
FILM-PHILOSOPHY

Essential Viewing

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Bernard Stiegler (2001) *La technique et le temps 3: Le temps du cinéma et la question du mal-être*

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Bernard Stiegler's ambition in this book – one very much in keeping with the combined philosophical rigour and situated activism of the *Technics and Time* series as well as his broader scholarly and “public intellectual” engagements – is to re-make the ground on which the theorisation of cinema as material, technical and historical phenomenon takes place. Realising this is critical to grasping the significance of Stiegler's claims about the cinema, television and digital technologies, for, as we will see, these claims intervene in established positions concerning the media, globalization and contemporary technoculture. This re-making of the ground of theorising continues his relentless calling to account across the *Technics and Time* series of Western thought for what could be called its enduring technical blindspot. The three volumes (so far) do not cease to insist on a reconsideration of the originary dependence of human beings on technology. Everything is at stake, in Stiegler's view, in this reconsideration today, when the increasing influence on cultures of the global technical system exacerbates the disorientation individuals feel toward themselves and each other, leading them toward a state of ‘ill-being’. The audio-visual program industries are a key element of this tendency.

Stiegler argues in *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus* (1998) that what is essential to the human is precisely the *lack* of an essence. The human is

'essentially in default', always already in need of some technical prosthesis in order to survive, to prosper, to improve oneself, so as to realise one's individual and collective goals (1998, 188). As such, the lack, the default of essence is paradoxically necessary (*'un défaut qu'il faut'*) to the human conceived as essentially a being that lives to transform itself, to have/produce significance, to contribute to the ongoing development of the collective, and so forth (1998, 210). The technical prosthesis has always already supplemented the human being, making possible its becoming. Moreover, Stiegler argues that time itself as lived by human beings is constituted in and through this technical prostheticity. Both anticipation of the future and memory of a past not lived become possible with the advent of the tool. The tool is a kind of external memory of the experiences and knowledge of those who devised and refined it and passed it down. To use it is to anticipate the future resulting from its deployment, a future inherited from those past lives of which it is the crystallised exteriorisation. Stiegler draws the general conclusion from this that exteriorisation (the formation of the techno-cultural context of human sociality) and interiorisation (the processes of memorious consciousness, consciousness of self 'in' time) exist in what he calls, after Gilbert Simondon, a 'transductive' relation (1998, 163) That is, they are reciprocal, co-constitutive of each other, existing only in their relation. The 'who' (genetic and 'epigenetic', experiential memory) and the 'what' ('epiphylogenetic', externally accumulated memory) invent each other in a 'recapitulating, dynamic and morphogenetic accumulation of individual experience' at the basis of human history and cultural becoming and differentiation (1998, 177).

The cinema is a crucial component of the 'what' active in this co-inventive dynamic since the start of the 20th century. *Technics and Time 3* focuses on it and the lineage of audio-visual technologies to which it belongs. This sustained consideration is prepared and anticipated by the analyses of photography, writing, digital technologies and the Husserlian 'temporal object' (to be examined below) in *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*. Much of this work is resumed and extended in *Technics and Time 3*, which Stiegler notes in the preface is something of a reformulation of his general project that can be read autonomously (13) – although this reader would volunteer that familiarity with the first two books is an enormous advantage in tackling the complexities of the third.

Stiegler provides a premonitory summary of his project in *Technics and Time 3* several years in advance of its release, in the concluding comments of 'The Discrete Image', first published in 1995 and released in English in Stiegler and

Jacques Derrida's *Echographies of Television* (2002: pp). He draws a correspondence between Derrida's influential deconstruction of the opposition of speech and writing and an hypothesis of his own: that 'life (*anima* – on the side of the mental image) is always *already* cinema (animation – image-object)' (emphases are Stiegler's, 2002, 162) *Technics and Time 3* elaborates this hypothesis and its implications. While it does so without substantial recourse to Derrida, this pre-formulation of it has the value of highlighting the importance of his writings for Stiegler's work, and perhaps above all his account of the paradoxical logic of supplementarity.¹ In both cases something intuited as secondary (writing, cinema), coming later to imitate the primary entity (speech, life), an artifice produced by technical (that is, non-living) means, a supplement added to a self-sufficient existence, is put forward as somehow central, determining of what seemed to pre-date it. A perverse game is played through this supplementary logic with the transcendental, idealist gesture that posits the enduring essence of things beneath the changes brought in the course of time. The 'always *already*' in the above quote from 'The Discrete Image' makes a quasi-transcendental play to outbid the implicit transcendental positioning of an essential 'life' over and above the temporal, technical phenomena of the cinematic apparatus and its productions. The stakes of this game are the understanding of life (at least, human individual and social existence), cinema and the transcendental gesture itself. This is what *Technics and Time 3* is playing for.

