

# University of Alberta

Bernard Stiegler's Critique of and Supplement to Martin Heidegger's Account of the  
Independence of Entities

by

Alexander Buchinski

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Philosophy

©Alexander Buchinski

Fall 2011

Edmonton, Alberta

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Libraries to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only. Where the thesis is converted to, or otherwise made available in digital form, the University of Alberta will advise potential users of the thesis of these terms.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis and, except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis first provides an explication of Bernard Stiegler's implicit critique of Martin Heidegger's account of the independence entities. After accomplishing this explication, an explanation and justification of Stiegler's theory of entities, in the form of technology, is given to see if it can provide a plausible account of entities that gives them their full significance of independence within a larger Heideggerian philosophical context. This explanation and justification consists of showing how, for Stiegler, the ontic and the ontological are in a relation of mutual constitution, and how this relation establishes the full significance of the independence of entities. Finally, Stiegler's critique is evaluated as to the degree of its proper understanding and engagement with Heidegger's project, and the philosophical merit of Stiegler's larger project is also assessed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: HEIDEGGER’S PROBLEMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF ENTITIES.....	10
CHAPTER TWO: STIEGLER’S PROJECT AND CRITICISM OF HEIDEGGER.....	53
CHAPTER THREE: AN APPROPRIATION OF HUSSERL AND DERRIDA TO EXPLAIN HOW TECHNICS IS NECESSARY FOR SEDIMENTATION OF MEANING.....	75
CHAPTER FOUR: THE IDEA IN THE KANTIAN SENSE AND THE SIGN.....	95
CHAPTER FIVE: TEMPORALITY AND DIFFÉRANCE.....	107
CONCLUSION: A FINAL EVALUATION OF STIEGLER’S PROJECT .....	120
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	124

## INTRODUCTION

I find Martin Heidegger's larger philosophical framework compelling. However, I do not find Heidegger's account of the independence of entities convincing. I believe the philosopher Bernard Stiegler, while attempting to build upon and maintain a larger Heideggerian framework, offers an interesting account of entities in the form of technology and of the human as essentially technological that seems to resolve my problem with Heidegger's account of the independence of entities.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in this thesis I aim to make the best case for Stiegler's philosophy of technology to see if it can provide a plausible alternative account of entities that gives them their full significance of independence, while still remaining consistent with Heidegger's larger philosophical framework.

To make the best case for Stiegler I want to draw out and explicate Stiegler's theory of entities in the form of technology, and the role that technology plays for him in constituting the essence of the human subject, while using as a guiding principle for this explication Stiegler's critique of Heidegger's treatment of entities.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, I intend to investigate firstly in what way Stiegler interprets Heidegger's account of entities (perhaps implausibly) as containing a fundamental inconsistency, and secondly whether and in what way Stiegler's philosophy of technology can be seen as resolving this inconsistency in

---

<sup>1</sup> Stiegler considers technology to be the most essential type of entity that makes possible other entities. The justification for this strange position will be borne out by my thesis itself. At this point, it is important to keep in mind that Stiegler's philosophy of technology is meant to be an engagement with entities at their most fundamental level.

<sup>2</sup> Volume 3 of Stiegler's Technics and Time has just been translated into English as I am putting the finishing touches on my thesis. I apologize for not being able to consult and integrate it into my thesis.

Heidegger's account of entities in a way that gives us a deeper understanding of Dasein, technology, and entities. This project will be carried out by focusing on the early Heidegger's works on Being, entities, and the self as Dasein, (as opposed to concentrating on the later Heidegger's explicit discussion of the essence of technology, with which Stiegler is not directly concerned), and Bernard Stiegler's works on time, the prosthetic human subject, and technics. Stiegler himself offers in these works an implicit critique of Heidegger, which I will interpret as being the basis upon which Stiegler builds his larger project of giving an account of technology and the self. Owing to a paucity of secondary material on Stiegler in English I will be offering my own interpretation of Stiegler's critique of Heidegger's theory of entities and the ontic.<sup>3</sup>

I have chosen not to set up Heidegger's and Stiegler's interpretive frameworks of technology in an *Auseinandersetzung*. For one thing, done properly, such a confrontation would require a book-length study. More importantly, I think that the significance of Stiegler's theory of technics is best revealed against the specific background of a critique of the early Heidegger's account of entities, and not through a full-blown Stiegler-Heidegger confrontation.<sup>4</sup> The justification for my limited approach will be borne out by the thesis itself. I believe it is necessary to explicate the gap in Heidegger's theory of entities that Stiegler argues he fills by presenting Heidegger's accounts of truth, phenomenology, Dasein, equipmentality, world, and Being, and showing how it

---

<sup>3</sup> The only article I have read on Stiegler related to my thesis, but focused on evaluating Stiegler's interpretation and appropriation of Derrida, was Ben Roberts' "Stiegler Reading Derrida: The Prosthesis of Deconstruction in Technics".

<sup>4</sup> I will use the terms 'technology' and 'technics' as synonyms for my purposes in this thesis.

could be that they contradict his account of entities as independent of Dasein. I will accomplish this by closely reading and explicating Heidegger's accounts of truth, phenomenology, Dasein, equipmentality, world, and Being with a focus on how they are laid out in Being and Time, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, and The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic. Moreover, I believe it is necessary to argue for and present Heidegger's account of entities as inconsistent because I want to address what Stiegler implicitly raises as being the problem with Heidegger's account of entities. Stiegler's problem with Heidegger's account of entities is that he intends to give to entities a strong full meaning of independence, but that when his claims of the independence of entities are situated within the larger framework of his account of Being, truth, Dasein, and phenomenology his account can be shown to fall short of doing justice to the full "realist" dimension of entities, i.e., to the full and proper meaning of their independence as real 'in itself' existence. Moreover, this interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities also allows me to properly situate Stiegler's philosophy of technology as attempting to resolve this problem with Heidegger's account of entities. Stiegler's philosophy frames itself as an immanent critique of Heidegger that seeks to overcome him, while building off him, and so it is necessary to establish in what way Stiegler engages with Heidegger to properly understand Stiegler's project.

I will then examine Stiegler's philosophy of technology with a view to evaluating whether, given Stiegler's implicit interpretation of Heidegger's understanding of entities as inconsistent, Stiegler can show how the ontic and the

ontological are mutually constitutive and equiprimordial. Stiegler's defence of his claim that technics is essential to the constitution of the human essence, which we shall see he understands as a 'lack of essence' or a 'default of origin', is what is most important in any comparison with Heidegger. This is because if Stiegler can show that entities as technics can ground Dasein in its existential-ontological structure then Stiegler can show how the ontic can ground the ontological.

Stiegler defends his claim that technics is essential to Dasein by arguing that we are in fact essentially prosthetic beings, as the myth of Prometheus informs us, which lack any defining characteristic other than that we are given technology, which itself lacks any defining characteristic other than that it is something exterior to the human. Technology for Stiegler enables human temporalizing, i.e., the essential ability of the human to project a future and retain a past even if we have not lived that past personally. It is clear that Stiegler's critique of Heidegger relies heavily on the view of temporality that Heidegger puts forward, and which Stiegler partially adopts and critiques.

In summary, my project will judge Stiegler's theory of technology's suitability for supplementing and interpreting Heidegger's account of entities as what and how they are independently of Dasein. I will investigate in what sense Heidegger's characterization of entities independent of Dasein can possibly (if not plausibly) be inconsistent with the larger structural elements of his philosophical framework and their integration. I am only advancing this possible interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities insofar as it expresses what I take to be Stiegler's problem with Heidegger's account of entities, and as what Stiegler

himself understands to be the taking-off point for his own philosophy of technics as involving an immanent critique and attempt to overcome Heidegger. If Stiegler's immanent critique gets Heidegger essentially wrong then this would perhaps reveal a weakness of Stiegler's project itself. However, I do think there is a "possible" gap in Heidegger's account of entities, and a convincing case can be made for it based on what I take to be a plausible interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities as not according entities their full significance of independence. Yet, to argue for it as the strongest interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities is beyond the scope of this thesis. I am using the interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities as inconsistent as an interpretive jumping-off point to give a sympathetic interpretation of Stiegler, and therefore am only obliged to argue for the weaker claim of the possibility of a lacuna in Heidegger's account of entities, and not this interpretation's dominance over other interpretations of Heidegger's treatment of entities.

Turning more primarily to Stiegler I will examine if Stiegler can successfully ground Dasein in technics. In particular, I want to see whether a more comprehensive alternative account of human being, temporality, and technology can be given by Stiegler by considering the human as an essentially prosthetic being. I am motivated to undertake this project because it takes off from a possible interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities, although it may not critique the strongest interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities, it addresses what I take to be a fundamental weakness in Heidegger's thinking, which is the degree of independence he allows entities as what stands separate



and against Dasein. If Stiegler is successful in this project then it will serve to provide, in Stiegler's opinion, a supplement, i.e., in Derrida's sense of something that supplants, to Heidegger's account of entities as independent of Dasein, a furthering of Heidegger's own questioning after the priority of the ontological over the ontic, and it will advance Heidegger's effort to expand metaphysical inquiry beyond its central problematic of fundamental ontology. Stiegler's solution to Heidegger's supposed inconsistency will also be presented as carrying out Heidegger's project of metontology ("The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic" p. 157). The ultimate goal and outcome of my thesis will be to explain where a possible gap in Heidegger's treatment of entities lies for Stiegler, and to show how that lacuna can be filled by Stiegler's theory of technics.

To carry out my project one needs to understand exactly where the inconsistency in Heidegger's account of entities as independent of Dasein lies, and how fundamental this inconsistency is for Heidegger in Stiegler's view. One must also understand in what way Stiegler supports technology and sees it as constituting the essence of Dasein as temporality. Then one must see how Dasein's being grounded by technics establishes that the ontic grounds the ontological, and the ontological also grounds the ontic. Once this is established, one is able to appreciate the full significance of Stiegler's theory of technics and one can decide if Stiegler effectively engages Heidegger or not. I believe the questions of the effectiveness, novelty, and philosophical merit of Stiegler's theory of technics can be answered by whether it effectively engages a plausible interpretation of Heidegger with respect to Heidegger's account of entities

independent of Dasein, and provides a resolution to the possible inconsistency in Heidegger this interpretation raises, while according a fuller more concrete sense of the independence of entities rather than the independence of entities being premised simply on a meaning constituted by the ontological and Dasein.

A reader unfamiliar with Stiegler, but familiar with Heidegger might think that Stiegler's account of technology sounds like an instrumental anthropological response to Heidegger's critique of the essence of technology. In a crude, but more straightforward way, this instrumental anthropological view is expressed in Ferkiss' Technological Man, Rybczynski's Taming the Tiger, Florman's Blaming Technology, and The Existential Pleasures of Engineering, etc. However, I believe that Stiegler's view is not just a rehash of these familiar appeals to the power of technology as an extension of man. To an extent Stiegler does put forth an instrumental, anthropological Promethean model of the human. Yet, he integrates this view into his larger project, (which is especially apparent at the beginning of Technics and Time vol. 1). In doing so, Stiegler makes a case *pace* Heidegger, for the equiprimordiality of the ontological and the ontic.

It is Stiegler's view of the equiprimordiality of the ontological and the ontic that he seeks to defend against Heideggerian criticism of this view. In fact, Heidegger too asserts a form of this equiprimordiality when he says "Being never prevails in its essence without entities... an entity never is without Being"

(“Postscript to ‘What is Metaphysics’” p. 233).<sup>5</sup> The contradiction Stiegler/I see is that entities must be given a stronger more meaningful sense of their independence for Heidegger’s claims of the independence of entities and the mutual dependence of Being and entities to be intelligible than is allowed for by his strict claims that ontological truth precedes and makes possible all ontic truth (“On the Essence of Ground” p. 103). This contradiction in Heidegger’s account of entities, under the interpretation of Heidegger I think best allows one to understand Stiegler, makes up the motivating problem from which I will guide my thesis, and is where I see a niche for Stiegler’s account of the equiprimordiality of the ontic and the ontological.

In the later chapters of my thesis, I aim to establish that it is not the case that Stiegler prioritizes the ontic over and against the ontological. Instead, I show how Stiegler argues that the ontic can ground the ontological as a way to throw Heidegger’s prioritizing of the ontological initially into question. In doing so, Stiegler makes room for the equiprimordiality of the ontic and the ontological, and their relationship of mutual constitution. Stiegler establishes the relationship of the mutual constitution of the ontic and the ontological through establishing that Dasein’s essence and Being depend upon the possibility of a sedimentation of meaning enabled by the relationship of mutual constitution of an infinite unified horizon, i.e., the Idea in the Kantian sense, and a factual linguistic/technical incarnation.

---

<sup>5</sup> I have chosen to break from William McNeill’s translation to keep my language consistent. I have chosen to translate *Seiende* throughout this passage as ‘entity’ or ‘entities’ rather than being or beings, and to put the ‘B’ in Being (*Sein*) in the upper case.

Stiegler does not intend to end his project at the establishment of the equiprimordiality of the ontic and the ontological, but he uses the relationship of the mutual constitution of technics and Dasein, and of fact and a horizon of sense, as a stepping-stone to make intelligible a conception of backward temporality. Backward temporality allows Stiegler to make plausible an original rupture, i.e., an original differentiation and exteriorization that is in fact not original. Furthermore, Stiegler uses the logic of *différance* to make the original rupture intelligible so as to call into question all thinking about fundamentals, which is (through appropriating Derrida) Stiegler's real biting critique of Heidegger. It is in arguing for this rethinking of origins, fundamentals, and priority that Stiegler fully makes intelligible the relationship of mutual constitution of the ontic and the ontological. This relationship of mutual constitution necessitates the ontic's due and proper separation and independence from the ontological allowing it to fill the role of "nature" for Heidegger, and carrying forward a project of metontology. It is in this way that entities are given their full and proper meaning of independence for Stiegler.

## CHAPTER ONE:

## HEIDEGGER'S PROBLEMATIC UNDERSTANDING OF ENTITIES

To orient the reader to Stiegler's implicit argument against coherency in Heidegger's account of entities, and to make this argument fully intelligible, I will summarize what I take to be Stiegler's problem with Heidegger's account of entities. This argument and summary of the inconsistency in Heidegger's account of entities puts forward an interpretation of Heidegger that I am not arguing is the strongest interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities, but a possible and, as I hope to show in this thesis, a plausible interpretation that makes Stiegler's project intelligible. Firstly, I must point out that Stiegler/I do not intend to launch a critique of Heidegger's account of entities in terms of categories and ontological frameworks that are not his, namely in terms of traditional metaphysics, which also considers unintelligible Heidegger's claims that there are entities as and how they are completely independent of Being, truth and reality. For Plato, it is not intelligible that there could be entities as they are in the realm of coming-to-be or passing-away without participating in the Idea of Being as what is most real. Likewise, for Aristotle all beings must fall under the highest and most general genus of Being. Instead, Stiegler's critique of Heidegger's account of entities is an immanent one, which seeks to understand Heidegger's larger philosophical framework, and show how its most fundamental elements contradict his claims that there are entities as what and how they are completely independent of Dasein.

The criticism is that Heidegger neglects to give entities their full significance in his ontology, which becomes apparent when one considers his account of truth, Dasein, world, and phenomenology. In other words, Heidegger claims that entities have a “reality” independent of Being and truth, and yet to claim that they have such a reality is inconsistent with Heidegger’s thesis about the primacy of Being and ontological truth.<sup>6</sup> Heidegger wants to distinguish Being and reality and yet reduces reality to Being and those two views are inconsistent. In Heidegger’s ontology, he assigns to entities their full import of Being as that which stands against us absolutely independently of us, but he does not convincingly argue for this claim. Aside from these undefended claims of the absolute independence of entities from Dasein, it seems that, for Heidegger, entities are that which is disclosed in the world as significances. As these significances, entities only exist and are made possible insofar as they are meaningfully interpreted in a context or open space of meaning, which is world, and which disclosure or Being of world is made possible by temporality, which Dasein fundamentally is. Moreover, since Heidegger considers phenomenology and ontology inseparable and necessary parts of doing philosophy, this means that for Heidegger entities are ultimately reduced in their Being to what shows itself in itself within the temporal horizon of Dasein, including any sense of the “is-ness” of entities in themselves independent of us. When Heidegger’s accounts of phenomenology and ontology are considered it does not seem, as Heidegger

---

<sup>6</sup> By the term ‘Being’ I do not mean the scholastic sense of *esse*, i.e., being as the real in itself existence of entities. I mean Being as Heidegger understands it as “being interpreted,” i.e., being in a Kantian, phenomenological sense of how things come to be for us in our understanding. It is that sense of Being that I think does not do justice to the independence of entities.

seems to claim but gives us no good reason to believe, that there are entities in the complete absence of Dasein, truth, and Being.

Therefore, I believe there is a lacuna in Heidegger's explanation of the original announcement of entities factually with the disclosure of Being. The gap occurs because Heidegger cannot explain or allow for the original independence of entities, which is required for his interpretation of truth and Being as disclosure. The issue is not that for Heidegger there can be a disclosure of Being without entities (which Heidegger seems explicitly to deny), but how originally entities can be announced factually with the disclosure of Being. Heidegger gives priority to the world as always already there in anything ready-to-hand. My point then is that there is a meaning of Being, i.e., the independence of entities, that cannot be reduced to the Being of meaning, i.e., the coming to be of the world in and as the temporal horizon of Dasein.

To anticipate what is to come in terms of Stiegler's response to Heidegger's view of entities, it may seem as if Stiegler gives priority to the invented tool as externalized memory over the world, i.e., the totality of significations within which entities can come meaningfully to be. Yet, in truth Stiegler insists that this relation is undecidable, and so for Stiegler the invention of the tool and the advent of Being are equiprimordial. Stiegler's conception of the mutual constitution of the ontic and the ontological allows for the independence of entities over and against Dasein, truth, and Being that Heidegger's account of entities lacks. This independence is gained through the fundamental grounding role of the ontological performed by entities.

Since Stiegler's criticism of Heidegger is based on a particular interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities, specifically how entities are to be understood independently of Dasein, it is useful to make explicit Stiegler's implicit interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, this account of entities is premised on Heidegger's account of truth, and so it is necessary to outline Heidegger's understanding of truth to fully appreciate this account of entities. Therefore, I will address the question of the coherency of Heidegger's understanding of entities by arguing for and explicating an interpretation of Heidegger's explanation of entities, truth, Dasein, world, and phenomenology that makes Stiegler intelligible, and seeing if this interpretation is coherent or does justice to being in the scholastic sense of *esse*, the real in itself of things and persons, and their real relations.

For Heidegger, there are different levels of truth. In elaborating his theory of truth Heidegger is motivated to show that the traditional philosophical conception of truth is not the absolute conception of truth, or even the most fundamental conception of truth. Heidegger understands the traditional conception of truth as claiming that the correspondence of an assertion with its subject matter is what truth is, and claiming that assertion is the locus of truth. Heidegger elaborates his foundational structure of truth when he says "assertion is not the primary 'locus' of truth. *On the contrary*, whether as a mode in which uncoveredness is appropriated or as a way of Being-in-the-world, assertion is grounded in Dasein's uncovering, or rather in its *disclosedness*. The most

---

<sup>7</sup> An important part of the contribution my thesis makes is the explication of Stiegler's implicit interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities.



primordial ‘truth’ is the ‘locus’ of assertion; it is the ontological condition for the possibility that assertions can be either true or false – that they may uncover or cover things up” (“Being and Time” p. 269). In this passage Heidegger claims that assertion is grounded upon Dasein’s uncovering, and its more primordial mode of revealing, which he understands as disclosedness. To provide a more comprehensive understanding of Heidegger’s theory of truth I will explain the different foundational levels of truth in their relations of primordially to each other, and explain in what way they ground each other. One must keep in mind that although Heidegger does make distinctions of primordially between levels of truth he considers all of these levels as involved in constituting the essence of truth. The essence of truth for Heidegger is the different ways and expressions of revealing or making manifest that constitute the essence of Dasein, which oddly includes concealment as a precondition for disclosure.

