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Blockbusters and the Art House Cinema of Consciousness
Bernard Stiegler and the Question of Cinema

Abstract

Bernard Stiegler's theory of consciousness is based on a unique claim: Consciousness *is* cinema. The invention of the technological dispositifs of photography, the phonograph, and above all of cinema, have made this structure visible. He develops the thesis of the cinema of consciousness in *Technics and Time 2 – 3* especially, where it leads to a deconstruction of consciousness as Husserl thinks it and of the I as Kant conceives it. This theory also lies at the root of Stiegler's large-scale criticism of contemporary cinematic capitalism that continues and critically engages with the works of Adorno, Horkheimer and Debord.

This article presents and critically examines Stiegler's theory of consciousness as a nonconscious *power* or *faculty of dreaming* that is not based on the imagination hidden in the depths of the unconsciousness (as in Freud) but on collective technical image-objects analyzed as "tertiary retentions". While Stiegler emphasizes the way in which the cinematic industry colonizes the imagination, this article asks what its creative potential might be. More importantly, the article presents a theory of *mimesis* that, I claim, is presupposed but ignored by Stiegler and that explains the pharmacological nature of cinematic consciousness.

Article

At the core of Bernard Stiegler's philosophical theory laid out already in *Technics and Time I-III* is a unique interpretation of consciousness as cinema. Let me first show how, athough this equation illuminates consciousness in a novel fashion, it does not correspond to the traditional idea of consciousness as self-consciousness inherited from the Cartesian, Kantian and Husserlian traditions, and although consciousness contributes to the important notion of individuation that Stiegler inherits from Simondon, it does not coincide with it either.

For Stiegler, the question of the consciousness is not about assuring the *ego* of the clarity of its thoughts (*cogito*) or even of its existence (*sum*). Despite its name, this consciousness is not necessarily conscious of what it thinks; on the contrary, it is constantly distracted by the affects and thoughts that happen *in it* but without this consciousness being itself their origin. In a later article, "Organology of Dreams and Archi-Cinema", Stiegler explains consciousness in terms of the "archi-cinema of the *unconscious*" (Stiegler 2014a: 7-37). But we could actually say that this unconscious is fundamentally driven by what N. Katherine Hayles calls the *nonconscious*[i], because rather than coming from the depths of the soul, or before coming from there, affects and thoughts come from external memory supports like books, photographs, audio recordings, cinema, television, digital media, and so on. They make *sense* to consciousness and contribute to the sense that consciousness makes of the world – but they do this by illuminating the unconscious with the ambivalent clarity of dreams (Stiegler 2014a: 8), and not at all by revealing consciousness to itself, at least not in any complete, definitive manner. By showing how consciousness is conditioned by different memory supports, Stiegler thus continues the deconstruction of the phenomenological notion of consciousness through "writing" that was developed by Jacques Derrida in his early works. But unlike Derrida, who deconstructs classical figures of consciousness without instituting a new one in their place, in *Technics and Time 2* and *3,* Stiegler conserves the classical name "consciousness" and redefines it in function of "tertiary retentions".

In this article I shall show what these "tertiary retentions" are and how they end up dissociating *consciousness* from the human *individual* whose consciousness it seems to be. The human individual is a different question altogether. Stiegler does not think the individual in terms of a fixed *identity*. Instead, he draws on Gilbert Simondon in order to describe human existence as a process of *individuation* that cannot be the object of knowledge because it is a process that never comes to a conclusion (for human existence that would be the fixed identity) but only to provisional metastable equilibria that are soon destabilized and changed again (Stiegler 2014 b: 45, 50-51). Acts, or strictly speaking events of consciousness, contribute to individuation if they are experiences that are capable of destabilizing the equilibrium or restabilizing it. They contribute to individuation insofar as every new experience is interpreted against the background of past experiences, the sense of which is changed by interpretation (Stiegler 2014a: 9). Individuation happens across these constantly renewed experiences, but it never results in an individual fully transparent to itself. Such a complete consciousness would be the end of individuation because it would end becoming. Stiegler also emphasizes that individuation is always a co-individuation in which I and We individuate one another and he is interested in showing how this co-individuation happens through the external memory supports provided by noetic technologies. He is interested in the new mechanical arts and especially in cinema because it illustrates the co-individuation of consciousnesses through noetic technologies so well.

In the second subchapter of this article I will outline the reasons why, given that Stiegler's theory of consciousness as cinema is on a fundamental level a theory of co-individuation, it has major implications for political philosophy. In his later books – especially *Symbolic Misery 1-2* – he

develops a large scale criticism of contemporary cinematic capitalism, which is distinct from earlier forms of capitalism by being a production and consumption of images above all else and an exploitation of the imagination and the affects. It leads to "symbolic misery where aesthetic conditioning in its essence constitutes an obstacle to aesthetic experience" (Stiegler 2014b: 83) such that psychic and collective individuation themselves are affected (Stiegler 2009: 3). Continuing and critically engaging with the works of Adorno, Horkheimer and Debord, Stiegler paints a sombre picture of cinematic capitalism, whose surface is attractive and delightful but whose deeper effects are stupefying, passivifying and depressing. They are the source of the massive onto-psychological *ill-being, mal-être*, that Stiegler diagnoses as characteristic of our time. Instead of analysing any particular films that could exemplify this ill-being (when any Hollywood blockbuster would do) Stiegler shows how ill-being is generated in the consciousness.

Hence Stiegler claims the contemporary era is in a deep crisis. In principle, in his work it is "not a matter of 'putting an end to crisis' but of starting a critique" (Stiegler 2009: 147) capable of revealing the conditions of the crisis. He differs from Adorno, Horkheimer and also Rancière by locating these conditions in material technologies. But although Stiegler emphasizes that contemporary audiovisual technologies, like all technologies, are *pharmaka*, he speaks far more about their destructive effects, as if the crisis was beyond critical remission. In principle, contemporary cinematic technologies could also provide emancipatory and empowering possibilities. Stiegler speaks much less of such possibilities, but he gives some indications in the chapter "Tiresias and the War of Time" of *Symbolic Misery 1* in particular, where he dreams of "criticizing television through cinema" (Stiegler 2014b: 93). He develops such possibilities further in the article "Organology of Dreams and Archi-Cinema", where he explains in some detail how filmlovers in the 1950s, making their own New Wave cinema, explored the emancipatory possibilities of cinema and how new possibilities surely lie in wait in the new digital media such as Skype, You Tube, webcams and smartphones, possibilities that were largely unexplored in 2014 when Stiegler wrote his article (Stiegler 2014a: 25, 29).[ii] In principle, as Patrick Crogan puts it, "the digital transition represents the potential for an equally unprecedented, global empowerment of citizens as media producers" – supposing, of course, that the need to "make movies" and "get behind the camera" has not been dampened by the overwhelming power of cinematic capitalism (Crogan 2014: 92).

