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Stiegler's Post-Phenomenological Account of Mediated Experience

Patrick Crogan

[C]inema is a new experience of life that begins in 1895. These dates, 1877 [the invention of phonography] and 1895, constitute two immense turns in the organological history of the power(s) to dream.¹

Introduction

Bernard Stiegler's analysis of cinema represents an important contribution to attempts to rethink film at the current juncture of the "end of cinema" and the emergence of the "post-cinematic" digital milieu. This is not, however, its primary purpose or disciplinary context. Within the ambit of its larger concerns, Stiegler's *Technics and Time* series develops a substantial critical renovation of phenomenological approaches to experience by addressing the mediation and transmission of experience through techniques and artifacts. In this regard I will examine Stiegler's notion of the "industrial temporal object" – primarily instantiated for him by cinema as pre-eminent media form of the last century. In order to understand the significance of this new theorization of cinema in the context of Stiegler's wider project, I will first give an overview of his account of the role played by technics in general, and mnemotechnical forms in particular, in the dynamics of human life as a form of "technical life."

Cinema is also a principal progenitor of the analog, analogico-digital and digital audiovisual media forms that have emerged in recent decades. This "post-cinematic" period might best be described as lying between the epoch of analog media (photography, phonography, radio, cinema, broadcast television) and the epoch of the digital systems of recording, representation, communication, simulation and so forth, an epoch which is only commencing to unfold.² I term this period the "digital transition," a term which should be read as retaining the question, "transition to what?," while also citing the pervasive, default – if ambivalent – sense of the inexorable "progress" of the digital revolution toward a global, "realtime," "immaterial" technocultural future. In this period the sense of "disorientation" arising from the mismatched speeds of technical, political-economic and cultural change increases. For Stiegler, while "disorientation" is ori-

ginary for the human, it is allayed by cultural political “meta-stabilizations” of the interface between the developmental rhythms of technics and sociocultural ways of life. Just how to achieve such a meta-stabilization, and what its character could or should be are in question in the digital transition – for there is nothing inevitable about the outcome of the current processes of technocultural change in their unprecedented global reach and accelerated implementation. Stiegler’s account of cinema is less about what is to become of cinema (or indeed of film studies in the transformation of its object of study) and more a central part of his philosophical project of responding to both the accentuated experience of “dis-orientation” felt in the digital transition and to the critical and cultural potentials it harbors.³ Its value to film theory is nonetheless twofold: it represents, as Tom Gunning has recognized, an important reconsideration of cinema as a technocultural form that has transformed human life’s potentials and possibilities on a global scale; secondly, Stiegler’s post-phenomenological characterization of cinematic experience offers crucial insights into how the post-cinematic digital media are transforming the conditions of the production of experience today.⁴

The Organological Perspective on the Human as “Technical Life”

Elaborated across the second and third volumes of the *Technics and Time* series, Stiegler revises Husserl’s influential phenomenology of internal time consciousness with a decisive post-phenomenological complication of how the “temporal objects” of consciousness are constituted. The role of exterior forms of recording, synthesizing and communicating experience – what Stiegler calls mnemotechnics – is crucial in this revision of Husserl’s phenomenology. Mnemotechnics are not only memory aids or supports, they are forms of memory that are constitutive of human experience in an intrinsic and essential way. This instantiates one of the major tenets of Stiegler’s philosophy of technology – that the human cannot be properly conceived of without thinking of it as a “technical” form of life, one whose development rests not only on genetic but cultural memory. The human’s ethnocultural becoming rather than species becoming is constituted in and through the combination of the human biological organism with the “organized but inorganic matter” of the tool or “*organon*.”⁵ Understood in this way, the tool is not only an instrument in the hand of the user of tools and invented for his/her purposes, but an organic supplement that has already played its part in framing the user’s experience of life’s purposes and possibilities. The “*what invents the who, just as much as it is invented by it*” argues Stiegler, complicating Heidegger’s fundamental distinction between two kinds of being – those of which one can ask “*who?*” or “*what?*” kind of questions.⁶

“Ephiphylogenesis” is the name Stiegler gives to this new kind of becoming of the living in *Technics and Time 1*, describing it as an ongoing dynamic between the “organic organized” individual and its environment, mediated by the “*organon*.”⁷

Beyond the circumstances of its particular use or invention, the *vital* significance of the non-living *organon* is its ability to function as exterior record of a context and manner of usage, and of the gestures and processes involved in its production. Techniques and artifactuality in general are the material substrate of the transmission of ways of living, including ways of reliving, remembering, revising reinventing and even revolting against those ways.

It is on the basis of this memorious capacity of technics in general and the role it plays in ethnocultural individuation that dedicated “mnemotechnical” forms developed, forms whose function was to exteriorize experience, make it communicable, collective, recoverable and transmissible. Language, a medium whose conventionality enables the expression of interiority in a form that others can understand, is both key instance and agent of this emergence of mnemotechnics. The uncanny “technicity” that characterizes human life is perhaps nowhere more keenly felt by many than in human language – both utterly internal, intimate and “ownmost” (as Heidegger would say), the very means of crystallizing one’s sense of self, and yet also an acquired competence, rule-bound, arbitrary, constantly changing under the impetus of a continuous, collective evolution.