For Heidegger, truth is most primordially understood at the existential-ontological level of the world’s disclosedness, and disclosedness is dependent upon the existential structure of Dasein. Heidegger says that:

Our earlier analysis of the worldhood of the world and of entities within-the-world has shown, however, that the uncoveredness of entities within-the-world is *grounded* in the world’s disclosedness. But disclosedness is that basic character of Dasein according to which it *is* its ‘there’... Only with Dasein’s disclosedness is the most primordial phenomenon of truth attained... In so far as Dasein *is* its disclosedness essentially, and discloses and uncovers as

something disclosed to this extent it is essentially 'true'. ("Being and Time" p. 263)

So, in a world without Dasein, there would be no truth or Being, and so there are no eternal truths without proof of the eternality of Dasein. This is because, for Heidegger, truth most primordially is disclosedness or a revealing, and this revealing is fundamentally Dasein's essential way of being, i.e., its *Wesen*.

Therefore, truth is essentially dependent on the existential structure of Dasein.

Dasein allows for disclosure because it interprets Being, and so opens a horizon of meaning, or a world. World is a totality of significances in which entities can come to be meaningfully as articulations of intelligibility, and in which specific entities and their specific characteristics can take place. So the fundamental openness or disclosedness of Dasein allows for a context or world to be revealed wherein Dasein can be uncovering as a less fundamental mode of truth.

Uncovering, as a less fundamental mode of truth, is a way of being of Dasein in which it uncovers particular entities, and sustains these entities in their uncoveredness so that they are made manifest as the entities they are.

The most derivative mode of truth is the agreement of an assertion with the entity it picks out in the world. This mode of truth as the correspondence between a judgment and its object in the world is derivative because for it to be possible there must first be entities uncovered in the world. There must be entities uncovered in the world for truth as correspondence because entities are that about which one can make assertions, and access to entities is necessary to verify the correspondence of one's assertion to the object of one's assertion,

which effectively establishes the truth of one's assertion. At a deeper level there must be Dasein as disclosedness to allow for the open region and context of meaning in which individual entities can be uncovered. Moreover, discourse belongs to disclosedness essentially, and it allows Dasein the possibility of expressing itself in assertions that are about entities that have already been uncovered.

To further clarify the relation of truth and entities for Heidegger, I will provide an outline of Heidegger's account of entities as they are first and foremost revealed to Dasein through Dasein's disclosedness. Heidegger believes that we engage with and relate to entities first and foremost as ready-to-hand equipment. Entities are in their thisness or are individuated as to their how and what not primarily in terms of being determined by their spatial and temporal position, but in terms of their equipmental character. This equipmental character is determined by the entity's "in-order-to" or functionality, which is determined within a larger equipmental "contexture" (*Bedeutsamkeit*).

To say that a ready-to-hand entity is constituted as such by its "in-order-to" relation is a fundamentally ontological statement. An entity is "not what and how it is, for example, a hammer, and then in addition something 'with which to hammer'. Rather, what and how it is as this entity, its whatness and howness, is constituted by this in-order-to as such, by its functionality" ("Basic Problems" p. 293). In terms of this theory of entities, each specific entity's essence is its functionality as such, and it is not as if a hammer were what it is independently of its being used as equipment or independently of its gaining its in-order-to

relations within the larger equipmental “contexture” (*Bedeutsamkeit*). Moreover, this explanation of Heidegger’s view of the individuation, whatness, and howness of specific entities makes clear, in a more concrete way, in what way the Being, truth, and reality of entities depends upon Dasein’s existential structure of Being-in-the-world.<sup>8</sup> This is because it is Dasein’s for-the-sake-of-which that determines Dasein’s projects. It is then in terms of Dasein’s projects that entities can be functional and be used in in-order-to-relations.

More primordially, it is Dasein’s disclosure of world as a totality of significations and pre-ontological unthematic understanding of functionality contexture, significance, and world that gives it a context within which it has projects. However, one must remember that Dasein does not create entities or their whatness, but serves to make entities manifest in themselves. Although, the Being and truth of entities is dependent on the existential structure of Dasein these terms no longer signify static essences. Instead, Being and truth designate the process of making entities manifest or disclosedness in general. Furthermore, one should also note that the apriority and primordially of the ontological-existential level of disclosure, world, and understanding of world that allows for entities to be made manifest is indicative of Heidegger’s understanding of the ontological as what is most fundamental, which is the claim that Stiegler challenges.

---

<sup>8</sup> Throughout my thesis I am using the term ‘reality’ to refer to Heidegger’s sense of reality as a meaning within the understanding of Dasein, i.e., how things announce themselves in themselves as independent. I am not using ‘reality’ to refer to the being-in-itself of entities outside the understanding of Dasein. I am using the phrase “entities as they are independent of Dasein” to refer to a more robust significance of the independence of entities at issue in this thesis that Stiegler/I believe that Heidegger cannot account for, i.e. that entities becoming true, and their full independence are different. The goal of this thesis is the elaboration of the structure of this difference, and the justification for this difference.

I have outlined above Heidegger's structure of truth from which the meaning and manifestness of entities as what they are is made possible most primordially. It is through the disclosedness of Dasein that the correspondence model of truth is possible. This is because for the correspondence model to make sense there must already be manifest entities that are intelligible as what they are for one to make judgments about, and then to look in the world and check if one's judgment matches what is made manifest to us. This process of verification cannot happen independently of Dasein because for Heidegger it does not make sense that reality could be inherently possessed of a static structural Being or truth to which our judgments correspond. Heidegger says that "Newton's laws, which are often used in arguments having to do with the interpretation of truth, have not existed from all eternity, and they were not true before they were discovered by Newton. They became true only in and with their uncoveredness, because this uncoveredness is their truth" ("Basic Problems" p. 220). In this passage, Heidegger makes clear how radical his view of truth and Being is. Here Heidegger states that what one commonly understands to be the most universal physical laws that are inherently woven into the fabric of the universe, and which hold at all times and all places, are not eternally true. Furthermore, Heidegger is saying even more radically that Newton's laws were not true before Dasein unveiled them in the form of Newton's discoveries. Therefore, the truth, Being, and reality of Newton's laws are for Heidegger not universal, and they are essentially dependent on Dasein for their truth, Being, and reality.

The claims of the lack of eternality of Newton's laws and these laws' dependence on Dasein for their truth should not come as much of a shock to the close reader of Being and Time. In Being and Time, Heidegger puts forward and argues extensively for his conception of the most primordial understanding of truth, which is to be understood as disclosure and uncovering. Therefore, one could deduce that it is in the uncovering of Newton's laws through Newton's discovery of them that they became true or were revealed. However, what should come as a shock is the further claim in Being and Time that "through Newton the laws became true; and with them, entities became accessible in themselves to Dasein. Once entities have been uncovered, they show themselves precisely as entities which beforehand already were" ("Being and Time" p. 269). The statement in this passage that entities and nature remain just how they were before their unveiledness should come as a shock, because it seems to directly contradict Heidegger's conceptions of truth, Being, world, and the phenomenological method in Being and Time. Heidegger is here stressing the past tense of entities as if they were in some way before they were unveiled, and so had Being and meaning before being revealed to Dasein. One would expect Heidegger to stress that entities have a past tense being as being what they already were only as a meaningful aspect of their present showing, and not as a Being and meaning in itself before and beyond the understanding of Dasein. It is also strange for Heidegger to say that entities show themselves *precisely* as they already were as if they are exactly unchanged once revealed not constituted in their meaning and Being in their unveiling.

Furthermore, Heidegger maintains that entities are as they are independently of uncoveredness or Dasein not in just this one passage as a “slip of the tongue” or as an honest mistake that he quickly recants. It is a chief characteristic of entities for Heidegger that they exist independently of Dasein. By the term ‘independent,’ I take Heidegger as meaning that entities would continue to exist as they are if there were no Dasein, or if Dasein were to disappear completely. For Heidegger, entities stand over and against us as completely separate from us in the way they are.

Heidegger reinforces this interpretation of entities as completely independent of Dasein on numerous occasions including in The Basic Problems of Phenomenology where he says:

Before being discovered the Newtonian laws were neither true nor false. This cannot mean that the entity which is uncovered with the unveiled laws was not previously in the way in which it showed itself after the uncovering and now is as thus showing itself. Uncoveredness, truth, unveils an entity precisely as that which it already was beforehand regardless of its uncoveredness and non-uncoveredness. As an uncovered being it becomes intelligible as that which is just how it is and will be, regardless of every possible uncoveredness of itself. For nature to be as it is, it does not need truth, unveiledness. (“Basic Problems” p. 220)

This passage seems to be reiterating almost verbatim the passage I quoted above from Being and Time. Heidegger emphasizes, in this passage and in Being and Time, his belief that after there is an uncovering of entities by Dasein they remain exactly the entities they already were before they were uncovered. One could interpret this as saying that primordially an entity is constituted in its full meaning once unveiled, which includes the projected meaning of its Being into the past so its past would fundamentally be part of its showing, and not its showing just presenting an entity precisely as it has always been in its completely independent meaning. However, the sentence where Heidegger says “for nature to be as it is, it does not need truth, unveiledness” (“Basic Problems” p. 220) seems to overturn that interpretation because the Being of nature seems to be independent of its unveiledness or truth as revealing. Moreover, Heidegger seems to be intentionally phrasing this passage so as to make a distinction between an entity as it is in truth or as unveiled to us, and an entity before, separate, and regardless of any unveiling or uncovering of that entity. The key difference between these two states of an entity in this passage is their intelligibility or lack of intelligibility for us, but in both of these states the entity does not change how and what it is.

It seems if Heidegger were not trying to talk of entities as they are before and in the absence of any truth, and so before or without Dasein, Heidegger would not talk of entities as being exactly as they were before their unveiling. Instead, one would expect Heidegger to dismiss talk of entities as they are before Dasein as nonsensical, and for him to emphasize that this past “how” of an entity is far



from our common sense understanding of a past. One would expect Heidegger to emphasize that this past “how” of an entity only makes sense as the meaning of a past “how” attributed to an entity in and through its revealing within the truth of Being and the understanding of Dasein. However, Heidegger rules out this idea of the past being only an aspect of the unveiled meaning of an entity by saying that it is “regardless of its uncoveredness and non-uncoveredness” (“Basic Problems” p. 220), which seems not just to be making the distinction between an entity’s past “how” as a meaning from the meaning of its present “how”, but to be removing an entity from the sphere of uncoveredness and non-uncoveredness to a realm of radical separation from truth not even involving non-uncoveredness. This realm of radical separation seems to be the expression of an entity or nature that is completely separate or independent of Dasein.

However, one does not readily notice the discrepancy between Heidegger’s treatment of entities in this passage, and his conception of truth, Dasein, Being, and phenomenology. This contradiction is unobtrusive for us because it seems to be common sense or an obvious aspect of our everyday experience that entities are in their essence separate from Dasein, and that we do not create them. It seems superficially obvious that when we walk out of a room our desk or pen does not vanish, or that before there was our particular self there were such entities. Yet, Heidegger in his phenomenology takes it upon himself to examine and explain what seems superficially obvious instead of leaving it as a free-floating construction. Heidegger says it is phenomenology’s task to question

the obvious, and so, to claim that entities are as they are independently of Dasein because it is obvious, is contrary to Heidegger's phenomenological method.

It is also contrary to Heidegger's theory of truth to claim that entities are as they are independently of Dasein. For Heidegger, it is Dasein's primordial openness or disclosure through its understanding of meaning that allows for world or an unthematic understanding of the functionality "contexture" (*Bedeutsamkeit*). Moreover, it is within this equipmental "contexture" (*Bedeutsamkeit*) that entities can be put to use or gain in-order-to relations, where such relations determine each entity as to its thisness, howness, and whatness. Furthermore, these in-order-to relations and equipmental "contexture" (*Bedeutsamkeit*) only make sense in terms of Dasein's projects, which are also only possible through Dasein's being as care, which is understood as that entity for whom its existence is an issue. Therefore, according to Heidegger's theory of truth, Dasein as care and Being-in-the-world, and phenomenology itself, it would seem that entities in their essence should be dependent on the disclosedness of Dasein and world and so do not remain "just how it is and will be, regardless of every possible uncoveredness of itself" ("Basic Problems" p. 220). This passage would seem to imply an entity remains independent of its uncoveredness in how it is; even though, an entity's uncoveredness should be newly constitutive of its meaning since its Being depends on the way in which it is uncovered.

To further convey how essential the contradiction of Heidegger's account of entities independent of Dasein is within his greater project as a whole, I will now outline Heidegger's definition of phenomenology, and the role

phenomenology plays in his philosophy. In doing so, I aim to give the reader an appreciation of the specific way Heidegger's view of entities, as being that which they are independently of Dasein or the world, contradicts his methodology of phenomenology. Heidegger describes the essential interrelation of phenomenology, ontology and philosophy when he says that "ontology and phenomenology are not two distinct philosophical disciplines among others. These terms characterize philosophy itself with regard to its object and its way of treating that object. Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology" ("Being and Time" p. 62). In this passage, Heidegger is claiming that the science of ontology is always understood along with the science of phenomenology, and that both of them are inseparable and constitute philosophy proper. The implication of this tight association of phenomenology, ontology, and philosophy is that one cannot deal with entities independently of all Being and truth, and still be doing philosophy. Nor can one treat of entities independently of Dasein and still be doing philosophy, given Dasein's fundamental role in answering the question of the meaning of Being as that entity that understands Being. This implication becomes apparent when one considers more specifically the role phenomenology plays in its relation to ontology. Thus, this passage reveals how fundamental phenomenology is to Heidegger's project and to philosophy as a whole, and so how fundamental of an inconsistency in Heidegger's philosophy a contradiction of the methodology of phenomenology with Heidegger's account of entities is.

Heidegger says that ontology is not meant by him as what historically the discipline has come to mean. Ontology for Heidegger is guided by the central

question of the meaning of Being, which is carried out, and its principles and its how determined, through the methodological conception of phenomenology. Phenomenology seeks to get to the things themselves, and avoid any technical devices or abstract constructions. In accomplishing this, phenomenology deals with the things themselves only insofar as they appear. I believe when one keeps in mind Heidegger's definition of phenomenology, and when one seriously considers his remarks about entities as they are independently of Dasein, one realizes that these remarks reveal themselves to be abstract constructions, and so inconsistent with phenomenology. Entities as they are completely independent of Dasein are abstract constructions because by Heidegger's definition they are separate from any disclosure or emergence to Dasein. Moreover, one may suggest that entities independent of Dasein are not abstract constructions because they are the pre-emergent aspect or meaning of entities as they do show themselves to Dasein. This suggestion does not work because Heidegger does not claim that entities as they are independently of Dasein are only an enabling limit or meaning to make sense of entities as they show themselves to us, but he claims that entities as they are independently of Dasein just are entities as they show themselves to us.

Furthermore, since Dasein is necessary for any and all disclosedness, entities as they are before they become manifest to Dasein must necessarily remain beyond all access for philosophy because philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology. This means philosophy can only treat of the object of ontology insofar as our methodology of phenomenology allows us access to it,

and phenomenology only allows access to what shows itself from itself insofar as it shows itself. What shows itself from itself is Being, and the phenomenon of phenomenology is Being and its structure, not entities (“Being and Time” p. 61 & 91). So it seems the what and how of entities in themselves are always the what and how in terms of Being, truth and the understanding of Dasein. Entities as they are completely apart from Dasein remove themselves from any possibility of disclosure because disclosedness or truth is Dasein, and, only insofar as Dasein is, is there disclosedness. Thus, according to the central principles of ontology and phenomenology, if entities as they are without Dasein are abstract constructions, and they are not able to show themselves in any way, they cannot be dealt with by philosophy. To deal with entities in this abstract manner completely contradicts phenomenology as Heidegger’s guiding methodological conception, and so falls outside the scope of ontology as a whole. Therefore, at a fundamental level in Heidegger’s philosophy, entities that exist beyond and without Dasein can be revealed to contradict the core methodological principles of phenomenology. Stiegler and I are making the point that this particular phenomenological approach does not do justice to the “realist” dimension of entities in themselves.

The contradiction between Heidegger’s account of entities as they are without any Dasein and his methodology of phenomenology could be easily resolved by Heidegger if he admitted his mistaken treatment of entities and denied them their independent nature. However, this would raise a much larger problem for Heidegger, because this would contradict the central principles of his theory of truth, Being, and the essence of Dasein. For Heidegger, Dasein and truth are

disclosedness, and they allow for the revealing of the world as a totality of significations within which the uncovering of individual entities can take place. Accordingly, it is unintelligible for Heidegger to say that we uncover or make manifest entities if there is nothing hidden beforehand, which we can make manifest or uncover. Instead, if there are no hidden entities independent of Dasein, it would seem that we would have to create them, which totally belies our experience of the world. To say Dasein creates entities also contradicts the methodological conception of phenomenology because this is to ignore the fundamental facts of our experience of how entities show themselves to us from themselves – namely as something that stands against us and is not dependent on us for its existence.

The contradiction could perhaps be most plausibly resolved by insisting that, in what I say above, I am advancing a conception of independence that is too robust and in-line with common sense, and that Heidegger actually is advancing a different conception of independence that is in fact congruent with his theory of truth. On this interpretation, the point is that Heidegger redefines the meaning of independence as being part of the meaning of beings in themselves as they come meaningfully to be for us, i.e., their independence is a matter of their relation to us, how and what they are manifest to us as they come meaningfully to be for us. Under this interpretation, it makes no sense to talk of the independence of entities as being how they are purely and simply in themselves because independence is only a meaning entities develop through their original disclosure to Dasein. This interpretation is certainly more coherent with Heidegger's larger theory of truth.

Moreover, this conception of independence seems to be the most charitable interpretation with regard to Heidegger. It is the most charitable interpretation, because if one interprets independence in the common-sense, robust way I have proposed, Heidegger would seem to be astoundingly confused not to realize this contradiction since he makes remarks about the independence of entities and the priority of the ontological and Being in understanding Dasein often side by side.

I concede that this is likely the strongest interpretation of Heidegger in isolation on only Heidegger's terms. However, Stiegler/I do not think this interpretation does justice to the "realist" dimension of entities. Therefore, I have chosen not to interpret independence in this manner in order to try to do justice to this "realist" dimension of entities by making the best case for Stiegler's project. Attempting to make the best case for Stiegler's project in this thesis means that I owe the strongest obligation of charity of interpretation to Stiegler. Stiegler does not favour this interpretation of the independence of entities, because he gives entities a robust conception of independence wherein they are fundamentally separate from Dasein or the who. For Stiegler, entities are fundamentally separate from the who insofar as they serve to originally constitute Dasein essentially. By performing this essential grounding function, entities are not simply dependent for their meaning of independence on the ontological and Dasein's disclosedness, but also derive some of that meaning from their relation of mutual constitution with the ontological.

Faced with these raw, basic experiences of entities as seemingly essentially independent of Dasein, and faced with Stiegler's more robust

conception of independence as complete separation, we are forced to look at the other side of the contradiction. It now seems we should ask how essential phenomenology is and what specific role it plays for Heidegger to show that phenomenology does not rule out dealing with entities as they are before or without Dasein. Heidegger defines his conception of phenomenology when he says “thus ‘phenomenology’ means ... to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself. This is the formal meaning of that branch of research which calls itself ‘phenomenology’” (“Being and Time” p. 58). This definition of phenomenology would seem to blatantly contradict positing and dealing with entities as absolutely independent of all Dasein, Being, and truth. This is because an entity completely independent of Dasein is precisely that which does not show itself in any manner. From these reflections the chief issue presents itself as one of intelligibly dealing with the radical independence of entities that Stiegler favours.

However, this does also point to a problem in dealing with Being, which is that it is not primarily manifest, but instead is proximally and for the most part hidden. Therefore, it would seem to be the case that this interpretation of phenomenology rules out Heidegger’s project of thematically and explicitly understanding Being. This raises the more general problem of how to phenomenologically deal with and understand what is hidden. Heidegger addresses this more general problem when he states:

What is it that phenomenology is to ‘let us see’? What is it that by its very essence is necessarily the theme whenever we exhibit



something explicitly? Manifestly, it is something that proximally and for the most part does not show itself at all: it is something that lies hidden, in contrast to that which proximally and for the most part does show itself; but at the same time it is something that belongs to what thus shows itself, and it belongs to it so essentially as to constitute its meaning and ground. Yet that which remains hidden in an egregious sense, or which relapses and gets covered up again, or which shows itself only 'in disguise', is not just this entity or that [ist nicht dieses oder jenes Seiende], but rather the Being of entities, as our previous observations have shown.