However, such openings seem to be rare in comparison with the crushing power of Hollywood blockbusters culminating in the "drive-based nightmares, that is, horror movies," that destroy the libido (Stiegler 2014a: 27)[iii] and especially of television, that synchronizes consciousnesses, excites desire to the point of finally extinguishing it, and thereby generates the general ill-being of our time (Stiegler 2014b: 1-13, 60-62). These powers seem so overwhelming that it almost looks as if cinema lacked any therapeutic dimensions. In principle, these latter should consist in different ways of "seizing the means of the image production" as in the classical arthouse films Stiegler comments on, such as *Intervista* (Fellini), *Eclipse* (Antonioni) *The Streetcar named Desire* or *On connait la chanson* (Resnais), which are generally auto-reflexive films on some aspects of film or of popular music. However, apart from such arthouse films, Stiegler does not give concrete examples of contemporary emancipatory cinema. It is as if this particular technology had made this well-nigh impossible, partly because image production has become so overwhelming that it has become impossible to maintain a critical distance from it, partly because the technological equipment has become a tightly sealed black box that makes the images before we can make them, and above all because cinematic production is itself a rapacious capitalistic industry.

1. The cinema of counsciousness

In *Technics and Time 2-3* Stiegler makes a striking claim: Consciousness *is* cinema. Consciousness has not become cinematic with the invention of cinema: The very structure of the conciousness is cinematic from the word go, and the invention of cinema as a technological dispositif has only made its archi-cinematic structure manifest. Stiegler's studies of the material technologies of the cinema are at work in his deconstruction of the philosophical notion of the I as conceived by Kant, and of consciousness as Husserl thinks it.

Stiegler's theory of consciousness can be explained in a very general way using a Kantian framework by saying that in order to complement Derrida's theory of writing, which is a deconstruction of the *logos* and therefore of the Kantian understanding, Stiegler shows in *Technics and Time 2* how photography and phonography deconstruct the two conditions of sensibility: The image set in the photographic picture displays space, the sound recorded in the phonographic piece of music extends time (Stiegler 2014b: 54). In *Technics and Time 3* the synthesis of the visible space with audible time leads to a study of the schematism of the transcendental imagination in terms of cinema. Stiegler says: "My ambition in this volume is to re-visit and contemporize this transcendental moment [of schematism] as cinematic consciousness constituting an archi-cinema." (Stiegler 2011: 6)[iv]

It is useful to start with the two "fundamental principles of cinema" (Stiegler 2011: 11-12): Photography and phonography.

Stiegler analyses photography as a unique kind of picture made possible by a specific, analogical recording technology (I will say a few words about digital technologies below). Unlike classical painting, photography tends not to be examined in terms of the picture's capacity to *imitate* reality or *imagine* it otherwise. Instead, because of its technological condition, the photograph gives itself, so to speak, as the Cartesian moment in art, the moment of *evidence* that *this* reality *was necessarily there*, not just "as if", but *certainly*. Stiegler quotes Roland Barthes, for whom this is the photograph's "power of authentification", which exceeds its "power of representation" (Stiegler 2009: 118). At the same time, when the photograph captures an instant, reproduces it later and finally multiplies it through numerous copies, it also gives itself as the evidence that this reality is *not there anymore*. The very structure of the photograph is this "*this was*," the disappearance of the instant captured and the emergence of its testimonial memory: "The photographic vision is a re-vision" (Stiegler 2009: 15, 15-17). What Stiegler calls the "photographic noema" is the intentional act capable of capturing what was but is no more: It carries out a conjunction of past and present realities that can "give me what I have not lived." (Stiegler 2009: 114, 220; cf. Derrida and Stiegler, 2002: 150). Photography gives presence by spectralising it. The structure of *this was, necessarily*, and *this is no more, necessarily*, constitutes what Barthes calls the *punctum* in his famous, poignant description in a passage of *Camera Lucida* of the photo of Lewis Payne made before his execution on which Stiegler comments at length in *Technics and Time 2*: "The photograph is beautiful, the young man as well: this is the *studium*. But the *punctum* is: *he is going to die*. I read simultaneously: *that will be* and *that was*: I observe with horror a future anterior in which the stakes are death. […] Whether the subject is already dead or not, all photography is this catastrophe." (Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, quoted in Stiegler 2009: 17.) The aesthetic composition of the photography is its *studium*, the catastrophy of its disappearance is its *punctum*. Photography shares with painting the

studium, which is also a form of *mimesis*: Not *mimesis* in the sense of an imitation of nature, but *mimesis* in the sense of the rules for composing a picture (I come back to the *mimesis* below). Photography's unique gift is therefore not imitating or reproducing nature, as we might imagine, but the *punctum*, the sight of nature in its very *disappearance* – the view at time's pure negativity, ultimately the sight of death – because of which "the photograph contains an objective melancholy." (Stiegler 2009: 18) The photograph is the experience of the impossibility of sharing the experience of the presence, ultimately, of death. In this sense, Barthes and following him Stiegler think of the photograph as *portrait*, as capturing the double sense of the Latin word *persona*, which means both somebody and nobody, the living and its death.

If photography reveals the spectrality of presence, that is, time as the instantaneous contact and separation between two presences, the phonogram extends the whole movement of time in its passing. In *Technics and Time 2* and *3*, Stiegler studies Husserl's 1905 *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Interal Time* in detail (Husserl 1990; Stiegler 2011: 13-16; Lindberg 2023). In this well-known text, Husserl analyses the melody as the paradigm of a purely temporal object, which reveals both the sonorous instant and its correlate, the I, as pure passage (Stiegler 2011: 13-15). The melody is the prime example of a purely temporal object, because it cannot be reduced to a discursive *logos* nor to a visual spatial image, but it still has a structured finite identity. Stiegler in fact reproaches Husserl for speaking of the melody as if it were only a sound, while it is really an articulated work. The phonograph is the unprecedented possibility of reproducing such a temporal object. Of course, music was also reproduced before the invention of the phonogram: With an instrument, a particular *sound* can be passed from one person to another; and with a score, a *composition* can be shared by a whole orchestra and by many orchestras, from one place and time to other places and times. But only with a recording can one conserve exactly the same *temporal object* – the particular *interpretation* of a given score – and share it with countless listeners.

