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TITLE: Proletarianization, deproletarianization, and the rise of the amateur

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ABSTRACT:

In this article, I present the three forms of proletarianization found in Stiegler's work: the proletarianization of the producer, the proletarianization of the consumer, and generalized proletarianization. In the lectures included in this issue, Stiegler refers to the proletarianization of sensibility, which belongs to this last form of proletarianization. I attempt to contextualize this new work in relation to Stiegler's past work on political economy as well as some of his political positions about capitalism as a social organization. I explain where the notion of proletarianization gets muddled and I also compare his position on new forms of capitalism to the influential work of André Gorz. Following Stiegler, I will call the underlying political project of deproletarianization that he has developed "protentional politics." I turn more specifically to the under-discussed notion of "tertiary protention" and questions its place in Stiegler's thought. Finally, I also explain why Stiegler's turn to the figure of the amateur, especially in the third lecture in this issue, is strategic in thinking of deproletarianizing practices. However, it is hardly straightforward since the role of the amateur has evolved dramatically throughout the last three hundred years.

BIOSKETCH:

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The proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.ⁱ

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

But I quote Marx without saying so, without quotation marks, and because people are incapable of recognizing Marx's texts I am thought to be someone who doesn't quote Marx. When a physicist writes a work of physics, does he feel it necessary to quote Newton and Einstein? He uses them, but he doesn't need the quotation marks, the footnote and the eulogistic comment to prove how completely he is being faithful to the master's thought. And because other physicists know what Einstein did, what he discovered and proved, they can recognize him in what the physicist writes.ⁱⁱ

Michel Foucault

We no longer have an image of the proletarian that we would simply need to be conscious of.ⁱⁱⁱ

Gilles Deleuze

In the hyperindustrial world, in which life is spent more in front of the computer than in the factory, the notion of the proletariat seems obsolete. However, following the statement made in the 1970s by Foucault in the second epigraph to this article, Marx and Engels arguably defined axioms to understand society and economic relations that continue to be relevant for political philosophy today, even after the financialization of the economy and the economic crisis. While Marx and Engels presented in some ways the laws of political economy, to do a new critique of

political economy would mean, according to Bernard Stiegler, to combat capitalism's proletarianizing tendency to turn all things into a hypercalculable environment in which singularities and desire disappear. Stiegler's philosophy thus clearly inherits the Marxist framework and axioms, while also displacing the notion of the proletariat into a larger notion: proletarianization. By this, Stiegler refers, first of all, to a condition rather than a specific class (the workers); second, the term is not defined by the absence of ownership over the means of production but by a loss of knowledge.

In this article, I present the three forms of proletarianization found in Stiegler's work: the proletarianization of the producer, the proletarianization of the consumer, and generalized proletarianization. In the lectures included in this issue, Stiegler refers to the proletarianization of sensibility, which belongs to this last form of proletarianization. My article is an attempt to contextualize this new work in relation to Stiegler's past work on political economy as well as some of his political positions about capitalism as a social organization. Following Stiegler, I will call the underlying political project of deproletarianization that he has developed "protentional politics." Finally, I also explain why Stiegler's turn to the figure of the amateur, especially in the third lecture in this issue, is strategic in thinking of deproletarianizing practices. However, it is hardly straightforward since the role of the amateur has evolved dramatically throughout the last three hundred years. In this sense, the amateur is the enacting, and even the acting out, of protentional politics. Stiegler attempts to bring a new, positive meaning to the "amateur" by going back to the etymology of the word (*amator*, the person who loves) for political purposes; the amateur is the new "image of the proletarian," as an emancipatory and not negative figure.

What is proletarianization?

Proletarianization is not a new theme in Stiegler's work. While it arguably begins with his interpretation of Simondon's "mecnology" in *Technics and Time 1*, its actual first appearance is in *Technics and Time 2* in the discussion of the loss of individuation in Simondon's reading of Marx.^{iv} While Simondon does not always refer to Marx's texts, in *Of Modes of Existence of Technical Objects* (1958) he developed an original reading of Marx's arguments about the consequences of the use of machinery for the worker in the mode of production.^v For Simondon, alienation is not identity or class-based but conditioned by the human-machine relation. This means that the wealthy are also alienated from the point of view of the technical object.^{vi} Stiegler extends Simondon's argument, however, by referring in this context to the loss of knowledge *in general*. While Simondon was thus concerned about the relation of the individual with the world through the technical object, Stiegler's interest is larger and serves as a basis for his new critique of political economy. Simondon argued that progress cannot be reduced to the economic realm but should be rethought ontologically from the point of view of technical objects:

It is not because a civilization loves money that it is attached to efficiency, but because it is first a civilization of efficiency that it becomes a civilization of money [...] In spite of the civil liberties, [this civilization of money] is burdensome for individuals.^{vii}

There is a passion for the efficiency and progress of technical objects that surpasses the economic and capitalist framework. Two interpretations can follow from this short passage. First of all, as an idealism that forgets that in a capitalist mode of production, exchange value overdetermines use value, and it is difficult to imagine the production of the technical object outside capitalism.

Second, Simondon's theory is prophetic in thinking the invention of technical objects beyond the logic of employment (understood as remunerated work), organized by capitalism. The latter interpretation calls for a more radical reading of Simondon, which resonates with Stiegler's conception of deproletarianization and Gorz's philosophy of work, both of which I discuss at the end of this article.

In reading Marx's *Grundrisse*, especially his "Fragments on Machines," Simondon argued that with the machine-tool, the worker was deprived from his know-how (*savoir-faire*) and was reduced to a mere technical organ of the machine. He called this condition, "a loss of individuation."^{viii} This understanding of the loss of individuation was introduced in Stiegler's own terms as disorientation and as ill-being (*mal-être*), in *Technics and Time 2* and *Technics and Time 3*. However, Stiegler's most systematic transformation and definition of proletarianization is developed in the second part of his work, starting with the *Symbolic Misery and Disbelief and Discredit* series until his most recent book *Pharmacology of National Front*. Throughout his work, Stiegler develops a systematic understanding of proletarianization, making this concept extremely relevant to diagnose and analyze the elements of contemporary capitalism (financialization, the role of debt, the end of the welfare state, the restrictions of the right to strike and protest, mass unemployment, ecological problems and the privatization of all forms of life) but I also point out where Stiegler blurs the precision of the concept.

The first dimension of proletarianization that must be considered is the proletarianization of the producer. This draws directly from Marx's "Fragments on Machines:"

Not as with the instrument, which the worker animates and makes into his organ with his skill and strength, and whose handling therefore depends on his virtuosity. Rather, it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso, with

a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it ... The worker's activity, reduced to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated to a mere abstraction of activity, is determined and regulated on all sides by the movement of the machinery, and not the opposite.^{ix}

The worker's knowledge has been inscribed in the machine, and he is reduced to an activity of monitoring and assisting the machine rather than working with raw materials. By relying on the machine, the knowledge of the worker is transferred into the machine. Stiegler calls this process proletarianization: through this loss of knowledge, the worker is proletarianized. What interests Stiegler is less the reification of labor into the machine or the theory of abstract labor and how these play out within Marxist philosophy from Lukács onwards, but how to reconfigure the social in accounting for the loss of knowledge. In this sense, when a worker is proletarianized, he is deprived of his capacity to elevate himself above his condition and to individuate with others (through the process of co-individuation) and with technical objects – for Stiegler, there is no distinction between work and individuation in this sense.