("Being and Time" p. 59)

Here Heidegger emphasizes that what he considers as lying hidden is not this or that entity, but the Being of entities. This means that entities independent of Dasein, Being, and truth are not what is hidden that phenomenology lets us see. Instead, it is entities, as already within a greater horizon of the disclosedness of Dasein, that are first and foremost experienced for Dasein as uncovered, which signal Being as constitutive of their ground and meaning. This interpretation of entities as what is proximally and for the most part disclosed is also supported when Heidegger outlines his theory of truth. Being is only able to be understood because it is the ground of something already revealed to us, which is namely entities as they show themselves to us. Heidegger states this repeatedly when he emphasizes that Being is necessarily always the Being of entities.

Therefore, the argument cannot be made that if Being, as the hidden revealing/concealing function, can be dealt with and understood by phenomenology then so should entities as they are completely independent of Dasein. This argument is not convincing because Being can only be dealt with as the ground and condition of the possibility of what already is revealed namely entities as they show themselves to us. Being is not something hidden, strictly speaking, as if it were something 'behind' what appears, but it is the revealing/concealing function ("Being and Time" p. 60). However, the ontological difference states that entities are separate from their ontological-existential structural pre-conditions, and so entities as independent of Dasein cannot be the ground of themselves as uncovered for Dasein. Moreover, according to this argument entities as they show themselves would be what is indicative of, and allows us to treat of, entities completely independent of Dasein. This is to understand entities as they are independent of Dasein as an ontological condition of the possibility of entities as they show themselves to us. Yet, entities as they show themselves are supposed to be essentially the very same entities they are without Dasein's uncovering. Therefore, it is implausible to think of an entity being the ontological condition of the possibility of itself.

It is perfectly intelligible that Being be investigated on the basis of what is manifest proximally and for the most part, which are entities as they show themselves insofar as they show themselves, because phenomenologically it makes sense that for something to appear to us, it must be revealed in a certain way. To answer the question of the meaning of Being, we must investigate the

condition of the possibility of entities being made manifest to us as ready-to-hand or present-at-hand. Heidegger shows us how our everyday dealings with entities presuppose that they are made meaningful based on our essence as the locus and medium of ontological disclosedness, and Being and world as the horizon of meaning within which these entities can come meaningfully to be for us.

However, to say that a hidden condition of the possibility of an entity being manifest to us is the entity itself as absolutely independent of Dasein is blatantly contradicting phenomenology by positing something “behind entities,” because entities are what are made manifest to us. Entities are not what linger before we make them manifest because this would create two realms of entities. The appearing of entities, and their mode of being disclosed, is what constitutes their Being and their essence since ontology is phenomenology.

Furthermore, there is a more fundamental philosophical objection to the conception of a radical hiddenness from Dasein of anything, whether it be Being or entities, which I alluded to above when I justified why entities as they are completely independent of Dasein are abstract constructions. According to the Meno paradox, which Heidegger takes very seriously, “a man cannot try to discover either what he knows or what he does not know? He would not seek what he knows, for since he knows it there is no need of the inquiry, nor what he does not know, for in that case he does not even know what he is looking for” (Meno 80E). Applied to the problems of the ways in which entities can be hidden and the intrinsic hiddenness of Being, this means that one cannot seek to uncover Being or entities if they are originally completely hidden. According to the Meno

paradox, if we sought to uncover completely hidden Being or entities we would not know what we were looking for or that there was something to look for, and so could not even get our search off the ground. On the other hand, if we already knew Being and entities thematically then we would not have to look for them because they would already be revealed to us.

Heidegger admits this realization that entities can never be radically hidden when he says:

Only in so far as Dasein has been disclosed has it also been closed off; and only in so far as entities within-the-world have been uncovered along with Dasein, have such entities, as possibly encounterable within-the-world, been covered up (hidden) or disguised... The uncovering of anything new is never done on the basis of having something completely hidden, but takes its departure rather from uncoveredness in the mode of semblance. Entities look as if... That is, they have, in a certain way, been uncovered already, and yet they are still disguised.” (“Being and Time” p. 265)

This passage indicates that Heidegger realizes the problem of treating entities as if they were completely hidden and then completely newly uncovered, which is an appropriation of the Meno paradox. Heidegger realizes that it does not make sense that entities could be originally completely hidden from us. Instead, Heidegger admits that for entities to be uncovered and understood by Dasein they

must in some partial sense already have been revealed to Dasein to a greater or lesser extent. In this case, there would be no such thing as an entity completely independent of Dasein, and completely hidden from Dasein, because if this were the case then no entity could ever be uncovered and understood by Dasein.

When one takes this passage's reasoning into consideration it seems extremely strange that Heidegger would state that there are entities as they are before Dasein and completely without Dasein. Yet, this is precisely what Heidegger repeatedly asserts. Despite these considerations, Heidegger claims that entities must be independent of Dasein as well as be how and what they are before they are revealed to Dasein, and therefore it seems Heidegger does not adequately deal with the ontical grounding of ontology and phenomenology.

I will now endeavour to summarize the contradiction in Heidegger's work, which I have argued for above, with the help of a passage that brings out this contradiction most evidently. I believe Heidegger succinctly expresses and makes apparent the contradiction between his account of entities as they are before or without existent Dasein, and his methodology of phenomenology when he asserts:

Three claims may be added here: 1) Entities are in themselves the kinds of entities they are, and in the way they are, even if, for example, Dasein does not exist. 2) Being "is" not, but Being is there [es gibt], insofar as Dasein exists. In the essence of existence there is transcendence, i.e., a giving of world prior to and for all Being-toward-and-among intra-worldly entities. 3) Only insofar as existing Dasein gives itself anything like Being can entities emerge

in their in-themselves, i.e., can the first claim likewise be understood at all and be taken into account.<sup>9</sup> (“The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic” p. 153)

The contradiction in this passage is not evident from this passage itself in isolation.<sup>10</sup> However, when one considers the above passage in the larger context of Heidegger’s view of philosophy as ontology and phenomenology, and how phenomenology is the methodology by which ontology must treat its subject matter, then the contradiction becomes apparent. The first claim in this passage states what I have repeatedly cited and understand to be Heidegger’s position on entities, which is that they are extant and are in the way they are even if there were no Dasein whatsoever. The second claim seems to be a typical Heideggerian claim as to Being and world’s dependence on the existence of Dasein whose essence is transcendence, which is to be understood as a giving of world and Being prior to any specific comportment toward and with entities. Moreover, the second claim bolsters the third claim in spelling out that it is Dasein’s transcendence that is prior to, and allows for, any entities to show themselves at all to Dasein. It is only after these entities come to be as emergent for Dasein that Dasein can formulate statements or assertions about them and understand the first claim.

---

<sup>9</sup> I have changed Michael Heim’s translation here using ‘entities’ instead of ‘beings’, and ‘Being’ instead of ‘being’ to make this passage more consistent with my usage of these terms throughout my thesis.

<sup>10</sup> Of course, this is true of all of Heidegger’s work that it cannot be criticized piecemeal one statement at a time ripped from its context.

Taken in isolation from Heidegger's methodology of phenomenology, and so his metaphysical and methodological underpinnings, and by ignoring how Heidegger makes the first thesis dependent on the third one could interpret the above passage without contradiction in an almost naïve realist way. This naïve realist interpretation takes entities as existing as they are whether we interpret them within the broader context of our projects, engagements, or our context of significations or not. The only addendum to the naïve realist view that Heidegger could be interpreted as making, is that he is claiming that it is only in terms of our significations that we can take notice of entities and understand the claim that they are always as they are in the complete absence of Dasein. Under this interpretation, Being and world are only necessary to allow us to *understand* our assertions about entities. Entities for the naïve realist are as they are regardless of our existence or larger interpretive framework of world.

Yet, given the fact that Heidegger is doing philosophy in the work from which this passage is taken, and he is not doing empirical science or making his way in the world day-to-day where in either case a realist assumption is necessary, one must take into account in the interpretation of this passage Heidegger's earlier definition of philosophy as phenomenology. For Heidegger, there is no outside access or understanding beyond what phenomenology enables us access and understanding of, which is what shows itself insofar as it shows itself. Therefore, for Heidegger, at the most fundamental ontological level entities should be accessed and dealt with only insofar as they emerge forth to Dasein. Likewise, insofar as entities emerge, their fundamental essence is given and this

should be understood not simply as Dasein's access to entities as they already were, but how entities essentially are.

According to phenomenology, it is not an entity's emergence to us that allows us to make claims about it as it was always and already before, and in the complete absence of Dasein. Instead, it is the entity's emergence by way of Dasein's understanding of Being that gives and shows the entity as it essentially is, without which emergence entities are not, because such a positing is an abstract construction at the ontological level, which is forbidden by phenomenology. The first claim of the above passage can only be made at the ontic level in scientific research or pragmatic endeavours where individual entities have been already revealed as and how they are, and so are intraworldly and have gained their essence. Yet, this dependence of the essence of entities on world and Being, which are in turn dependent on Dasein's existence, seems to remove the necessary independent standing against of entities characteristic of their essence.

The contradiction of Heidegger's methodological conception of phenomenology and his account of the independence of entities is not a contradiction at the level of whether there are entities before or without Dasein. Instead, it is a question of whether, according to the methodology Heidegger sets out to begin his ontological project of the question of the meaning of Being, he should even be dealing with or trying to make sense of entities in this sense at all. Heidegger's adherence to the methodology of phenomenology as he defines it seems to preclude the treatment of entities as independent of Dasein and world, since entities in this sense – in the most radical way – are as they do not show



themselves from themselves. Entities in this sense are in complete separation from existent Dasein and world, which are the conditions of the possibility of entities showing themselves at all.

To further flesh out the problem I see with Heidegger's account of entities, and to give this problem some legitimacy, I think it will be helpful to refer to Stephen Mulhall's encounter with a similar problem in his book Heidegger and Being and Time 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. In this book, Mulhall, while interpreting Heidegger's account of truth, world, and entities, expresses the problem of entities as they are independent of Dasein. However, I believe Mulhall misidentifies this problem as being primarily the problem of scepticism. The problem should not be expressed in terms of scepticism, because even if entities are not what and how they are independently of Dasein and can only announce themselves and be known in and through the understanding of Dasein, this thesis does not collapse into scepticism, or preclude an empirical realism with respect to entities as they are disclosed and have being for us.

The path of empirical realism within the framework of a transcendental idealism is the path that Kant stakes out, and, which interpreted according to the two-aspect interpretation of things-in-themselves, gives an alternative to being a sceptic or a dogmatic realist. The two-aspect interpretation of things-in-themselves characterizes noumena and phenomena as simply two different senses, meanings, or aspects of a single object. In terms of this interpretation, what is empirically real is what can be objectively verified as what appears in our horizon of experience, and nothing outside of or behind our horizon of experience counts

as real. When the two-aspect interpretation of Kant is applied to Heidegger, this means that for Kant and Heidegger the claim is that things-in-themselves (Kant) and entities (Heidegger) exist independently of us, but that the question of what and how they are “in themselves” only arises and can get worked out within the horizon of our understanding. Put differently, the understanding of Dasein is the transcendental horizon within which empirical realism is possible. Consequently, the question of what exists outside that horizon does not collapse into scepticism; rather, it is not intelligible. I need not provide a thorough Kant interpretation or Kant/Heidegger comparison here to make my basic point: that the two-aspect interpretation of things-in-themselves, regardless of whether it is correct or not, is compatible with empirical realism. Therefore, one can be a realist about entities without claiming that entities must exist in themselves as they are in complete separation from human being.

Despite his inaccurate characterization of the problem of Heidegger’s incoherent account of entities as one of scepticism, Mulhall does correctly recognize the problem as one of an incoherence involving Heidegger’s theory of truth and Dasein. Mulhall expresses this when he comments on what he perceives to be Heidegger’s strategy for fending off scepticism, saying that:

The cogency of his analysis of Dasein’s Being as being-in-the-world... classifies the worldhood of the world as an aspect of Dasein’s ontological structure, it may seem to be open to the charge of subjectivizing reality, or quietly ceding its objectivity and independence while claiming to have preserved it from

sceptical molestation. For, if the world is ontologically grounded in the Being of Dasein, must it not follow that when Dasein does not exist, neither does the world? And what reality is left to a world that is dependent for its own existence upon the continued existence of human creatures within it? If such a world is all that the Heideggerian analysis leaves us, is there any real difference between him and the sceptic? (Mulhall p. 97)

In contradistinction to Mulhall, I claim that the problem is not one of the subjectivizing of reality, world, or Being, and that this seeming discrepancy can be easily overcome by recognizing, as Mulhall suggests, the significance of the ontological difference. Mulhall's insistence on properly appreciating the ontological difference only properly accounts for and rescues that which falls on the side of the ontological – namely world and reality. Reality and world are shown to be on the side of the ontological and dependent for their existence on Dasein, while entities are shown to exist separately from the ontological and so are not dependent on Dasein. Yet, the deeper problem of the independence of the ontic is deferred by Mulhall.<sup>11</sup> The ontic side of the pre-ontological difference concept of world, or world as Mulhall uses it in the above passage, still seems to have quietly ceded its objectivity and independence because its independence from Dasein seems to be based on an ungrounded assumption.

---

<sup>11</sup> One may argue it is deferred and unanswered by Heidegger for that matter because Mulhall is trying in this work to introduce and explain Heidegger's work instead of critically interpreting him. Yet, I would argue that a proper presentation of Heidegger, while not obliged to comprehensively deal with or take sides on incoherencies in the text, is at least obliged to raise them, or one is not doing the text justice in one's interpretation. Mulhall does not undertake this indication of inconsistency, and so he falsely presents the text.

For Mulhall, what seems to address this deeper problem of guaranteeing that the aspect of the world that needs to be independent does not lose its independence is the consideration that it is absurd to think that entities, like tables, disappear when we step away from them. This response is thoroughly unsatisfactory because it is just another way of saying that the independence of entities is self-evident. In addressing this problem, Mulhall goes on to consider it as a problem of asserting or capacity to understand and not one of the independence of entities when he says:

If Dasein were to vanish, then what would vanish from the world would be the capacity to understand beings in their Being, the capacity to uncover entities as existing and as the entities they are. In those, circumstances, it could not be asserted either that entities exist or that they do not – for then there could not be assertions about, or any other comprehending grasp of entities, any encounter with them in their Being. (Mulhall p. 98)

The fundamental problem is not one of whether in a world without Dasein it could be asserted or understood whether entities exist or not. That possibility of understanding or assertion is clearly essentially tied to Dasein's existential structure of care as disclosedness, understanding, and discourse as is the truth of such an assertion, its Being, and its reality under Heidegger's new more primordial conception of truth as disclosedness. The real problem is still one of justifying Heidegger's position that entities are as they are completely independent of Dasein.

Moreover, Heidegger makes it clear that he does not simply mean to make the point that in a world without Dasein there can be no assertions about the existence of entities, or any truth or falsity about such entities. One cannot say that Heidegger has just made an error of expressing his theory of entities that is remedied along the lines of Mulhall's resolution of the problem by making a distinction between "what can be said about entities-in-a-world-without-Dasein, and what can be said in-a-world-without Dasein about entities-in-a-world-without-Dasein" (Mulhall p. 99). Unfortunately, this distinction is flatly contradicted by Heidegger in three separate works: Being and Time, The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic, and The Basic Problems of Phenomenology. In these three texts, as cited above, it is made clear that Heidegger intends to assert about entities that they are exactly as they were before Dasein came on the scene, which is not a claim about what Dasein is enabled to say or not say depending on its extantness. Instead, it is a claim about entities as they are independent of any assertion of Dasein.

Heidegger's account of truth coherently and consistently expresses that what it means to be true, real, or to be as such is to be disclosed, and that any possibility of disclosedness is essentially tied to and grounded in Dasein. The essential interrelation of disclosedness and Dasein implies that there can be no truth, Being, or reality without Dasein. The problem and the inconsistency arises when one considers how it is that Heidegger can maintain this conception of truth, reality, and Being, and a strict methodology of phenomenology, while still maintaining that entities exist as they are in themselves before and without

Dasein. Therefore, Mulhall's explanation and response to the problem begs the question, because he has only established that for Heidegger – given his transformation in doing ontology – Being, truth and reality do not need their independence justified because they are shown by Heidegger to depend essentially on Dasein. The question of the independence of entities is deferred to the ontic, but Mulhall's and Heidegger's attempts (under the interpretation of Heidegger I am maintaining to make the best case for Stiegler's project) to establish their independence are unsatisfactory. Instead, given Heidegger's theory of truth and equipmentality, entities within our horizon of understanding that are already uncovered as that which they are, are made possible by the world as a horizon of meaning, which is not the radical type of independence that the interpretation I am maintaining of Heidegger asserts of entities, and this is what creates the inconsistency.

At this point in my analysis of the radical independence of entities from Dasein, I recognize that an entity's independence is its independence of and from Dasein, which is a meaning in the understanding of Dasein, and not a being or reality in itself. This recognition does seem to temper the radicality of independence entities can be given. Entities as a separate realm and reality from Dasein as truly independent in and of themselves would be self-caused, i.e., God. To posit entities in such a separate realm is unintelligible, and so not an intelligible limit on the independence of entities. However, in my account of the independence of entities, I am not trying to insinuate a God's eye view, i.e., that we can stand outside our own understanding of the world and entities to see the

independence of entities in themselves, not just as they are for us in experience as independent, but as they are purely in themselves. Instead, I am trying to interpret Heidegger as eliciting a stronger meaning of independence in his account of entities than his larger philosophical framework supports, while not invoking a God's eye view or entities as a reality in themselves to provide this stronger sense of independence. This robust sense of independence is instead provided by the possibility of the equiprimordiality and mutual constitution of the ontic and the ontological.

Furthermore, Mulhall's resolution is also shown to be unhelpful when one considers the fundamental contradiction between Heidegger's methodology of phenomenology and entities as they are before or without Dasein. Heidegger says that "*only as phenomenology, is ontology possible*" ("Being and Time" p. 60). The strictness of this pronouncement, the seeming inescapability (under the interpretation I am maintaining) of recognizing the complete independence of the nature of entities and the necessity of their possibility as something that is as it is in the complete absence of Dasein, forces one to consider the possibility of there being another philosophical endeavour outside fundamental ontology's scope that deals with entities as they are completely independent of Dasein.

The apparent impasse in Heidegger's thought has been shown to be a result of Heidegger's insistence on phenomenology and ontology as all-encompassing expressions of philosophy, the seeming unintelligibility of Dasein conducting an investigation of something that by definition is before or completely independent of Dasein, and his insistence (under the interpretation of

Heidegger I am maintaining to give the most charitable reading of Stiegler) on the complete independence of entities from Dasein. However, it would seem that Heidegger himself also recognizes this impasse, and the necessity of a new expression of philosophy that treats of the ontic or entities in their grounding of the ontological when he says:

In other words, fundamental ontology does not exhaust the notion of metaphysics. Since Being is there only insofar as entities are already there [im Da], fundamental ontology has in it the latent tendency toward a primordial, metaphysical transformation which becomes possible only when Being is understood in its whole problematic. The intrinsic necessity for ontology to turn back to its point of origin and be clarified by reference to the primal phenomenon of human existence: the entity “man” understands Being; understanding-of-Being effects a distinction between Being and entities; Being is there only when Dasein understands Being. In other words, the possibility that Being is there in the understanding presupposes the factual existence of Dasein, and this in turn presupposes the factual extantness of nature. Right within the horizon of the problem of Being, when posed radically, it appears that all this is visible and can be understood as Being, only if a possible totality of entities is already there. As a result, we need a special problematic which has for its proper theme entities as a whole [das Seiende im Ganzen]. This new



investigation resides in the essence of ontology itself and is the result of its overturning [Umschlag]... I designate this set of questions metontology.<sup>12</sup> (“The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic” p. 156-157)

A point of great importance in interpreting this passage is establishing what “the factual extantness of nature” means. From the English translation of this passage by Michael Heim, it would seem straightforward that Heidegger is referring to the factual extantness of nature as opposed to the factual existence of Dasein.

