologies is negative or positive only insofar as it is figured within a preexisting cultural and political framework. The obsessive woman reader in 18th and 19th century Britain became a 'species' as Foucault would say, because specific power/knowledge nexuses allowed it to emerge as a category. The woman reader embodied normative ideas about a woman's place in the social order, and became a canvas for the inscription of fears about women's sexuality and rights.

Internet Addiction, ADD, or other contemporary media addictions signify bubbles which are given a negative meaning by being interpreted as pathologies. In a spherological reading, they can be read as cases of compromised immunity. Media are thought to isolate, in the sense that they prevent the possibility of forming any authentic communities, and of fulfilling proper roles within them. As the human is absorbed into the hybrid human-nonhuman assemblage of the Internet medium, for example, there is a danger for her sphere to become too porous, too exposed to the contaminating influence of the media assemblage. However, the concept of the bubble as articulated by Sloterdijk, does not inevitably prescribe this reading. The porous vulnerability and openness to contagion exhibited by the media user is the very precondition for the creation of alternative forms of community, of alternative relationships to nonhuman actors, and novel ways of circulating affect and spaces for creativity.

CONTAGION THEORY, COMMUNICATION, AND COMMUNITY

If the concept of immunity is one that is ambiguously framed for the purpose of both criticism and productive theoretical gestures, the case of contagion is more clear-cut—it rarely heralds anything positive when it comes to technology. The computer virus has been the bugbear stalking digital networks for decades, instilling fear into casual technology users, as well as at an institutional level. By the turn of the 21st century, universal viral contagion had become a prospect with potentially disastrous consequences. Informational contagion is nothing as insignificant as having one's operating system thrown off kilter—it is a threat that could collapse economies

and trigger wars. And while information might is the main focus of contemporary discourse on contagion, contaminating computer codes are not the only thing that can be transmitted.

Through the logic of computer viruses, information can be contaminated and information itself can contaminate. But information, as data, is only marginal to this debate. It is communication, with all its material, symbolic and affective attributes, that is in fact the source of the threat, it seems. Well before computer viruses, communication has been embroiled in a discourse of contamination since the earliest beginnings of networked communication systems like the telegraph, telephone and even radio (Durham Peters 1999; Sconce 2000). But information is not the only contaminating factor in communication, as current as well as 19th century theories of crowd contagion have argued. The popularization of network and assemblage theories have prompted a resurgence of interest in contagion, and have repurposed it as a way of seeing the material and discursive conditions of postindustrial modernity.

In Tony Sampson's reformulation of Gabriel Tarde's theory of social contagion from the 19th century, contamination is a way of seeing what kinds of things are brought in relation with one another, and what kinds of encounters occur within the social fabric. It intersects with the neomaterialist agenda in the sense that it tries to avoid the separation between human subjectivity and the objects that they encounter. Tarde constructed a theory of imitation/contagion as an alternative to the Durkheimian theory of collectives, which was "binary, resonant and overcoded" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 218-9) and maintains a strict separation between the social and other domains. Contagion theory is a way of seeing the world in terms of monadic singularities, (i.e., foldings of the social, biological, cultural and psychological): a mix of matter, affect and cultural representations. Now, according to Sampson, currently there are two kinds of viral paradigms circulating through the fabric of modernity: One is a molar virality, which takes disease transmission as a vector. This is the virality that is present in biopolitical discourses which use the vocabulary of the epidemic (terrorism, online security)—and presumably, this would imply a defective theory of contagion, which still preserves the boundedness of the individual. On the other hand, there is a molecular virality, for which the best example is the orchid-wasp assemblage that Deleuze and Guattari talk about—an assemblage constituted by accidents of desire, of desire-events. This molecular virality, like the wasp and the wasp-imitating orchid of the *Thousand Plateaus,* is the way in which "a swapping of code fragments from one machine to another leads to the emergence of 'strange, unheralded new assemblages'" (Tarde 2012, 45).

What gets transmitted in a Tardean virality is a sort of intersection or translation from biological to social desires, propagated through imitation. What spreads through contagion is what Tarde calls imitative rays that take on a life of their own. There is no medium for transmission, there is not necessarily any order for the transmission either. Contagion is the way in which the porousness of subjects opens them up to the desires and affects of others (both humans and nonhumans). The self itself

becomes part of the fabric of contagiousness. What is really useful about contagion theory is that it offers an alternative to the self-contained, individual subject whose agency is based on rational decisions. Subjects are irremediably tied to others, and in fact, the subject itself does not even exist in this context. One can only speak of a subjectivity in the making, because both identity and individuality are constructed and reconstructed (as well as constructing and reconstructing) contagious relations.

If media addictions are to be read through contagion theory, it is possible to do so in two ways: through a molar contagion theory, in which contamination passes hierarchically from machines to humans, from one institution to the other, and from one human to the other through direct contact; or through molecular contagion theory, which emphasizes the importance of not individuality, but collectivities and assemblages. In fact, Tarde's figuration of the somnambulist is in many ways very much alike to the Internet Addict, because it refers to a blurring of identity boundaries and of ontological distinctions which occur in a state of lowered consciousness, of flawed rationality and loss of self. The Internet Addict emerges when one assemblage captures fragments of another assemblage's affects and desires.