The advent of figural and symbolic graphic inscription marks another decisive emergence in the becoming of human “technical life” by inaugurating a long history of what Stiegler terms the “grammatization” of the mnemotechnical articulation of experience. Initiated (so far as we know) with cave art, the oldest known examples of which are dated around 30,000 years ago, grammatization “refers to the process by which the mental temporal flows experienced by the psychic individual are recorded, reproduced, discretized and spatialized.”⁸ In cave art the experience of encounters with predatory environmental competitors, of hunting and fighting, of sexual difference and the fecundity of women are recorded and hence made available for re-living or, more precisely, for re-temporalizing, in shared verbal and gestural rituals of remembrance. These recordings are reproducible, in successive iterations and elaborations of the cave inscriptions, and in their translation to other sites for the collective exteriorization of ethnographic experience across a territory.⁹ As artifactual, these recordings are concretized as material, spatial forms, like the tools and the jewelry and other adornments (including, most likely, bodily inscriptions) that predate them, and the fixed and mobile supporting “media” that emerge in the long history of grammatization’s elaboration, from cave art all the way down to the book, the gramophone record, the film, the cassette, and the disk. “Discretized”: an experiential continuum is rendered through a process involving a technique of tool use, which can itself be further exteriorized in successive developments of production technics and technologies. This rendering of “mental temporal flows” operates by a division of the flow into separate elements that are assembled together in the spatialized, grammatized form. Various lines compose the image of the running horse, evoking its movement through space. Separate compositional ele-

ments appear in several cave art sites; some are interpreted by evolutionary anthropologists as “female symbols” (abstracted figurations of the vagina – already generalized here as “the vagina,” symbolizing “woman” in general), or whose significance remains less certain, but are clearly a discrete and repeated element.¹⁰

Writing, whose ideographic beginnings are composed in Leroi-Gourhan’s view both by this abstracting, symbolic pole of the earliest cave graphics and the more analog, representational markings, composes its recordings of interiority out of discrete elements and develops modes of sequencing their “reading” to reproduce an articulation of what their author(s) deemed necessary or worthy of recording.¹¹ Writing and imaging then, interrelated from their initial emergence in rupestral graphics, begin their co-implicated trajectories of the differentiation of this “new empathic possibility” of the grammatization of shared experience.¹² With the development of phoneticized and linearized scripts in the Middle East – associated by Leroi-Gourhan with the rise of agricultural society and the emergence of new labor divisions, hierarchical social structures and trading economies in permanent settlements – a new phase of literate, orthographic mnemotechnical grammatization commences.¹³ The “religions of the book,” but also the cultures, economies, arts and sciences, politics and philosophies, not to mention histories “of the book,” are possible on the basis of this phonetic, orthographic artifactuality.¹⁴

Over the last century or so, the unprecedented power of orthographic *analog* image and sound technologies – phonography, photography, radio, cinema, television – technoscientifically and industrially produced and disseminated globally – shifted the predominantly literary grammatizing conditions of the West’s technocultural transformation of ethnocultural becoming. Today the “digital transition” affects the conditions in which all mnemotechnical media, figural and symbolic, analog and digital, make experience communicable, memorable, and culturally valuable.¹⁵

Cave art is a matrix and point of departure for the era of grammatized “mnemotechnicity,” by which term I mean to evoke the co-constitutive dynamic between psychic and collective, cultural becoming animating and mediated by mnemotechnical forms. According to Stiegler’s account of the historical and technically composed conditions of human being-as-becoming it is necessary to distinguish the changing epochs of mnemotechnical mediation, for example from ideographic to phonetic scripts, from hand-copied manuscripts to the printing press, and from the graphic traditions to the industrial forms of mechanical reproduction of exterior phenomena. In “An Organology of Dreams,” however, Stiegler draws inspiration from the extraordinary graphics discovered on the walls in the Chauvet cave in 1994 when he characterizes the general condition of human experience since grammatization as “archi-cinema.”¹⁶ This is in part a citing and updating of his mentor, Jacques Derrida’s “archi-writing” (and

“archi-trace”), terms which in Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* referred to the irreducible relation between “living” speech and the non-living writing artifact as extrinsic, codified, technical form of communication and expression (what Stiegler will call “grammatized” communication). Stiegler acknowledges as definitive Derrida’s account of the intrinsic role of the technical “supplement” in our very conception of what is integral, and essential to the human as conscious, living present.

As an “updating” of this central Derridean notion of archi-writing, Stiegler also points toward his more situated, engaged revision of Derrida’s “archi-” formulation toward a more historical and strategic one. On the one hand “archi-cinema” broadens the parameters of Derrida’s concerns with the philosophical implications of the written technical supplement in going back to the graphic markings of rupestral art as key moment of historical emergence of this new “empathic possibility” of grammatization. On the other hand, it situates the theoretical task of coming to grips with the “technical supplement” as one that is both more historical in character and more specifically addressed to and emerging from the contemporary conditions in which it emerges as an increasingly urgent task.¹⁷ For Stiegler the cinema was the pre-eminent media form of the 20th century’s consolidation and intensification of industrial modernization. In its rapidly achieved conventional stabilization by the late 1920s as commercial sound cinema it combined the potentials of the photographic and phonographic analog recording technologies in a mnemotechnical form of unprecedented power and reach. I will examine Stiegler’s analysis of this power of the cinematic “experience” below. The digital audiovisual media draw on this power in various post-cinematic manifestations and consequently it is crucial for Stiegler’s critical account of the nature and stakes of the digital transition to analyze the specificity of the cinematic form.