As a reader of Roman law, Marx used the term proletariat in reference to the Latin term, *proletarianus*, denoting the person who has no property or no wealth. In Latin, “*proles*” means offspring, which seems to imply that the proletarian is a child, a descendant of the owner or the state. The displacement operated by Stiegler with his notion of proletarianization is faithful to this Latin etymology: a person without wealth – if we understand “wealth” in the sense André Gorz and Dominique Méda have given to this term. For Gorz and Méda, wealth is not reducible to accumulated capital, but refers to being in a position to cultivate and work at one's individual and social patrimony.^x Stiegler's task is to diagnose *historically* the symptoms of proletarianization, rather than holding on to the proletarians as a class in charge of its own history.

While in this article I intend to show the power and the operability of proletarianization as “a new image of the proletariat,” it is worth noting, first of all, that the absence of discussions on the theme of alienation in Marxist literature in Stiegler’s texts makes the new category of proletarianization significantly more difficult to appreciate. Where does alienation end and proletarianization begin? Marx inherited the theme of alienation from Hegel, who uses it to refer to the separation of the human spirit from nature. Alienation is overcome when spirit is fully developed and finds itself at home in the world. For Marx however, alienation is related to work (“alienated work,” in the words of the 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*), referring to a psychological and physical separation of the worker from his nature and the world; however, it is also historically determined and constitutes a *necessary stage to self-realization*. In this latter sense, it is accepted as a stage of human development. The individual is transformed into “commodity-man.” Dialectically, however, this negativity is also the condition for a higher stage of human civilization.^{xi}

This indicative picture of Marx’s dialectical movement does not correspond exactly to Stiegler’s pharmacology, even though Stiegler finds pharmacological elements in some of Marx’s texts (especially his analyses of machinery and the means of production). One of the differences, for example, between Marx and Stiegler is that while alienation is primarily concerned with the repression and the diminution of psychological and physiological capacities, Stiegler’s notion of proletarianization is used to diagnose the level of both theoretical and practical knowledges in society.

The theme of alienation is often linked to the first and second stages of capitalism, from the first industrial revolution and the birth of the factory to the rise of Fordism. However, as such it gives a necessary historical basis to describe the new forms of proletarianization that appeared with post-Fordism, the third phase of capitalism. The different stages of capitalism are fundamental to portray the move from the proletarianization of the producer to the

proletarianization of the consumer, but they are also technically determined, through what Stiegler calls stages of grammatization. Grammatization is best defined as a technical history of memory: the material and therefore spatial existence (or engraving) of a temporal flow.^{xii} The process of grammatization explains how technical objects come to be, not only as the support of knowledge (*logos*), but as its inscription, its discretion and therefore its modification. Techno-logy is thus not the discourse *about* technics but the formalization and the transformation *of* knowledge; the technical tool grammatizes gestures, speeches, sensibilities, and knowledges in general.^{xiii} Grammatization is more general than proletarianization, which *only* accounts for the loss of knowledge. In this sense, we can say that grammatization conditions proletarianization. Both grammatization and proletarianization are historically determined.

Stiegler refers in this context to three industrial revolutions: The first, which was at the center of Marx's analysis of capitalism, took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the invention of the steam engine and mechanized production but also the first railway networks. The second is the development of Taylorism-Fordism as a new form of capitalism based primarily on oil, the car industry and consumption. The third is the financialization of society and debt, the rise of the information economy, and what some call "cognitive capitalism."

In the second industrial revolution the rise of the consumer was organized by giving workers higher wages and better social conditions. This also coincided with the birth of the welfare state that systematically stimulated consumption by taking care of the population with health and unemployment benefits. Bruno Trentin demonstrates the correlation between Keynesian measures and the development of Fordism, what Stiegler calls the "Fordist compromise" (*PFN* 325). He argued in 1997 that the left did not see the mutation of these industrial models after 1970:

We should in fact situate the beginning of this crisis during the phase that coincided with the exhaustion of the first thirty years of almost continuous growth of production and revenues in industrialized countries (what the French call *Les Trentes Glorieuses*) and with the emergence of limits to the Fordist model and the Taylorist forms of labor organization, at the moment of the arrival of new flexible technologies of information and the accelerated process of the globalized markets.^{xiv}

The third industrial revolution is portrayed as the passage “from the motorway network to the digital network,”^{xv} the information economy and the rise of new technologies. This transition, as Trentin demonstrates, is what the left did not think and continues to refuse to think when it is calling for “more purchasing power” instead of struggling against proletarianization itself (*EC* 231). For Stiegler, the slogan of “increasing people’s purchasing power” belongs to the populist discourse that comforts the second industrial model, no longer relevant in a service-based economy and “cultural capitalism,” since this old model is in fact already overcome. Politicians should be calling instead for an increase of “purchasing knowledge” (*PFN* 331).

In pointing out the “Fordist compromise,” Stiegler does not target the welfare state as such since it has been continuously under attack from the 1970s onwards. Instead, he attempts to reformulate the political question in terms of consumerism and even “hyperconsumption”. “The consumer is the new proletarian figure, and the proletariat, very far from disappearing, has become a condition – proletarianization – from which it has become nearly impossible to escape.”^{xvi} Demanding more purchasing power implies for Stiegler to demand, instead of reconsidering the value of work and work as value, more proletarianization and the impoverishment of the consumer, an impoverishment of both her *savoir-faire* (know-how) and *savoir-vivre* (knowing-how-to-live).^{xvii} With hyperconsumption, individuals have become addicted to consumption.^{xviii} Capitalism has ceased to be a “destructive creation” as Schumpeter famously argued, but has been

turned into a “destructive destruction,” and this is due to the acceleration of technical novelty. Technical novelty has required a social readjustment as Bertrand Gille demonstrated, but today the threat of the obsolescence of forms of life has increased with such extreme intensity that it is philosophy’s role to slow down technical life and diagnose the threats and the hopes of these obsolescences.

Today, these forms of life (the family structure, social institutions such as universities or schools, but also associations and organizations) do not simply become obsolete but are interrupted, short-circuited and evermore shuffled, and the obsolescences of technologies are not organized technically but planned economically – hence the expression: “planned obsolescence.” This is what Stiegler means by the proletarianization of *savoir-vivre*:

In the most general way [hyperconsumption] deprives consumers of their *savoir-vivre*, forcing them to constantly try to keep up with the obsolescence of things. This is so because the milieu has become fundamentally unfaithful, but according to a rhythm that no longer permits the production of new forms of fidelity, or of *pathos* producer of *philia*, or of trust, and it is the result of a much larger process that, as “absolute pharmakon”, thereby deprives political leaders of the very possibility of making decisions and deprives scientists of the capacity to theorize their practice, that is, to form long circuits.^{xix}

This planned obsolescence leads to a situation in which computers or mobile phones are meant to last two years, fridges five years, and so on, to stimulate consumption. It is partly this constant change in *pharmaka* that leads to a situation of generalised frustration, not only with the production of new needs and the destruction of desire, but by the economic demands to adapt constantly to new *pharmaka*, and to render impossible the processes of adoption. The distinction

between adaptation and adoption has been at the heart of Stiegler's political philosophy since *Technics and Time 3: The Time of Cinema*. The capitalist system demands constant adaptation to a changing environment not by having its subjects participate in this change but by having them passively (and tacitly) adapt to it. Adaptation is one of the primary targets of Stiegler's new *Ideologiekritik* and it is combatted by inventing wild and creative forms of adoptions – and not merely by resisting the adaptive prerogatives.^{xx}

This shift from the proletarianization of the producer as Marx diagnosed it in *Grundrisse* to the proletarianization of the consumer, as first described and critiqued by Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard in 1967-1970, has an evident consequence.^{xxi} Consumption in a hyperindustrial and service-based economy has replaced production: consumption is the continuation of production by other means. With the development of new means of communication (mobile, internet) and new technologies (robots and automata of all kinds), the time of the consumer is increasingly spent on performing tasks that workers used to do: self-checkouts, cashpoints and online ticket reservations are the best examples of this paradigm.