In Chapter 1, 'The Time of Cinema', the quasi-transcendental play is made through an analysis of the cinema as a technical system that produces an experience of time. This experience, argues Stiegler, maps perfectly onto the dynamic of temporal engagement of the cinema spectator, so much so that it produces the well-documented impression of reality and credibility capable of 'capturing' one's consciousness for the duration of the film (31). The 'coincidence' of the time of film and spectator is a key element of the book's propositions concerning the threat, to which we will return, posed by contemporary audio-visual programming (cinematic,

¹ On the paradoxical logic of supplementarity, see Derrida, (1976, 141-164). While *Technics and Time 3* is dedicated to Derrida, Stiegler could not be called a 'Derridean' in the sense that such a term would describe his work as in the main proceeding from and having recourse to the writings of Derrida, even if he acknowledges the significance of Derrida for his project through frequent engagements with his texts. In 'Technics of Decision: an Interview', Stiegler explains his relation to that of key thinkers for his own thought (he has Martin Heidegger in mind at this point) as being 'against' them, in the sense both of 'right up against',

televisual and even more so 'numerical' or digital). The irregularity of this *quasi-transcendental* analysis is signalled early on by Stiegler: 'The analysis is that much more necessary because the singularity of the cinema reveals the singularity of the "human soul" as such: it exhumes techno-logically the "mechanism" of the "hidden art" in its depths' (30). An account of what lies in the profound depths of human life reliant on a techno-logical hermeneutic appears to be anything but transcendental. Nonetheless, Stiegler's account of cinema is carried out through a formulation of what unifies and is therefore essential to any or all concrete, realised instantiations of cinema, even if this transpires through the perverse reversal indicated above wherein life, or more specifically living consciousness, plays the role of being (in) the 'image' of cinema. More correctly, the perversity lies in the way Stiegler makes the one and the other swap roles, double as metaphor for the other, as vehicle for its 'transcendental' formulation. For instance, he describes the 'cinema' which is

produced ceaselessly by consciousness, which projects on its objects those which precede them in the sequence in which it inserts them and that it alone produces. In fact, this is also, in effect, the same principle as cinema: to arrange its elements into a sole and self-same temporal flux. (38)

And further on he asserts that the 'structure of consciousness is through and through cinematographic, if one calls the cinematographic in general that which proceeds by *the montage of temporal objects*, that is, *of objects constituted by their movement*' (52, Stiegler's emphasis).

If one calls the cinematographic *in general* montage, one can call consciousness *in general* cinematographic. Consciousness and cinema are *in general* montage, the one exemplifying the other's transcendental generality and vice versa. This analysis of the cinema and consciousness as sharing in the generally cinematic characteristic of the montage of temporal elements is elaborated and legitimated by Stiegler through a detailed critical intervention in Husserl's phenomenological account of memory in *Logical Investigations*. Stiegler discusses Husserl's elaboration of two forms of memory, or retention, primary and secondary, operative in consciousness. He finds there a blindspot in Husserl's account of memory, one which he attributes to the problematically transcendental ambition of phenomenology itself, an ambition which is obligated to exclude from the consideration of the essential nature of consciousness precisely what Stiegler

close to, but also, necessarily, distinguishing oneself, departing from them in some way, 'even Derrida' (2003c, 157).

proposes as essential supplement to its constitution, namely, the technical supports of human memory of which the cinema is a singular instance.