Heidegger makes the distinction between the factuality (in German the *Tatsächlichkeit*) of an entity and the facticity (in German the *Faktizität*) of Dasein when he says “and yet the ‘factuality’ of the fact [Tatsache] of one’s own Dasein is at bottom quite different ontologically from the factual occurrence of some kind of mineral, for example. Whenever Dasein is, it is as a Fact; and the factuality of such a Fact is what we shall call Dasein’s ‘facticity’” (“Being and Time” p. 82).

This presentation of the difference between factuality and facticity makes it seem that the phrase ‘the factual extantness of nature’ refers to the matter of fact occurrence of nature like the occurrence of some mineral as different from the facticity of Dasein, and would suggest it is not bound up with Dasein.

Yet, contrary to this interpretation the original German wording of factual extantness is the *faktische Vorhandensein* of nature, which seems strange because it implies nature is meant not as factual, but as factical. It seems strange to call

---

<sup>12</sup> Here again I have chosen to keep my language consistent by breaking from Michael Heim’s translation. I have chosen to translate *Seiende* throughout this passage as ‘entity’ or ‘entities’ rather than being or beings, and to put the ‘B’ in Being (*Sein*) in the upper case.

nature factual because Heidegger defines the factual by saying that “the concept of ‘facticity’ implies that an entity ‘within-the-world’ has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its ‘destiny’ with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world” (“Being and Time” p. 82). This definition of ‘facticity’ seems to imply that only Dasein can be factual as that entity who has Being-in-the-world and can understand itself as in terms of “the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world” (“Being and Time” p. 82). However, *faktische Vorhandensein* can be interpreted as meaning that nature is *Vorhandensein*, i.e., present-at-hand before us and *faktische*, i.e., referring to the particular way in which Dasein is a fact. Based on this interpretation, *faktische Vorhandensein* can be understood as emphasizing nature’s connectedness to Dasein as being before Dasein and in the way Dasein is, and not as placed outside of or before the ‘fact’ of Dasein.

What I think further suggests that nature is not dependent on Dasein here, is that in the above passage the factual existence of Dasein is supposed to presuppose the factual extantness of nature, suggesting that it is separate from Dasein’s factual existence because it is what Dasein presupposes, and so would be involved in constituting Dasein. This would suggest that the factual extantness of nature cannot be interpreted as referring to entities ready-to-hand or present-at-hand. Present-at-hand entities are derivative of ready-to-hand entities, which are only made possible by world as the totality of assignment relations within which contexture entities can gain their functionality that constitutes their how and their what. Furthermore, world is only made possible as a result of Dasein’s existential

structure of care, but Dasein's existence is precisely what the factual extantness of nature is supposed to ground. However, Heidegger does mention another interpretation of entities, in which he refers to nature by saying that "world is only, if, and as long as Dasein exists. Nature can also be when no Dasein exists." ("Basic Problems" p. 170). In this passage, Heidegger is clearly referring to nature as existing when there is no Dasein, and he distinguishes nature in this sense from world which exists "only, if, and as long as Dasein exists", and that this projecting of a world belongs to the essence of Dasein. Therefore, I take nature in these two passages as being representative of entities that are before or without Dasein.

Given this interpretation of nature, it seems as though Heidegger is claiming in the above passages that after the fundamental ontological project of the existential analytic, one recognizes that there is Being only insofar as Dasein understands Being. One then also recognizes that Dasein's understanding of Being is grounded upon the factual existence of Dasein, which itself must be grounded on entities as they are before or independent of Dasein. This realization comes from a radical understanding of fundamental ontology, and it warrants an investigation of the totality of entities as already there. Entities are already there and independent for Heidegger, in that they have to be seen as allowing for the realization of the ontological difference and Dasein's understanding of Being. This would imply that the ontic, i.e., in the sense of entities in themselves, grounds the ontological, i.e., in the sense of being-interpreted, and so would necessitate a turning of philosophy to a new problematic to investigate entities as

they are without or before Dasein as the condition of the possibility of fundamental ontology. The possibility of an investigation that lies outside the scope of phenomenology and ontology would resolve the problem of the contradiction of Heidegger's claims about entities as they are before or without Dasein, and his conception of phenomenology, truth, world, and Dasein. Therefore, I interpret this passage as Heidegger presenting his strange recognition of his insufficient account of entities by which he appears to disavow the sole primordially of the ontological over the ontic. Heidegger also characterizes metaphysics as more general than fundamental ontology, which is to be brought to its overturning through a cultivation of metontology which it is turned over into.

In this section, I have presented an interpretation according to which it seems reasonable to charge Heidegger with a fundamental inconsistency between his account of entities and his methodology of phenomenology, his theory of truth, and his conception of Dasein. I have also argued for the plausibility of the interpretation of Heidegger I am maintaining, while admitting it is likely not the most plausible interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities. Moreover, I have defended why I have chosen to interpret Heidegger in this way by explaining that it allows me to raise the problem I see in Heidegger's account of entities, give the most charitable reading of Stiegler, and it allows for Stiegler's project to be made intelligible, which will be further justified in the unfolding of my account of Stiegler's project in the next chapter. I have also argued that Heidegger recognizes the need to establish the ontic's grounding of ontology to be carried

out by what he calls “metontology”. Furthermore, I have interpreted metontology as striving to establish the autonomy of entities, which the interpretation that I am defending of Heidegger’s theory of entities espouses and requires, through their ability to ground the ontological, while being grounded themselves by the ontological.

The grounding of entities by the ontological and the ontological by entities seems like the Baron von Münchhausen story in which he escapes a swamp by pulling himself out by his own hair. It seems as utterly implausible that what makes possible something could itself be made possible by that very thing. This was one of my objections to the self-grounding of entities, but this is different in that there are two things, namely the ontic and the ontological, grounding each other and being equiprimordial rather than one thing grounding itself. Moreover, Heidegger himself seems to employ the reasoning of two things being equiprimordial and constituting each other in his elaboration of the relation of Being and Dasein; wherein, Heidegger claims that there is ‘Being’ only in and through the understanding of Dasein, and conversely there is *Dasein* only in and through an understanding of ontological meaning.

However, one may object that the co-grounding of the ontic and the ontological is different than the relation of Being and Dasein if one properly understands the ontological difference. The ontological difference is not an external relation between two things, which gives entities an ontological status in themselves that is then juxtaposed to Being. In fact, the ontological difference only comes to be in the understanding of Dasein, which then accords an ontic

status to entities as being what and how they are independently of Dasein. Given this objection it seems likely that in trying to present the ontological and ontic as mutually grounding each other Stiegler is departing from a close engagement with Heidegger given the fundamentality of the ontological difference in Heidegger's philosophy.

Yet, I believe there is still a possibility for Stiegler to be able to engage with Heidegger, opened up by considering the passage I have cited above on metontology from the Metaphysical Foundations of Logic. This passage would seem to suggest that at this point in doing fundamental ontology, a transformation has to take place to reflect a more primordial metaphysical project that involves a grounding of Dasein in a factual extantness of nature, which I have interpreted above as a meaning radically independent of truth or disclosedness. By pursuing this interpretation of that passage in the context of what Heidegger says about nature in the Basic Problems of Phenomenology, I think Stiegler can be interpreted as carrying through the project of metontology, i.e., the grounding of Dasein in the ontic, and so Stiegler can be seen as engaging with Heidegger. I admit this interpretation of Heidegger may not be the most plausible, but I think I have made a case for its plausibility. Therefore, I intend to explain in the next section in what way the ontological can ground and be grounded by the ontic, and so be equiprimordial with it, and what the ontological comes to mean in this relationship of equiprimordiality with the ontic. This explanation is necessary because *prima facie* it seems as if Stiegler re-invokes, in the name of an ontic grounding of the ontological, a traditional metaphysics as the science of beings as

beings in themselves. I will accomplish this explanation by explicating how Stiegler's theory of technics makes the equiprimordiality of the ontic and ontological cogent, and how this equiprimordiality establishes a subversion of all conceptions of origin or fundament.

## CHAPTER TWO:

## STIEGLER'S PROJECT AND CRITICISM OF HEIDEGGER

Now that a plausible interpretation of Heidegger that is sympathetic to Stiegler's project has been put forward and Heidegger's account of entities has been shown to be inconsistent under this interpretation, a space has been opened for Stiegler's project to fill. Stiegler's project, as I understand it in its engagement with Heidegger, aims to give entities, reduced to the specific form of technics, their proper due and metaphysical significance, which Stiegler believes Heidegger fails to do. Stiegler views his project as a continuation of Heidegger's lineage, but as also offering a critique and challenge to Heidegger's philosophy.

The preface of the first volume of Technics and Time opens by saying "the object of this work is technics, apprehended as the horizon of all possibility to come and of all possibility of a future" ("Technics and Time vol. 1" p. ix). This passage illustrates that, in the first sentence of Technics and Time, Stiegler sets up how his work is a challenge to Heidegger's conception of entities and a challenge to Heidegger's conception of ontology. For Heidegger, the ontic is grounded by the ontological, and the essence of modern technology as the radical forgetting of Being enables the hegemonic absorption in the ontic as "standing reserve" that narrows the possibilities of projecting meaning, and closes future possibilities for Dasein. Moreover, for Heidegger, technics (as what is granted by the essence of modern technology and as a matter of our insistent engagement with entities in instrumental anthropological terms) does not narrow possibilities



of meaning, but is dependent on them. On the other hand, Stiegler, as evidenced by the above quotation, sees technics positively as “the horizon of all possibility to come and of all possibility of a future”. Stiegler’s challenge to Heidegger is whether technics itself (understood for Stiegler as ontic realities) serves to open up possibilities of ontological meaning. For Heidegger, despite all of its ontic power and possibilities, what the computer does is “inessential” (“Identity and Difference” p. 41). For Stiegler, what the computer does is essentially transformative, which is creating new ontological meaning in realizing new ontic possibilities. Therefore, for Stiegler, technics is the transcendental condition of any future horizon, of any possibilities within this future, and, as will become apparent, any possibility of a past for Dasein. Whereas, for Heidegger, an understanding of Being as the essence of technology is the transcendental condition of any instrument or technics.

For Stiegler’s critique of Heidegger to be successful, he must show how technology is responsible for the horizon of all possibility of revealing and projecting meaning instead of narrowing this horizon. The question for Stiegler becomes: “In what way is technics the condition of the possibility of all future possibilities, the ontological-existential, and temporalization as such, and not simply dependent on Dasein’s ontological possibilities of meaning for their ontological significance?” Answering this question will also show how entities can be independent of Dasein and the ontological by grounding Dasein and the ontological. This question sets up that an appropriate answer must be concerned with determining how comprehensive Stiegler’s and Heidegger’s accounts are,

and not with who is right or wrong. This is as it should be. A successful critique of Heidegger by Stiegler will take Heidegger up in terms of his own standards, which is one of the comprehensiveness of account, not conformity to an absolute truth. To do this properly and be fully comprehensive, Stiegler will have to show what the condition of the possibility of technics is, which he does in a way that critiques the logic of grounds.

Stiegler's critique of Heidegger is based on criticizing Heidegger's views of truth, the ontic, the ontological and the logic of grounding. The basis of comparison for Heidegger and Stiegler will be whether technics allows for the possibility of truth understood as a revealing, and is in turn allowed to emerge through truth as disclosedness, or whether technics, understood to encompass entities in general, is only metaphysically made possible by Dasein and Being.<sup>13</sup> Heidegger prioritizes truth as revealing and the ontological, while Stiegler contends that technics is an essential condition of temporality and of truth. Stiegler thinks that technology's fundamental importance within ontology has been forgotten in our current intellectual climate. Moreover, Heidegger takes the existential-ontological essence of Dasein, its essential temporality, and its historicity as more primordial than entities in the world, while Stiegler sees the equiprimordiality of technics and Dasein as the condition of the possibility of an

---

<sup>13</sup> The claim by Stiegler that technics is representative of entities in general will be justified in and through the explication of Stiegler's larger framework in which it makes sense. However, to make some sense of this claim for the reader, technics encompasses entities in general because technics fills the role of "nature" for Heidegger. In The Basic Problems of Phenomenology "nature" means that entity that is most primordially representative of entities as that entity that is most originally and fully separate from Dasein in its meaning by grounding the ontological and Dasein. Stiegler's argument is that technics fits Heidegger's conception of "nature" because it is the entity that is equiprimordial with and grounds Dasein and the ontological, while itself being grounded by Dasein and the ontological.

essential temporality of Dasein. At this point, I recognize that I am presenting Stiegler as claiming the equiprimordiality of technics and Dasein, and that technics/entities “ground” Dasein and the ontological, which seem to be two claims at odds with each other. I will show how Stiegler does resolve this conflict through a revised logic of grounding, but for now I want to introduce Stiegler’s overall project in its relation to Heidegger.

For Stiegler, it is the essential Epimethean/Promethean relationship wherein the human subject and technics, the who and the what, mutually allow for the possibility of the other, as well as for the possibility of sense, by allowing for the possibility of death and finitude. The myth of Prometheus gives us an interpretation of the essence of man as a de-fault of essence or lack of one. According to the myth, Epimetheus is charged with giving all creatures their defining characteristic, which would then be their essence; but lacking forethought he forgets about human beings, who are then left without an essence. To remedy Epimetheus’ lack of forethought, Prometheus steals fire (representing technics for Stiegler) from Zeus and gives it to humanity as a defining characteristic. Yet, technics also lacks a defining characteristic as something inherent to technics that determines and unifies each instance of the technical as what it is. Therefore, the human is defined by that which itself lacks an essence, and so is a double forgetting or double lack. In this double forgetting, the human constitutes the technical as what it is through actively using and developing the technical, and the technical defines the human in the human’s ability to use and be determined by the technical and its evolution.

At this point, given the preceding presentation of Stiegler's and Heidegger's projects I have provided, there would seem to be a marked preference of Stiegler in favour of technology, and of Heidegger against technology. This would seem to suggest that my thesis is a normative endeavour that pits Heidegger against Stiegler to find out if we should be intensifying our use of technology or diminishing it. I must guard against this danger that my thesis could be misinterpreted as trying to set up and resolve a dichotomy between different lifestyle preferences. The conflict is not: "does the good life consist in becoming a humble peasant living in the *Schwarzwald* reading Greek philosophy, or does one choose to embrace the modern technological, fast-paced world and aid in its development and progression?" While there are undertones of this dichotomy running through the works of these two philosophers, their engagement is not one of a battle of lifestyle choices. It is also not an issue of competing ideologies, with Heidegger being criticized for a Teutonic windmills on the Rhine ideology and Stiegler being criticized for a naive Promethean ideology, both of which have deeper theoretical problems than competing lifestyle choices.<sup>14</sup>

For these two thinkers, the issue is a philosophical battle of truth and primordially. However, truth is understood by them in a much different way than it is traditionally taken up. It is a question of the most comprehensive interpretation of the world, instead of a question of getting it right and having our

---

<sup>14</sup> For Heidegger, the idea of a lifestyle choice is part of the *Gestell*, wherein nihilism is our effective reality. Within the *Gestell* there is a lack of a higher end that can be used to guide our everyday choices, but instead there is simply a plurality of lifestyle choices available to us none of which can be judged by a higher standard as to what is good. ("The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead")

minds correspond to the way things are in themselves as Ideas in heaven independent of our timely, worldly situation. Truth is thoroughly historical, worldly, and finite for Heidegger and Stiegler. For both, it is an inquiry into the relation and constitution of the subject and entities.

Stiegler's position is that technology, by enabling prosthetic access to the already-there, allows for the indeterminate, i.e., an undetermined futural horizon onto which Dasein can project possibilities of ontological meaning. So part of Stiegler's goal in his project will be to show how it is that technics opens the indeterminate, and is the extreme enabling limit of all possibility. It is enabling for Stiegler because it opens up the field of any possibility of projection of possibilities. These claims by Stiegler, although they are abstractly presented here and will be given further development later, can be seen as engaging with Heidegger's conception of Dasein as understanding, i.e., as fundamentally projecting possibilities of ontological meaning onto the futural horizon, while differing from it by proposing that technology is the extreme most limit of Dasein that enables the futural horizon of ontological meaning.

For Heidegger, death understood as Being-towards-death is the extreme most limit of all possibility. Death is also an enabling limit for Heidegger, in the sense that it is the limit within which we 'are,' and so is enabling in that in our Being-towards-death lies the possibility of authentic self-understanding, but it is not enabling in the sense that it somehow opens up the field of possible projections. For Heidegger, our ability to project future possibilities of meaning is dependent on Dasein's temporality as the articulated unity of the three ecstases,

which open the futural horizon as such and allow us to grasp the possibility of our impossibility, which is our death. The ecstatic horizon of our temporality as Dasein is where Heidegger's account bottoms out, because it is the horizon upon which we project our understanding of Being, and so it enables us to understand Being, but one cannot question after the possibility of temporality because there is no further horizon onto which we can project an understanding of temporality. It is here that Heidegger recognizes the essential role of concealing for truth and Being.

Death is Dasein's extreme most limit for Heidegger because it is the impossible possibility, meaning that, when it is actualized, Dasein is no more. This means that our death is never effectively real as actualized in the horizon of Dasein's experience. Therefore, our death is always our own most indeterminate futural possibility, and so is understood as a Being-towards-death. Although our Being-towards-death opens for Dasein a futural horizon, it is a futural horizon that does not extend forever into the future, but comes to an end. In this sense our Being-towards-death represents how, at any moment, our demise is a possibility understood as the possibility of the impossibility of our projection of all possibilities. Recounting our life in the wake of our explicit realization of our Being-towards-death allows us to relate to our life as primordially mortal and completely contingent. The responsibility for our life that we gain by making this realization allows us to attain authenticity by living a genuinely individual and whole life.

Moreover, Stiegler asserts that Heidegger's fear of the obscuring of Being, and his fear of eclipsing the primordial aspect of Dasein's true essence by an absorption in entities results in Heidegger's dismissal of any consideration of tertiary-memory or the world-historical in the existential analytic. By tertiary-memory, I understand Stiegler to be talking about the ability of objects external to the human to preserve and communicate meaning among different subjects within one generation and between different generations. Stiegler's contention in this regard is that Heidegger's lack of analysis of tertiary-memory, and its essential technical make-up, leads to an overlooking of its necessary constituting function of the existence of Dasein by preserving a past that is not one's own. Heidegger has a problem with the claim that a realm of entities could constitute Being or allow for contexts of meaning because, for there to be any entities at all, there must be Being to give them meaning and to let them appear. It makes no sense for Heidegger that technical objects could primordially allow for the possibility of Dasein, temporality, or Being. Stiegler will endeavour to establish how Heidegger is mistaken in this conception of Being, Dasein, and temporality. For Stiegler, Dasein's essential temporality necessarily implies the realm of the technical and factual as being equiprimordial and responsible for Dasein and Being insofar as truth, understood as revealing, is concerned. Stiegler is asserting that the meaning of Being depends upon the temporality of Dasein and this depends on technics, which itself depends upon the temporality of Dasein and Being for its essence.

The starting point for Bernard Stiegler in his understanding of the relation of technology and humanity is the claim that humanity is constituted by the prosthetic, and this constituting function of the human by the prosthetic is essential for the human in that it makes the human what it is. Stiegler says that “that which anticipates, desires, has agency, thinks and understands, I have called the who. The supplement to the who, its pros-thesis, is its what. The who is nothing without the what, since they are in a transductive relation during the process of exteriorization that characterizes life; that is, a process of differentiation by which life proceeds by other means than life” (“Technics and Time vol.2” p. 6). In this passage, Stiegler is claiming that ‘prosthesis’ is to be understood as what first appears to the who, proximally and for the most part, as a supplement or an artificial apparatus of defence, attack, or anything fabricated in order for the who to survive. Also, the supplement inadvertently becomes a memory support for the who, as in the case of flint, where the act of cutting a stone preserves the gestures of cutting in the flint. The preserved gestures of cutting the stone imprinted in the flint can instruct someone else how to cut the stone with the flint in the future without observing the initial cutting of the stone, or having the initial cutter present to teach them. In this sense, a memory support has been constructed inadvertently through the unintentional preservation of the gestures of cutting the stone, with the flint effectively externalizing the knowledge of how to cut a stone with flint. The ability of the prosthetic to preserve memory beyond the human is called external memory because it is external to the memory of one’s immediate consciousness or nervous system and one’s genetic memory,



which have no way of communicating with each other. The prosthetic also serves to represent a more general class of things as encompassing the what or entities in general, which is in contradistinction to the who of the human subject, and which mutually constitute each other.