How is such a temporal object perceived? According to Husserl, the perception of melody is based on primary and secondary retentions. The primary retentions are not just punctual impressions but acts of consciousness in which the previous notes are still present such that they can give a musical sense to the present sound. Contrary to Husserl, Stiegler claims that primary retentions are already selective, for example, they retain the musical elements of the situation and ignore audible but musically irrelevant noise. Secondary retentions are memories of earlier primary retentions conserved in memory: Unlike primary retentions, they are not the past that still lingers in the present, but the past that is definitively past. In the case of the melody, the secondary retentions include melodies heard previously; they constitute the musical experience from out of which the listener interprets the new melody as a melody, then as a familiar or strange, a good or bad melody. Stiegler adds a new element to the Husserlian explication of the temporality of the musical perception: Tertiary retentions. What Stiegler calls a tertiary retention is what Husserl calls image-consciousness, namely, the specific kind of consciousness that emerges when looking at a noetic work. More specifically, Stiegler's tertiary retention is a technical object or a system: A phonographic disc, a musical instrument, a score, a recording, "whatever object that serves as a support of memory that can be transmitted from a generation to another, from an individual to another, or from a culture to another" (Stiegler 2008: 21-34, 31). As examples of this structure, which Stiegler also calls epiphylogenetic memory, these tertiary retentions "engram" experiences on supports that have some kind of materiality. The material objectivity allows for the conservation of an experience over a much longer period than conscious memory or individual experience. The material tertiary retention belongs to the common world and this is why it can be shared with other

consciousnesses: It constitutes what Heidegger calls "world-historicity" (Stiegler 2011: 21). It brings to consciousness experiences that it itself did not have, but that contribute to its imagination nonetheless: Tertiary retentions constitute the cultural experience against the background of which the listener selects significant elements in his or her imagination. With the notion of tertiary retention, Stiegler can turn Husserl's notion of constitution upside down: Husserl shows how consciousness constitutes the world, but Stiegler shows how the world – a work belonging to the world – constitutes consciousness.

Cinematography is "a technology allowing for a mechanical restitution of movement." (Stiegler 2014b: 83). It reveals the cinema of consciousness which combines the two principles of photography and phonography. The invention of the phonogram in 1877 and the invention of cinema in 1895 "constitute the two turns in the *organological history of the power(s) to dream*" (Stiegler 2014a: 11) – but it is cinema that really complements and surpasses Kant's three critiques with a fourth one, the critique of the power to dream.

With cinema, the theme of a *coincidence* between the temporal object and consciousness reaches its climax. In the photo, the spectator's present instant coincides with the lost instant of the photo; in the musical recording, the temporal flux of consciousness coincides with the flux of the temporal object. In the cinema, "the coincidence between the film's flow and that of the film spectator's consciousness, linked by phonographic flux, initiates the mechanics of a complete adoption of the film's time with that of the spectator's consciousness – which, since it is itself a flux, is captured and 'channeled' by the flow of images." (Stiegler 2011: 12) Cinema is a temporal object that coincides perfectly with consciousness. This coincidence, which enables the powerful adoption of cinematographic affects, has far-reaching consequences, because it explains cinema's extraordinary power of individuation (that shall be explained below). Before examining these, let us first consider the specific mechanisms of scematisation revealed by cinema.

Firstly, cinematic consciousness synthetizes diverse visual and sonorous elements (and discursive ones, although Stiegler rarely, if ever, speaks of them) into a singular temporal object. "The very principle of cinema: to connect disparate elements together into a single temporal flux." (Stiegler 2011: 15) Stiegler uses Husserl to explain cinematographic synthesis or connection – and he uses film to refine Husserl's theory of consciousness. Film is above all a temporal object based on primary retention: "Husserl's principle of primary retention is the most productive conceptual basis through which to analyze this 'generalized cinema.'" (Stiegler 2011: 15) As in the case of melody, the primary retention retains the just-past, because – as the photograph shows – the instantaneous experience is evanescent and it needs the specter of primary retentions to be meaningful. Secondary retentions are memories in the proper sense of the word: Memories of previous cinematographic (and other) experiences. While Husserl defines primary retention as perception and secondary retention as imagination, Stiegler thinks that perception is always already marked by imagination: Perception does not retain everything that is just-past but only what is significant in it, and imagination selects what is significant. One cannot distinguish primary and secondary retentions because perception is always mediated by imagination. Stiegler says that there is no perception outside imagination and that perception is imagination's projection screen (Stiegler 2011: 16). In other words, imagination does not only project onto the empty screen of perception. Instead, perception each time provides singular image material that the imagination organises as if it were the post-productive activity of the cinema of consciousness that captures and edits perceptions and adds filters and special effects. For Stiegler, the cinema of consciousness

is "a system of editing and post-production of primary and secondary retentions and protentions." (Stiegler 2014a: 14).

Secondly, the consciousness opens a dimension of future expectations. In the "Organology of Dreams", Stiegler emphasizes that as each consciousness is interwoven with specific primary and secondary retentions that account for its unique experience, these also bear primary and secondary *protentions*, that is, expectations. Some secondary protentions are *stereotypical* (habits, volitions) and their reactivation (by a film) impoverishes experience. Other secondary protentions are *traumatypical*, for example repressed or fantasized desires that oblige consciousness to intensify attention. The stereotypes bear common significations whereas the traumatypes disrupt them and invite a reconfiguration of the field of significations: This is why they contribute to individuation (Stiegler 2014a: 8-10). Note that Stiegler does not reject traumatypical experiences when they enhance the desire to deal with them: He is only critical of the kind of experiences that dampen and extinguish desire itself, as in "horror movies".