While the victim of the first form of proletarianization was the producer, especially the industrial worker, the second form of proletarianization mainly has affected the consumer, especially those members of the middle-class who had access to more and more retail areas (the department store and the supermarket, then the shopping center and the online retailer). Generalized proletarianization, the third form of proletarianization, is then logically defined by its *mass propagation*. It can be associated with the third industrial revolution (post-Fordism), even though there is no radical break; rather, there are hybrid forms of proletarianization during the second half of the twentieth century, with generalized proletarianization being the intensification of the previous two forms of proletarianization (of the producer and the consumer) (*DDI* 62-63).

As I noted earlier, the consumer is the new proletarian, but when Stiegler advances this statement, he is careful to point out that this is a condition no one can escape. In this sense, the

proletarianization of the consumer is always already a generalized proletarianization, but the distinction is nonetheless significant in understanding the degrees in the intensification of proletarianization. What Adorno and Horkheimer diagnosed in 1944 as the “culture industry” anticipated in this respect the generalization of proletarianization. With the culture industry, “sustained thought is out of the question”: it “leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience.” Instead, spectators are expected to “react automatically.”^{xxii} Adorno and Horkheimer anticipated this since they theorized the film industry as having a totalizing power over the real life of individuals. With new communication networks, using both analog and digital technologies, information has become a commodity that is transferrable via cables and satellites to organize systematically the synchronization of consciousnesses. Generalized proletarianization for Stiegler is defined by the combined loss of *savoir-faire*, *savoir-vivre* and *savoir-théoriser* (theoretical knowledge), reducing the consumer’s existence to a subsistence by liquidating her singularities.^{xxiii} It is only from there that it will become clear why Stiegler considers the amateur, that is everyone, to be a the revolutionary agent.

Due to the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, marketing has been used increasingly to compensate for the lack of use value of new commodities, by stimulating the drives of the consumers and by first targeting the vulnerability of children who have not fully developed their capacity to transform their drives into desires.^{xxiv} Marketing strategies are operated through social media, mass media and Hollywood, and these knowledge and information industries have turned consciousnesses into “raw materials” (*MS* 36). While in the second industrial revolution, goods were exchanged and consumed – they were “circulating capital,” as defined by Marx –, with the third industrial revolution what is sold has no intrinsic value and the targets are not individuals but consciousnesses (“consciousnesses are markets”, *MS* 36). This leads Stiegler to define the present economic system as a drive-based capitalism that exploits all forms of attention to fabricate, reproduce, diversify and segment the needs of consumers (*MS* 24; *WMLWL* 79-134). The

financialization of the economy based on the development of public and private debt has created a speculative economy that is based on the frenetic satisfaction of drives and on short-term thinking. As Stiegler notes in his lectures on the proletarianization of sensibility, even (or especially) in the art world, it is no longer a matter of taste and judgment: speculating on the art market has become the rule. Hyperconsumption ultimately leads to a destruction (*consummation*) of all objects and relations, rather than to the creation of objects of desire through libidinal and financial investments. It is in this context that the power of the notion of proletarianization aims at providing alternative to workers' struggles and demands.

In *États de choc* [States of Shock], Stiegler extends his argument about generalized proletarianization with the controversial claim that “systemic stupidity” is the central feature of our contemporary times.^{xxv} While proletarianization is minimally defined by the loss of knowledge (this knowledge can be lost over generations, yet it is increasingly experienced during a single life time), stupidity is the pharmacological condition of *all* knowledge. Stiegler's analysis of stupidity is based on the already mentioned Adorno and Horkheimer, but most centrally on Deleuze's commentary of Nietzsche's saying that the task of philosophy is to harm stupidity.^{xxvi} For Deleuze, stupidity should not be confused with errors, it is not the negation or the destruction of thought but “a base way of thinking,”^{xxvii} hence the relation between knowledge/thinking and stupidity is not oppositional but one of process or continuum. This analysis of stupidity is then read through the prism of Stiegler's interpretation of the myth of Epimetheus and Prometheus, developed in the first volume of the *Technics and Time* series.^{xxviii} The problem here, related to my discussion of the difference between alienation and proletarianization earlier on, is the risk of conflating proletarianization with stupidity, and in this way de-historicizing specific cases of proletarianization. The true originality of Stiegler's argument about proletarianization is to allow for a new image of the proletariat, which is not reducible to the working class but encompasses everyone. This new image of the proletariat gives a potentiality to everyone and does not simply

assign to a certain group the heavy burden of leading the emancipatory process. Everyone is an amateur, that is a curator, an artist, a philosopher or a critic potentially, but also: no one escapes the conditions of stupidity and proletarianization. However, this generalization that Stiegler adopts also muddles the concept itself.

There is a tendency or a temptation in Stiegler's work in generalizing proletarianization to too many instances, in raising the notion of proletarianization as a universal category. This is particularly evident when he refers to Plato as "the first thinker of proletarianization."^{xxix} The specific form of proletarianization that Plato diagnosed in *Phaedrus* regarding writing informs a general theory of proletarianization, but one cannot but wonder if all processes of proletarianization, from 5 BC until today in 2014, can really be equated or be reduced to a single symptom. Specific technical objects and systems operate different forms of attention and care to which correspond specific and incommensurable instances of disindividuation and proletarianization. For instance, the case of forgetting the spelling of words because of the use of word processors when writing, create problems that cannot be compared with Alan Greenspan's avowal of his loss of knowledge in the workings of the financial economy (*NCPE* 47). The obvious disadvantage of this generalization is that it potentially discourages action if too many things are going wrong. There is thus a need for more specific, spatio-temporally situated diagnoses.

There are different instances of proletarianization that are produced but these cannot be confused with stupidity as a transcendental structure of thought (as Deleuze defines it). On the contrary, proletarianization needs to be analyzed *historically*, in relation to the stages of grammatization, instead of raising it as an eternal condition that has existed since Plato. Stiegler is right to argue that Plato (and Socrates) condemn some forms of writing in *Phaedrus* since this process of exteriorizing one's memory implies a forgetting and a first discussion of the loss of knowledge. However, his argument is most powerful when it diagnoses new forms of

proletarianization that Plato could not have envisaged, when it calls for contemporary empirical studies in anthropology, sociology and political science.

Taking care of capitalism?