Contagion theory seems to be concerned with an immaterial materiality. Thinkers like Brennan or Lisa Blackman certainly do acknowledge the importance of the material, of bodies, but their emphasis is on the immateriality of what is transmitted. A more material approach to matters of contagion comes from epidemiological discourses, which focus on the material-discursive construction of disease. Protevi, for example, looks at the case of AIDS in order to underline the way in which the viral (whether we're talking about the viral as material or conceptual) implies a renegotiation of the borders of the body. The body is increasingly conceptualized as porous, fragile and susceptible to ruptures, which means that its integrity must be protected more than ever. As both Protevi and Parikka argue, the cultural fear of contagion is tied both to the body politic and the body biological.

MEDIA ADDICTION DECONSTRUCTED

In the first part of the paper I have tried to lay out a critical framework that can help position media addiction within a philosophical discourse that struggles with the overlaps and contradictions between the twin paradigms of contagion and immunity. In what follows, I would like to examine more closely the nature of media addiction, as a technicity ("emergent form of relations between technologies and living bodies" (Bucher 2012, 11)) that is increasingly becoming the focus of medical and psychological research, as well as popular discourse.

Before the advent of Web 2.0, it was not unthinkable to construe media addictions as neatly delimited behavioural problems that arose in conjunction with specific technological media. Media addictions did not even need to be of the digital sort: the 18th century saw the unfolding of panics around the idea of women reading obsessively (Jack 2012; Phegley 2004), "radio mania" was a threat for the men of the roaring twenties (Butsch 1998), and the spectre of television addiction (Kubey and

Csikszentmihalyi 2002) has been floating around in many different cultural contexts since the respective popularization of TV sets. In the past, media theory drew up boundaries. One could be addicted to the TV, without necessarily presenting addictive behaviour in relation to radio or books. But Web 2.0, or rather the cumulative shifts in media structures that is brought under the umbrella term of Web 2.0, has challenged the fixity of these boundaries. Web 2.0 refers not to a fundamental change in the technology of the web, but rather a recent refiguration of the way in which various media work in tandem. Contemporary Internet is perhaps more recognizably an assemblage than any other networked system before it. Web sites are no longer self-contained platforms, but rather a distinguishable ramification intensely connected to other parts of the assemblage, they are "increasingly entangled in a networked context and shaped by third-party content and dynamically generated functionality"(Helmond 2013).

As Anne Helmond argues, the Internet is now made up not of individual websites, but of ecologies (Ibid.). The user of Web 2.0 is not a passive consumer of information, but an important actor who generates content that feeds into the assemblage (Langlois, McKelvey, Elmer and Werbin 2009). Therefore attempting to theorize the Internet Addict, for example, becomes a needlessly complicated challenge. Is a person addicted to the Internet if they spend all their time online streaming videos or listening to music? Or playing games? Blogging? What about the person who spends their online time not in front of a computer, but by checking their web-connected smartphones every ten minutes? But even if we concede that media-addiction is a more useful umbrella term for all these 'problematic' technicities, there is still the question of what differentiates an addict from a 'normal' person who is merely taking advantage of all the affordances of digital technologies without feeling any compulsion or pathological need to do it?

Even if one accepts that Internet Addiction exists as a legitimate medical diagnosis and not just a contemporary sociocultural anxiety, there still remains the question of what the user is addicted to. As briefly pointed out earlier, media are not static binary structures, a coupling of hardware and the representations it produces. They are processes of mediation between assemblages of human and nonhuman parts, interweaving matter, affect and intensity. The television addict, the radio addict, the book addict are intimately connected to both the material basis of their desired object, and the affective load that it transmits. Better yet, there is no separation between matter and affective load. I would argue that media, in the case of the so-called addict, serve not to isolate, as some scientific and popular discourse seems to suggest, but rather as a mechanism of sphere creation that still maintains the porousness necessary for community creation and connectivity. The media addict, both as a figuration and as a medical category, is vague enough in order to encompass almost any kind of technicity that can be conceived as problematic. The problem itself is quite blurry: medical research references the potential psychological, social, educational and intellectual effects that improper media use can incite (Coman and Ross 2012).

Fandom participation can provide an interesting example as to how spherological immunity and contagion work their way into discourse on medium-use. The contemporary fan is a unique example: the object of her desire is part of a media assemblage (most commonly music, film, television series, literature, games), while at the same time, the coagulation of fannish identity most happens through a medium, such as various online platforms. Fandom participation should not automatically be considered a media addiction, despite the frequent pathologizing language of obsession and addiction used to describe fans of certain media (Bell 2010; Reilly 2012; Jenson 1992). In fact, the longstanding history of pathologizing the fan (Pinkowitz 2011; Mousoutzanis and Riha 2010) might have much in common with media addictions (the obsessive-woman reader comes again to mind, especially given the prevalence of gendered elements in the construction of the pathologized fan (Ibid.)). One simple (and perhaps unjustly reductive) way to analyze the figure of the media fan is as an individual in whose case separation from one community results in tight connections to another community; therefore fandom is not only about separation from community, but rather joining an improper community. Viewed from the outside, fandom forms into an immunized, cohesive sphere. However, this view is complicated not only through a Sloterdijkian or assemblage-oriented analysis, but also by an empirical glance into the workings of online fandoms.