Thirdly, a tertiary retention is "a memory resulting from all forms of recordings – a memory Husserl designates as *consciousness of image*." (Stiegler 2011: 16-17). It is the technically supported image, here the phonogram and above all the film. All examples of "image consciousness" (Husserl) or "tertiary memory" (Stiegler) are works of art or writing. Husserl mentions a painting and a bust, Stiegler a film and a musical recording, and he also refers to Kant's philosophical treatise. "For Husserl, the consciousness of image is not a *memory* of that consciousness; it is an artificial memory of what was not perceived nor lived by consciousness. A nineteenth-century painting is certainly a kind of memory, but one could not say, according to Husserl, that it is a memory of someone looking at it *now*. It is, rather, a memory trace of the painter, who has in some fashion exteriorized and frozen his memory allowing, a century later, another consciousness to contemplate it as an image of the past – but in no case as a memory of his own lived past." (Stiegler 2011: 20). Like Husserl's image consciousness, Stiegler's tertiary memory is not the spectator's own memory but somebody else's – to cut a long story short, let's say "the artist's." Otherwise than Husserl, however, Stiegler thinks that tertiary memory, although an artificial supplement of memory, really contributes to the spectator's imagination and all but creates it. The constitutive power of artificial memory is particularly strong in the case of the film because it engages both dimensions of sensibility (image and sound) – and I would add understanding in the guise of narration and mythos. It engages all dimensions of consciousness and is therefore perfectly isomorphous with it: Consciousness is a flux that tends to adapt to the cinematic flux. Tertiary memory contributes to secondary memory (memory and imagination); cinema in particular also helps in understanding how this contribution takes place. "Consciousness of image, in the case of the phonogram (though it could also be said of cinematic recording), is what finally roots the primary and the secondary in one another, through the technical possibility of the temporal object's repetition (and it cannot be emphasized strongly enough that before the *phonograph,* as before the cinema, such repetitions were strictly impossible)." (Stiegler 2011: 21). The reciprocal conditioning between perception and imagination becomes evident thanks to the intervention of this kind of tertiary memory in which the same temporal object is captured differently by secondary and primary retentions.

The theory of the cinema of consciousness invites a reformulation of the entire idea of consciousness in function of technical supplement. Tertiary memory is totally different from an ideal object: It is a material phenomenon combining an image-object and a mental image. The image-object is comparable to the linguistic sign Derrida analyses: A singular image-object is a

technical object that has a history and that can also project a future (Stiegler 2011: 36, 56; Derrida and Stiegler 2002: 147). However, the image-object differs from Derridian writing insofar as it does not supplement the *logos* but affective and imaginative experiences. The image-object carries the temporal, affective flux of somebody else. My consciousness relates to it by adapting to its flux and by adopting it – or not, by rejecting it. While consciousness reasons with works of *logos*, it can only be touched and affected by works of imagination. "The selections from primary retentions that I make from my secondary retentions are, however, themselves subjected to the process of selection issuing from a past that I have not lived but rather inherited as tertiary retentions constructing the world in which I live *and that I adopt*, […] tertiary retention is at once the adoption of both new lifestyles brought about by technical changes and retentions of a collective past that was never lived, made accessible by technical prostheses and allowing for transplantings, migrations, assimilations, and fusions that, as we shall see, can also constitute the *We* of an identificatory cinema." (Stiegler 2011: 60). The consciousness of the I relates to the film by following its movement or by resisting it.

Being a technical object, the tertiary retention belongs to the *common* world: It carries this with it and is actually constitutive of the traces of those others who invented it, use it, and to whom it makes sense. This is why tertiary retention is also the presence of the "external" world "in" the consciousness or the presence of what Heidegger calls "the they" (*das Man*) in "me." Because of this structure, the I belongs to the world, but because of it, the I is also alienated from its ownmost experience. All of its experiences carry the trace of other experiences that precede it. It is through tertiary retention that a self can be carried away from its own experience and hypnotized by the experience of the others. But however alien to consciousness it may be, cinema still remains for Stiegler a phenomenon of consciousness. This phenomenological take distinguishes Stiegler's account from "Deleuze's metacinema", which reveals, as Peter Szendy puts it, "the archi-filmic structure of the world". According to Deleuze, "world itself has begun to make cinema, however nondescript [*un cinéma quelconque*], and this constitutes the television, when the world begins to make whatever nondescript cinema." (Cited and commented in Szendy 2017: 71.) For us, it is clear that these two are connected[v] – the cinema of consciousness necessarily reflects the archi-filmic structure of the world – but these two perspectives lead to different evaluations of cinema: Stiegler emphasizing ethical and political questions, Deleuze aesthetical and existential ones.

A word on digitality before summarizing what I said about the cinema of consciousness and continuing to its political consequences: In *Technics and Time 2*, originally published in 1996, Stiegler analyses photography, phonography and film as "analogical" technologies (Stiegler 2009: 25), but in "Discrete Image", published in the same year, he emphasizes the passage to digital technologies and the differences between analogical and digital technologies (Derrida and Stiegler 2002: 147-163). First, while all analogical images are based on the punctum of evidence – "this was real" – digital technologies can in principle create images in a completely synthetic manner: The element of recording the real can be just a sample or it can be entirely missing. Second, while the studium of analogical images is organised according to the aesthetic criteria set by consciousness, the digital constitution of images ignores the features that are meaningful to a consciousness (rhythm, proportion…) and simply divides the image into discrete units that can be calculated (pitch, pixel). Third, contemporary imaging technologies also manipulate images without us noticing it (e.g. when our smartphone camera adjusts the colors, contrasts and other features to correspond to predetermined aesthetic ideals). Much of this manipulation happens in the black box of the apparatus, which imposes an automatic treatment of the image and sound based on

statistical information about what an ideal image might be, but that the ordinary user at least cannot choose. Despite these possibilities, most digital images are still used like analogical images, such that they aim at capturing the real. However, as users are increasingly becoming aware of the technological possibilities of digital tools and of the "artifactuality" of the digitally framed scenes, the public is at the same time losing faith in digital images and, by extension, in the entire media field constituted digitally (and the loss of confidence in media can enforce loss of confidence in democracy). In "Organology of Dreams" (2014), however, Stiegler suggests that "archi-cinema in the age of digital tertiary retention" might also radically change our relation to the moving image and sound "both because it turns this into everyday practice engaged in by everyone" and because it makes huge film libaries accessible to everyone Stiegler 2014a: 25-26).

Now, whether the image-object is constituted analogically or digitally, its effect on consciousness is the same. According to Stiegler, the tripartite structure of consciousness is repeated and therefore made thinkable with unheard-of precision by musical and especially cinematographic recordings. Film is totally isomorphous with consciousness. This is why it can illustrate the structure of consciousness particularly well, but this is also why it can affect consciousness more deeply than any other type of technical object. According to Stiegler, the contemporary world is saturated by moving images and this accounts for a major – and disquieting – epochal change based on not only technical, but furthermore on the industrial colonisation and exploitation of the imagination. Let us now consider how this happens.

