The last two decennia there has been much focus on the materiality, and the analogue and digital technology, of cultural products, artworks and qualified media products, which in form of delimited entities and ‘tools’ communicate with human subjects and produce ‘meaning’. But how do we decide what counts as a medium of communication? How necessary and supportive is the troublesome concept of a medium with respect to ‘its’ social and political implications throughout time? How shall we outline a ‘medium’, if we shift the focus to a processual and performative intermediality? Are there any elementary units at all that might be named media sub specie aeternitatis?

Provocatively, the German professor Andreas Hepp states:

[M]edia have always had a processual character. In this respect, ‘media as a process’ is a general term used to bring this processual perspective front and center. However, as digitalization has intensified this processual nature has become even more dominant. It is in this respect that the expression ‘media as a process’ emphasizes a contemporary phenomenon.

With this symposium we search new directions and empirical material for the field of intermedial studies, by asking how we can grasp the transformative quality of “media as performative process”. Is this approach rather due to the contemporary phenomenon of digital technology, or is it more generally a question about our perspective, that is, how we look at ‘things’?

Is the medial process bound to programmed media technology and rationality, or can criteria for performance, such as its ambivalence, unpredictability and transformative power (Fischer-Lichte 2008), be integrated in a way that allows for political dissensus? Is there any place and role left for the
(emancipatory struggle of the) subject in the process of ‘transformative performativity’ and the traditional understanding of communication as a “fierce longing for contact with an untouchable other” (Peters 2001)? Or do we have to stick with subjective agency as operational reflexivity in the shape of media-technological feedback commands? Shall we – with Bruno Latour – give up any distinction between artefact, corporate body and subject (Latour 1999)? How can Felix Guattari’s new processual ecology (1989, “a logic of intensities, the logic of self-referential existential assemblages”), be integrated into an understanding of media? How can affect be integrated into a dynamic model of media modalities? And, last but not least, how do we interpret artworks that consist of (endless) actualisations of its potentialities?

Do you want to engage with these intermedial problems together with us? We invite you to a symposium and welcome presentations (15–20 min) dealing with media and intermediality from perspectives such as for example:

- media as a process
- process/es as media
- media as potentiality
- media as actualisation/s
- aesthetic processes
- the heterogenesis of medial flow
- body performance and/or commercialised subjectivity
- media performativity
- media as/in change, variation, iteration etc

We do this from lunch to lunch in sunny Lund in late summer: August 27–28, 2020. Coffee breaks, lunches and a dinner (evening, August 27) will be included. NB Still, the pandemic decides this date also.

Send a short abstract (ca. 200 words) to: <per.backstrom@kultur.lu.se>; new deadline 1 June. We will evaluate which papers to accept at our meeting mid–June and mail you back soon afterwards, the main criteria being that your paper deals with media in its processual aspects and fits together with other accepted papers to generate a fruitful discussion. It is, of course, also possible to attend the seminar without a paper; you are in that case welcome to register 15th of June latest.

A Warm Welcome!
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Theoretical background — a selection