Citing Marc Azéma’s *La préhistoire du cinéma*, Stiegler states that the extraordinary Chauvet cave art is in a way “the origin of cinema, insofar as it brought with it the discretization and proto-reproduction of movement, of which that cinema that appeared in industrial form in 1895 would be the mechanical culmination.”¹⁸ On the cave’s walls were inscribed forms exteriorizing the psychic processing of experience, images produced from the imagination’s reworking of perceptions recalled by the “desiring and dreaming beings that we are.”¹⁹ These images adopted and transformed the exteriorized forms that, as mnemotechnical cultural artifacts, had already conditioned those perceptions and the psychic mechanisms producing and integrating them. This is why Stiegler will propose at the outset of “An Organology of Dreams” that “the dream is the primordial form of this archi-cinema, and this is why an organization of dreams is possible.”²⁰ As an expression of a desire (Freud), the dream is for Stiegler always also a negotiation of the psychic process with the collective cultural conditions of its identity and individuation, conditions experienced in and through exterior mne-

motechnics. Dreams are “organized” in part through the agency of the culture’s *organons*, through which they are concretized as “transductive” forms mediating the reciprocal dynamics of individual and collective identity. Stiegler’s “organological analysis” of human (as) becoming insists on the essential part played by an “organo-genesis in which consists the transformation of psychic and social organizations that result from the transformation of technical and technological organs.”²¹ Constituted in an irreducible relation of inside and outside, experience is in the epoch of grammatization an “archi-cinematic” montage and projection both of what individuals perceive and accumulate in living their lives and what is shared through cultural artifacts.

Stiegler approaches cinema, then, from this perspective. Cinema was the last century’s most significant concretization of an industrialized mnemotechnical “organo-genesis” affecting the human capacity to dream (to desire) on an unprecedented scale. In *Technics and Time 3* its specific articulation of interior with exterior is assessed by drawing on the resources of Husserl’s classic phenomenological account of consciousness. Stiegler considers the implications of the predominant industrial mobilization of film’s power to wed the flow of consciousness to its unrolling in a process that concretizes in a particular way the archi-cinematic dynamics of the “beings in time” that we are. It is to this analysis that I now turn.

The Cinematic Industrial Temporal Object

Stiegler’s account of cinema as “industrial temporal object” draws on and revises Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology of the temporal object of consciousness. It is essential to understand Stiegler’s post-phenomenological supplementing of Husserl’s analysis of experience to grasp the implications and stakes of his analysis (and indeed diagnosis) of industrial audiovisual culture. Stiegler’s cultural politics turns on his insistence on the importance of the co-constitutive dynamic between psyche and exteriority analyzed in the previous section. Cinema is important because of the transformative effect it had via its conjugation of the interiority of mind, desire, perception, memory and anticipation (or “protention” in Husserl’s terms) with “the movies” as industrial product, economic commodity, cultural institution and political and promotional *organon*. Stiegler’s account of cinema, then, is an account of the cinema as mnemotechnical *organon* connecting and configuring interiority and exteriority. Husserl’s analysis of the phenomenology of the “internal consciousness of time” is significant in Stiegler’s view for having provided the means to discern how the flow of the present moments of perception are combined together in such a way as to form coherent temporal phenomena. These are available for recall and reflection in the ongoing synthesizing dynamic through which consciousness develops and reformulates its criteria for evaluating phenomenality. Husserl distinguishes between two kinds of

“retention” operating in consciousness, the first enabling the second. “Primary retention” is what strings together the separate moments of perception into an extended present capable of constituting a coherent “temporal object” or phenomenon. It retains the impressionable contents of past moments in the perception of a phenomenon such as a melody (Husserl’s primary example) or a film which has become an object of conscious attention, retaining these long enough for the temporal object to be constituted as a single phenomenon.²² “Secondary retention” on the other hand is the faculty of recollection as it is normally understood whereby such phenomena can be remembered and re-processed, reviewed and reflected upon by the imagination in the ongoing becoming of an individual consciousness’s development. Stiegler supplements these with a third, exterior form of retention that he argues conditions the operations of the first two and, furthermore, demonstrates their composition in consciousness in contrast to Husserl’s assertion of their opposition. “Tertiary retention,” available to consciousness in the form of technical and mnemotechnical artifactuality, is the substrate of the interior retentional processes of consciousness and conditions its experience of and in time.