The cinema is an instance of what Stiegler calls a mnemotechnology, that is, a technology specifically dedicated to the recording of experience, such as language, graphic art, writing, sculpture, ritual, and closer to its point of emergence, photography and the gramophone. The transductivity analysed in *Technics and Time 1* between interior consciousness and the exterior technical milieu which mediates its relations to other consciousnesses (and to itself) is already marked in the term, mnemo-technology. Stiegler insists on it in his account of cinema, taking Husserl to task for failing to think the mnemotechnological form adequately. Husserl proposes that two kinds of 'retention' are operative in consciousness. He distinguishes between these through a discussion of the difference between the audition of a 'temporal object' and its subsequent recollection. While all objects are temporal to the extent that they are encountered in time, the term 'temporal object' specifies those objects which consist in a temporal duration, that is, those objects (of consciousness) which are constituted temporally. Husserl's example is a melody. Stiegler resumes Husserl's analysis of how primary retention works in the hearing of a melody to enable consciousness to apprehend the sequence of discrete sounds as a coherent entity (and not 'noise'). In a melody, he explains, a 'note only "sounds" through its rapport with preceding and following notes' (37). Primary retention is the 'maintenance of the having-just-passed' in the present of consciousness, so that at each moment of audition consciousness retains the previous note of the melody, it itself retaining the previous note, and so forth (37). This is what allows consciousness to constitute the temporal object via a dual retention and anticipatory 'protention' that at each moment of hearing projects the coherence of the melody based on these retained moments (and their protentions). The recollection of the melody at a time after it has concluded Husserl names 'secondary retention', one which occurs in consciousness via a dynamic operated by the imagination so that the memory is selectively recalled and reconstituted, that is, produced, in dialogue with all the other recollections ordered in and comprising consciousness as such, that is, consciousness as a continuity maintained beyond or beneath the temporal flux of immediate perception.

In effect, what Stiegler does is to ask Husserl where he heard this melody. Via an examination of the gramophone recording as a temporal object, Stiegler supplements Husserl's two forms of retention with a third form, tertiary retention, and

in the process refigures the interplay of primary and secondary retention. Husserl, he points out, relegated external objects containing the record of experience to the category of 'image-consciousness' available to consciousness as perceptions but not intrinsic to its memory-structure (40). The gramophone, argues Stiegler, is a new kind of mnemotechnology that accomplishes something not previously possible, namely, the exact repetition of a temporal object. The audio recording reproduces exactly the original playing of the melody. This capacity is critical for Stiegler because it demonstrates that Husserl's insistent exclusion of secondary retention (and the role of the imagination therein) from the pure perception of the object operative in primary retention cannot be sustained. This is made evident in the way that each listening of the recording (and in the same way each viewing of a film) is a different experience; one hears (sees) it differently, noting different aspects each time. In other words, the past experience of the recording must have influenced the current audition. This means that 'secondary retentions inhabit in advance the process of primary retention' (43). Perception of a temporal object, then, and by extension, of any object of consciousness perceived in time, is never 'pure', never free of the selective dynamics of the imagination, of selections based on the archive of all past memories. All perception is marked by the protentions emerging not only from within the present moment of perceiving – it is this that can no longer maintain itself in pure opposition to the past or the future in this analysis – but from the memories of past perceptions. This marking is a marking out of what to perceive from the totality of sense perceptions. In other words, all perception is always already a selective reduction of the total possible retention of the object of consciousness.

And what this reductive character of perception (as well as secondary retention) also indicates is that the archive of consciousness is constituted in the interplay of primary, secondary and tertiary retentions. While for Husserl these latter are artificial memories, not intrinsic to the workings of consciousness, but only its objects, Stiegler insists on tertiary retention as the *sine qua non* of consciousness as montage. The 'archive' is the fallible, finite, fragmentary, secondary memory of individual consciousness always already supplemented by the external record accessible through

all forms of objective "memory": cinematogram, photogram, phonogram, writing, painting, sculpture, but also monuments and objects generally, inasmuch as they testify to me about a past that I have not necessarily lived myself (54).