Stiegler's position on capitalism and the role of the state is founded on his project of conducting a general organology, to study the relations and the transductive relations between biological, technical and social organs.^{xxx} For Stiegler, radical politics should be focused on individuating with the present capitalist organization, since a brutal interruption of capitalism as a social organization could be more detrimental to these other organs than the current situation:

Capitalism must go to the end of its process, and we remain utterly ignorant about the way this will turn out. On the other hand, we can describe this process and what, in it, threatens to brutally interrupt it. This process is the expression of becoming insofar as it is always duplicitous, that is, tragic – and what I here call combat is less the class struggle than it is the struggle between *tendencies*. (DDI 57)

Stiegler wants to save becoming and individuation from the double tendency of the current form of capitalism to hypersynchronize or hyperdiachronize (PA 105-106). The hypersynchronization is organized through television and advertisement, producing on an industrial scale similar behaviors and modes of living (the same fast-foods, the same television programs or music, the same working hours, the same teaching curricula), opposing all forms of diachrony or differences. Hyperdiachronization is the speculation of singularities to oppose all forms of synchrony, usually by creating intimate societies and associations (this is especially valid for the arts, but the principle

can be extended to all forms of work), whose very principle of existence rests on an immunization and an exclusion of others leading to pathologies such as anomy (*a-nomos*) or scapegoating (*pharmakos*). The Internet permits these hyperdiachronic groups to develop and emerge in unprecedented ways, and they are speculative and have self-referential practices, often having no reference to reality. Traders speculating all day long on financial markets can also be said to foster a tendency of hyperdiachronization; this is why the punk slogan “no future” has paradoxically been taken seriously by bankers and has been implemented.^{xxxii}

In *États de choc*, Stiegler demonstrates the limits of poststructuralism and its paradoxical complicity with the neoliberalization of society: it called for resistance without proposing alternatives. French speculative philosophy allowed for the development of the speculative economy. His philosophical project is to propose a new model and enunciate its axioms, against a certain melancholic left that has resigned into communist nostalgia or Marxist idealism. Hyperdiachrony and hypersynchrony are overcome in Stiegler’s project by laying out how a new industrial model, organized by a new public power, should take place. In investing massively, this new public power should aim to explore and redefine the role of new technologies and their possibilities in the social, elaborating therapeutic practices to (constantly) fight the toxicity of the *pharmakon* and liberate new processes of individuation and transindividuation. His “pharmacology of capitalism” requires first an analysis of the symptoms not of society but of the flows and processes of psycho-collective individuations. This is one of the distinctive aspects of his reading of capitalism that he shares with Simondon as well as Deleuze and Guattari: Stiegler does not focus on national economies but on the flows and processes that individuals as psycho-collective individuals create. These psycho-collective individuations are in turn constituted and conditioned by technical tools and these tools also individuate, by changing their functions through new assemblages. Stiegler understands capitalism as the global configuration of these assemblages through capitalism’s retentional circuits.

By turning trust and credit into objects of possible calculation, the (hyper)industrialists have participated in the liquidation of “belief as experience of the indeterminacy of the future” (DDI 16):

It is not a matter of opposing the capitalist process but, on the contrary, of enabling it to see out its term, that is, of avoiding its self-destruction, and hence permitting its transformation, and perhaps thereby engendering, some day, a wholly other organization of individuation. (DDI 40-41, translation modified)

For Stiegler, we do not know the end of capitalism because we only live in an associated milieu and cannot see past our current organization of individuation. More importantly even, this associated milieu has become dissociated, and singularities that “bear witness” to the indeterminacy of the future have been endangered when they should have been protected. There can be no evolution or revolution of capitalism without these singularities and the therapeutic struggles to “take care of the new commerce” (NCPE 50).^{xxxii} Therefore Stiegler’s question can be formulated this way: *how can we imagine what post-capitalism could look like if we cannot even see beyond the short-term satisfaction of drives?* He denounces certain forms of anti-capitalism as being oppositional and therefore idealist, while he argues that we need to cultivate a compositional politics that would allow for tendencies and singularities to be articulated and produce a new dynamism: “combating a *tendency* within a process means, first of all, thinking this process as the articulating of a dual [*double*] tendency, which is what makes it dynamic” (DDI 37).^{xxxiii} It is not a matter of opposing anti-capitalism as such, but to re-constitute alternatives by a dynamic composition that will allow for the individuation, and perhaps the transfiguration, of capitalism itself. He writes, “the belief that the capitalist process needs is at its core an-economic” (DDI 46).

This “an-economic” is the domain of life that cannot be reduced to basic necessities: subsistence. However, the problem raised here by Stiegler’s project of deproletarianization is its compatibility with the existing form of capitalism. Stiegler *hesitates* on this question, especially since it is related to copyright laws and the problem of access – I will return to this later.

However, Stiegler’s position on capitalism derives from his philosophical project of general organology. General organology is the larger project in which pharmacology (together with critique) functions as the methodological device to diagnose the toxicity and the curability of the *pharmaka*.^{xxxiv} General organology is always already political since it proposes to rethink the relations between biological organs, technical organs and social organization and their co-individuation in the *socius*. General organology draws from the original practice of organology in musicology, which is the study of the history of musical instruments, their practices and their social roles in all civilizations and historical periods. Yet general organology is not limited to the study of musical instruments but takes into account all technical instruments and their effects on biological and social organs. The Internet is today the most complex *pharmakon* due to the increasing part that it takes in our life (especially in the last six or seven years, with smartphones and tablets) and it should be the subject of a pharmacology that maps out the short-circuits it creates as well as the long circuits of transindividuation it produces in its assemblages with other *pharmaka*. General organology in this sense is a politics of “protentions,”^{xxxv} projecting new assemblages and practices for transindividuations to come.

All technical tools for Stiegler are supports of memory and spirit, hence his expression “technology of spirit.” If technical tools indeed bear spirit (bear both the noetic and the spiritual, as in *esprit* in French and *Geist* in German), a general organology diagnoses the way these technical tools function with biological and social organs, electing and prescribing the assemblages that produce long (even infinitely long) processes of transindividuation. In his work, Simondon increasingly conceded an agency to technical objects; for Stiegler, this agent functions

due to the spirit and thoughts that these objects bear. Technical tools do not have only one role or one function but can be used in a multiplicity of ways. Conferring one role to a designated technical object is to fall back to metaphysics. The general organology on the contrary deconstructs the metaphysics of technical objects, accounting for the polyphony of practices that are inscribed within the assemblages of organs. The project of general organology diagnoses, presents and produces the protentions that are contained in the stages of grammatization. In this sense, we can say that it is always already an *alter-grammatization*, since it attempts to alter-grammatize our existences with singularities, or with what Stiegler refers to as “consistences.”

Protentional politics and the question of “tertiary protentions”

Before analyzing some of Stiegler’s propositions for a deproletarianization, it is crucial to envisage deproletarianization as a politics of protention, in the same way Stiegler refers to other politics of protention in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

What took place during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the organization of the capitalist “protentionalization” of the world, which consisted firstly in the disenchantment of the legitimating powers and the secularization of beliefs: not in their destruction, but in their transformation into calculable beliefs, including through the harnessing of scientific beliefs by the production apparatus in order to devise ways of transforming matter, nature, technique, human beings, and behavior. This transformation of belief was able to accomplish enormous gains in production throughout the nineteenth century, enabling new forms of membership and social cohesion within the social project,

carried out by the bourgeoisie through the development of schools, through the engagement it made possible with national history, etc.