By adding this retentional “supplement,” Stiegler both adopts and refigures Husserl’s analysis of the workings of primary and secondary retention. This is why his account of cinema (and, indeed, consciousness) as developments in a far longer history of “archi-cinematic” mnemotechnicity is decisively “post-phenomenological.”²³ Having posed insightfully the nature of experience as comprised of different retentional modes of perception and recollection, and of experience fashioned in the “living present” of consciousness and feeding the continuous revision of its underlying synthesis, Husserl was unable in Stiegler’s view to develop the full implications of his account.²⁴ Limited by his efforts to ground phenomenology in a rigorous conceptualization of the phenomenon as separate and free from the subjective colorings of any particular perceiving consciousness, Husserl maintained an absolute distinction between primary and secondary retention. Perception was not influenced by the imagination, by what consciousness had already perceived and remembered. Primary retention formed temporal objects that passed into consciousness’s store of experiences, but a semi-permeable membrane prevented the revisions and remembering of past experience influencing the living present in its ongoing constitution of phenomena. These were constituted on the basis of the general “eidetic” conditions of the deep structure of the manifestation of phenomena to intentional consciousness, the discovery and interpretation of which was the purview and goal of phenomenological inquiry.²⁵

For Stiegler perception and imagination and their primary and secondary retentional processes are certainly different, but they cannot be opposed to each other. This becomes evident as the relationship between retention and *protention* in both kinds of retention is considered. For Husserl, the flow of time is phe-

nomenally experienced in a Janus-faced present that retains the preceding moments and anticipates the next on the basis of the preceding. In the hearing of a melody each new note sounds as the continuation of the sequence begun by the first note and retained in the elaboration of the “large now” of primary retention. As continuation of the melody, each new note is heard on the basis of its fulfillment of or divergence from what was anticipated of it. This anticipation is the protentional horizon that is the structural, eidetic complement of retention in the internal consciousness of time.

Primary retention modifies the present now by reducing it in some way as it passes into the “just-past,” and this modification is itself continuous. Its reduction of the presently heard note enables that sound to both make way so that the new note can become present – a reduction that enables it to pass – and to be retained as part of that ensuing present (reduction to the just-past). This passing away to be retained as just-past is a dynamic process, however, and the protentional horizon of primary retention is key to this dynamism.²⁶ What is retained in each new note of the melody, or in each new shot of a film, is the modified previous note or shot. This just-past carries forth and undergoes a further modification of what it had retained of the note or shot before it, on the basis of the changing protentional projections of what the ensuing note or shot would be in response to what it turned out to be, and so on into the past of the retained just-past moments in the continuously modifying “comet trail” of the temporal object.²⁷ Retention, as inherently protentional, is a dynamic in which “each later retention is not only continual modification that has arisen from primary impression [the first moment of the temporal object], each is also continual modification of all earlier continuous modifications of that same initial point.”²⁸

Continual modification of continuous modifications – here, Stiegler argues, Husserl approaches the true complexity of primary retention as a spiraling dynamic out of which perception forms phenomena in time. The present now modifies what is retained of the just past “on the fly” (as one says today), but this occurs as a function of the protentions which have anticipated it. A note sounds that causes a refiguring of the pattern of the melody, or the sense of its mood, as it unfolds. A shot shows us something that causes us to re-evaluate in an instant what has been happening in the film’s narrative or sequence of images and sounds, or how we are to understand a character or a montage of images. Past and present are in a relationship of folded, iterative co-constitutivity, mediated by the protentional projections of retention toward an anticipated future that the present realizes differentially.²⁹

How then, could the temporal object start with a pure, “primary impression” unaffected by the protentional horizon of consciousness as ongoing, memorious continuity? Inasmuch as retention is always protentional, the *secondary* retention which enables consciousness to develop on the basis of its processing of experience cannot be definitively excluded, as Husserl would have it, from perception’s

constitution of phenomena. This is in a nutshell Stiegler's critique of Husserl's account of internal time consciousness. Secondary retention has always conditioned primary retention from before it begins, and the spiraling flow of consciousness of a temporal object takes its place within a larger "vortex" of memorious consciousness.³⁰ Moreover – and this explains Stiegler's supplementing of Husserl's retentional modes – this is itself a spiraling within the cultural, collective vortex of tertiary retentions and protentions. The melody can only begin with a "primary impression" if it is recognized as music, based on the protentions of a consciousness that has heard music before and can distinguish it from other sounds.³¹ What is and is not music is a question that must be posed in cultural and historical terms.³²

"The ear is originally musical," says Stiegler in summarizing his response to Husserl in *Technics and Time 2*.³³ And *Technics and Time 3*'s account of cinema and "cinematic consciousness" could be similarly resumed as "the eye is originally cinematic" – although it would be more apt to say the eye and the ear inasmuch as the synchronized sound film of standard commercial cinema is an *audiovisual* temporal object. The "unprecedented" power of the cinematic mnemotechnics resides, for Stiegler in its capacity to produce a compelling experience fashioned in what he variously characterizes as a conjoining or coinciding of the temporal flows of artifact and perceiver.³⁴ The cinematic flux generated by the projecting apparatus for "re-temporalizing" the industrially produced recordings captured on film (and later on tape, floppy, optical disk and so forth) entrains the primary retentional process of perceiving consciousness. Or, rather, entrains the flow of many consciousnesses: cinema realized an unprecedented power to captivate mass and globally extended audiences on an unprecedented industrial scale of production, distribution and exhibition. Like Jonathan Beller, in the wake of the *Kulturkritik* of Horkheimer and Adorno, and after the ideological apparatus theory of Althusserian-influenced film studies – both of which his work represents a critical response to – Stiegler emphasizes the centrality of "Hollywood" to the spread and intensification of global industrial capitalism in the 20th century.³⁵