Memory is inside/outside the phenomenological subject, who must be rethought as not essentially the container of phenomena, but as a form ('me') that is originally 'outside myself' (84). Cinema, and the audio-visual technologies that come in its wake, are a major influence on consciousness because they form a vital part of this 'what' that is outside. They have the capacity to impact on what people think at this structural level of the constitution of consciousness out of the flux of experience, experience which is itself realised and made possible in the milieu made possible by the 'what'. Technical audio-visual temporal objects form an increasing proportion of one's experience in the modern era, giving them an increasing potential to influence the nature and the ordering of retentions in consciousness, out of which come the protentional principles for selectively producing the primary retentions in an ongoing real-time montage of the present moment.

This influential capacity is built on an accumulation of abilities across the technical lineage of analogical representational technics, from photo to phonogram to cinema and beyond. The cinematographic apparatus, arriving shortly after the phonogram, combines this new ability to record temporal flux with what photographic technology accomplished through the capture of a past moment in time. This point is established by Stiegler with reference to Roland Barthes's influential analysis of the perceived capacity of the photograph to elicit 'spontaneous' belief in the past reality of the 'this has been' seen in the photograph.² The cinema 'adds the dimension of duration' to the photograph's compelling power. On top of this, Stiegler argues, television adds two new 'determinations': 1. 'Through the technique of broadcasting, it allows a mass public to simultaneously watch the same temporal object in all the points of a territory' (62). This makes possible the constitution of 'mega temporal objects' (62), that is, the program schedules of television channels that Stiegler earlier describes as a kind of extension in time of the Kuleshov effect constitutive of cinematic montage in general (being the 'demonstration' of the principle that perception is always already projection, 38). 2. 'As technique of capture and *live retransmission*, it allows this public to live collectively and in all the points of a

² In order to elaborate the significance of this photographic capacity for the cinema, Stiegler resumes here a discussion of Federico Fellini's *Intervista* (1987) from *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*, the complexity and significance of which requires its own review. The analysis turns on a sequence in which Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg and Fellini view the Trevi Fountain sequence from *La Dolce Vita* (Federico Fellini, 1960) years later, and leads Stiegler to propose the impossibility of excluding the tertiary memory form of the film clip within a film from the complex dynamics of the recollections, emotions and reflections generated in

territory the event so “captured” at the very moment it takes place...’ (62). These two effects come to ‘transform the nature of the event itself and the most private aspects of the lives of the inhabitants of the territory’ (62). The numerical, analogico-digital technologies add a further level of transformative capacity to cinema and television, situated in part in the shift from broadcasting (and the regulation of cinematic production and distribution) to digital, electronic dissemination, and the resultant erosion of the regional and national groupings attendant on the ordering and regulation of network programming in particular ‘territories’.

Through this accumulating capacity to effect the ‘who’, cinema and the audio-visual representational systems that flow from it assume an increasingly central role in the system of contemporary technoculture. This system, ordered by the logics of corporate capital, that is, by the logics of the amortisation of capital investment in the shortest possible time, coordinates industrial production generally (the production of goods and services for consumption) with the ‘program industries’ capable of accessing and soliciting the individual (as) consumer (61). Consciousness is the material in the market of marketing whose forum is the program industries: ‘In the industrial development of culture it is consciousness itself which is for sale’ (122).

Here the resemblance between Stiegler’s account of the ‘program industries’ and those accounts of media and culture in the era of capitalist modernity (and post-modernity) should be evident. In particular, one can see parallels with the general tenets of the hugely influential formulations of Louis Althusser concerning culture and ideology, its passage into film and then cultural/media studies via the work of ‘apparatus theory’ (Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz) and Anglo-American cine-semiotic film theory of the 1970s. Beyond the disciplinary and theoretical differences between the conceptualization of the subject-in-ideology and the intentional consciousness of phenomenology that Stiegler adopts from Husserl, the parallels would be drawn on the basis of the assertion of a form of materially exterior ‘conditioning’ of human interiority operative through these technologies of representation. Stiegler is not unaware of this similarity, even if he does not address these particular theorists of film and culture in his book.³ He does, however, discuss

actors and spectators in this revisiting of their individual and collective pasts (1996, 46-49).