Fan communities and other internet communities can often see the world through rose-tinted technoutopian glasses—an alternative to the closed-mindedness and exclusionary nature of 'terrestrial' communities. Many participants see online communities as safe spaces within which they can pursue interests and practices which they perceive as either divested from the real world (role-playing blogs and games), or unacceptable in their 'real' communities (pornographic fan art and fiction). As Joseph Brennan shows in his analysis of online slash fandom, the infrastructure of the Internet allows for the creation of 'bubbles within bubbles', or isolated spaces within a space that is already seen as isolated—a kind of fracturing of the online community into smaller components. Online platforms such as Livejournal or Tumblr are seen by a majority of fans as safe havens where they can build tight-knit communities that supplement the deficiencies of their 'real' communities, and yet, even these communities have "as much potential for prejudice and narrow-mindedness as real-world communities, perhaps an even greater potential given cultures of anonymity" (Brennan 2013, 6). I would argue that if the act of connecting to the Internet is a catalyst for the formation of personal bubbles from the environment, and an entry-point to the sphere of online community, this should not be seen as a finite action, but rather as a process of alternating and layering states of isolation and inclusion. Becoming part of an assemblage such as an online community, like in the case of orchid and wasp, is no simple matter of gluing two distinct parts together. It entails a process of negotiation, imitation, redefinition of boundaries, and the emergence of assembled properties that exceed the properties of the parts involved.

Pinkowitz (2011) examines in detail the way in which discourse on fandom (which here can be understood as addiction to one specific example of medium) constructs a carefully drawn boundary between the normal and the pathological individual and their media spheres. She argues that the crystallization of the inappropriate Other emerges through the cultural encoding of rules regarding one's relationship to the medium/object of desire, and "as long as the fan (or antifan) shows 'good common sense' and remains 'rational' and 'in control,' he or she will be spared the condemnatory and pathology-citing discourses of the dominant hierarchy"(Ibid.). The transgressions against this 'good common-sense' are, I would argue, transgressions against norms of self-contained individuality, and gender, sex, sexuality, and race codes. Once the media addict has lost her common sense, her subjecthood is soon to follow.

CONCLUSION

Peter Sloterdijk's spherology is essentially a theory of connectedness, and an expression of apprehension over how easily connectedness, the glue that holds together the world as we know it, can turn into its flipside: isolation. It is not surprising that Latour, the pioneer of Actor-Network Theory, has remarked on the similarities between these two approaches (Latour 2009). However, while ANT is consonant with themes of connectivity, mediation and inevitable entanglements between human and nonhuman elements, the vision of networks and passages is far too sterile for Sloterdijk: "Unlike networks, spheres are not anemic, not just points and links, but complex ecosystems in which forms of life define their "immunity" by devising protective walls and inventing elaborate systems of air conditioning"(Latour, 2011).

Sphereology is essentially a theory of connectedness and, regardless of its main postulations, should be receptive to being connected, in its turn, to a vocabulary of contagion as well. Contagion, as articulated by Tarde and furthered by his descendants, seems to be precisely the manifestation of the turbulent ties that come into being between ideas of being connected/networked, the isolation and transcendence proper to the Enlightenment model of the individual, and the fear of contamination voiced collectively by various epidemiological discourses. This paper has tried to untangle some of these ties through a reflection on media, which are increasingly acknowledged as shapers of lives and ways of living. Sloterdijk's writings, with his examples drawn from urban planning, environmental studies and geography, have been assimilated into critical studies of space and the politics of space. I have used the example of media addiction to suggest some pathways through which spherology could be equally constructive in the fields of media philosophy and philosophies of technology.

Sloterdijk's philosophy of spheres is not an answer to any of the questions and apprehensions raised by mediation. Sloterdijk himself was ambivalent about media, and their potential to isolate and to produce 'anti-sociality'. What he does is to offer

a set of tools that can clarify these issues, if not to solve them. Mediation, in all its complexity, creates an inconsistent and contradictory tug-of-war between the need to isolate, to immunize, to protect the notion of humanity (if not always individual humans themselves), and the drive to facilitate fusions between human and nonhuman actors, matters, fluxes of affect and ideas. Media addiction, much in the same vein as drug addiction, is discussed as an event through which the afflicted individual becomes alienated, isolated from the rest of her network. I have tried to show how coupling spherology with theories of contagion allows a more balanced dynamic between the ideas of contagion, immunity, isolation and connectivity which are part of the discourse on media addiction.

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