Moreover, it is a particularly puzzling claim that the prosthetic serves to constitute the essence of the human who. One may raise the objection to this claim of Stiegler's that it seems to be inherently contradictory, since the prosthetic is of human devising. It would seem that what is essential to something cannot be prosthetic. A prosthesis is traditionally understood as an addition to something which it supplements or aids when it falls short of attaining its full and proper being. Therefore, one could suggest that a prosthesis reveals privation of the essence of what it supplements, and is not involved in the true *eidōs* or Idea of what a thing truly is. Under this objection, the prosthetic should only come into play when something does not exemplify its true *eidōs*. However, Stiegler's seeming contradictory use of the word 'prosthesis' does not mean that our investigation into Stiegler's philosophy of technology should come to an end so soon after getting underway. Instead, such a contradiction manifests the deeper and more profound sense of Stiegler's philosophy.

The seemingly contradictory use of the term 'prosthesis' by Stiegler reveals the challenge to traditional ontology that Stiegler is posing, and his attempt to work in a tradition that has a transformed understanding of ontology. Stiegler is not using the traditional Platonic conception of essence as *eidōs*. Essence, for Stiegler, does not mean a static Idea in heaven to which imperfect

beings in the realm of coming-to-be and passing-away participate, but never fully emulate in our temporal world. The transformed sense of essence that Stiegler is drawing on takes after the Kantian tradition in that the prosthetic is transcendental for Stiegler. The prosthetic is transcendental in that it is the condition of the possibility of there being human subjects at all.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Stiegler's transformed sense of essence takes after Heidegger, in that the prosthetic allows for what it means to be human to reveal itself in time insofar as this revealing is intrinsically historical. This means that there is no full and proper being of human being, no *eidos* of what it truly is, which is revealed in or outside time. Instead, the human essence is simply the temporal revelation itself of the relation of mutual constitution of who and what without *eidos* or *telos* except as a regulative ideal. For Stiegler, the prosthetic only has its sense and meaning within a larger horizon of sense and intelligibility. The prosthetic is also transcendental, not in the strict Kantian sense, but in a Derridian sense. I see the contrast of the understanding of the transcendental between Derrida and Kant to be one in which the transcendental, for Derrida, is not an always already present stable set of categories or principles that exist abstractly within the subject's faculty of the understanding.<sup>16</sup> Instead, the prosthetic as transcendental lacks an origin or

---

<sup>15</sup> The notion of the Kantian transcendental is used generally here to signify the condition of the possibility of something because for Kant what is transcendental serves to constitute objects of our experience from the forms of intuition and the categories of the understanding.

<sup>16</sup> The abstractness and static presence of the categories of the understanding is even further exemplified if one recognizes that the categories must be located outside of the subject because of the role they play in the Transcendental Deduction as making possible any combination, and so as responsible for the unity of apperception and so the transcendental ego. If this is the case and they cannot be located in the transcendental ego they only become more abstractly universal and disembodied. The bottom line is that Kant cannot account for his own theoretical philosophy on its own terms, which was the objection of post-Kantians like Fichte and Schelling. The break with Stiegler's conception of the transcendental then becomes even clearer because the categories are

stability, and is constituted in and through a constituting relation with the human subject because it lacks absolute presence, and so comes to resemble less of a transcendental relation and more of one of mutual constitution.

A further challenge to traditional ontology that Stiegler asserts is that the history of the human and the technical are the same, and that both technics and the human are equiprimordial in the constitution of this shared history.<sup>17</sup> Stiegler says that “*the pursuit of the evolution of the living by other means than life* – which is what the history of technics consists in, from the first flaked pebbles to today, a history that is also the history of humanity – a statement that will lead us to the unusual concept of ‘epiphylogenesis’” (“Technics and Time vol.1” p.135). What is the relation of the history of the human to the history of technics? They are not merely coincidental, but in fact historically co-invent and structure each other and lead to the emergence of one another. Stiegler proclaims this relation by saying that “a history of technics – which is the invention of the human. As object as well as subject. The technical inventing the human the human inventing the technical. Technics as inventive as well as invented. This hypothesis destroys the traditional thought of technics, from Plato to Heidegger and beyond” (“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 137). The traditional thought of technics invoked here is the thought that technics is secondary or merely a supplement to pure presence or being. Heidegger can be grouped into this tradition for Stiegler because he takes truth or revealing to be more primordial than technics and its

---

prior to the subject and given ontological priority, whereas the prosthetic and the human are in a fundamental interplay without a definitive origin.

<sup>17</sup> Although, this view of a zoo-technological characterization of human being is not new with Stiegler, but it is shared by Karl Marx and Benjamin Franklin.

essence, which is for him one mode of truth or revealing, and one that is extremely negative and destructive in its modern form, so much so that Heidegger calls it danger as such.

The unique relationship of mutual constitution of the *who* and the prosthetic is further explained and described by Stiegler when he says:

the conclusion must be drawn that it is rather the evolution of the *what* that has a return effect on the *who* and governs to a certain extent its own differentiation: the *who* is not differentiated like the other living beings; it is differentiated by the nonliving (and a deferral of death by this differentiation in death), by organized but inorganic matter, the *what*. How else to explain the evolution of instrumental stereotypes, if not at the level of anticipation, since instrumentality is no more than quasi-zoological, regulated as it is in its production and its differentiation by the fact of “genetic collapse”? The question of technics is the question of time.

(“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 154)

This passage succinctly expresses the relation of the *who* and the *what*. Their relation is a matter of differentiation. The *who* becomes differentiated from itself and reflected into itself by the *what*, and the *what* becomes differentiated from itself by the anticipation of the *who*. Therefore, the anticipation of the *who* makes possible the *what*, and so the question of technics is a question of time because anticipation is fundamentally temporal. The *what* requires the anticipation of the

who, and so technics is a question of time, because the initial possibility of anticipation allows for the tool, understood as an example of technology as what stands apart from the human as the organized inorganic, to be made with a future purpose of use in mind. The anticipation of the who also provides the necessary foresight needed to conceptualize and order the steps involved in tool-making before construction begins.

However, there is also a second level of anticipation involved in tool production. There is a second level of anticipation involved because the tool has the ability to form a stereotype or form that can be preserved beyond the immediate memory of the manufacturer of the tool. So animals (e.g. apes on termite heaps) use what nature provides in the moment as tools; prosthetic man makes tools in advance and keeps them on hand, which inform and dictate further anticipations. Also, the tool can form something that can be reused and guide future production of more tools like it beyond the immediate manufacture/instruction by the original producer/user of the tool. The tool can become a stereotype and guide future tool production regardless of the intention of the initial toolmaker, or in the absence of any intention for this purpose by the initial toolmaker. By allowing for a future beyond the initial toolmaker the tool stereotype opens up a new domain of anticipation. The new domain of anticipation that the tool stereotype opens up is the new possibility of a multi-generational form of anticipation “in which the form of anticipation itself undergoes transformation, is itself broadened out, and in which the human (be)comes (to) itself, becoming only what the technical becomes” (“Technics and

Time vol.1” p. 154). The human becomes what the technical becomes because, insofar as the technical exists and because of the way it exists, there is a more expanded futural dimension opened for the human. Likewise, the technical determines in what mode the future is projected.

One may argue that the initial human possibility of anticipation is the root of the second technical level of anticipation, and so the second level of anticipation is derived from the first. However, considered in terms of the ontology of historicity, which Stiegler assumes and which structures our present discussion, this possibility cannot be abstractly posited as an essential characteristic of the human. Instead, one must understand that the human only anticipates insofar as it actualizes this anticipation in the production of tools. This is a different thesis than Karl Marx’s famous thesis that human beings define themselves and make history when they first produce the means of life, while being an appropriation of this thesis.

Stiegler’s motivation is transcendental in that he takes for granted Heidegger’s view of the essence of the human being as projecting possibilities of ontological meaning, and seeks to further ground Dasein’s transcendence, and ability to project future possibilities of meaning. For Stiegler, as for Marx and Heidegger, humans are what they do, but Stiegler thinks what humans do primarily is project possibilities of ontological meaning instead of being thoroughly material and so ontic producers of their means of life that then end up constituting the human’s self-understanding. Yet, Stiegler sees the condition of the possibility of the projection of ontological meaning as rooted in an original

rupture, i.e., an original differentiation and exteriorization of Dasein from immediate nature that is in fact not original and does not have an interior (i.e., there is no immediate nature, subject, or entity in itself preceding the rupture) produced through the original factual linguistic/technical emergence that produces a unified horizon of sense and temporality. The original rupture both opens up the self-defining actions of tool production, and the human as one who ecstatically and temporally projects ontological possibilities of meaning.

Another objection one may make, is that the technical or the prosthetic is a narrower subset of the what or entities in general, and cannot signify the what or fill the place of entities in general or “nature”. Put simply, the prosthetic is originally something we make, and therefore is not ontologically identical with the given things of nature that we do not make. Yet, technics must fill the place of entities in general for Stiegler to be able to solve the problem of the discrepancy in Heidegger’s account of entities (as it occurs in the interpretation of Heidegger I have expounded in the previous section). To resolve Heidegger’s discrepancy, one must show that entities can ground the ontological, which is done through an investigation of entities as they are independent of Dasein or what Heidegger calls “nature”. Part of resolving the above objection is the recognition that “nature” is not thought of here as raw unmade materials, but as a formal place holder for entities as they are before and independently of Dasein that both constitute, and are constituted by, Dasein. The prosthetic can fill this role as long as it is shown to be an entity independent of Dasein, which for my argument’s sake, is the entity that is equiprimordial with and which grounds and

is grounded by the ontological and Dasein. The prosthetic fills this role for Stiegler as the most original and primordial form of entity, which grounds and is grounded by Dasein and the ontological such that the openness of world and the disclosedness of Dasein can allow for an emergence of all intraworldly entities so that nature as we commonly conceive it can be made manifest as, e.g., pine trees, black holes, mountains, or subatomic particles.

Furthermore, Heidegger would argue against Stiegler that it is the fundamental finitude of the human and his Being-towards-death that is responsible for anticipation as constituting a finite temporal horizon for the human and not technics, and, more fundamentally, it is the ecstatic temporality of Dasein that is responsible for our ability to project death as a future possibility of Dasein. Yet, Stiegler makes a convincing point that a deferral of death or a differentiation of death is necessary for death to be realized (both recognized and made actual) as a finite horizon, which would mean the tool as a factual mode of exteriorization and differentiation is necessary for a recognition and constitution of a relation to death. Moreover, Stiegler would argue that an initial rupture or a ripping of the human from immediacy is necessary for its ecstasies, i.e., for its never being self-identical, but always being transcendence. Stiegler is trying to explain the initial possibility of the non-self-identity of human being. For Stiegler, the nonliving needs to reflect the human to allow it to gain separation from its natural immediacy enabling the human to recognize what death is and actualizing our Being-towards-death. Heidegger would respond by saying that we are always already in a relationship with death in our Being as Dasein, but



Stiegler wants to more comprehensively account for how this is so given our experience of the world.

The prosthetic most fundamentally takes the form of writing, which is for Stiegler also the most basic form of technology, but, generally speaking, the prosthetic encompasses any manifestation of life by means other than life, and so allows for life to transcend itself. So then the question becomes: “how does writing, as an exemplary form of technology and prosthesis for Stiegler, constitute the human?” Stiegler’s answer to this question is interesting for my purposes because he attempts to show how prosthesis allows for the human conceived in a specific way. Stiegler engages in his explanation of why the prosthetic is necessary for the human essence by appropriating the conception of the human that Heidegger professes; namely, the human understood as Dasein. Therefore, Stiegler’s project can be understood as explaining how technology allows for Dasein, as shown and introduced above in terms of the what accounting for the who and vice versa.

Dasein is understood for Stiegler, as well as for Heidegger, as fundamentally being what it does. What Dasein does primordially is project possibilities of ontological meaning. This projecting of ontological possibilities is essentially futural or protentional in that this projection of ontological possibilities of meaning opens the infinite and indeterminate future horizon. This means that Stiegler accepts Heidegger’s characterization of Dasein, but rejects the idea of finitude upon which it is based. The opening of this futural ontological horizon is anticipation. Dasein is also its there, and this is etymologically expressed in the

German word '*Da-sein*' which is literally translated as "there-being". Heidegger emphasizes that Dasein is the "there" of Being understood as Dasein being the locus and medium for the advent of Being itself. The there-being of Dasein essentially includes the past in the form of cultural-historical structures, such as language, that enable the ability of Dasein to project meaning into the indeterminate futural horizon.

Stiegler says of Dasein's temporality, and of the relation of Dasein's past and future, that "Dasein is temporal: it has a past on the basis of which it can anticipate and thereby be. Inherited, this past is 'historical': my past is not my past; it is first that of my ancestors, although it is in essential relation with the heritage of a past already there before me that my own past is established" ("Technics and Time vol. 1" p. 5). This quotation highlights that Dasein essentially includes a past that Dasein has not lived, but which ultimately constitutes Dasein by allowing Dasein to anticipate and project future possibilities. A past that is not mine establishes my own past because a past that is not mine provides the greater framework in which my personal past can gain intelligibility. Past culture, tradition, and language allow me to articulate my past, look back on events that have befallen me, and to distinguish and differentiate between these events. Furthermore, I can only distinguish my personal idiosyncratic past against the background of a larger human history without which it would not appear.

The fact that a past which Dasein has not lived plays an essential role in constituting Dasein's essence is the taking off point from which Stiegler launches

his comprehensive account of technology, and his critique of Heidegger's characterization of the ontological as more primordial than the ontic. Stiegler's point about the fundamental importance of the past for constituting Dasein is a valid one; however, Heidegger would rebut that Dasein is not directly determined by the past in this sense. It is actually my past, only in my present acts of appropriation, and so this past is inherently interrelated to my present as Heidegger attests in setting up temporality as an ecstatic, articulated unity. The past is the past only as it enters into and structures my current "existence". This criticism is a central one, which Stiegler must address if he is to show that he adequately understands Heidegger's account of the temporality of Dasein. As I will further elaborate below, Stiegler claims that it is cultural-historical structures of technics, most fully exemplified in the possibility of writing, that allow for one's present acts of appropriation of a past because technics/writing enables any possibility of a sedimentation and reactivation of past meaning.

Stiegler's philosophy of technology and his criticism of Heidegger work by appropriating Heidegger's conception of the human being as Dasein, and by endeavouring to explain how it is that Dasein can have a past. Stiegler's argument takes off from the foundation that the possibility of Dasein consists in the possibility of a past. Stiegler then argues that this is because Dasein is its futural projecting of ontological possibilities, which depends on it having a past. Moreover, Stiegler asserts that Dasein's own factual past depends on the possibility of a past that is not its own. The past that Dasein has not lived and Dasein's own past are not ontic properties of Dasein that it has "by nature".

Instead, Stiegler claims that the possibility of opening the horizon of a past that is not Dasein's own depends on having a heritage, or the possibility of traditionalization, which depends upon sedimentation of meaning.

Sedimentation of meaning is made possible by the possibility of writing, or the possibility of a memory external to our own epigenetic memory. The possibility of what we write not just being idiosyncratic squiggly lines, but instead being infinitely repeatable into the future, and capable of separating meaning from a single temporal moment of initial insight, a particular person's memory, and a community, is the possibility of ideal sense or the supratemporality of meaning. This then makes Dasein essentially dependent on the possibility of writing, or understood more broadly, the possibility of external memorization, which Stiegler understands as technics in its fullest sense. For Stiegler, every tool is a form of "external memorization". Therefore, Dasein is essentially prosthetic, and any possibility, both past and future, depend upon technicity as what essentially bestows temporality upon Dasein. This then is how Stiegler can say of Technics and Time that "the object of this work is technics, apprehended as the horizon of all possibility to come and of all possibility of a future" ("Technics and Time vol. 1" p. ix).

Stiegler recognizes the necessity for Dasein's essence of having an external memory. Yet, how is this external memory reactivatable? Stiegler raises this problem without fully addressing it when he asks "where is the memory of the stereotype kept, if not in the material trace of the stereotype in which the pre-existing tool itself consists, repeated, duplicated by its 'maker' and guiding the

latter much more than being guided by him or her?” (“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 158). This simple answer does not stand up to thorough scrutiny. Memory cannot simply reside in the material trace because to be repeated and duplicated by its “maker,” it must be interpreted within a horizon of sense; otherwise, the material trace holds no significance and so is not reactivatable. Reactivation implies significance, as the example of writing clearly brings out when one considers that any written words outside of a context of interpretation are simply squiggly lines. Words must be reiterable and reactivatable through interpretation to be effectively memorized. Yet, Stiegler is right in the sense that memory must reside in the material trace because factuality is necessary for external memorization. The memory of the stereotype cannot reside in the individual subject because, in that case, there is not effective externalization of memory, and so it would not allow for the possibility of writing or communicating across generations and epochs. However, written communication across generations *is* a real possibility. Sorting out these meditations leads us to the work of Edmund Husserl and Jacques Derrida’s interpretation of Husserl.

## CHAPTER THREE:

AN APPROPRIATION OF HUSSERL AND DERRIDA TO EXPLAIN HOW  
TECHNICS IS NECESSARY FOR SEDIMENTATION OF MEANING

After establishing the importance of retention of sense for the constitution of Dasein, Stiegler asks how this fundamental retention of sense is possible. In doing so, Stiegler invokes the phenomenological problem of ‘traditionality’ or sedimentation of meaning. Stiegler invokes this problem because of the ontological transformation, which he shares with Husserl and Heidegger, which involves seeing truth and sense as fundamentally historical.<sup>18</sup> Since there is no stepping outside the horizon of history and time for Stiegler, as opposed to Platonism, there is no transcendent realm of Ideas in which sense can reside waiting to be unlocked. The point is that such a stepping outside history is not denied on traditional sceptical grounds, with all the attendant problems of historical relativism that raises, but it is denied because the very idea of such a stepping outside no longer makes sense. Instead, Stiegler recognizes that because truth, Spirit, and cultural forms are historically constituted this raises the problem of how the originary sense of our cultural forms is maintained, unified, and able to endure so that sense and meaning can be passed on allowing sedimented cultural forms to make sense at all. By explaining how this sedimentation and unification

---

<sup>18</sup> The term ‘historicity’ should not be confused here with Husserl’s use of the term as the transcendental structure of history that allows for the transmission of sense, and sedimentation. Instead, historicity is understood in opposition to traditional metaphysics as the historical constitution of truth and Being, which is an unintelligible idea for traditional metaphysics, and to which Husserl cannot reconcile himself. I will explain how Husserl’s commitment to traditional ontology forces him to posit the Idea in the Kantian sense as a supratemporal absolute that makes possible empirical history.

of sense is possible, Stiegler allows for the intelligibility of the retentional aspect of Dasein. Therefore, we are led to ask: “how do the prosthetic and writing allow for the past retentional horizon as an essential aspect of Dasein to make Stiegler’s project work?” Answering this question involves drawing on Derrida’s and Husserl’s understanding of writing and the transcendental field.