³ In relation to a psychoanalytic perspective on these questions of knowledge, understanding and the imaginary projection of the coherence of the world, Stiegler signals a major engagement with Freud and the general question of desire to come in the following volume of the *Technics and Time* series. And this is already under development in the last two chapters of *Technics and Time 3* through speculations Crogan, Patrick (2006) ‘Essential Viewing’. *Film Philosophy*. v. 10, n. 2, pp. 39 – 54. <<http://www.film-philosophy.com/2006v10n2/crogan.pdf>>. ISBN: 1466-4615 online

the related and equally influential work of the Frankfurt School theorists, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, on the 'culture industries', making an explicit parallel between their work and his account of the program industries. In Chapter Two, 'The Cinema of Consciousness', Stiegler resumes their argument in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* concerning the increasing regulation of cultural life outside of work hours in the era of industrial modernity through the industrialisation of cultural production so that all aspects of social and cultural existence become subject to commodification. In their reliance on Immanuel Kant's notion of the scheme in their positing of the external schematization of thought produced by the culture industries, however, Stiegler identifies the persistence of the metaphysical 'technical blindspot' in their work, something which inhibits the critical potential of its account of culture – and, by implication, those related accounts of the ideological conditioning of subjects in and through the productions of the dominant, mainstream film and media industries. On this point, the idealism subtending Jean-Louis Baudry's famous 'materialist' account of the cinema's functioning as an ideological apparatus—no more evident than in the ambiguous role played by Plato's cave in Baudry's 'Ideological Effects of the Cinematographic Apparatus'—would be so implicated. A materialist and 'scientific' knowledge of the cinematic apparatus is presented there in and as an idealist, that is, transcendental, conception of knowledge that would be capable of escaping ideology. Plato's cave works both to figure the deluded state of the subject-spectator in ideology and, therefore, to position Baudry's materialist account of that state of delusion as a theoretical exiting from the cave. The impasse of experimental film practices inspired by such critical accounts, what David Rodowick called (in his book of the same name) the 'crisis of political modernism', is due in no small part, I would argue, to this inbuilt contradiction of materialist theorisations of the cinema which hampered critical and practical interventions in dominant cinematic practices.⁴

Stiegler goes back to Kant in order to set the scene for a 'new critique' of the culture industries (84). He traces the concept of transcendental schematism in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* back to the notion informing it, namely, that of the 'triple

extending the earlier analysis of Kant's work on the mechanics of reasoning toward the (divine for Kant) origin and end of reasoning as such.

⁴ Rodowick develops insightful criticisms of the work of Baudry and other theorists of the cinema's ideological workings for their reliance on a naïve opposition of code/deconstruction, as if a critical decoding practice could simply undo the mystifications of coded positionings of the subject in institutional practices of signification and access some realm free of coding as such. (see Chapter 3 of *The Crisis of Political Modernism*).

synthesis' of apprehension, reproduction and recognition developed therein. Briefly, Stiegler maps Husserl's primary and secondary retention, along with his own tertiary retention, over Kant's apprehension, reproduction and recognition, indicating how (as with Husserl) the constitutive role of technics haunts Kant's elaboration of the 'transcendental' form of consciousness. In Kant's analysis, the achievement of the 'triple synthesis' of these three processes of consciousness results in the understanding arriving at the 'unity of apperception' of the object (79). Kant's analysis of the synthesis of reproduction (memory) cannot, however, argues Stiegler, detach itself coherently from the synthesis of apprehension (perception), something which Stiegler argues is symmetrical with Husserl's difficulty in keeping primary and secondary retention separate. Because the synthesis of recognition emerges in Kant's argument from an a priori unity of the phenomenon under consideration with the precepts of the consciousness seeking to understand it (the 'transcendental affinity' (78) of mind and its objects in the world), the confusion of apprehension (perception) and reproduction (memory) troubles the legitimacy, that is, the 'transcendentality' of the understanding arising out of this 'triple synthesis'.