In the twentieth century, the mobilization of libidinal energies took place through the capturing and harnessing of protentions via channeling of attention. It was thus a matter of elaborating [*tendre*] an industrial protention... and thus of overcoming the contradiction in which consists in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

In the course of the recent crisis, this protentional system collapsed, after having run out of control as it was driven toward an ever-more extreme short-termism, reaching the limit of its *self-annihilation*. (NCPE 67-69, emphasis in the original, translation modified)

Deproletarianization requires conducting a general organology, but this general organology has to diagnose the protentions in the co-individuations of biological, technical and social organs, that is, the organizations of the powers “to project” and to “expect.”^{xxxvi}

Protentional politics is the capacity to “throw” thoughts, it is a certain becoming-projectile of politics by placing desire at its heart. The question of protention differs from deproletarianization. While deproletarianization is *the conquest of knowledge*, protention is construction of the future through primary, secondary and tertiary mediums. The relation between retentions and protentions is not that of a simple correspondence. It is, rather, analogic or reticular. It is, indeed, through an ecology of spirit (after Bateson), that relations between primary, secondary and tertiary retentions and primary, secondary and tertiary protentions can be established. However, the question of these protentions remains underdeveloped in Stiegler’s work.

Collective secondary protentions are defined as “a process that constitutes horizons of expectation” (DDI 112) and are determined in the same way as singular primary protentions by

tertiary retentions (that are technical objects).^{xxxvii} To my knowledge, Stiegler hardly ever mentions “tertiary protentions.” The only example of tertiary retention that he provides is money (as coins or banknotes).^{xxxviii} This is surprising since, following Stiegler, tertiary protentions will be the materialization of attention and expectations, for he often defines protentions as “objects of desire” (*PFN* 29). The dollar bill famously bears the inscription “In God we trust,” recalling Benjamin Franklin’s sermon that “time is money” and “credit is money” (*DDI* 66-67). This trust inscribed on the banknote is the transformation of belief into a calculable trust that is credit. According to Stiegler, this process has led with hyperconsumption to the “destruction of belief through the calculation of trust” and to the exhaustion of trust and credit (what he calls “discredit”), bringing capitalism on the verge of self-destruction (*DDI* 71, see also *DDI* 85-89).

But one could think of many more objects of desire than money. For instance, when Fredric Jameson argues in *Archaeologies of Utopia* that utopias are desires “with a textual existence in the present,” this is compatible with Stiegler’s notions of tertiary retention, and the speculative and the mysterious (or even mystagogic) notion of tertiary protention.^{xxxix} Traditionally, utopias are first and foremost texts that have a materiality – they are archives of desires – and intend to produce universal expectations as well as material ones (constituting a political party, quitting one’s job, etc.). This is probably not the case for other literary genres. While secondary protentions are shared collectively, tertiary retentions – and through them certain mysterious tertiary protentions – overdetermine both primary (psychic) and secondary (collective) protentions. We could possibly think of other forms of tertiary protentions, such as constitutions or even religious books (or objects); Jameson refers to Rousseau’s projects of constitution-writing as utopias.. Constitutions construct the spirit of the laws as well as envisages foreseeable historical events (sometimes to prevent them) (Jameson *AF* 18, 36). Hannah Arendt comments on Woodrow Wilson, who criticized Americans for their “blind and indiscriminating” worship of the US Constitution, and finds within this worship a positivity and a strength:

Perhaps the political genius of the American people... consisted precisely in this blindness, or, to put it another way, consisted in the extraordinary capacity to look upon yesterday with the eyes of centuries to come.^{x1}

Arendt is clear that what we usually consider to be a “written document,” for the American people, the US Constitution is “the remembrance of the event itself – a people deliberately founding a new body politic,” (Arendt *OR* 204) but this can be extended to the hopes and the promises that this “worshiped” text contains for the American people. This speculative excursion on the possible forms tertiary protention would probably have to turn to objects that support cults and faiths, and would have to be historically and anthropologically studied, since they are specific to the forms of belief of the community or the social organization.^{xii} As noted earlier, these examples of tertiary protentions overdetermine primary and secondary protentions, in the same way, tertiary retentions support both primary and secondary retentions for Stiegler.

From this short section on protentions and retentions, it is clear why Stiegler’s affirmative politics – economy of contribution and the processes of deproletarianization^{xiii} – is a project of taking control of retentional and protentional apparatuses or *dispositifs*. This can be accomplished through an ideology critique, that is a critique of the ways in which apparatuses are used:

An ideology has less to do with disseminating [*diffuser*] or infusing [*infuser*] ideas than to take control of retentional and protentional apparatuses [*dispositifs*] of technologies of transindividuation – and at the time of Mussolini, then Hitler, these technologies are radio and cinema (*PFN* 216).

A new critique of ideology needs to not only know the functioning networks of information technology but also take control of them, and participate in their making and unmaking, to

individuate the most sophisticated technical tools that make the associated milieu. “What I cannot build, I cannot understand,” the physicist Richard Feynman writes.^{xliii} However, this does not mean that revolutionaries should all become computer scientists or technical engineers – in the same way that in the 1930s-1960s the Marxist revolution did not need intellectuals to become factory workers, and therefore proletarianized. But there should be a renewed dialogue or even relations between philosophy and technics: technics should inform philosophy, and vice-versa. Following Simondon and others, his project is techno-logical: creating a new *logos* (rationality, or reason) of *techné* (both art and science).

Deproletarianization, economy of contribution and the rise of the amateur

“A revolutionary process is taking place. It is both technological and economic, but not yet political” (EC 230). The proletarianization of decision-making is for Stiegler responsible for the disinvestment of the state and the rise of public debt. Public debts are not the cause of the weakening and the withering of the state but their symptoms. Dogmatic Marxists resigned in the fight against proletarianization, since for them, communism is the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, the deproletarianization of the proletariat is not an issue for Marxists: they affirm that “there is nothing beyond proletarianization” (EC 223).^{xliv} They are not interested in the production of new knowledges. The new digital technologies have allowed for new forms of political movements and rallies (the Occupy movement, the Arab spring) but the new territorialization with the digital reticularity has led to the destruction of the long-term temporality specific to politics and the media. Significant events or movements can last a very short period (a day or even a few hours) before being erased from the collective consciousness by a new video from a politician or

the publication new opinion poll, etc. In this sense, deproletarianization has to produce new knowledges when the time of the media has been entirely reconfigured.^{xlv}

André Gorz and Maurizio Lazzarato are the main two sources of inspiration for Stiegler to develop his alternative politics of deproletarianization: the “economy of contribution.” Gorz has developed an original philosophy of work that considers the ontological distinction between work and employment: employment is a rationalized version of work, or, in Stieglerian terms, employment blocks the processes of individuation and is reduced to a proletarianized form of work. Yet employment and work should not be opposed. By referring to Lazzarato and his study of the model of remuneration of artists in France (under the regime of *intermittents du spectacle*) Stiegler understands that the main problem is the tendency in recent public policies to increase the part taken by employment in one’s life, and to forget about other forms of work.^{xlvi} Employment is a set of rational tasks that are organized in a “megamachine,” and individuals are reduced to being servants to this megamachine with which they do not agree and in which they do not believe. As Stiegler often acknowledges, Gorz argued in *The Immaterial* that open source softwares have the potential to free work from employment constraints, since they have a high production cost (in terms of labor) but they can also be reproduced almost unlimitedly at a negligible cost (Gorz I 44). The circulation of these softwares and the continuous possibility of transformation that they permit lay the foundations for Stiegler’s and his political organization *Ars Industrialis*’s economy of contribution. The mode of production and circulation of free softwares are paradigmatic for Gorz and Stiegler of the transformation of capitalism and the possibilities to come. In theoretical terms, this allows us to take seriously “the question of work time outside of employment” (*NCPE* 22, emphasis removed).