Husserl contends that supratemporality of meaning depends upon a universal and unitary horizon of sense so that we can have historicity as the structural possibility of retention, sedimentation, and reactivation of sense. However, for Husserl, this unitary, universal horizon of sense (understood for him as the transcendental field or transcendental subjectivity) is intelligible only as an Idea in the Kantian sense.<sup>19</sup> The transcendental field is an Idea in the Kantian sense for Husserl because it cannot intelligibly exist as a traditional Platonic Idea because this presupposes a realm independent of time and the world, which Husserl does not accept. Instead, an Idea in the Kantian sense does not exist originally in a realm separate from time and space, but is essentially tied to fact, and is an infinite task or *telos* that we always work toward, but never attain. However, the Idea in the Kantian sense depends upon the finitude of Dasein, which I will illustrate in terms of Derrida’s critique of Husserl’s use of the Idea in

---

<sup>19</sup> I am not using the Idea in the Kantian sense in its technical meaning among “mainstream” readers of Kant as something that is thought, but without any empirical or objective verification. Instead, I am using it as re-interpreted by Derrida via Husserl, and resembling what Kant calls in his moral philosophy a regulative ideal in the Critique of Practical Reason. In this text Kant uses the term ‘regulative ideal’ to refer to a sense that is necessary to make sense of our ethical experience, and toward which we aim namely: God, Immortality, and Absolute Happiness. Belief in God and immortality, although not objectively verifiable, are nonetheless justified in serving to make sense of our moral experience. The highest good, as the perfect unity of moral perfection and absolute happiness, not just absolute happiness, which could in itself be underserved, is our infinite task. We never attain this regulative ideal, but we only ever infinitely try to approximate and get closer to it.

the Kantian sense. The conclusion I aim to establish through an investigation of Derrida's critique of Husserl is that the Idea in the Kantian sense only works as absence that is a sign of the presence of the infinite, which I will use to support and interpret Stiegler's critique of Heidegger.

Derrida says of writing and of the transcendental field that:

The possibility of writing will assure the absolute traditionalization of the object, its absolute ideal Objectivity – i.e., the purity of its relation to a universal transcendental subjectivity. Writing will do this by emancipating sense from its actually present evidence for a real subject and from its present circulation within a determined community... without the ultimate objectification that writing permits, all language would as yet remain captive of the de facto and actual intentionality of a speaking subject or community of speaking subjects. By absolutely virtualizing dialogue writing creates a kind of autonomous transcendental field from which every present subject can be absent. (“Origins of Geometry” p. 87)

In this passage, Derrida explains how writing guarantees and opens the possibility of traditionalization. Traditionalization is the possibility of retaining the past sense of ideal objects by allowing for the separation of sense from three different moments of subjectivity. The three different moments of subjectivity from which the sense of an ideal object is separated are: separation from the intratemporal, immediate intuition allowing for the possibility of repetition at a different time



within the same subject, separation from the individual to allow for communication within a community, and separation from a community and attainment of the transcendental field. Moreover, the separation of sense from subjectivity as such to allow for the supratemporality of sense constitutes what it means to be ideal objectivity as such. Therefore, writing constitutes the essence of objectivity by allowing for the most radical separation and transcendence of sense from subjectivity. The true essence of subjectivity is also constituted in and through the separation of sense from the subject because the fullest expression of subjectivity is attained in its fullest separation from objectivity. Yet, one may wonder how this analysis of Husserl by Derrida relates to Stiegler's philosophy of prosthesis and subjectivity. I believe Stiegler closely employs Derrida's interpretation of Husserl in his project, except he considers writing to be a primary but specific form of technics in general. With this exception in mind, Stiegler does still employ the conception of an original rupture as a separation of fact and sense creating ideal sense, and the radical separation of ideal sense from subjectivity serving to constitute subjectivity as such, while at the same time constituting what it is to be objectivity in its fullest sense evoking a relationship of mutual constitution.

One may also wonder whether I am not simply imposing a reading of Derrida and Husserl onto Stiegler's philosophy of technology. The importance of understanding Husserl's view of writing for interpreting Stiegler is made obvious when Stiegler says, in a remark encompassing his whole project:

I will show through a critical reading of Heidegger here and of Husserl in the second volume that when life becomes technical it is also to be understood as ‘retentional finitude’. This retention, insofar as it is finite, is caught in the dynamic that a technical tendency determines. It is what neither existential analytic nor phenomenology could think, although the latter at the end of its Husserlian versions confronts the problem under the name of ‘writing’. (“Technics and Time vol.1” p.17)

Here, Stiegler asserts that the becoming technical of life is also the incorporating of a retentional finitude, and in fact this is a different expression of the same thing. The advent of the technical opens the possibility of primordially living the past in the present or the presence of what is absent. Yet, since our technical ability to live the past in the present is not an absolute recall of the past being made present, but is dependent on technology, it is technology that structures and controls its dynamic. Stiegler also makes clear in the above passage that the relation of his philosophy of technics to Husserl’s philosophy of writing is that they both take up the same problem. It is interesting to note that Stiegler says of Husserl’s confrontation with the problem that it is “under the name of ‘writing’” which means that Stiegler takes “writing” as simply a title Husserl uses, or merely the guise that the problem takes for Husserl, who had not completely worked out what the problem fully entailed. Contrary to Husserl, Stiegler argues that the problem is more accurately depicted in terms of the technical.

The problem for Husserl, which Stiegler takes up, is one of the origin of ideal sense. Husserl refuses to invoke a transcendent realm of essences or Ideas to explain the origin of sense because he recognizes that sense arises historically, and only after this origination in history can become in certain cases omnitemporal, objective, and ahistorical. Therefore, the problem of the origin of sense becomes for him: “how is it that ideal sense is created and preserved through an exteriorization achieved factually in time by means of a material incarnation?” The problem of the factual, historical origin of ideal sense is where I interpret Stiegler as beginning to deal with Heidegger’s problem of a factual grounding of the essence or Being of entities, insofar as it deals with the problem of the absolute purest expression of objectivity and subjectivity in their ontological sense arising from the purely factual. Stiegler states this problem, and the relation of technics and symbolic activity, in the context of a debate as to the necessity of the origin of language and tool use being a result of creative consciousness or not when he says that “the issue, on the contrary, is symbolic activity, insofar as it accompanies technical activity from the very beginning ‘technics and language being two aspects of the same property’ (the process of exteriorization) (114). This individual level will therefore become that of differentiation in general – of the symbol as well as of tools, which moreover does not presuppose a creative consciousness” (“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 171).

Furthermore, Stiegler says of the role of symbolization and technics in making exteriorization possible that “in theory the progress of the cortical fan excludes neither that archaic technical evolution already supposes the

exteriorization of memory – in the tool itself, but also in full-fledged anticipation, albeit in a mode essentially veiled for us. The opposition between technical and nontechnical intelligence is practical for descriptive purposes, but superficial” (“Technics and Time vol. 1” p. 173). These two passages establish that Stiegler treats the technical and the symbolic as being tied together as “aspects of the same property” and so they play the same role in exteriorization, which is that they both allow for differentiation in general. Also, Stiegler is trying to establish in the above passages that intentional creative consciousness presupposes the exteriorization of memory that makes possible creative consciousness and any intelligence whatsoever. Therefore, the origin of ideal sense factually in time is not about how creative consciousness can create tools or writing, because creative consciousness presupposes these two possibilities.

Moreover, Stiegler says of the origin of ideal sense through the rupture that “an inscription of memory through rupture, the inscription of the rupture in memory. The rupture is but the memory of the rupture, is but the effects of the traces it engenders” (“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 170). This passage describes the same realization Husserl has about the origin of geometry, which is that a backward temporality is required for its possibility. The origin of geometry is only an origin in the wake of the sense created, which allows one to look back on the event of the origin and make it intelligible. Therefore, the retention of sense comes first ontologically, and the factual event of origin second. This will also aid in understanding how Stiegler deals with the Heideggerian conception of history and Being, and how he can justify his claim of the equiprimordiality of

fact and sense. To be clear, the view of fact that I am expressing is that “fact” is not a matter of what happens contingently in time, but any and everything that is an object of consciousness, and even such that the paradigmatic fact is nothing contingent at all but the omnitemporal and supratemporal “objects” of mathematics.

Stiegler brings out the problem of chronology and ontological priority whose solution involves backward temporality, when he says of Derrida that:

All of this points primarily to life in general: there is time from the moment there is life, whereas Derrida also writes, just before the Leroi-Gourhan quotation, that ‘the trace is the *différance* that opens appearing and the signification (articulating) the living onto the non-living in general (which is) the origin of all repetition’ (Derrida 1974, 65). To articulate the living onto the nonliving, is that not already a gesture from after the rupture when you are already no longer in pure *phusis*? There is something of an indecision around *différance*: it is the history of life in general, but this history is (only) given (as) (dating from) after the rupture, whereas the rupture is, if not nothing, then at least much less than what the classic divide between humanity and animality signifies” (“Technics and Time vol. 1” p. 139).

Stiegler is explaining how the trace allows for exteriorization as an articulation that makes possible appearing and signification, which brings to mind the already

discussed role of fact in establishing sense. It is the possibility of an exteriorization of meaning as an original separation of sense that is made possible through a factual inscription or trace. This factual inscription, which is also the possibility of a sedimentation of meaning, in turn makes possible time, repetition, and appearing. In this sense, the fundamental importance of technics is revealed as the trace that makes possible an exteriorization of meaning, and makes possible a separation of sense from fact.

However, Stiegler also invokes the very compelling problem of the explanation of the rupture in the way I have described it above. The problem is whether the rupture is made possible by articulation, which itself is made possible through the exteriorization of meaning that has as its condition of possibility the trace, or whether this articulation and the trace are made possible only after the rupture once they are situated in a horizon of sense, and so they cannot allow for the rupture to happen. The solution to this problem is the idea of backward temporality, which is involved in the origin of sense. In the origin of sense, sense makes its appearance as that which is idealized and separated from natural immediacy, and which is capable of reflecting and conserving the factual for Dasein. Stiegler is suggesting that not only sense is created in the rupture, but life and temporality are also created at the same time. Any looking backward, and an ordering of the chronology of facts involved in the creation of the origin of sense, must necessarily happen retrospectively in terms of the sense created, and so it is actually what happened later. This shows the co-primacy of sense for factuality, in that sense allows for the significance of the fact of an original event, but, as has

been shown, an original factual instantiation is necessary for the possibility of any original creation of sense.

Backward temporality is necessary for explaining the rupture, also understood as the origination of exteriorization, which is necessary to show how, in contrast to Heidegger, there are facts or entities before the history of Being, and at the same time not before the history of Being. There is a realm of natural immediacy before the rupture for Stiegler. Yet, this realm of natural immediacy is only actualized after the rupture in terms of a horizon of sense, which makes it intelligible and allows it to appear as what it is. In terms of the ontology of historicity, the bringing to appearance of natural immediacy means that it is brought into Being. Yet, there must be fact to allow for the rupture. This is not breaking with Heidegger's ontology of historicity by positing an originary realm that is abstract and transcendent, or which is constituted as what it is statically in terms of a permanent unchanging essence that does not require a framework of meaning within which to allow for it to come-to-presence. It is not positing facts before the rupture in terms of an essentialist ontology.

The facts are only actualized themselves in terms of a fundamental horizon of sense or context of meaning. However, such a positing of an original realm of facts is trying to think Heidegger's ontology of historicity further by showing how, for there to be any possibility of a context of meaning in which to interpret these facts, there must be a factual instantiation to allow for a factual original rupture. There must be a factual original rupture because if one takes historicity seriously one cannot abstract Being, or any possibility of origin, from

the factual and historical, and so defy Heidegger's philosophical project of ultimately situating an understanding of Being as Being-in-the-world. Yet, Stiegler is questioning Heidegger's prioritizing of the ontological over the ontic, the intelligibility of having the ontological perform the sole grounding function to the exclusion of the ontic, and, more fundamentally, what priority itself means.

Stiegler is asserting a relation of mutual constitution of the ontic and the ontological, which, as has been noted above, Stiegler can be criticized for in his changing of the concept of the ontological and misunderstanding of the ontological difference to the point that he fails to engage Heidegger effectively, or read Heidegger charitably. Stiegler's justification for doing this is that by showing how the ontic can constitute the ontological essentially, it more fully establishes and requires the independence of the ontic from the ontological. Once the ontic is shown to be independent in its taking on the role of constituting the ontological, while being mutually constituted by the ontological, then technics, as the most primordial form of the ontic, can fulfill the place of "nature" in the interpretation of Heidegger I have defended above in the first section.

Stiegler puts forth the schema for his argument about the role of writing and tools in allowing for the possibility of history and the already-there, which are both understood as playing the role of the trace, when he says "now if it is true that only epigenetic sedimentation can be the already-there, this is only possible when the transmission allowing for the sediments is of an absolutely technical, nonliving essence: made possible by the organized albeit inorganic matter that the trace always is – be it a matter of tool or of writing – let us say one of an *organon*



in general” (“Technics and Time vol. 1” p. 141). So writing for Husserl, and technics in general for Stiegler, opens a virtual horizon of sense that allows for traditionalization and retentionality by making possible sedimentation of meaning across generations.

For Husserl, writing allows for the separation of sense or meaning from the moment a subject has the originary conception of this sense, and allows the subject to repeat that moment of insight in its sense, but not its factuality, i.e., in the sense of a contingent occurrence. Writing enables repetition of the original insight and in doing so allows for a separation of the moment of insight from the subject in that moment of insight. Moreover, writing allows for the separation of sense from the individual subjectivity of the author, and allows it to be communicated to another subject so that another subject can share the insight of the author. For instance, a community can share in Pythagoras’ discovery of the theorem:  $a^2+b^2=c^2$ . However, Stiegler contends that these three separations of sense, from the initial moment of insight within an individual subject, from the individual subjectivity itself, and from one’s community and epoch are not exclusive to writing, but are what technics accomplishes in general.

The unique separation of sense from one’s current community at a point in time most fully allows for the possibility of objectivity and sense because it most fully separates sense from a subject. This creates the possibility that sense can be passed on to other communities at different times, and it creates the possibility of the sedimentation of meaning, which in doing so opens up the virtual space of the transcendental field. The transcendental field is not completely transcendent of

the subject or of factuality, such as the Platonic Ideas are, but requires a factual instantiation in the first place to exist at all. However, the truth of the sense elevated to the transcendental field is independent of any factual linguistic incarnation. It is important to emphasize the radical sense of “possibility” that is invoked here. It is not simply that because Pythagoras wrote the Pythagorean theorem down that today I can easily access this mathematical formula, and conveniently use it to calculate values of a triangle so that I do not personally have to rediscover the Pythagorean theorem.

Writing does not simply allow for easy access and easy conformity of my mind with the mathematical essence of the Pythagorean theorem. Instead, writing also opens up the possibility of any Ideal objects whatsoever, which is the possibility of communication omnitemporally throughout history, and therefore allows for the possibility of history as such understood as sense history. History is understood as sense history because phenomenology shows that for the facts of history to make sense as facts they have to be situated within a unitary horizon of sense to appear and so be facts at all. This radical sense of possibility is invoked because of the ontological framework that Husserl and Stiegler implement. Stiegler and Husserl argue that horizons of possibility do not just fall from the sky, but, in accordance with historicity, they come to be concretely in time.

I have so far established that the possibility of the sedimentation of meaning makes possible sense history, understood as the domain of culture and Spirit. Stiegler makes an argument for how the possibility of sedimentation

allows for Dasein, and for the cultural-historical domain that the existence of Dasein depends upon for its temporality, when he says:

What Heidegger calls the already-there, constitutive of the temporality of Dasein, is this past that I never lived but that is nevertheless my past, without which I never would have had any past of my own. Such a structure of inheritance and transmission, which is the very ground of facticity itself since tradition can always conceal from me the sense of the origin that it alone can transmit to me, presupposes that phenomenon of life *qua* Dasein becomes singular in the history of the living to the extent that, for Dasein, the epigenetic layer of life, far from being lost with the living when it dies, conserves and sediments itself, passes itself down in “the order of survival” [*survivance*] and to posterity as a gift as well as a debt, that is, as destiny. This is not a ‘program’ in the quasi-determinist biological sense, but a cipher in which the whole of Dasein’s existence is caught; this epigenetic sedimentation, a memorization of what has come to pass, is what is called the past, what we shall name the *epiphylogenesis* of man, meaning the conservation, accumulation, and sedimentation of successive epigeneses, mutually articulated. Epiphylogenesis is a break with pure life, in that in the latter, epigenesis is precisely what is not conserved ... even if this is not without effect on the genetic selection in which evolution consists... Epiphylogenesis

bestows its identity upon the human individual: the accents of his speech, the style of his approach, the force of his gesture, the unity of his world. (“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 140)

The first thing to establish in explicating this passage is to explain what Stiegler means by the epiphylogenetic and the epigenetic. Epiphylogenesis is Stiegler’s third type of mediate communication across time, and is also called tertiary memory for Stiegler. Primary memory is the individual subject’s personal intentional field that dies when he or she dies also known as epigenetic memory. Secondary memory for Stiegler is one’s genes or genetic memory. Tertiary memory, or the epiphylogenetic, originally constitutes what it means to be human in that it separates the human from natural immediacy, and in doing so allows for a fundamental exteriorization of the human from itself. It creates the possibility of the noema understood as the possibility of the object being for consciousness.

In the wake of this explanation of Stiegler’s terminology, the preceding passage can be seen to show that Stiegler thinks that the fundamental retentional aspect of Dasein is made possible in time through technics. Dasein’s essence is made possible through technics because Dasein is fundamentally temporal and its past is made possible by a past that it has not lived, but which is its always already-there understood as its past cultural formations. These past cultural formations enable its futural projecting of ontological meaning, and these past cultural formations depend upon the preservation of sense. I understand the last sentence in the passage above to be emphasizing that the epiphylogenetic makes possible the cultural-historical formations that make possible the individual

Dasein; namely, “the accents of his speech, the style of his approach, the force of his gesture, the unity of his world”. Dasein is distinct for Stiegler in its ability to conserve and sediment its epigenesis, and then anticipate on this basis.

Stiegler also importantly recognizes that sedimentation is necessarily composed of movement and preservation. This is why the human is always a default, or a forgetting, and this is why he defines the human in terms of the myth of Prometheus. If we preserved everything infinitely, understood as the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present (i.e., the infinite as eternal),<sup>20</sup> there would be no movement because everything would be fully present. Humanity’s finitude is necessary for the movement of history in that forgetting is necessary for the structure of the human subject, and for sense history. Human finitude means that we cannot have the infinite, understood as the perfect self-sameness of the whole, fully present to us. Yet, we can have infinite horizons in our finitude, but only through the sign or the finite concept, which represents the infinite in the sense of the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present (i.e., the infinite as eternal) in terms of an Idea in the Kantian sense. If we had infinite preservation of sense there could be no movement of history. This is why Stiegler draws on the myth of Prometheus to exemplify the human essence, as well as the Meno paradox. When we look at our immediate phenomenological experience of the world we see that we question after things. Meno recognizes in dialogue with Socrates that if we already knew everything we would not have to ask or inquire, but if we knew nothing we would not ask at all because we would not be able to

---

<sup>20</sup> This is the classical definition of eternity, e.g., Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, V, vi.

begin to ask after anything. We must be in a situation of vague, partial knowing to make sense of our experience, and this forms for Stiegler an important starting-point for investigating the human.

Stiegler's account of the possibility of Dasein's past, and essential futural projecting of meaning being made possible by epiphylogenesis, sounds plausible. Yet, it would be more convincing if it directly addressed Heidegger's own considerations of heritage, and the past that is handed down. Heidegger conveys how he deals with historicity, and how he deals with the possibility of repeating a past that Dasein has not lived by saying:

Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate – that is to say, authentic historicity. It is not necessary that in resoluteness one should explicitly know the origin of the possibilities upon which that resoluteness projects itself. It is rather in Dasein's temporality, and there only, that there lies any possibility that the existentiell potentiality-for-Being upon which it projects itself can be gleaned explicitly from the way in which Dasein has been traditionally understood. The resoluteness which comes back to itself and hands itself down, then becomes the repetition of a possibility of existence that has come down to us. Repeating is handing down explicitly – that is to say, going back into the possibilities of the Dasein that has-been-there. The authentic repetition of a possibility of existence that has been – the possibility that Dasein may choose its hero – is grounded

existentially in anticipatory resoluteness; for it is in resoluteness that one first chooses the choice which makes one free for the struggle of loyally following in the footsteps of that which can be repeated. (“Being and Time” p. 437)

In this passage, Heidegger outlines the ontological priority he gives to Dasein as the locus of Being when he deals with heritage and the authentic repetition of a past that has been. Heidegger emphasizes that any possibility of access to a past that has already been, in contrast to Stiegler, depends primordially upon the temporality of Dasein, which is Dasein’s anticipatory resoluteness. Heidegger speaks of Dasein “handing itself down”, and not about the primary importance of technology for this process. This possibility of handing down, repetition, and heritage is grounded in resoluteness understood as Dasein’s own projecting onto its Being-guilty, and an open, ready understanding of its anxiety confronted head-on and not fled from into ontic entities. This authentic resoluteness and futural projecting is grounded in Dasein’s Being-towards-death as its extreme most limit of possibility that keeps Dasein from ever being whole as finite, and so holds open the future as an indeterminate horizon within which to meaningfully project possibilities. This projecting of possibilities is grounded in Dasein’s ecstatic temporal nature that is always outside itself and never coincidental, and so allows for an open horizon of a future, present, and a past. For Heidegger, Dasein’s temporality is the ground of any handing down of the past, and so any past Dasein has not lived.