The core of this problem of transcendentalism lies with the tertiary memory form 'outside' the interior core of human understanding but also intrinsic to it. Stiegler 'proves' this in a brilliant deconstructive reading of Kant's explanation of the mediating function of the schema in the attainment of the unity of apperception. The 'transcendental schema' (Kant's term, 85) appears in the revised version of the Critique, precisely, argues Stiegler, to attempt to resolve the difficulties in establishing the transcendental nature of the process of consciousness. The schema is a third term, says Kant, standing between the categories of understanding (the transcendental concepts) on the one side and the phenomena of consciousness on the other, making possible the cognitive synthesis and the arrival at the unified apperception of phenomena (85). The schema's goal, Stiegler cites Kant, 'is not a particular intuition, but the unity in sensibility' (85). But whence comes the schema, asks Stiegler, if not from particular intuitions of objects of consciousness, recorded, retained, accumulated and available to consciousness 'a priori', always already conditioning the individual's intuition and understanding? Is not the understanding at work in each moment of consciousness a kind of film-making, he suggests, with apprehension, reproduction and recognition being the coordination of the processing of 'rushes' and 'inserts' in an ongoing, synthesising montage, determined in its single and self-same form by the exercise of criteria of selection and combination conditioned by the experience and understanding recorded in the 'films' (books,

images, and all kinds of other recordings) already made available to consciousness (79)? The appearance of such a mediating schema would be conditional on and reciprocal with the exterior reproductions of the flux of consciousness in all the forms of tertiary memory (78).⁵

The schema cannot be maintained in this position between the pure abstraction of the a priori categories of the understanding and the particularities of worldly phenomena. To do so, Stiegler suggests, is tantamount to positing a kind of magical, secret origin to the unity of apperception (110). This unity (of consciousness) is, in Stiegler's analysis, always projected, anticipated, but never pre-ordained. If the process of the synthesising of retentions and protentions that is thought retains some mystery, then this must be addressed not as transcendental, 'beyond' material, historical, factual existence, but as a mystery concerning what is given to consciousness, by the technical milieu in which it always finds itself, of the understanding of experience it has not itself necessarily lived. The 'magic lantern' of consciousness that projects a unifying light over phenomenal diversity must be thought transductively as figure (of the schema) of thought and the technology allowing consciousness to be so thought, that is, schematised (96). Likewise with the cinema: 'In other words,' says Stiegler, 'the *elementary rules* of capture, montage, mixing, direction and post-production and projection of flux are the categories [of understanding]' (114). Without this schema of the *elementary rules* of the cinema, the categories of thought await their *quasi-transcendental* re-cognition.

Such schematisations are, however, always (with) us. The impact of the schematisations of thought produced by the culture industries is possible because selections must be delegated by consciousness, 'and have always already been delegated, to the ascendants one inherits by adopting their past experiences as one's own...' (113). The 'durable delegation' that is sociality is founded on the 'absolute credit' given to these past experiences, a kind of 'unconditional belief' that the program industries are capable of mobilising in their efforts to coordinate production and consumption (113). It is critical, Stiegler argues, for the development of a 'new critique', first and foremost of critical thinking, to interrogate the implications of this quasi-transcendental basis of sociality and culture situated in the technical

⁵ Stiegler's prime demonstration of this is Kant's own revision of the *Critique of Pure Reason* across the editions first released in 1781 and 1787 respectively, a refinement of his ideas impossible without the existence of the first version, in exterior, published form, of the synthesis of the flux of his consciousness before the question of the critique of pure reason (79-82).

milieu.⁶ Adorno and Horkheimer fail to do so, proposing instead that the culture industries had 'deciphered' and mechanised the secret principle of schematisation that Kant had proposed (68). The critical and cultural theory that followed in its wake shares largely in this shortcoming.⁷

The remainder of *Technics and Time 3* can be understood as taking a series of steps toward the laying out of the terms of this new critique in the face of the 'ill-being' that Stiegler argues is growing out of the accelerating industrialisation of culture globally.⁸ This ill-being is characterised in Chapter 3, 'The American Politic of Adoption', as a 'pollution' of the reciprocal dynamic through which individual and cultural development takes place (167). Stiegler parallels well known accounts of the centrality of American capitalist modernity in the processes of globalisation when he

⁶ Stiegler will advance the term 'atranscendental', cautiously, in a footnote in which he promises to say more about it in the forthcoming volume in the *Technics and Time* series, to describe his project's philosophical positioning as 'neither empiricist nor transcendental' (129).