The eye and the ear are "originarily cinematic," that is, "archi-cinematic," which means technically, technoculturally enabled. Through his post-phenomenology Stiegler is able to identify how cinema could map itself to the temporal flow of consciousness like a musical (or theatrical) performance but also be industrially produced and reproducible. Its montage of shots fabricate the unrolling of its projected flow and condition expectations of what temporal object it will become – and all this as subject to industrial design, specification, and standardization.³⁶ The archi-cinema of consciousness reaches a new stage of its mnemotechnical, organological "evolution." In the globalizing, American century, archi-cinema becomes a cinematic montage and projection of perception and memories that are both individual and retained from the experiences of others that remain active thanks to the mnemotechnical *organon*. Hollywood be-

comes the “capital” of 20th century consumerism through its capacity to standardize and globally distribute dreams, fantasies and desires.³⁷ Stiegler says that a “film is a kind of dream had in common, a daytime dream, via the industrial production of tertiary retentions which are themselves industrial.”³⁸ It functions, as Godard says of Hollywood (citing André Bazin in *Contempt*, but in error), like the realization of a “world that conforms to our desires.”³⁹

Cinema’s capacity to compel conviction is identified by Stiegler as the power to fabricate a convincing mnemotechnical fictioning of reality, a reality which is never phenomenally “pure” and which is always mediated by tertiary memory supports. Film presented the possibility of the photographic and mechanical capture of the spatial and temporal dimensions of exterior appearance. This is undoubtedly central to its early success and its rapid expansion into a major industrial media form in the early 20th century. Stiegler characterizes the specificity of cinematic technics as emerging from the conjunction of their spatial and temporal recording and playback systems. The cinema’s extraordinary power emerges as the quickly understood expectation that it is able to generate two “co-incidences”:

1. The photographic coincidence of past reality, of past and reality. This is the “real effect” of the capture of a past space-time in front of the photographic apparatus identified by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* and André Bazin before him in “The Ontology of the Photographic Image.”⁴⁰ In a similar vein, accounts of the indexicality of the cinematographic sign have stressed this sense of the capture by the camera of what was there before it at the moment of exposure. This temporal dimension of photographic capture is the decisive feature of what analog cinema “essentially” was for D.N. Rodowick; less a representational record of an actual space than a recording of a past time, gone forever but preserved by and in the apparatus.⁴¹
2. The coincidence of the “flux” of the film’s unrolling in time with the flux of the spectator’s consciousness. This is the result of the mechanical production of the illusion of movement from the capture of still images, a process of recording duration comparable in effect, if not in procedure, to the phonogram’s recording of sound – itself later to be wedded to the cinematographic through synchronized “sound-on-film” technology in the re-tooling of mainstream cinema in the late 1920s.

The cinema produces a compelling “illusion” of reality that unfolds in the lived time of the spectator’s conscious attention before it. The spectator lives the cinema’s fictioning of experience. Lived experience is co-generated in the composed fluxes of the film and its viewing. Stiegler’s focus on this composition of experience and fiction, of the fictioning of experience in the cinema, re-frames some thorny issues concerning the realism of film (and indeed of the post-cinematic

forms noted above). In the classic accounts of the ideological effect of the cinematic apparatus and of its illusionistic realism, for example, the claims for the effect of the cinema on the psyche of the spectator turned on an uneasy relation between, on the one hand, an account of the imaginary mastery generated by the “apparatus” of the cinema in its placing of the spectator as the invisible focal point of an orchestrated sequence of views and, on the other hand, a conventionally established narrative realism of character, plots, and verisimilar representational norms.⁴² From this perspective, a phenomenological account of cinematic experience was hopelessly naïve, or cynically complicit with the ideological workings of the dominant social order dedicated to reproducing itself. The spectator could only be rehabilitated by a theoretical and/or aesthetic destruction of the double trap of apparatus and its false projections, much like the slave in Plato’s cave who had to be freed and made to exit the cave of shadowy projections. His or her life down there in the cinematic illusion was false, a kind of mental trap made of artificial copies of true existence positioned cleverly vis-à-vis the duped.⁴³

From Stiegler’s perspective, however, access to a space of unmediated, illusion-free experience is the illusion; all experience is mediated, that is, fabricated, and passes into, through and from techniques and technics. Cinematic representation has been more or less globally adopted as a compelling experiential medium. Its extraordinary global success in the last century represents a major shift in the mode of fictioning experience from what was for two millennia a predominantly literary and graphic (as distinct from photographic) technoculture. Its “apparatus” demands careful analysis as a powerful means of fictioning experience, but it is not a secret system for locking the human psychic apparatus into an illusory experience of reality, just as the commercial “culture industry” more generally does not possess – counter to what Horkheimer and Adorno proposed – a decryption key for all the Kantian schemas operative in the syntheses of human imagination, memory and experience.⁴⁴

So while it is important, indeed vital, to pay attention to what is fictioned in mainstream cinema for its capacity to influence understandings, values, and in general people’s orientations to living, it is also critical to keep in view the fact that all experience is composed with and through kinds of fiction. This is why cinema is so powerful; it animates fictioning in a new and compelling way through its enrolling of the spectator in its unrolling. This is both its potential and its threat, continued and in some ways multiplied in the wedding of this capacity to other technics in the emerging digital industrial temporal objects.