It seems to perhaps be the case that Stiegler misinterprets what is fundamental to Heidegger about Dasein, which is the priority to Being of Dasein's resoluteness and understanding of Being, which places Dasein inextricably as the locus of Being. However, Stiegler is not misinterpreting Heidegger on this point; he is disagreeing with Heidegger. Stiegler is not disagreeing with Heidegger on the issue of what is prior, but on what priority itself means. Following Derrida, Stiegler seems to argue for an "origin after the fact". An "origin after the fact" is the idea that in trying to trace the factual origin of sense any ordering or understanding of the chronology of facts involved in the creation of sense must necessarily happen retrospectively in terms of the sense created, and so the factual origin is actually what happened later. This reveals the unintelligibility of having a single dominant origin, and so of the traditional conception of origin, because sense and fact are shown to be co-primary in that sense allows for the significance of the fact of an original event, but an original factual instantiation is necessary for any possibility of any original creation of sense. On the other hand, in the early Heidegger he is still looking for a grounding in Being. Yet, it would strengthen Stiegler's account to deal with this fundamental aspect of Heidegger's conception of the temporality of Dasein head-on, and perhaps more explicitly appropriate it as the way in which Dasein and the ontological ground the ontic. Since Stiegler does not address this issue head-on the success of Stiegler's account will strongly depend on its giving a more plausible and comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon of entities bolstered by Stiegler's different conception of what "priority" itself means. To further



justify Stiegler's account as being more comprehensive it is necessary to understand how Stiegler appropriates Husserl's Idea in the Kantian sense and Derrida's critique of Husserl.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

## THE IDEA IN THE KANTIAN SENSE AND THE SIGN

To make his argument convincing, Stiegler must find a different way of conceiving of horizontality than the finite form of Heidegger, or the infinite form of Husserl, while not sinking back into speculative metaphysics or “Platonism”. This is not to imply that Husserl and Heidegger share a conception of “horizon,” but that Stiegler develops a different conception than either of them, while borrowing from them. I have already explained what I mean by Heidegger’s finite form of horizontality constituted by our Being-towards-death and ecstatic temporality, which creates an open space within which a horizon of intelligibility can allow for Dasein’s projections of ontological meaning. This conception of horizon is as the ontological context of meaning (*Bedeutsamkeit*) on the basis of which beings are first manifest at all, and which for Heidegger is their effective reality, and it is a finite conception of horizon because it depends on Dasein’s finite temporality for its openness. By infinite horizontality, which is propounded by Edmund Husserl, I mean the Idea of a *telos* that makes possible an indefinitely unified horizon, which makes possible an infinite unity of sense as in the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present.

The possibility of the unification of any past sense and any future sense is enabled for Husserl by the structure of an infinite *telos*, understood as the Idea in the Kantian sense. The Idea in the Kantian sense is infinitely indeterminate as to its content, but it is infinitely unified as to its form. It is a *telos* or teleological

ought-to-be, which we are always approaching, but which we never reach. The Idea in the Kantian sense makes possible the transmission of sense historically because it provides a never-ending unified horizon against which diverse empirical facts can appear in terms of a single sense. Without this never-ending unified horizon empirical facts *as such* could not gain sense, and so would not be revealed to consciousness. This unified horizon also explains how a sense like the sense of geometry can stay unified without end into the future in the face of immeasurable changes to its subject matter and content.

This *telos*, i.e., the Idea in the Kantian sense, is also called Reason by Derrida, i.e., following Husserl's usage in the *Krisis*, and Derrida comments on this aspect of Husserl's philosophy when he says:

Even if certain expressions at times might suggest this, 'hidden Reason' is not an ability concealed in the shadows of a historical subjectivity or in the subworld of becoming. Reason is not some eternity at work in history: first because there is no history without Reason, i.e., no pure transmission of sense as the tradition of truth; then because (reciprocally) there is no Reason without history, i.e., without the concrete and instituting acts of transcendental subjectivity, without its objectifications and sedimentations.

("Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry" p. 144-145)

In this passage Derrida emphasizes that Reason is not an ahistorical positing or Platonic Idea that we can only reach if we transcend our worldly, historical

existence to glance things-in-themselves. Reason is necessarily instituted in “concrete and instituting acts of transcendental subjectivity” meaning as an ideal object Reason’s truth is not dependent on historical events, but it must first be concretely, historically incarnated to exist at all. Although, Reason is incarnate it is not strictly an ability of a conscious subject, but Reason is incarnate through an original rupture involving a factual, technical, or written instantiation. Yet, this original rupture and a history of facts only make sense in terms of a unified horizon of sense, understood as the Husserlian horizon of formally unified implicit intentional iterations of meaning of the same object extending ever-elusively into the future and the past, which is also called Reason here by Derrida. Therefore, nowhere is there a stable, single point of origin. It is this interpretation of sense and fact as mutually constitutive by Derrida that allows Stiegler to make possible the equiprimordiality of technics and a horizon of sense, and so work between the infinite horizontality of Husserl and the finite horizontality of Heidegger.

Derrida’s critique of the absolute presence of Husserl’s living present provides an interpretive framework that Stiegler invokes in his argument positing the prosthetic as essentially constitutive of the human, and the human as essentially constitutive of the prosthetic. Stiegler says that “it is because the who is defined by its retentional finitude: its memory being limited, essentially failing, radically forgetful (Epimetheus’ primary trait); it must be strengthened by supports that are not only its means of self-conservation but the very conditions of its e-laboration” (“Technics and Time vol.2” p. 8). In this passage Stiegler argues

that it is because the human is essentially finite and has an inability to have everything immediately present to it that it requires technics for its self-conservation. Self-conservation is not meant to simply represent human survival. Self-conservation also refers, in the above passage, to the possibility of creating a heritage and tradition, which is enabled in terms of technics.

These technical supports that allow for the possibility of a heritage also make possible the resolute projecting of possibilities of Being by which Dasein can be. Therefore, Dasein requires technics essentially, and so technics defines human modes and possibilities of Being. This is the sense in which the who determines the what of technics and not intentional consciousness, which is in fact made possible by technics. It is our finitude that gives us the need for technics, and in doing so enables Dasein's relation to technics; however, it is also technics that reveals and actualizes our finitude.

This point of the mutually constitutive relation of our finitude and technics is important for further understanding how Stiegler negotiates between a philosophy founded on the Idea in the Kantian sense, and a philosophy founded on the finitude of Dasein, i.e., between the infinite horizontality of Husserl and the finite horizontality of Heidegger. A closer look at Derrida's deconstruction of Husserl's Idea in the Kantian sense reveals how the sign, and so technics, are necessary for the possibility of Husserl's interpretation of the Idea in the Kantian sense. The grounding of the Idea in the Kantian sense by the sign is essential for Stiegler to establish the primacy of technics as opposed to the primacy of an infinite *telos*, while still appropriating the Idea in the Kantian sense. Stiegler

appropriates the Idea in the Kantian sense because it allows him to make intelligible his conception of an original rupture by making possible backward temporality through providing a unitary horizon of sense derived from factuality, which is not solely dependent on Dasein. The independence of the Idea in the Kantian sense through its grounding of Dasein is pivotal for Stiegler's argument to succeed because Stiegler is trying to subvert the ontological priority of Dasein while making room for the equiprimordiality of technics as the most primordial form of entity. This argument in attempting to subvert Heidegger's prioritizing of the ontological is not shifting the priority to entities, but instead is rethinking the very meaning of "priority", "primordiality", and "ground" in place of the early Heidegger's conception of these terms through the establishment of the mutual constitution of entities and the ontological.

For Derrida it is our finitude that defines what is most basic to consciousness – namely the living present, which is always informed by absence. Our finitude is what allows for us to have the infinite horizon of the Idea in the Kantian sense. Death is intrinsic to the living present according to Derrida because the unity of time imposed by the Idea in the Kantian sense has the structure of a sign. Stiegler explains the structure of a sign that Derrida employs and that he too implements when he talks of the "general and abstract economy in which language consists and which allows it to name, in an indefinite combination of a finite ensemble of signs, an infinite reality. All language, being essentially finite and able nevertheless to account for an a priori indefinite and quasi-infinite reality, is necessarily and immediately the implementation of a

process of abstraction and generalization” (“Technics and Time vol. 1” p. 166).

This passage explains that it is in the nature of a sign to be a finite capturing and representation of the infinite. This essential structure of the sign allows it to make possible the Idea in the Kantian sense as an infinite made possible in the living present of our finite consciousness.

Although, the unity of an infinite temporal horizon *appears* in the present as presence *as such* it is not presence *as such* because my consciousness is finite, and therefore the unity of temporality cannot appear in the living present in my consciousness as infinite as such. Therefore, there is a unity of temporality only through the sign of infinity not through infinity itself as the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present, and this is what it means to be an Idea in the Kantian sense for Derrida. The non-presence of the infinite unity of temporality is essential for its presence in the form of an Idea in the Kantian sense. This then means that the infinite object of the Idea in the Kantian sense is not present, but the object in infinity is reached in the form of a sign.

Moreover, since the Idea in the Kantian sense is essentially a finite signatory representation of the infinite, understood as the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present, i.e., the infinite as the eternal, and this fact reveals the necessity of its linguistic incarnation. Since in terms of the ontology of historicity there is no transcendent horizon in which to situate Ideas that unify meaning ahistorically, and since the horizon of the Idea in the Kantian sense, which fulfills this role for Husserl and Stiegler, is historical it must arise factually through a factual sign, i.e., a linguistic incarnation. Linguistic incarnation is

essential to the consciousness of an ideal object, and so also for the Idea in the Kantian sense as one type of ideal object. This linguistic incarnation is not a mere addition, but it is a prosthesis understood in the transformed sense of the word used by Stiegler. The linguistic incarnation looks like something added on to an already constituted object, but in fact the linguistic incarnation constitutes it as what it is. Furthermore, since Stiegler equates language and tools under the category of technics this means that technical incarnation is necessary for the Idea in the Kantian sense, and so the technical is necessary for a unified horizon of temporality. By arguing in this way Stiegler joins Derrida in emphasizing, in opposition to Husserl, that factuality is as important for ideal objectivity as sense, while still allowing Stiegler to appropriate Husserl's Idea in the Kantian sense for his own purposes. Stiegler also contends, in appropriating the ontology of historicity, that the sign also exposes and actualizes our finitude in making possible the finite representation of the infinite understood as the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present.

The ideal object is independent of any specific linguistic/technical incarnation, but it needs to be linguistically/technically incarnated. Once an ideal object, e.g., an Idea in the Kantian sense, is incarnated all of its incarnations can be destroyed without affecting its sense, yet it cannot exist without an initial incarnation. Its sense is not dependent on any specific incarnation, yet it must be factually incarnated to be because all sense is historical and all history is sense. Therefore, the possibility of reactivation presupposes a dead body or some kind of linguistic/technical incarnation from which ideal sense is liberated.



Even though, an ideal object is independent of a particular linguistic incarnation, if all linguistic incarnations are destroyed an ideal object is both absolutely alive and absolutely dead. An ideal object is absolutely alive and beyond death because it is beyond any incarnations, and so it does not face any possibility of death since it is now liberated from all incarnations, while maintaining its sense and its unity. However, an ideal object is also absolutely dead because it is seemingly impossible to reactivate if all its incarnations disappear. Husserl claims that a true ideal object can be reactivated without previous incarnations to guide this reactivation. An example of this reactivation from nothing is: geometrical theorems being reactivated millions of years into the future after all record of them has been destroyed. Husserl says this is possible because they do not depend on a particular culture or language. However, the natural question to ask is where has this sense gone and what does it do once all its factual embodiments have been destroyed. For Husserl it remains in transcendental subjectivity or the transcendental field, and thus becomes virtual, which is a position that borders too closely on the transcendent for Stiegler to agree with.

Therefore, the truth of an ideal object is independent of my finite consciousness, but depends on the Idea in the Kantian sense as the formal unifying horizon of meaning, which depends on the finitude of a finite consciousness for its initial actualization in the form of a sign. However, the ideal object is also absolutely dead because even though it does not depend on my particular finite consciousness, yet if there were no finite consciousness at all the

idea would not be experienced or lived, and so it would be absolutely dead. This reveals that the relationship of fact and sense is one of mutual interdependence; wherein, the parts of the relation constitute each other and the relation in their differing and deferring from each other, while equiprimordially the relation constitutes the parts of the relation by providing a context in which these parts are meaningful as what they are. This is in contrast to Heidegger's view of the relation, where the relation or context of meaning is most primordially necessary for the two parts of the relation to come to presence and show themselves as what they are. Now it becomes clear how two different views of truth, understood as the condition of the possibility of what appears coming to show itself meaningfully as what it is, are at issue in the critique of Heidegger by Stiegler.

As has been shown, Stiegler is very much working within the Husserlian phenomenological tradition with emphasis on its central concepts of horizontality, origin, traditionality, and sense history. Likewise, Stiegler aims to show how in an original moment of exteriorization the human being is constituted. However, Stiegler also recognizes the problems involved in giving a history of this origin, and the problems of positing a moment of origin at all. We are ripped from our natural immediacy in the exteriorization of our memory in technics and in writing for Stiegler as epiphylogenesis or technological memory,<sup>21</sup> which event of exteriorization also constitutes our memory at the same time making memory and technics equiprimordial. Technics in general and writing in particular open up in

---

<sup>21</sup> Stiegler equates language, including writing, and technics when he says "techno-logical memory (language and technics are here amalgamated in the process of exteriorization" ("Technics and Time vol.1" p.177).

exteriorization the horizon of the infinitely repeatable ideal object in the form of the sign, i.e., the Idea in the Kantian sense. The sign can essentially be ripped from its context and still maintain its sense, and this possibility allows for the three levels of separation of sense that constitute the human including our individual epigenetic memory. Moreover, Stiegler is seemingly making natural immediacy what is most primordial, but in truth he is privileging an original relation of mutual constitution of Dasein and technical entities with technical entities filling the role of “nature” for Heidegger as what most fully and originally exists separately from Dasein. The idea of natural immediacy and what we more conventionally conceive of as nature comes to be within the horizon of sense created after the rupture, and is only chronologically prior to the rupture as a meaning necessary to make sense of it after the fact, but not as what is most originary ontologically or ontically.

However, it is impossible to give a history of an original separation or of an originary event because giving this history involves reducing the very possibility of a horizon of sense in the Husserlian sense of reduction, i.e., a bracketing out of or putting aside of something while not completely abstracting from it, but there only is history insofar as it can be situated in a sense horizon. Yet, if we situate pre-sense history in a sense horizon we are no longer getting pure pre-sense history, but we are getting a sense interpretation of pre-sense events. This is Heidegger’s objection to trying to give a “pure” account of history as a factual, empirical history of events and accounting for them without recognizing the primacy of Being in allowing for history as such. In Heidegger’s

view of history and historicity he posits an overarching context of meaning as necessary for objects to be revealed to us, and in terms of which one can have the possibility of a chronological history. Heidegger says of this view of history that:

We shall call that sending-that-gathers [*versammelnde Schicken*] which first starts man upon a way of revealing, destining [*Geschick*]. It is from out of this destining that the essence of all history [*Geschichte*] is determined. History is neither simply the object of written chronicle nor simply the fulfillment of human activity. That activity first becomes history as something destined. And it is only the destining into objectifying representation that makes the historical accessible as an object for historiography, i.e., for a science, and on this basis makes possible the current equating of the historical with that which is chronicled. (“Question Concerning Technology” p. 24)

Heidegger’s view of history does not require an initial factual incarnation in writing, but only a context of meaning that sends man on a way of revealing, and it is only in terms of this revealing that objects come to be for us, which in turn depends on the unaccountable gift of a way of questioning. In the end there is history *stricto sensu* for Heidegger only where and when the question of Being is asked. Once objects come to be for us they can be chronicled, but objects certainly do not allow for a horizon of meaning for Heidegger. For Heidegger, it is nonsensical that entities could allow for a horizon of meaning because of the ontological difference, which is at the root of Heidegger’s philosophy and states

that Being precedes and makes possible the manifestness of entities, and the limit of their manifestness is the limit of their effective reality.

Stiegler's rebuttal to this objection is to admit that Heidegger is correct in his account, but the deeper truth is the establishment of the co-primacy of sense and facts. Facts are co-primary because they enable the ideality of sense and the essence of Dasein as an interpreter of ontological meaning. However, this is not to say that Being is virtual. Instead, it is saying that the condition of the possibility of Dasein's essence and a horizon of meaning, and so the condition of it interpreting the meaning of Being, requires that Dasein and technology/language have an original factual incarnation that establishes a horizon of sense as ideal and separate from the ontic, and which allows Dasein to have access to a past that is not its own, which establishes Dasein's Being-outside-itself. Moreover, Stiegler can point out that Heidegger's privileging of the ontological as a horizon of meaning in which entities come meaningfully to be for us is incongruous with the interpretation I have defended of Heidegger's account of entities as they are independently of Dasein, which Stiegler's account of technics can begin to make sense of by attempting to answer Heidegger's call for metontology.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

## TEMPORALITY AND DIFFÉRANCE

Now that the co-primacy of fact and sense has been established, and it has been explained how these two elements allow for temporality, it must be shown how temporality mutually constitutes these two elements of fact and sense further invoking the logic of différance. Temporality is important for Stiegler because it is the ultimate unifying horizon against which fact and sense or technics and ideal sense in the form of the Idea in the Kantian sense are made possible to allow for a primary rupture, and exteriorization. Positing a primary rupture and exteriorization is important for Stiegler because it establishes the equiprimordiality of technics and Dasein, i.e., the what and the who. For Stiegler, that which allows one to perform a separation between traditional dichotomies in philosophy is something unified that holds these things together, but allows them to be different. Fact and sense are held together, but they are also different. This unified horizon in which fact and sense can be different and held together is the horizon of temporality. In temporality it is possible for sense to be understood as both omnitemporal and supratemporal in that it is present in all facts, but it is also beyond all facts, because sense is allowed to arise only by pulling apart and reducing facts to sense. Yet, there is also no sense without fact because there must be an original factual instantiation of the sign to have the rupture and so a horizon of sense. These two parts of a traditional philosophical dichotomy need to be together, but also be different because the reduction of sense presupposes that you can go from fact to sense.

In the act of presupposing a difference between fact and sense they are held together in a relation of comparison as a relation between something that appears contingently in time (a fact in the usual sense) and the transtemporal, omnitemporal, and supratemporal meaning of what appears. Sense and fact are held together in this relation within the horizon of temporality, which allows for the possibility of the supratemporality of sense (its differentiation from facts), and the possibility of omnitemporality, (the presence of sense within facts everywhere and always because sense originates in factuality). This ties sense and fact together in a relation that expresses Bernard Stiegler's fundamental point about technology, which is that sense is factually nowhere, but everywhere in facts. Sense is then seen as both supratemporal and omnitemporal because, set against the ultimate unifying horizon of temporality, sense originates and is incarnated in the timely, but its truth is beyond all facts and historical contingencies such as the destruction of all linguistic/technical incarnations.

The passage from fact to sense has sense transmitted apart from fact so one can realize and make actual fact as fact. Stiegler makes reference to the necessity of a generality of sense in language for there to be particular expressions at all using a similar logic when he says "either this particularity is determined as particular against a horizon of generality, against the backdrop of which it outlines itself – and in this case the generality is already there and language is already general – or else there is simply no expression, no situation nor any particularity" ("Technics and Time vol. 1" p.168). The point of this passage is to illustrate that it is only against a general background that is always already there

that a particular instantiation is exposed. So with respect to the relation of sense and fact it is necessary for the supratemporality of ideal sense as an Idea in the Kantian sense to always already be a general horizon for a fact to be revealed as fact, for particular transtemporal instantiations of sense to gain their meaning, and for sense to gain its distinction apart from fact as that which has meaning beyond historical contingencies.