⁷ Stiegler attacks (and this is no overstatement) Pierre Bourdieu's *On Television* as exemplary of this failing of critical thought before the major forms of audio-visual technology (131-138). Walter Benjamin's meditations on reproduction are, however, cited here as a significant exception in the German school, and Stiegler returns to Benjamin in the final chapter in order to reformulate the terms of this 'new critique' as a thinking of re-production as 'repro-duction', that is, as the creation of something new in the very act of reproducing the already (re)produced (311). Given his engagement with Benjamin, it is intriguing that Stiegler does not address Benjamin's meditations about the cinema explicitly in his own account of it. I'm thinking here in particular of Benjamin's idea in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' of the 'distracted' mode of engagement with the cinema as opposed to the contemplative mode of encounter with painting. The comparability, indeed the compatibility, of this idea of distracted perception with Stiegler's argument about the 'capture' of consciousness by the cinematic temporal object seems to me to be a question worth pursuing. While the latter seems to suggest an experience like that proposed by psychoanalytic film theory, one of immersive psychic coupling with the cinema projection system, Benjamin proposes (as commentators such as Susan Buck-Morss and Miriam Hansen have noted) a more psychically detached, but physically embodied encounter with the film image – at least as its intrinsic critical potential, however circumscribed by Hollywood's employment of the 'artificially' auratic star system and its adoption of the immersive narrative forms of bourgeois literary tradition. The fact that 'The Discrete Image' adopts a distinctly Benjaminian flavour in positing the analytical critical possibility opened up by the digital image's appropriation and indetermining of the photograph's perceived impression of reality, suggests that this question has a history and a future.

⁸ The translation of '*mal-être*' as 'ill-being' is made with thanks to Daniel Ross and David Barison, whose film, *The Ister* (2004), includes lengthy segments of an interview with Stiegler and represents, among other things, one of the best overviews of his project available to the English-speaking (or subtitle-reading) viewer. '*Mal*' in French also has the sense of 'evil' or 'bad', and this dual sense of diseased and evil

argues for the leading role of America in the 'industrial organisation of adoption'. Identified as the key geo-political and philosophical theme today (190), 'adoption' is approached through a discussion of the work of Gilbert Simondon on the transductive relationship between psychic (individual) and collective individuation. As with the account of consciousness as cinematic, adoption is understood as a process intrinsic to individual and cultural becoming, through which the resources of the technical milieu (called 'pre-individual' by Simondon) are taken up as the conditions of individuation. America's exceptional propensity to regulate and industrialise adoption is linked to its singular history, a history of diverse and competing colonial origins, the extermination/assimilation of indigenous peoples, and multiple waves of immigration, all in the absence of a coherent 'projective apparatus' (160) of national, communal identity (available to Europeans and to most of their colonial outposts). The advancing integration of all forms of representational mnemotechnologies in global, interactive information networks plays a determining role in the global dissemination and adoption of the 'American way of life', that is, the way of life as consumer (177).

The increasing influence of these program industries on processes of psychic and collective individuation worldwide leads to a new phase of the alienation of the individual from his/her material production that Marx analysed (137). Here, individuals are increasingly alienated from their thought (that is, from their process of individuation) through the confusion between primary, secondary and tertiary retentions arising from the increasing pre-emption of the first two by the mediatic programming of the latter (186). This tends to interrupt the 'rhythm' of the complex interplay between synchronisation and diachronisation at the heart of psychic and collective individuation (159). The adoption of the spatial and temporal coordinates held in common by the collective – which Stiegler names 'calendarity' and 'cardinality' (183) – is the synchronising basis of identity, inasmuch as this adoption of a particular identity and history is what opens the possibility of one's own diachronic individuation of that synchronicity. The hyper-industrial exploitation of the synchronising tendency of adoption tends to close off the individual's diachronic potential. The result is a reactive 'hyper-diachronic' atomisation of the collective through a loss of investment and belief in the always already phantasmatic, projective synchrony of the collective.⁹ The evident and extensively analysed

being is active in Stiegler's account of the dangers of the 'hyperindustrialisation' of individual and collective becoming.