2. Archi-politics of cinema and the possibiliy of new practices

Stiegler's works on the mechanical arts also have a political aim in that they aim at revealing the archi-political setting created by cinematic technologies. Like Rancière, he thinks that the question of politics is at the same time an aesthetic question, but unlike Rancière, he stresses the technological conditions of aesthetic politics (Stiegler 2014b: 2).[vi] Stiegler claims that "Our epoch is characterized by the seizure of the symbolic by industrial technology, where aesthetics has become both the theater and the weapon in the economic war. This has resulted in a misery where conditioning substitutes for experience." (Stiegler 2014b: vii).

Moving images – cinema and especially television – obviously presuppose technological equipment, which is never detached from the industrial context of its fabrication. The potential toxicity of the cinematographic image-object results from its technological and economic framework. Stiegler continues Adorno's and Horkheimer's interpretation of cinema as a "cultural industry" which externalizes, industrializes and exploits the power of schematism, but because Stiegler focuses far more on the technological structure of cinematic image production, he can show in detail *why* cinema can capture consciousness so powerfully. Stiegler agrees with the general notion of cultural industries, but claims that one cannot simply reject cinematic schematism, as Adorno and Horkheimer would like to do. "The nascent critique of this manipulation synchronizing consciousnesses during the age of *audiovisual* and temporal objects and mass-audience industries cannot and must not be a mere denunciation of the 'de-naturing' of consciousness by cinema, but on the contrary the highlighting of the fact that consciousness functions *just like cinema,* which has enabled cinema (and television) to take it over. Consequently, the critique of cinema and television as social phenomena that could destroy consciousness itself (this is the claim of 'spiritual ecology') calls for a new and different critique of consciousness, as a re-working of the Kantian project." (Stiegler 2011: 77). In other words, the destructive tendencies

of cultural industries cannot be countered with anything less than an entirely new political economy and a "new ecology" (Stiegler 2011: 37-40).

Stiegler explains the devastating effects of modern audiovisual cultural industries in the two volumes of *Symbolic Misery* especially. As we have already seen, Stiegler's analysis of the image-object shows that the cinematic object can mark the imagination so effectively because it has the same structure as the flow of the imagination: The flow of imagination adapts itself to the cinematic flow quasi naturally. Like any technical object, the image-object is simultaneously a remedy to and a poison for the originary default: a *pharmakon*. Just as writing alleviates the default of memory but also infects it with an alien memory, the image-object alleviates the default of the imagination but also *aligns*, and eventually *infects* it, with an alien imagination. The first problem with the ever-intensifying cinematic technologies is therefore the infection of the imagination with dreams and desires that are fundamentally advertisements for industrial capitalism. The Hollywood blockbuster invades everybody's mind and fills it with fear, violence, and very questionable stereotypes. But much more importantly, the intensification of these technologies – more intensely in television than in cinema, and more intensely in contemporary digital networks than in television – also introduces another risk, one that is far more serious because it affects the fundamental character of consciousness as temporality. The cinematic industries are so intensive and so rapid, and they impose such a constant flow of incentives that they end up oversaturating and thereby destroying the capacity for attention. They also create such a strong flow of desires that they end up destroying the individual's own capacity for desire. This is how they produce a new type of consciousness which is totally depressed – because it no longer has any desires of its own. Worst of all, it has lost its desire of itself and lacks primary narcissism. This causes what Stiegler calls *ill-being*, *mal-être*. A depressed consciousness is no longer capable of individuation. Without desire, it is also incapable of attentiveness and with this, it loses its living, doing, and thinking skills (in Stiegler's terms *savoir-vivre, savoir-faire*, and *savoir théorique* – "*savoir*" translates *techne* rather than *episteme*). Both collective and individual individuation are thereby compromised by the cinematic industries, which gradually absorb the individuated "I" and "We" into the featureless "One." By destroying the possibilities for individuation – desire, attention, imagination, skill – contemporary cinematic capitalism causes a disorientation without the possibility of a reorientation (which Stiegler also calls "epochal redoubling"[vii]).

Stiegler examines the archi-political consequences of cinematic technologies through the three phases of film, television and contemporary digital media. One could say that Stiegler sees all forms of the cinematic industry as following the principle of the Hollywood blockbuster, whose power is only intensified with each technological innovation: All cinematic products have their native ground in an industry that serves the interests of capitalism. These interests explain the content that addresses baser drives, but more importantly, they explain the increasingly overwhelming cinematographic production that stupefies consciousness, saturates affectivity, dampens desire, and produces the specific kind of psychological ill-being that is for Stiegler the plague of contemporary society.

Not everybody wants to hear that this analysis is indispensable – and I think that it is. However, it is also indispensable to ask what the "arthouse cinema of consciousness" would be. Stiegler says far less about cinema's therapeutic possibilities than about its toxic effects. He analyses a few classic films, such as *Intervista* (Fellini), *Eclipse* (Antonioni) *The Streetcar named Desire*, *On connait la chanson* (Resnais), *Elephant* (van Sant), and he emphasizes the way in which these films reflect on the conditions of cinematic production. However, he does not venture very far into the

possibilities of active engagement with image technologies, although his observations on active music listening and digital technologies point in that direction. For example, his repeated claim that contrary to a book, a film cannot be interrupted, repeated, annotated and rewritten, is no longer true in the contemporary digital environment. His claim that contrary to reading, which goes necessarily hand in hand with writing, televisual reality is passifying (Derrida and Stiegler 2002: 56), becomes secondary in the context where sophisticated audio and video recording devices are included in ordinary smartphones. This is not to say that contemporary, apparently democratized image production would necessarily be any better than classic television news and arthouse cinema (the average Internet "influencer" is hardly an example to be followed), but that contemporary image production is nonetheless not as unilateral as the centralized radio and television of the 20th century. The Internet is also home to openly accessible original artistic productions and theory.

But beyond these more and less passifying modes of image consumption, isn't it always possible to make arthouse cinema? Moreover, don't contemporary digital technologies harbour unprecedented artistic possibilities that are already being used for deeply touching and thoughtful works (as Grégory Chatonsky objects to Stiegler in Chatonsky 2016)? This is certainly true, although Stiegler hardly analyses such works in detail.