Cinema edits experience and this is at the center of what Stiegler will call its “pharmacological” character as both poison and cultural cure or therapeutics. In the capitalist industrial era Hollywood has served the reifying purposes Horkheimer and Adorno identified, “synchronizing” consciousnesses on a massive scale in order to coordinate consumption with the needs of the industrial system in

general by providing means to condition the experiences that become the secondary retentions – and consequently, the protentional horizons – of the many.⁴⁵ But cinema and its maturing digital mnemotechnical descendants also hold in potential “positive pharmacological possibilities” via their amazing capacity to thread together consciousnesses in collective experience.⁴⁶ Indeed, as is widely recognized, the digital transition represents the potential for an equally unprecedented, global empowerment of citizens as media producers with the potential to completely overturn the predominant model of the concentration of mnemotechnical production in corporate interests.

This is why Stiegler argues for the need to “make movies” and to “get behind the camera.”⁴⁷ Developing what one calls a “working knowledge” of the production of experience is a central critical task today, inasmuch as it is a prerequisite to realizing the potential of the digital transition’s remodeling of established broadcast media production and reception regimes.⁴⁸ It is not only that getting “behind the camera” represents an effective way to unmask the synchronizing techniques of mainstream cinema (and the industrial experiential media that have succeeded it) – a rationale which best characterizes the project of the “political modernist” experimental film maker/theorists of the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁹ Drawing inspiration from Abbas Kiarostami’s enigmatic *CLOSE UP* (1990) and its significance for the film-loving Iranian society in and for which it was made, in “Faire du cinéma” Stiegler appeals to the critical value and necessity of working with as well as on – and not against – the technics for fabricating such compelling experiences. This is the pathway to a better understanding of the nature and necessity of “our” grammaticized cinematic consciousness. It is in this way that a better adoption of post-cinema’s systemic, industrial mediation of experience can be opened up in and as a way to dream up a credible future. If as I said earlier grammaticization marked another decisive emergence in the becoming of human “technical life,” I would conclude by pointing out that for Stiegler there is nothing inevitable about the course of this becoming, nothing that guarantees that this technical life will continue to answer to the characterization of “human.” On the contrary; it is increasingly apparent today that the interminable historical project of realizing a human being must be actively negotiated and pursued through a critical and cultural political inflection of technoscientific developments that share no essential biological determinations or tendential vectors with such a projection of the human. This makes the adoption of each shift of mnemotechnical forms an increasingly urgent political question about the course of the overdetermined but nonetheless open history of human becoming. “Archi-cinema” – which today is on the threshold of an epoch that might motivate a renaming of our mnemotechnicity to something like “archi-programming” or “archi-simulation” – has to be continually remade so as to continue as a human history.

65. Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," 334.
66. *Ibid.*, 338.
67. *Ibid.*, 337.
68. *Ibid.*, 339.
69. Stanley Cavell's *The World Viewed*; Bernard Stiegler's *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), B. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); and Stephen Mulhall's *On Film*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), are just a few notable examples of the ways in which Heidegger's thought has made its mark in recent philosophy of cinema.
70. Cf. "I call the comportment which enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology, openness to the mystery." Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, 55.

Stiegler's Post-Phenomenological Account of Mediated Experience

1. Bernard Stiegler, "An Organology of Dreams," trans. Daniel Ross, *Screening the Past* 36 (2013): paragraph 18 (references will be to paragraphs for this non-paginated online publication). Available at <http://www.screeningthepast.com/2013/06/the-organology-of-dreams-and-arche-cinema/>.
2. Steven Shaviro in "Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, *Boarding Gate* and *Southland Tales*," *Film-Philosophy Journal* 14, no. 1 (2010), available at <http://www.film-philosophy.com/index.php/f-p/issue/view/14>, uses this term to characterize certain digital film and video aesthetics and the affects they generate in an essay that revises and updates some of the principal themes of earlier work on postmodernist technocultural and aesthetic transformations. I use it here more to characterize the continuity (and transformations) of the technological conditions of mediation of these industrial media forms that developed in the wake of the cinema's establishing of an audiovisual temporal experience designed to coordinate the attention of spectators/users with its unfolding.
3. On disorientation, see Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 92. See also Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 1-2.
4. This is not to mention the contribution it makes to what has recently (if somewhat belatedly) been termed the "phenomenological turn" in film studies (see the recent one day symposium held at Queen Mary University, London, with this title, <http://filmstudies.sllf.qmul.ac.uk/events/phenomenological-turn>). Most of this work has been informed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and to a lesser extent that of Martin Heidegger. In this regard, Stiegler's return to Husserl's efforts to ground a phenomenological inquiry should be approached as a critical rethinking of the nature and stakes of such as "phenomenological turn."
5. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1*, 177. Stiegler takes the description of the human as "technical life" from Georges Canguilhem, but his principal source for developing this account of the human is the philosophical anthropology of Andre Leroi-Gourhan. Leroi-Gourhan's account of hominization as achieved via the "exteriorization"