⁹ The term 'hyper-diachronic' is actually from a discussion of these themes in another text, *To Love, To Love Oneself, To Love Ourselves: From September 11 to April 21*, in which this process tending toward ill-being is re-examined, in a more generally Crogan, Patrick (2006) 'Essential Viewing'. *Film Philosophy*. v. 10, n. 2, pp. 39 – 54. <<http://www.film-philosophy.com/2006v10n2/crogan.pdf>>. ISBN: 1466-4615 online

phenomena of globalisation and its discontents are symptoms in Stiegler's account of this tendency toward hyper-diachronisation.

The remaining three chapters explore the crisis of education and the overturning of conventional notions of scientific knowledge in the ongoing advance of what Stiegler calls 'technoscience-fiction'.¹⁰ The insights developed through the account of the cinematic character of consciousness, how it knows and orients itself, and the globalising processes its industrial exploitation has put in train are revised and extended in these chapters. I have no space left in which to venture even the kind of foreshortened summary I have provided of the first half of the book. One concluding point, however, should be made concerning the general tenor of Stiegler's work in relation to the state of film theory today. While much recent scholarship on film and cultural production is intent on locating and theorising the conditions of anti-hegemonic potential of various forms of production, Stiegler's intervention in the thinking of cinema (and culture as material production generally) is aimed at rethinking the hegemonic as such. Consequently it focuses on and emphasises the hegemonic, globalising processes so powerfully at work in the reproduction of contemporary technoculture today. This does not mean, however, that his work should be taken as ignoring, or ignorant of, the possibilities of differentiation and resistance to the dominant tendencies influencing technoculture. On the contrary, what he calls in *Technics and Time 1* the 'idiosyncratic' potential of individual material productions (film, text, artwork, software object, and so on) to reflect on, reconsider and recast the prevailing schematisations of existence 'we' have always already delegated to 'ourselves' is a structural component of the reproductive potential of human 'nature' understood as originarily technical and prosthetic (*Technics and Time 1*, 199). His own readings of particular films and television programs in *Technics and Time 3* (which I have not had time to engage with here) in order to elucidate his reflexions on cinema (not least for himself) bear this out.¹¹ Stiegler's project is best

accessible way, in terms of a 'hyper-synchronisation' having as its abreactive double a hyper-diachronisation tending to uncouple individuals from any sense of inherited communal potential.

¹⁰ Part of Chapter 4, 'Our Ailing Educational Institutions', was published in the online journal, *Culture Machine*, although, inexplicably, only two thirds of the chapter are included in the translation.

¹¹ In terms of film and cultural theorisations of what eludes or remakes the hegemonic, I'm thinking, for instance, of work on reception studies, on subcultural stylistic appropriation of the mainstream, and of postcolonial theories of cinema as 'intercultural' (Laura Marks), 'accented' (Hamid Naficy) and so forth. Here would be the building blocks of another account of *Technics and Time 3*, one focussing more on how it would impact on the theoretical tenets of such attempts to think the Crogan, Patrick (2006) 'Essential Viewing'. *Film Philosophy*. v. 10, n. 2, pp. 39 – 54. <<http://www.film-philosophy.com/2006v10n2/crogan.pdf>>. ISBN: 1466-4615 online

understood, then, as a sustained effort to lay out the basis for precisely such aesthetic, conceptual and critical reinvention through a 'new critique' of the dominant tendencies of contemporary, hyperindustrialising technoculture capable of avoiding easy subsumption or recuperation by its immense adoptive capacity.

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diversity and plurality of cinematic production and reception. Yet another approach could have looked at Stiegler's project in relation to the history of film theory, commenting, for instance, on his account of montage in relation to its 'classical' formulations by Sergei Eisenstein (who is cited in the series of epigraphs to the book) and the Soviet film avant-garde, on his notion of the impression of reality of the cinema compared to that of Christian Metz's cine-semiology, on his allusive and inviting suggestion of a critique of Gilles Deleuze's film books, on the potential it provides for a (much-needed) confrontation with cognitive film theory, and on the possibilities for reading particular films (and other audio-visual works) emerging out of his approach to thinking cinema's temporal engagement of the spectator. These are some of the 'opportunity costs' which haunt my selective reduction of Stiegler's book.

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