It seems to me that of all the arts, music is the one that touches Stiegler most, but what he says of music can be extended to artistic creation in general. In "La lutherie électronique et la main du pianiste", he affirms: "I defend the following thesis: thanks to electronics, in all arts appear instruments which have the same role as they have in music" (Stiegler 1989: 229-236, 230). In music, "instrumentalisation is originary," (Stiegler 1989: 232) that is, the instrument is not a just a *means* for producing the work of art, but the *instrumental practice is itself* the work of art. The instrument is not simply a prosthesis that supplements an organic lack: "When it appears (like the *piano forte* in the 18th century), it opens a world" (Stiegler 1989: 232). The instrument opens a world that was not there before – and not only did it not exist but it was not even imaginable. On the other hand, if the instrument *invents a new world*, it also *reinvents the human being*, in the sense that it demands a practice through which the musician gradually adapts herself to the instrument. An instrument, for example a piano, "requires a singular kind of practice: An unending practice, an *instrumental practice* in which the instrument is not submitted to a pre-existing aim but on the contrary constitutes this aim. The instrument *instructs* the aim of instrumental practice. It is obvious that the pianist *invents herself* in the tireless practice of her instrument, and in the practice she also invents herself ceaselessly" (Stiegler 1989: 229).

In "Programmes de l'improbable, court-circuits de l'inouï", Stiegler explains the kind of invention that belongs to mechanical arts. In this article, he mainly discusses analogical recording technologies which characterize both the phonogram and all photographic arts including cinema. Like Walter Benjamin, he thinks they are characterized by reproducibility, but unlike Benjamin, he does not think reproduction as secondary to a more originary production, but considers that reproducibility is the *originary* mode of the work of art which the mechanical arts have finally made visible. (Stiegler 1986: 126-159, 132). The opportunity in the mechanical arts resides in the possibility of not only *using* the capacity to reproduce sounds or sights, but of *putting reproductibility itself into play* by *suspending it* such that it becomes thinkable as such. "The essential question is obviously the question of the improbable, non-programmable, non-programmed. The endurance of the improbable, that is to say, the *suspension of pro-grammes, of clichés, or attitudes, or gestures, words and actions that have been evaluated in advance, of stereotypes of bad repetition*" (Stiegler 1989: 140). At first sight

it might seem that the recording apparatus (phonogram, photogram, film) is only capable of empty ("bad") repetition – but actually it is always possible to suspend its repetitive logic, not in order to look at some improbable reality outside of the machine, but in order to look at the machine itself, at its very operation of repetition, to which the look itself introduces an exception. The *techné* of the artist (skill) now interrupts the *techné* of the instrument (its technics), and *vice versa*. "The *techné* suspends an epoch of techné, the techné is the epoché, and in this suspension there is an improbable answer, a sequence, a temporalisation: the epoché is epochal" (Stiegler 1989: 140). In more simple terms, this means that the very apparatus, which only seems to impose a formatted message in a formatted form (which I nickname the logic of the Blockbuster), can also become the locus for new invention if its smooth operation is interrupted, disturbed, or suspended, such that its very logic can be opened, re-examined and reprogrammed (the logic of arthouse cinema).

Digital technologies capable of synthetizing sounds and images have an even greater capacity to open a world than analogical technologies. In a clearer way than in analogical technologies, they do not just reproduce an extra-technological vision but open the world that they are capable of projecting and they do so insofar as a human being has acquired the instrumental practice in creating such worlds (for example a game designer, a graphic designer in cinema, etc). As in the case of analogical technologies, digital technologies open a movement towards invention when they are not simply used, when the unquestioning use is suspended and the conditions of use are made present. For example, given that digital imaging technologies contain more and more mechanisms that regulate the picture independently of the user (automatic regulation of contrasts, framings, colors, etc), making such mechanisms visible can introduce an exception to the regularity of the mechanism, and hence, lead to new invention.

Whether these general principles suffice to liberate the genuinely artistic possibilities of cinematic technologies is something that can ultimately only be examined in works of cinematic art. I must leave the study of such works to another time. Instead, in the last part of this paper I will try to show why the possibility of therapeutic and liberated works remains rooted in the very structure of consciousness – although Stiegler pays this little attention.

3. Image and mimesis

Both the positive and the negative *pharmakon* effects of cinema result from the *coincidence* of consciousness with cinema. But what makes this coincidence possible? According to my hypothesis, the condition of possibility of the cinematic consciousness is *mimesis*. But this hypothesis can only hold if the very notion of *mimesis* is redefined, too. Inspired by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's groundbreaking works on *mimesis* (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989; inspired by Derrida 1981). I reject the classical "Platonic" conception of *mimesis* as reproduction and follow the "post-Kantian" conception of *mimesis* as production. With this change, *mimesis* is no more interpreted in terms of imitation but it comes forth as the *logic of imagination*. Following the latter I find in cinematographic consciousness at least three different forms of *mimesis*, that I will now name, following Stiegler's example, primary, secondary and tertiary *mimesis*.

We have seen how Stiegler finds the structure of the three retentions (perception, imagination, work (which concretizes the image-object, as wel shall see below)) both in consciousness and in cinema, and how the cinema can *also* hold the role of the third retention in the constitution of consciousness. But how, exactly, is the first retention (perception) marked by the second retention (imagination), and imagination by the tertiary retention (work)? It seems to

me that these markings don't obey to reason but they pass through *mimesis*. But what does this make of *mimesis*?

Above all, *mimesis* is not the imitation of the reality. As Patrick Crogan shows, Stiegler describes the coincidence of film with a past reality and the coincidence of this film with the cinema of the consciousness, but this does not mean that film is a representation of reality that the spectator takes for the truth. From such a prespective, a bad representation would appear to be an ideological construct that gives a false impression of reality and the critical task would be to dismantle its illusions (Crogan 2014: 90-91). Interpreting film in this way as a simple representation of reality means interpreting it in terms of *mimesis* understood as simple *imitation*, as if, following an inversed Platonic order, the work could only imitate reality and conscience could only imitate work. But Stiegler does not analyse cinematographic works in this manner. We cannot go "behind the works" in order to verify their correspondence with "reality". According to Stiegler, experience is always already marked by tertiary retention and in this sense all experience is mediated and fabricated. The task is therefore not to go behind fabricated pictures in order to compare them with (a fantasized) "pure experience," but to see how the presentation schematizes reality in the first place. For Stiegler, a film is not bad if it shows false images but if it affects negatively the capacity of schematization. Film makes this capacity manifest better than any other artwork: it is the scheme of schematism itself, it is the very movement of imagination as it coincides with the consciousness's movement of imagination. It shows, as we have seen, that the schematism of imagination consists in 1. synthetizing the multiple (primary retention), 2. creating expectations (secondary retention) and 3. adapting oneself to the past experiences of other consciousnesses (tertiary retention). All of this contributes to a Post-Kantian way of thinking cinematic mimesis, not within the framework of the Platonic idea of mimesis as *imitation* (the image is the copy of the thing which is the copy of the idea), but within the post-kantian theory of mimesis as the creative activity of *imagination*, that is, as the power for creation. Cinema is the movement of the imagination that coincides with consciousness' movement of imagining.