- of organic, biological functions through the human development of technics is adopted by Stiegler in *Technics and Time 1* and inspires his propositions concerning the human as a being always becoming something else in a permanent dynamic with the developmental dynamic of its exteriorized elements (see pp.134-179).
6. *Ibid.* See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 71.
 7. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1*, 177.
 8. Stiegler, "An Organology of Dreams," paragraph 15.
 9. See André Leroi-Gourhan's account of recurring images and symbols in the earliest rupestral art in Europe in *Gesture and Speech*, trans. Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 190-200.
 10. *Ibid.*, 193.
 11. *Ibid.*, 199ff.
 12. Stiegler, "An Organology of Dreams," paragraph 15.
 13. Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 200-203.
 14. See Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2* for an extended discussion of the emergence of orthographic writing and the nature and consequences of its transformation of grammatization (in particular, the first two chapters).
 15. It is worth recalling that alphabetic writing is a digital technics, resting on the oppositional discretizing of alternative symbolic elements analyzed by Saussure. See Anthony Wilden's *System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange*, 2nd ed. (London: Tavistock Press, 1980).
 16. The Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc cave in the Ardeche river valley in southern France was discovered in 1994. The wall paintings are thought to be amongst the earliest known from the Upper Paleolithic era, dated around 30,000 years ago. Chauvet is subject of the 3D documentary by Werner Herzog, *CAVE OF FORGOTTEN DREAMS* (2010) and the book (and film) by Marc Azéma, *La Préhistoire du cinéma* (The Prehistory of Cinema, 2006), both of which Stiegler cites in connection to his discussion of "Archi-cinema." Azéma, for instance, makes an explicit case for the cinematic character of the Chauvet graphics, how they indicate motion in a manner resembling Muybridge and Marey's proto-cinematic imaging practices, and how the contours of the cave wall, in combination with the "projection" conditions of flickering firelight, appear to have been mobilized in the design of a convincing impression of the movement of figures.
 17. There is considerable commentary on the relation between Stiegler's work and that of his mentor, Derrida. See, for instance, essays by Ben Roberts, David Wills, Patrick Crogan, Daniel Ross, and Ian James. In *Technics and Time 1* (and elsewhere) Stiegler positions his account of technics as a dialogue with Derrida's analysis of supplementarity in *Of Grammatology* (136ff). In a more recent interview he draws a more distinct line between his more historical and empirically oriented account of technics and human technicity and the more transcendental leaning of Derrida's "philosophemes" such as "archi-writing" (see Bernard Stiegler, Ben Roberts, Jeremy Gilbert and Mark Hayward, "A Rational Theory of Miracles: On Pharmacology and Transindividuation," trans. Ben Roberts, *New Formations* no. 77 (2012): 164-184 (quotation from p. 165). In an earlier essay on Derrida's work, however, Stiegler

- points out that in the *Exergue to Of Grammatology* Derrida sets out to respond to the threat posed by the cybernetic and non-phonetic “dislocation” and subversion of language already underway in modern technoscience with another deconstruction [see Stiegler, “Derrida and Technology: Fidelity at the Limits of Deconstruction and the Prosthesis of Faith,” trans. Richard Beardsworth, in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. T. Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)]. In a sense Stiegler’s activism can be understood as a particular adoption of Derrida’s thought that picks up the threads from this situated contextual engagement announced at its beginnings in mid-1960s Cold War Europe.
18. Stiegler, “An Organology of Dreams,” paragraph 31. Marc Azéma, *La préhistoire du cinéma: Origines paléolithique de la narration graphique et du cinématographe* (Paris: Erance, 2006).
 19. Stiegler, “An Organology of Dreams,” paragraph 28. The “desiring and dreaming beings that we are” for now at least; there is nothing guaranteeing the permanence of this kind of being given the radically contingent and historical nature of human being as a becoming, one which Stiegler has glossed, in a commentary on discourses of the so-called “post-human” pathways opening up today via biotechnologies and cyborg technics, as one in which the human is always a project(ion) that is never fully realized, and for which there is no inevitable realization. See *What Makes Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 104-106.
 20. Stiegler, “An Organology of Dreams,” paragraph 1.
 21. *Ibid.*, paragraph 36.
 22. Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 33. Husserl uses the term “temporal object” for such phenomena, noting that while all objects of consciousness are temporal in a general sense, and will change in time, what he designates as “temporal objects” are those such as melody which take time to be perceived in their entirety as a discrete, coherent phenomenon (7).
 23. In *États de choc: Bêtise et savoir au XXIe siècle* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2012), Stiegler comments that Husserl himself approaches such a revision of his project in his last published work, “The Origin of Geometry,” wherein he in effect “accords a phenomenological status to the tertiary retention [namely, the annotations of the ‘proto-geometers’ whose work led to the formulation of the first apodictic, ideal theorems of geometry] he had hitherto relegated to the sphere of the constituted world and to the everyday empiricism that he had termed the ‘natural attitude.’ It is necessary, however, to put quote marks around the epithet ‘phenomenological’ accorded to the new status of tertiary retention here, inasmuch as the fundamental principles of phenomenology are put in question through its becoming constitutive of reason” (85, my translation).
 24. Stiegler provides a lengthy commentary on Husserl’s work on internal time consciousness in the final chapter of *Technics and Time 2*, a commentary which is resumed and provides the platform for the account of cinema and cinematic consciousness in the opening chapters of *Technics and Time 3: Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press,