Gorz raises the problem in terms of applied knowledges or skills (*connaissances*) and knowledge (*savoir*) and also sees the process of proletarianization, but he expresses it in different terms: “the great majority has the knowledge [*connait*] of more and more things but knows [*sait*]

and understands [*comprend*] less and less” (Gorz I 111). The problem with the so-called “knowledge economy,” according to Gorz, is that we are led to believe that all forms of knowledge are formalizable or codifiable. The proximity of Gorz’s theses on knowledge and Stiegler’s account of proletarianization is striking.

Yet there are also disagreements between Stiegler and Gorz. The first one is that Gorz thinks of the new forms of production as “immaterial,” whereas Stiegler insists they are “hypermateral.” To claim that new technologies (softwares or the internet) operate at the immaterial level is to retreat into idealism and to dismiss the material inscription of information and energy. The notion of hypermaterial on the other hand allows us to think the increasing industrialization and materialization of life. The second disagreement, which is probably more fundamental, concerns the end of capitalism and the mutation to new forms of post-capitalist social relations.^{xlvii} Stiegler shares Gorz’s understanding of non-rationalized work as producing value when he chooses to reinstate the figure of the amateur, the revolutionary figure *par excellence*. He also agrees with Gorz’s propositions for a guaranteed basic income (a form of “negative income tax”). The death of capitalism for Gorz is not the project of collectivizing all properties (including intellectual property) but the liberation from employment, when non-rationalized forms of work can become once again an integral part of one’s life:

The task for the left, if the left can continue to exist, is to transform this liberation of time into a new freedom, and into new rights: the right for everyone to earn one’s life by working, but by working less and less, better and better, while receiving one’s own share of the socially produced wealth. The right to also work non-continuously or intermittently without losing the full revenue during the intermittences – in order to open new spaces for activities without an economic goal and to recognize a dignity and an inherent value for

individuals as well as for society as a whole, to activities that do not hold remuneration as the only goal.^{xlvi}

What is surprising in Stiegler's undecidability – he admits “not [being] completely clear on” on open softwares and “of not knowing” whether capitalism will be replaced by socialism^{xlix} – is the incompatibility of his stated rejection of Gorz and Lazzarato's political positions while adhering to their economic analyses to feed his arguments about a contributive economy. A “new form of value” should be cultivated that comes from a work outside the rationalised form of employment. Stiegler recognises the imperative to take care of this new form value, which he calls “spirit value.”^l For him, the taking care of new modes of transindividuation happens in this new form of value insofar as it is not reducible to the exchange-value or even to the use-value. The excess of consumption has liquidated institutions and belief in general, creating economies based on suspicion and discredit, rather than care and love. Stiegler reinstates the figure of the amateur to imagine what forms this contributive work could take (or Gorz's “socially produced wealth”).

Although not named as such, the practice of amateurs was already conceptualized in certain *Autonomia* writings, or even in Félix Guattari's notion of the postmedia.^{li} Free radios, for instance, first operated with pirate means and before slowly prospering within a legal framework, until they became, a few years later, increasingly standardized and colonized by advertisements. In *Mystagogies*, Stiegler develops this notion of the amateur by going back to its Latin etymology: *amator* means the lover, the person who loves.^{lii} The history of amateurs and their place in the history of grammatization is evocative of their potential, but also of the hurdles and challenges that await them. In early eighteenth-century France, the term “amateur” referred to the aristocratic figure who advised artists. The amateur was also a mediator, a writer and a curator. “Honorary amateur” was a status for those lovers of art who had developed an acute knowledge and

appreciation of art. Diderot criticized them for favoring pleasure over instruction, taste over judgement. With the French revolution, the term took on an unflattering and discrediting meaning: “during the Revolution, the amateur is driven away by the aristocratic values which he last incarnated.”^{liii} The digital age allowed for the formation of “taste communities” today what small and privileged urban environments such as Paris or Vienna have made possible in the last two centuries.^{liv} For Stiegler, the amateur is a revolutionary agent, since in the age of generalized proletarianization and surplus population, and far from representing the public at large or the consumer in the “sharing economy,” the amateur is an active participant in social circles, a producer of new practices, new discourses and artefacts. Although the eighteen-century amateurs were used by the monarchic regime, by creating a wealth of knowledges (erudite treatises, taxonomies, etc.) they were also active participants in the social life of art. As in the exemplary case of Claude-Henri Watelet’s *Rymbranesques*, whose copies of Rembrandt’s paintings contributed in the reassessment of Rembrandt in the artistic canon one century after the death of the Dutch painter, amateurs learned about paintings and other artworks by copying, not to imitate or falsify the traits but on the contrary to learn with them and to understand how the artistic gesture and particular works of art “function” (as the verb *œuvrer*): “in the culture of *amateurs*, knowledge was a praxis, not a theory.”^{lv} In reinstating this term, Stiegler wants to move away from the derogatory meaning of the terms “amateur” (especially when referred to as “amateurism”), as being opposed to “professional.” For after all, in the digital age, the amateur is the noble figure who contributes to the production and the prosperity of singularities against the atrophy and the entropy generated by the capitalist system.

ⁱ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin, 1967), 88.

ⁱⁱ Michel Foucault, ‘Prison Talk’, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (1972-1977), Colin Gordon ed. (New York: Random House, 1988), 52-53.

ⁱⁱⁱ My translation, the original reads “Nous ne disposons plus d’une image du prolétaire auquel il suffirait de prendre conscience.” Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), 234; Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 173.

^{iv} Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, vol. 2: Disorientation*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 75.

^v Andrea Bardin argues, in his project of establishing a materialist political philosophy from Simondon’s work, that human work organized the “easy ontology” [*ontologie facile*] of determinism that opposes matter/form, necessity/liberty. Simondon’s categories are of considerable help to propose a “difficult ontology” that is needed for a materialist social theory. See his excellent essay, Andrea Bardin, “De l’homme à la matière: pour une “ontologie difficile”. Marx avec Simondon,” in *Cahiers Simondon, No. 5*, Jean-Hugues Barthélémy ed. (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2013), 25-43.

^{vi} Muriel Combes, *Simondon. La philosophie du transindividuel* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 116-120.

^{vii} Simondon quoted in Pascal Chabot, *La Philosophie de Simondon* (Paris: Vrin, 2003), 50.

^{viii} Bernard Stiegler, *Philosopher par accident* (Paris: Galilée, 2004), 90-91. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *PA*.