According to Stiegler, the coincidence between cinema and consciousness is the coincidence of two flows of images. Now, what is the *image*? As we have already seen, Stiegler does not take images to be representations of reality but *material* that is produced, used, and transformed both by the imagination and by different technologies of recording as well as visual and aural synthesis. Images are not simple (like some unlikely virginal sense data), because they are always already constructed by the synthetic activity of the imagination. I propose to examine images as "compositions" and to understand these as metastable syntheses of multiple elements. The word "composition" has the advantage of fitting to both visual and aural imagination, so as to help to avoid the oculocentrism that is all too current in philosophy.[viii] Now, the composition made by the imagination is an *image*, not an image-object; the image results from the *secondary mimesis* whereas the image-object results from the tertiary mimesis.

To understand what an image is, it is important to make a distinction between the image and the image-object. The image must be distinguished from the image-object just as the secondary retention is distinct from the tertiary one. Stiegler calls the "image-object" the kind of image that is held in Husserl's "consciousness of image", which Stiegler reinterprets as the objective or tertiary memory (Stiegler 2009: 189, 199, 225). Being a tertiary memory, the image-object is a work – a film, a piece of music, a painting, a book. We tend to call the image-object a work of *art* if it is punctured by some kind of a truth content (Adorno would say *Wahrheitsgehalt*). Independent of this artistic content, every image-object is a presentation, a *studium*. For me, the *studium* is the third

form of *mimesis* – *tertiary mimesis* – the (eternally metastable) law of equilibrium that regulates the composition of the "beautiful" work. (It goes without saying that the "beauty" of a work does not need to be *beautiful* in any conventional sense of the word. "Beauty" is each time a new way of composing with the aesthetic laws of *mimesis* and *harmonia*: they can also produce dissimilarity and disharmony, as long as these appear as the rules of a "good" picture or piece of music or film.) Sometimes the image-object is also oriented towards the *logos*, such that it becomes the presentation of a discourse aiming at truth ("philosophy") or at simple seduction ("sophistry") – but Stiegler leaves the deconstruction of the *logos* to others (to Derrida). The *tertiary mimesis* that regulates the work is fundamentally different from the *secondary mimesis* that explains the functioning of the imagination itself.

If the image-object is a work of tertiary retention, the image, on the contrary, belongs to the secondary retention that is the domain of the imagination. It is not possible to "see" an image (composition) of the imagination. It does not belong to perception: It is not visible, but it makes visibility possible – similar to how, according to Stiegler, the secondary retention makes primary retention possible by selecting the material that is significant to it. This is how the image contributes not simply to sensible impressions, but to *sense* itself. The image properly belongs to the imagination and this is also why it is so fragile and ephemeral. The imagination's image is a memory, but unlike a work of tertiary memory, it is does not have a stable form, but it is a memory that the imagination schematizes incessantly, like the weaving of an endless cloth that is soon undone by forgetfulness and inattention. Despite its elusive character, the image is not obscure but on the contrary, whenever an image coagulates in the flow of imagination, it is very clear, only its clarity is not discursive, but dazzling, like a thunderbolt in the night. The image can be defined in terms of the *distinction* that it creates against the indistinction of its moving background, and also in terms of the *evidence* that it provides on a prediscursive level. The image is clear, distinct and evident, such that it is at the same time the necessary condition of truth and the *pharmakon* that opens the way to the mere semblance that defines both art and illusion. By play, I thus describe the image as the Cartesian instant of a luminous dream against the background of the elemental invisibility of the schematism.

Imagination is the play of images. It has its own logic which is irreducible to the *logos*. It seems to me that this logic can be best described as the *emergence of distinctions* and as the *activity of comparing* distinct images. This play of similarities and dissimilarities makes the *secondary mimesis* that must be distinguished from the *tertiary mimesis* which is at play in the tertiary retention, which governs the image-object where the tertiary mimesis composes the studium of the artwork. In secondary mimesis, the image enables comparison in the sense of *Gleichnis*, which is the kind of similarity which is more than a numerical sameness and less than an articulable identity. Similarity can only be established between *distinct* images that are by the very fact of their distinction at least minimally different. As the image draws its imagelikeness from these comparisons, there is always more than one image, there is really a host, a multitude of images, that do not pre-exist comparisons but on the contrary are crystallized in the very the activity of comparing. The images cannot "think" (discursively) but they are driven by the desire to *make sense*, which they attempt by stimulating the imagination in a free play of comparisons, approximations, and differentiations between images. Sense is not an image but the possibility of relating, constellating images – it is the capacity for producing mimetic equilibria ("harmonies"). The imagination is capable of affection and repulsion, which are given to sense, but it is not capable of solution and decision, which need the powers of the *logos*. *Images affect*: They attract, repulse, stimulate or freeze the free

play of affectivity. It is difficult to resist images, also to fight them, because, on this affective level, it is not possible to reason for and against, it is not possible to tell why one should follow or not follow the attraction of this image and this play. On the level of the imagination, there is no conscious I who would even think of reasoning, there is only a play of imagination out of which the I can eventually emerge. The images cannot be reasoned with because they are "below" reason, and there they sketch and schematize the sense within which reason can be constituted. The I can be stricken and stupefied by images precisely because the image *is* by nature a spectacular moment that cuts down reasoning.