- 2011). It is beyond the scope of this essay to give a detailed account adequate to the complexities of this commentary. I have elsewhere attempted to address some of these; see, for instance, Patrick Crogan, “‘Passing, Swirling, Spinning:’ A Brief Note on Stiegler’s Post-Phenomenological Account of Mediated Experience,” *Technophilia blog*, June 2013, <http://technophilia.wordpress.com/2013/07/03/passing-swirling-spinning-a-brief-note-on-stieglers-post-phenomenological-account-of-mediated-experience/>.
25. Husserl’s philosophical methodology responded to what he (among others such as his contemporary, Henri Bergson) saw as the classic impasse of 19th-century conflicts between idealist and empiricist epistemological frameworks in philosophy and the sciences.
 26. Husserl speaks of the “falling away” of present moments, and of their “running off” (*The Internal Consciousness of Time*, 29). See also Stiegler’s analysis of retention as modification in *Technics and Time 2*, 212ff, and as reduction which makes the experience of time as what passes possible in *Technics and Time 3*, 19.
 27. Husserl, *The Internal Consciousness of Time*, 33.
 28. *Ibid.*, 31.
 29. This is so even when the note or shot conforms to its protention and is, as one says of a boring work, “absolutely predictable.” In this case it demonstrates what Stiegler terms in “An Organology of Dreams” a “stereotypical” conformity to the protention. Alluding to Freud’s analysis of trauma in resuming this analysis of Husserl’s account of retentional modes in consciousness, Stiegler states that one can class perceptual impressions in a range between “stereotypical” and “traumatypical” depending on the extent to which they conform to the protentions conditioning consciousness’s perception. But even the most stereotypical perception has the effect of “impoverishing” the temporal object so that “the attention consciousness has for this object fades away, disindividuating itself by reinforcing these stereotypes.”
 30. See the section entitled “Passing, Swirling, Spinning” in Stiegler *Technics and Time 2*, 210-214.
 31. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2*, 204-205. The “tone” only becomes a “note” in a melody on condition of consciousness’s experience of the melodic and it is this dimension of the constitution of the temporal object that Husserl ignores or avoids in reducing the note to the tone of primary impressional content. Stiegler considers the reading of a poem in a similar way (203-204).
 32. I am reminded of the possibly apocryphal but nonetheless instructive anecdote about the “Westernization” of Meiji Restoration Japan: a Japanese diplomatic mission to France are taken to a symphonic concert. Asked about how they enjoyed the concert, the spokesperson advised that they found it interesting, but that the “first part” had been the best part of the performance. He was referring to the sounds of the orchestra as they tuned their instruments before commencing the symphony.
 33. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2*, 210.
 34. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 3*, 10-11.

35. Jonathan Beller, *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle* (Lebanon, NH: Dartmouth University Press, 2006).
36. Stiegler, *Technics and Time* 3, 37-38. In effect Stiegler suggests that had Husserl considered the melody as heard on the phonograph – already in widespread use in his day – he might have had cause to rethink the strict separation of primary and secondary retention and, thereby, the very grounding of phenomenology in such an absolute distinction between perception and imagination, and interiority and exteriority.
37. Both Beller and Stiegler term Hollywood the capital of the 20th century (*The Cinematic Mode of Production*, 193), and of “Industrial Schematism” (*Technics and Time* 3, 37).
38. Stiegler, “An Organology of Dreams,” paragraph 49.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), and André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” in *What Is Cinema?*, trans. Hugh Gray, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
41. D.N. Rodowick, *The Virtual Life of Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 64.
42. The key sources for this ideological-psychoanalytic theorization of cinema spectatorship via Althusser’s work were texts by Jean-Louis Baudry and Christian Metz, such as Baudry, “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus,” in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), and Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, trans. Celia Britton et al. (London: Macmillan, 1982). Its extension and elaboration was carried on in an anglophone context in journals such as *Screen*, *October* and *Camera Obscura*.
43. In “An Organology of Dreams,” Stiegler says “[...] this cinema of caves and theatres is staged by Plato at the beginning of book VII of the *Republic* as a kind of dream: as the dream of that dream that would be the lie of life lived in the cave – that is, in the *pharmakon*. Now, we see that whereas the philosopher wants to leave the cave, the film-lover, the *amateur de cinéma*, would like to get behind the camera or into the screen: what the cinephile loves is the *pharmakon* and the pharmacological condition itself insofar as it is also the condition of desire” (paragraph 34).
44. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. E. Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 98.
45. Stiegler, *Technics and Time* 3, 74.
46. Stiegler, “An Organology of Dreams,” paragraph 23.
47. Stiegler, “Faire du Cinéma,” unpublished keynote address delivered at the Impact of Technological Innovations on the Theory and Historiography of Cinema conference (Montréal, November 2011) and “An Organology of Dreams.”
48. Bernard Stiegler, *La Télécratie contre la démocratie: Lettre ouverte aux représentants politiques* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 221.
49. See D.N. Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism: Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).