^{ix} Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Random House, 1973), 692-693; see Stiegler’s commentary of these fragments in Bernard Stiegler, *États de Choc: Bêtise et savoir au XXIème siècle* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2012), 214-242. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *EC*.

^x Dominique Méda, *Qu’est-ce que la richesse ?* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999) and André Gorz, *L’immatériel. Connaissance, valeur et capital* (Paris: Galilée, 2003). This notion is also close to Amartya Sen’s concept of capability that Stiegler often refers to. Hereafter, *L’immatériel* by Gorz is cited parenthetically as *Gorz I*.

^{xi} Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man* (London: Continuum, 2003), 37-48; Sean Sayers, *Marx and Alienation: Essays on Hegelian Themes* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011). The fact that Sayers does not refer to the category of the proletariat in his book, apart from arguing that this category should be defined in global rather than national terms (61), confirms the problem that I outlined about the lack of dialogue between the tradition studying alienation on the one hand, and proletarianization on the other.

^{xii} Victor Petit, "Grammatisation" in Bernard Stiegler, *Pharmacologie du Front national* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013), 400-1. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *PFN*.

^{xiii} The first example Sylvain Auroux gives of this process of grammatization is the alphabet analyzed as "a *becoming-letter* of the sound of speech". Bernard Stiegler, *De la misère symbolique* (Paris: Flammarion, 2013), 87, emphasis in the original. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *MS*.

^{xiv} Bruno Trentin, *La Cité du travail. Le fordisme et la gauche*, trans. Jérôme Nicolas (Paris: Fayard, 2012), 43.

^{xv} Bernard Stiegler, Alain Giffard and Christian Fauré, *Pour en finir avec la décroissance. Quelques réflexions d'Ars Industrialis* (Paris: Flammarion, 2009), 27-32.

^{xvi} Bernard Stiegler, *Disbelief and Discredit, vol. 1: The Decadence of Industrial Democracies*, trans. Daniel Ross and Suzanne Arnold (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), 35, translation modified. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *DDI*.

^{xvii} We are astonished at John Hutnyk's Marxist deterministic proposition that entirely misinterprets Stiegler's precise notion of proletarianization: "There is the possibility of going further here, to proletarianize it all, and taking up Marx's nuanced consideration of proletarianization in a wider sense, suggesting that what is called incivility and delinquency are indeed the opposition, or at least part of, and beginning of, an organised resistance to that which would reduce all of life to marketing controls.... a Marxist interpretation of the present crisis

should not stop with a diagnosis of ruin. The recognition and incivility are not enough, and we may need rather more delinquents, and considerable civil unrest, before a revolutionary call to attention gains ground.” Paradoxically, we see that Hutnyk’s Marxism falls back to the status quo and the same social-democrat policies of prescribing more consumption and proletarianization. He also points out how Stiegler does not see the possible “multiple and non-linear time” that an exposure to television produces and the deep attention it can solicit, he asks “why not grant the possibility that these forms have a role in progressive political transformation as well?” (149). But this is precisely what Stiegler does and has been doing in his philosophical project and outside the walls of philosophy since the 1980s! See John Hutnyk, “Proletarianisation”, *new formations*, 77, 127-149.

^{xviii} On hyperconsumption as being addictive and toxic, see Bernard Stiegler, *Mécréance et Discrédit, 2: Les sociétés incontrôlables d'individus désaffectés* (Paris: Galilée, 2006), 122-23.

^{xix} Bernard Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living: On Pharmacology*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 53. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *WMLWL*.

^{xx} Gerald Moore, “*Adapt and Smile or Die! Stiegler Among the Darwinists*,” in Christina Howells and Gerald Moore (eds.), *Stiegler and Technics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), especially 24-33.

^{xxi} Guy Debord, *The Society of Spectacle*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), originally published in 1967, and Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, trans. C. Turner (London: Sage, 1998), originally published in 1970.

^{xxii} Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1997), 126-7; see Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 3: The Time of Cinema*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 35-40.

^{xxiii} *DDI* 63, 87; Bernard Stiegler, *La télécratie contre démocratie* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 236-7.

^{xxiv} This is argued in Bernard Stiegler, *Taking Care. Of Youth and Generations*, trans. Stephen Barker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

^{xxv} This notion of “systemic stupidity” was briefly introduced in *WMLWL* 22-3, 131.

^{xxvi} Deleuze always referred to this as the mission of philosophy. In his *Abécédaire* (filmed in 1988-9), he notes “People pretend that philosophy is after all only good for after dinner conversations, but if philosophy did not exist, we cannot imagine the level of stupidity.... The same goes if there were no art, we cannot imagine the vulgarity of people. The world would not be what it presently is if there were no art, people would not care anymore [*les gens ne se tiendraient plus*].” Gilles Deleuze with Claire Parnet, “R as Resistance,” in Pierre-André Boutang, *Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze*, (Éditions Montparnasse, 2004).

^{xxvii} Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 105.

^{xxviii} See Chapter 10 “Epimetheus’s Stupidity,” in *PFN* 218-239.

^{xxix} Stiegler, “Anamnesis and Hypomnesis: Plato as the first thinker of proletarianisation,” arsindustrialis.org/anamnesis-and-hypomnesis (last accessed 18th November 2013); Bernard Stiegler, *For A New Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Daniel Ross (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 29-36. He writes, “what Socrates describes in Phaedrus, namely that the exteriorization of memory is a loss of memory and knowledge, has today become our everyday experience in all aspects of our existence, and more and more often, in the feeling of our powerlessness [*impuissance*]” (29, translation modified). Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as *NCPE*.

^{xxx} The notion of transductive relations comes from Simondon: a relationship which constitutes the elements themselves, they could not exist without each other. In the case of Stiegler, the technical object (the “what”) is co-constitutive of the subject (the “who”): “the what invents the who as much as it is invented by it.” Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, vol. 1: The Fault of*

Epimetheus, trans. Richard Beardsworth and George Collins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 177.

^{xxxix} Franco “Bifo” Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012). In this text, Franco “Bifo” Berardi makes the interesting parallel between poetry and finance, for the experimental forms of poetry and writing, that the twentieth century has witnessed, anticipated the dereferentialization of speculative economy:

The experience of French and Russian symbolism broke the referential-denotative link between the word and the world... This magic of post-referential language anticipated the general process of dereferentialization that occurred when the economy became a semio-economy. The financialization of the capitalist economy implies a growing abstraction of work from its useful function, and of communication from its bodily dimension. As symbolism experimented with the separation of the linguistic signifier from its denotational and referential function, so financial capitalism, after internalizing potencies, has separated the monetary signifier from its function of denotation and reference to physical goods (18-19).

But Berardi also believes in the power of poetry and that it will start the process of “reactivating the emotional body,... social solidarity,... [and] the desiring force of enunciation” (20). This comparison of two forms of hyperdiachronization is very interesting because on the one hand, Berardi presents financial speculation as a practice that has a tendency to reduce everything to calculation (through the destruction of the time of decision by using robots that trade on markets in nanoseconds), and on the other, self-referential sentences that break from grammar and whose reading requires an extreme attention and reduces all things to belief (or even meditation). Both of

these are opposed either to belief or to calculation, but following Stiegler, “it should not be a matter of opposing calculation to belief” (*DDI*, 47, trans. modified).