Stiegler does not present the imagination as I do. However, it seems to me that when he says that cinema is isomorphous with consciousness, he relies on the images having the specific character that I just described. Cinema is a tertiary retention, not a seconday one, but this tertiary retention functions by mobilizing externalized secondary retentions, that is, images. Images exist only as the incessant schematization of a crowd of visual images, of a flux of sound images, and above all of the movements of the imagination that constantly juxtapose them. Cinematic images are isomorphous with the images of the spectator's secondary retentions because both consist of constant comparisons. Being an image-object, cinema is a work, but because this image-object is also a time-object, it is constantly in movement and therefore it seems to undo its work-character and rejoin the incessant movement of the imagination itself. Like imagination, cinema does not reason although it gives to think. This is why the imagination at work in the cinematic images engages the spectator's imagination in endless mimetic games of comparison. This is not the same as the secondary mimesis *within* the imagination, nor the tertiary mimesis in the image-object, but something that could be called the *primary mimesis between* the mimetic element of the imagination and the mimetic element of the image-object. It asks: Does the film image resemble the imaginary image? Does it differ from it? Does it combine images similarly or differently? The comparison starts because by play, because it is an attractive or a frightening game with ever new possibilities of *Gleichnis*. The comparison does not explain, it affects: Attracts, revolts, amuses, bores – just like a film can do. It does not compare images but movements of imagination which do and undo these images. These movements are not images themselves, they are *rhythms* beyond images, rhythms of making and unmaking possible compositional sense. *Primary mimesis is rhythmic*. The cinematic rhythm imitates the rhythm of the consciousness and the other way round: one sweeps the other, together they compose a beat.

This is why the flow of images we are increasingly exposed to touches a level where consciousness has very few means of resistance and defence. The flow of film and television images, news images, social media images, advertisments, informative commercial websites etc, is often described as if it were a flood, a whirlpool in which consciousness *drowns*: Imagination is the *element*, the *elementary imagination*, into which we are thrown without being able to thematize and control it. The imagination is the element of images and of rhythms, it is an elementary force ithat sweeps us with it but that we can neither thematize nor control. Of course, an audiovisual document can consist in reasoning. It can, for example, be a filmed interview with Bernard Stiegler. To some extent we can explain what Derrida calls the "artifactual stage" (*Echographies of Television*).[ix] But still, by its very form, it is a flux of imagination that carries the reasoning without caring for it, unwittingly supporting it, contradicting it, distracting from it.

To end, we must ask if it is possible to resist the powerful flow of cinematic imagination? When Bernard Stiegler shows how consciousness *coincides* with cinema, he uses cinema as the

mirror of consciousness. Because of the mimetic relation between cinema and consciousness, cinema can powerfully affect and even infect consciousness. But it cannot destroy their mimetic distance altogether and colonize the imagination entirely. Mimesis is neither sameness nor identity but a play with similarity *and* dissimilarity; it is not a reproduction of the identical but the play with the similar – which always also consists in discovering the dissimilar. This is why consciousness will never be entirely formatted by the cinematic image but only affected by it. Because of its inevitable difference from the cinematic medium it can also depart from it and refuse it, sometimes by a conscious critical movement and sometimes by an instinct-like affect of rejection, both of which constitute the important phenomenonen of *taste*. The mimesis-wide difference between consciousness and cinema explains why cinema can surprise consciousness and engage it in an agreeable play of looking for similarities and dissimilarities. It also explains why the imagination can take leave of hackneyed cinematic conventions and invent images such as were never before seen and surprise the field of existing cinema.

Because the coincidence between cinema and consciousness is really their mimetic play, the blockbuster can have such a powerful effect on consciousnesses – but there is also always space for "the arthouse cinema" issuing from an imagination that reaches further than the images already seen. Think, for example, of Céline Sciamma's *Potrait of a Lady on Fire*. The film itself is obviously a beautiful *work*, moreover, an artwork (film) on artworks (portraits of Héloïse), and all of these works draw their beauty from a tradition they reflect. Both the film itself and the paintings in it exemplify tertiary mimesis insofar as they display such a wonderful, balanced studium. But the real source of the film is not the beauty one can see, it is the haunting *image* of a lady on fire that breaks out from the studium. The invisible image of the lady on fire is the imaginary center that drives the secondary mimesis of this film. One cannot see it but one is called to look for it by comparing all aspects of the film – from the pictures to the psychology of the characters and even sounds and colors – and asking what holds all of this together. The primary mimesis is the intense activity in anybody who is caught in creating and interpreting the film, asking how an unheard-of image of a lady on fire grows from the pictures we see, and how the film changes the stereotypical image of a lady on fire (for example Jeanne d'Arc) into a new image (a painter's model who looks back). By soliciting primary mimesis this film resists to its extinction provoked by third-rate blockbusters – and enables joy.

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[i] Hayles does not use this term to describe Stiegler's work in particular, but to speak of a phenomenon that was first explored by Stiegler, namely, the material technological dimension of thinking (Hayles 2017).

[ii] Stiegler also speaks of cinema's possibilities in a discussion of the film *The Ister*, which he calls a new kind of a poetical and philosophical work (Stiegler 2006). *The Ister* is a film on Heidegger by Daniel Barison and Daniel Ross with interventions by Stiegler, Jean-Luc Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe.

[iii] Responding to this, Dan Ross imagines a "cinema of negenthrtopes that could only be, not a horror movie exactly, but a cinema of horror" (Ross 2015: 164).

[iv] For a lucid presentation of Stiegler's presentation of the cinema of consciousness, see Ben Roberts 2006 and 2019.

[v] Patricia Pisters locates their proximity not in their respective works on cinema but between Stiegler's theory of memory and Deleuze's theory of memory in *Difference et Repetition*. They have similar interpretations of the first two syntheses of memory but a different interpretation of the third synthesis, which for Deleuze indicates the future and for Stiegler the past engrammed in the tertiary retention (Pisters 2016: 329-330).

[vi] Stiegler never quotes Philipe Lacoue-Labarthe, although he seems to presuppose his works: Both study aesthetic politics in its technological framework.

[vii] Reification of a technical system can lead to the suspension of the programs through which a social body is united. "An adjustment then takes place in which an epochal intensification (*redoublement*) occurs; this adjustment is the *epokhe*'s key accomplishment, in which the *who* appropriates the effectivity of this suspension (i.e., of programmatic

indetermination) for itself. Technical development is a violent disruption of extant programs that through redoubling give birth to a new programmatics; this new programmatics is a process of psychic and collective individuation. Contemporary disorientation is the experience of an incapacity to achieve epochal redoubling." (Stiegler 2009: 7).

[viii] For Stiegler, the most exemplary images are *temporal* objects which would be better described in aural terms – "melody" being a poor example of aural works, which should at least be described in terms of harmony or composition. Sound has many dimensions, and all of them have been radically questioned in contemporary music. Melody is not necessarily "melodic" but just any sequence of pitches treated as such; harmony is not necessarily "harmonic" (tonal) but just any simultaneity of different pitches or other values treated as such; rhythm is not necessarily a pulsation but irregular, timber can be hoarse… All of this can make a "composition" in the most general sense of arrangement or constallation of sounds and silences.

[ix] Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television*, op. cit.

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