^{xxxii} It should be noted that Stiegler makes a distinction between commerce and market from the volume 1 of the *Disbelief and Discredit* series, his argument is that the market has destroyed commerce. “Commerce is always an exchange of *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre*.... On the other hand, however, the *consumerist* market presupposes the liquidation of both *savoir-faire* and *savoir-vivre*” (*NCPE* 16).

^{xxxiii} See also the excellent article by Daniel Ross, “Politics and Aesthetics, or, Transformations of Aristotle in Bernard Stiegler,” *Transformations* 17 (2007)

www.transformationsjournal.org/journal/issue_17/article_04.shtml

^{xxxiv} An interesting variation on pharmacology is Paolo Vignola’s project of symptomatology that attempts to diagnose the symptoms that erode societies: “It is only once symptoms are individuated and analyzed at the heart of society that it is possible for Stiegler to practice a pharmacology to act in a therapeutic manner on a malaise, and to eventually reverse it into a chance to learn, much like what happened to Epimetheus, the Titan that experienced, through his defaults, his own stupidity.” Paolo Vignola, “Devenir dignes du *pharmakon* : Entre symptomatologie et pharmacologie,” in B. Dillet and A. Jugnon (eds.), *Technologiques. La Pharmacie de Bernard Stiegler* (Nantes: Cécile Defaut, 2013), 414-5.

^{xxxv} “Protention” is defined in Edmund Husserl’s philosophy, and borrowed by Stiegler, to designate the capacity to project oneself and the collective toward the future, whereas “retention” is the action of “retaining,” that is memory. The whole of Stiegler’s philosophy is based on the conceptual distinction between three kinds of memory: primary retention (personal recollections), secondary retention (collective memory, like history or a language) and a third retention (technological memory, developed from Derrida’s concept of “trace”). While “retention” refers to the past (but a past that is not static but dynamic and therefore can individuate), “protention”

means here the future (projects) and the capacity to individuate these projections, and possible realities (expectations). It is this capacity of projection (to project oneself) in the long term that defines the (psycho-social) investment in the objects of desire.

^{xxxvi} “This is what the Greek word, *elpis*, means: expectation (that is, protention), at once hope and fear” (*DDI* 45).

^{xxxvii} Stiegler also notes that for him these collective secondary protentions are related to what he calls “consistences”, this notion comes from Husserl’s idealities. They make up the “pre-individual fund” (he uses here Simondon’s vocabulary). See also *DDI* 92, 111-16; *WMLWL* 19.

^{xxxviii} The term “tertiary protention” is used in *EC* 235. It is also implied in the section “Economy of Protentions” in *NCPE*, 66-70.

^{xxxix} Jameson defines utopias as being not only a text but also a desire, what he calls a “Utopian impulse” (xiv) or a “standing reserve of personal and political energy” (7), it is both form and content. For Jameson, utopian writing is a practice of an “absolute formalism in which the new content emerges itself from the form and is a projection of it” (212), it is a window to the improbable projections of the future, and in this sense “form becomes content” (212). The formal aspects of utopia are not only reflected in the style of writing but in its projects that require a certain form, it is about totalized spaces, cities and buildings. “The presumption is that Utopia, whose business is the future, or not-being, exists only in the present, where it leads the relatively feeble life of desire and fantasy.... The aporia of the trace is to belong to past and present all at once, and thus to constitute a mixture of being and not-being quite different from the traditional category of Becoming and thereby mildly scandalous for analytical Reason. Utopia, which combines the not-yet-being of the future with a textual existence in the present is no less worthily of the archaeological paradoxes we are willing to grant to the trace” (xv-xvi). Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* (London: Verso, 2007). Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as Jameson *AF*.

^{xl} Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London : Penguin, 1973), 198. Hereafter, this work is cited parenthetically as Arendt *OR*.

^{xli} The Bible, the Torah and the Koran, when studied as the “only book,” will be the first examples that come to mind, but the most significant example is probably the practices of “Guru Granth Sahib” in Sikhism that personify their scriptures as a living guru.

^{xlii} Stiegler also uses the term “re-capacitation” in reference to Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach (*PFN* 326-344).

^{xliii} This quotation is an epigraph in Antonio Damasio, *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (New York: Random House, 2010).

^{xliv} I tried to show earlier that Stiegler risks to discourage all struggles against proletarianization when he conflates it with stupidity, making it a transcendental condition.

^{xlv} On these questions concerning the reconfigured time of the media, see Tom Vandeputte, “La Fabrique du présent : Stiegler et le temps de l’actualité,” in B. Dillet & A. Jugnon (eds.), *Technologiques. La Pharmacie de Bernard Stiegler*, 393-412.

^{xlvi} “The question of time spent working cannot be reduced, in other words, to the question of time in employment” (*NCPE* 51-52). See Antonella Corsani and Maurizio Lazzarato, *Intermittents et précaires* [Precarious and intermittent workers] (Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2008).

^{xlvii} Bernard Stiegler, *Économie de l’hypermatériel et psychopouvoir. Entretiens avec Philippe Petit et Vincent Bontemps* (Paris: Mille et une nuits, 2008) 127.

^{xlviii} André Gorz, “Pourquoi la société salariale a besoin de nouveaux valets,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, June 1990.

^{xlix} “I myself am not completely clear regarding what I think of the idea of ‘radical free software’, ‘creative commons’, ‘open source’, the difference between them and their different modalities; I haven’t yet formed a solid view because I think that in order to have a concerted viewpoint one must spend a great deal of time studying carefully the organisational models and questions, which

are also the primary questions particularly regarding property and industrial property... [My] position is not that of knowing whether capitalism will be replaced by socialism, communism or who knows what. I think that no one could respond to that question today; a tremendous amount of work needs to be done theoretically and practically as well, and this work does not yet exist.” Bernard Stiegler, Ben Roberts, Jeremy Gilbert and Mark Hayward, “A Rational Theory of Miracles: on Pharmacology and “Transindividuation”, an interview with Bernard Stiegler,” *new formations* 77, 183

ⁱ Bernard Stiegler, *Ars Industrialis, Réenchanter le monde. La valeur esprit contre le populisme industriel* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006); *WMLWL* 9-26.

ⁱⁱ In 1985, Guattari calls for a “concerted reappropriation of communication technologies and computers” (133), Félix Guattari, “Du postmoderne au postmédia,” *Multitudes* 34 (Autumn 2008), 128- 133.

ⁱⁱⁱ Bernard Stiegler, *Mystagogies. De l’art contemporain, de la littérature et du cinéma*, forthcoming.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ Jean-Louis Jam (ed.), *Les divertissements utiles : des amateurs au XVIIIe siècle*, (Clermont-Ferrand : Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2000), 11.

^{liv} Charlotte Guichard, “Taste Communities: The Rise of the Amateur in Eighteenth-Century Paris,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4, Summer 2012, 519-547. In this excellent article, Guichard recounts the role of the amateurs during the French monarchy, in sustaining and producing a French school of painting by keeping art criticism at bay. These closed societies were first directed by the monarchy against the rise of the artistic public sphere, and they participated in the production of knowledge, creating taxonomies from their taste and their choice in collecting. Erudition and pleasure come together in the amateur’s work and its reliance on taste (rather than judgment).

^{lv} Guichard, “Taste Communities: The Rise of the Amateur in Eighteenth-Century Paris,” 539.