On the other hand, ideal sense, e.g., the Idea in the Kantian sense, does not start and is not maintained in a heaven of Ideas, but must be factually constituted and pass outside of facts. Therefore, there is nothing beyond or outside of the passage outside facts in which sense is constituted. This absolute passage is a movement constituting historicity. It is a movement to sense between me and myself as differentiation of moments in time consciousness in me, between myself and others, and a passage to transcendental subjectivity across epochs of time to attain supratemporality. However, the moment of passage is not originary, but it must be situated within its ideal sense from the present through phenomenology, and its sense is only truly uncovered historically in a movement or zigzag method of interpretation going from our present situation to gain insight into the past interpretive framework, and then using what is learned of the past sense to inform our understanding of our current situation. Then this revised present interpretive framework is used to further inquire into past sense, and so on back and forth refining our current framework of understanding, while never escaping it completely. Derrida says this passage outside of which there is



nothing is also a danger because nowhere else can there be sense than in history, but the danger is that we can lose sense.

Important for Stiegler in explaining the role of temporality in his philosophy is Derrida's philosophy of *différance*, since it is important in explaining the possibility of an original exteriorization. The general logic of *différance* plays a substantial role in explaining temporality, the mutually constitutive relation of the who and the what, the possibility of a rupture and original exteriorization, and Stiegler's appropriation of the Idea in the Kantian sense. For Stiegler, *différance* provides an alternate logic with which to elaborate and make sense of the moves he makes so as to overcome Heidegger's conception of the fundamentality of Being and Dasein. *Différance* shows how Stiegler's conception of temporality essentially differs from Heidegger's although both conceptions are taken to be essential to the essence of Dasein. This also illustrates that I am not claiming that *pace* Heidegger Stiegler makes the ontic and technics prior to Being in Heidegger's sense, but that Stiegler, following Derrida, makes *différance* "fundamental" yet in a way that deconstructs all questions of fundamentality. In other words, the appeal to *différance* is not a matter of making *différance* fundamental, but through an attempt to show how the differed matters are equiprimordial serves to subvert all thinking about fundaments and origins.

Stiegler discusses how the nonliving makes possible a primordial temporality of life by allowing for deferral when he says:

Now *phusis* as life was already *différance*. There is an indecision, a passage remaining to be thought. At issue is the specificity of the temporality of life in which life is inscription in the nonliving, spacing, temporalization, differentiation, and deferral by, of, and in the nonliving, in the dead. To think the articulation is also to think the birth of the relation we name with the verb “to exist”; this is to think anticipation. (“Technics and Time vol.1” p. 140)

In this quotation Stiegler is dealing with the relations of many different concepts. Existence, as in the distinctive way of human existence and not as *existentia*, is put forward here by Stiegler as anticipation following Heidegger. To exist for Heidegger is to project possibilities onto the future or to anticipate, and Heidegger calls Dasein’s temporality anticipatory resoluteness. This anticipation and the horizon of temporality it implies is made possible for Stiegler by the passage in which life is inscribed in the nonliving or the dead. Death makes possible anticipation, but not in the sense Heidegger uses it, but at a supposedly deeper level. The deeper level is one of the arising of a horizon of temporality at all. The only sense I can make of Stiegler’s claim that technics allows for temporality as it relates to Dasein is that technics allows for an original Being-outside-itself of Dasein through written inscription, which allows it an access to its past, and the ability to create a sense horizon that maintains its sense infinitely into the future, and it allows for the immediate present to come to presence.<sup>22</sup> This would coincide with making possible the temporality of Dasein as Heidegger

---

<sup>22</sup> I admit this connection is a little fuzzy, and one of the weaker points of Stiegler’s argument is his understanding of, and accounting for, Heidegger’s understanding of temporality.

understands it as a unified ecstatic temporality. A unified ecstatic temporality means that Dasein is outside itself in the future, past, and present as three open horizons that are always integrated, and which provide a structural opening within which the horizon of Being can be interpreted by Dasein and entities can come to presence in this there.

Derrida explains the relation of *différance* to time in the essay “*Différance*”, which helps one to understand why Stiegler invokes *différance* in explaining technics as the organization of the inorganic, and the rupture as the birth of time and space. Derrida says of *différance*’s relation to time that:

For the distribution of meaning in the Greek *diapherein* does not comport one of the two motifs of the Latin *differre*, to wit, the action of putting off until later, of taking into account, of taking account of time and of the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation – concepts that I would summarize here in a word I have never used but that could be inscribed in this chain:

*temporization*. *Différer* in this sense is to temporize, to take recourse, consciously or unconsciously, in the temporal and temporizing mediation of a detour that suspends the accomplishment or fulfillment of “desire” or “will,” and equally effects this suspension in a mode that annuls or tempers its own effects. And we will see, later, how this temporization is also temporalization and spacing, the becoming-time of space and the

becoming-space of time, the “originary constitution” of time and space, as metaphysics or transcendental phenomenology would say, to use the language that here is criticized and displaced.

(“Margins of Philosophy” p. 7-8)

By appropriating this Derridian concept of *différance* to describe the exteriorization of the human through technics Stiegler is trying to stress, in his diagnosis of the phenomenon of technics, that technics is a necessary component in *différance* as the possibility of difference and deferral. Stiegler will further contend that technics is one essential element in the play of the organization of the organic and inorganic that concretely allows for the possibility of *différance* described in the Derrida quotation above. Technics for Stiegler is what allows for temporization as “the action of putting off until later, of taking into account, of taking account of time and of the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, a detour, a delay, a relay, a reserve, a representation” (“Margins of Philosophy” p.8).

Moreover, exteriorization, as the original rupture, is what technics most basically makes possible for Stiegler through its allowing for temporization, which in turn makes possible temporalization as the opening of a temporal spacing necessary to constitute a temporal horizon. So it is in this way that the prosthetic or the technical makes possible the horizon of temporality by making possible a delay, a putting off until later, and a spacing, which is an essential delay and separation required for Dasein’s ecstatic essence. It is these characteristics, which also seem to characterize the technological Enframing for

Heidegger as a putting off until later, taking into account of time and the forces of an operation that implies an economical calculation, and allowing for a standing reserve or stock supply, that Stiegler uses with *différance* to make the argument for the equiprimordiality of technics, and his understanding of exteriorization and temporalization. Stiegler asserts that given technology as characterized in its negative attributes by Heidegger it is not a narrowing inauthentic mode of revealing and temporalization, but it is the condition of the possibility of a movement of exteriorization that originally allows for Dasein's ecstatic temporality as the opening upon which the revealing of Being is projected. Yet, technics is not absolute pure present origin, but, as explained above, technics is in a relation of mutual constitution with an interpretive horizon of sense justified by an appeal to *différance* that serves to subvert all thinking about fundamentals and origins.

Stiegler shows the further importance of *différance* to his project in terms of the mutual constitution of the who and the what, and the possibility of exteriorization when he says:

The ambiguity of the invention of the human, that which holds together the *who* and the *what*, binding them while keeping them apart, is *différance* undermining the authentic/inauthentic divide. We shall look into this at the very moment of its passage, from *phusis in différance* (life in general) to the *différance* of this *différance*. *Différance* is neither the *who* nor the *what*, but their co-possibility, the movement of their mutual coming-to-be, of their

coming into convention. The *who* is nothing without the *what*, and conversely. Différance is below and beyond the *who* and the *what*; it poses them together, a composition engendering the illusion of an opposition. The passage is a mirage: the passage of the cortex into flint, like a mirror proto-stage. This proto-mirage is the paradoxical and aporetic beginning of ‘exteriorization’... The paradox is to have to speak of an exteriorization without a preceding interior: the interior is constituted in exteriorization. (“Technics and Time vol.1” p.141)

This quotation shows that Stiegler recognizes that there is no absolute origin involved in the process of exteriorization; in which, the use of tools and writing creates a unified temporal horizon through the factual emergence of the possibility of epiphylogenesis from immediate nature. The model that Stiegler is protesting against is one that gives priority to the interior, understood here as immediate nature or to the essence of the subject, that by its permanent nature creates the tool. Instead, Stiegler invokes the notion of a passage similar to the one Husserl applies to the origin of geometry or sense in general. Husserl claims that we can establish the origin only after the possibility of repetition and abstraction are enabled, which are necessary to make sense of the event of origin. Moreover, we can call the subject the subject only after its separation, reflection, and articulation in the object.

The way différance plays out as expounded by Derrida, in relation to Husserlian phenomenology and Stiegler’s understanding of the Idea in the

Kantian sense, is through articulating the relation between finitude and the infinite. This understanding of finitude and death allows Stiegler a way to account for the possibility of death in a way that aids his emphasis on the ontological importance of technology. In appropriating this conception of death Stiegler is trying to give a more comprehensive account of death that complements his project instead of having death occupy the place it does for Heidegger as the extreme most limit of possibility that is one's own. For Heidegger, death means that Dasein is not fundamentally whole, but its possibility means that Dasein is essentially always its not yet, and so this accounts for Dasein's ecstatic nature. Stiegler neither wants death to occupy the place of the extreme most limit of possibility, which is the place of technics for Stiegler, nor to be conceived in a sense that is radically one's own. If death is not essentially radically one's own, or singularly responsible for Dasein's Being-outside-itself as being its not-yet, then Dasein and death no longer occupy a place of fundamental importance for constituting Dasein's ecstatic temporality to the exclusion of the technical.

The relation of the finite and the infinite for Stiegler is one of a weird movement that can be understood as an infinite movement of finitude. The Idea in the Kantian sense appears as infinite *différance*, or as pure presence always deferred because we only have a sign of it, and we never have the Idea in the Kantian sense in full presence. This is *différance* because *différance* is the fact that there is no pure present origin to a system of differences. Therefore, each item in a context of items is only what it is in its difference, and that means in its

reference to another item and that to another item, and so forth. The consequence is that while looking for a fully present item, a point where the referring stops, we are constantly referred to something else and hence presence is always deferred.

The infinite Idea in the Kantian sense is only ever present in a finite form because our consciousness is finite, and this is the only way it can appear to us. Therefore, this appearing of the infinite is not pure presence, but a mediate relation through a sign that signifies the absence of the Idea in the Kantian sense from the living present. Yet, we never reach the Idea in the Kantian sense because it is an infinite *telos* that structures our experience, which we never attain. So the Idea in the Kantian sense only appears or has reality as the sign of something infinitely deferred. This is the same structure given to death as Heidegger understands it. For Heidegger, death has meaning as Being-towards-death, and death, as the indeterminate horizon that allows for Dasein to project possibilities of meaning, is immanent within Dasein. Conversely, the Idea in the Kantian sense is in the realm of transcendental subjectivity realized by the original exteriorization that writing/technics makes possible.

Therefore, pure presence can only be produced from out of a relationship with death in a finite contexture for Stiegler, which requires the sign to allow for access to pure presence as the infinitely deferred. For Heidegger, authenticity can only be achieved in a relationship with death. Only in relation to death can finite consciousness experience itself as finite and actualize its finitude. Stiegler, drawing on Derrida and Husserl, explains Dasein's relation to death in terms of the possibility of the sign and technology, and so allows Stiegler to find a way to



try and more comprehensively account for the possibility of death that is so fundamental to Heidegger's project. For Heidegger, this needs no explanation, but is always already part of our there-being as Dasein. So perhaps Stiegler in critiquing Heidegger tries to explain too much, and does not properly recognize the primordial ontological importance of death and Dasein's ecstatic nature as Heidegger understands it.

I have a sign of an Idea in the Kantian sense in my consciousness as a sign of an Ideal infinitely deferred, which can only have presence in this way because my consciousness is finite, and so I cannot have the ideal appear immediately to me in intuition as the eternal, i.e., the perfect self-sameness that possesses the whole as present, without the sign. Instead, I have retention and protention of the Ideal as absence because my consciousness is not infinite. If my consciousness were infinite I would not need a sign for the Idea in the Kantian sense. My appearing to myself as finite, and of the Ideal appearing as infinite only happens because I am finite. The point is the old Cartesian point that I must have the Idea of the infinite as pure presence to be able to recognize myself as finite, and hence as a being in time in and for whom pure presence is always deferred. The further claim is that the deferral of pure presence is a matter of *différance*. One needs to be finite to appear in the essential relation of oneself to death, which is the infinite limited to the finite, or gaining meaning within our finite horizon of meaning as a sign. This is *différance*. *Différance* is the infinite limited to the finite. It is the living of the infinite finitely. There is a weird equation taking place between the finite and infinity because both are not conceived or used as oppositions, but

instead they are considered in a movement of mutual constitution and yet are held to be different.

## CONCLUSION:

## A FINAL EVALUATION OF STIEGLER'S PROJECT

The aim of my thesis was not a confrontation between Stiegler and Heidegger, but an explication of Stiegler's larger project understood as an engagement with and a critique of Heidegger through a particular interpretation. Heidegger was not taken up and interpreted in terms of his philosophy of the essence of technology, but in terms of his account of entities, truth, Dasein, phenomenology, and issues of fundamentality since the texts and topics Stiegler most engages with from Heidegger deal with these issues. The interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities defended in this thesis is probably not the most charitable reading of Heidegger possible, but I believe I have defended a plausible interpretation of Heidegger. This plausible interpretation of Heidegger serves to mitigate objections to Stiegler's project to the effect that it is based on a complete misreading of Heidegger, and so is a misled project from the start. In addition, Heidegger's account of entities and truth was interpreted in this way because it allows for the most charitable interpretation of Stiegler whose philosophy of technology I am using to try and solve the problem I see in Heidegger's account of entities. The problem Stiegler/I see with Heidegger's account of entities is that his larger philosophical framework contradicts the strong meaning of independence of entities Stiegler/I interpret Heidegger as supporting, and to which I am sympathetic.

*Prima facie* it seems that the central issue in Stiegler's critique of Heidegger is one of fundamentally different metaphysical priorities. Heidegger understands Dasein and Being to be fundamental. Heidegger considers Dasein as always-already its "there" and not in need of a further grounding, and for Heidegger entities are always grounded by the ontological. On the other hand, it seems Stiegler opposes Heidegger by trying to establish the metaphysical priority of the ontic/technical as if to turn Heidegger on his head. In fact, Stiegler works to resolve Heidegger's inconsistent account of entities, in the interpretation of Heidegger I have defended, by following Heidegger's undeveloped recognition of the need to ground the ontological in the ontic. Stiegler tries to show that technics is in fact responsible for Dasein, a horizon of Being, and temporality by what he sees as carrying through Heidegger's nascent project of metontology instead of just arguing directly against Heidegger.

However, it is not the case that Stiegler prioritizes the ontic over and against the ontological. Instead, Stiegler tries to show how the ontic can ground the ontological as a way to throw Heidegger's prioritizing of the ontological initially into question. In doing so Stiegler makes room for the equiprimordiality of the ontic and the ontological, and their relationship of mutual constitution. Stiegler does not intend to end his project at the establishment of the equiprimordiality of the ontic and the ontological, but uses the relationship of the mutual constitution of technics and Dasein, or fact and a horizon of sense, as a stepping-stone to make intelligible a conception of backward temporality. Backward temporality allows Stiegler to make plausible an original rupture, i.e.,

an original differentiation and exteriorization that is in fact not original.

Furthermore, Stiegler is not prioritizing *différance* or an original rupture, or the mutual constitution of Dasein and technics, but these relations and the logic of *différance* serve to subvert all thinking about fundamentals and origins (or at least all thinking about origins as something that can ever be made fully present), which is (through appropriating Derrida) Stiegler's real biting critique of Heidegger. It is in arguing for this rethinking of origins, fundamentals, and priority that Stiegler establishes the relationship of mutual constitution of Dasein and technics necessitating the ontic's due and proper separation and independence from the ontological allowing it to fill the role of "nature" for Heidegger, and carrying forward a project of metontology. It is in this way that the ontic gains more metaphysical significance for Stiegler.

I admit that the most plausible interpretation of entities for Heidegger involves interpreting independence in a different sense, which comes as a result of understanding the ontological difference not as an external relation between two things giving entities an ontological status in themselves. Instead, the ontological difference only comes to be in the understanding of Dasein, which then accords an ontic status to entities as being what and how they are independently of Dasein. In a study focused solely on Heidegger this interpretation would be a matter of serious consideration, and would likely be shown to be the most convincing interpretation of Heidegger's account of entities. However, I have undertaken in this thesis to make the best case for the problem Stiegler/I see with

Heidegger's account of entities, and I have attempted to solve this problem by providing the best account of Stiegler I can.

Overall, I think I have put forward a clear and coherent explication and defence of Stiegler's larger project as a critique of the early Heidegger's account of entities, the ontological, Dasein and Heidegger's conception of fundamentality. I chose to pursue an explication and defence of Stiegler because I am sympathetic with Stiegler's critique insofar as it challenges Heidegger's privileging of the ontological over the ontic, and the fact that Heidegger seems to deprive entities of their full metaphysical weight by making their independence seem to be just a meaning subsequently appended to an entity after its unveiling. Stiegler also helps to make sense of some of Heidegger's more puzzling claims with regard to metontology, "nature", and the independence of entities. I also find Stiegler interesting in his own right and worth investigating in his application of *différance* to issues of the ontic/technical and the ontological, and his deconstruction of all questions of fundamentality

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Boethius. The Consolation of Philosophy. Ed. Douglas C. Langston. New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010.
- Derrida, Jacques. Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry. Trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. Stony Brook, N.Y.: Great Eastern Book Co., 1978.
- . "Différance." Margins of Philosophy. Trans Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. 1-27.
- Fackenheim, Emil L., Metaphysics and Historicity. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1961.
- Ferkiss, Victor C., Technological Man: the Myth and the Reality. New York: Braziller, 1969.
- Florman, Samuel C., Blaming Technology. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982.
- . The Existential Pleasures of Engineering. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976.
- Gadamar, Hans- Georg. Truth and Method. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall. London: Continuum Publishing Group, 1975.
- Haar, Michel. Heidegger and the Essence of Man. Trans. William McNeil. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- . "The End of Distress: the End of Technology?" Research in Phenomenology vol. 13. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983.
- Hegel, G.W.F. Phenomenology of Spirit. Trans. A.V. Miller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Heidegger, Martin. Being and Time. Trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. New York: Harper, 1962.
- . Identity and Difference. Trans. Joan Stambaugh. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- . "Letter on Humanism." Basic Writings. Ed. David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1977. 217-265.
- . "The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead". The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1977. 53-112.
- . Off The Beaten Track. Ed. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

- . "On the Essence of Truth." Pathmarks. Ed. William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 136-154.
- . "On the Essence of Ground." Pathmarks. Ed. William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 97-135.
- . "Postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?'" Pathmarks. Ed. William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 231-238.
- . The Basic Problems of Phenomenology. Trans. Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- . The Essence of Truth. Trans. Ted Sadler. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- . The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude. Trans. William McNeil and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- . The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic. Trans. Michael Heim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.
- . "The Question Concerning Technology". The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper & Row Publishers Inc., 1977. 36-49.
- . "The Self-Assertion of the German University". The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader. Ed. Richard Wolin. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Janicaud, Dominique. Powers of the Rational: Science, Technology and the Future of Thought. Trans. Peg Birmingham. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Pure Reason. Trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- . Practical Philosophy. Trans. Mary J. Gregor. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Mulhall, Stephen. Heidegger and Being and Time 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005.
- Plato. The Republic. Trans. Richard W. Sterling and William C. Scott. New York: Norton & Company, 1985.
- Ricoeur Paul, "Kant and Husserl". Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology. Trans. Edward G. Ballard and Lester E. Embree. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2007. 175- 201.
- Roberts, B.L. "Stiegler Reading Derrida: The Prosthesis of Deconstruction in Technics". Postmodern Culture, 16 (1), 2005.



- Rybczynski, Witold. Taming the Tiger: the Struggle to Control Technology. New York: Viking Press, 1983.
- Sheehan, Thomas. "Nihilism and Its Discontents". Heidegger and Practical Philosophy. Ed. Francois Raffoul and David Pettigrew. Albany, N.Y. : State University of New York Press, 2002.
- Stiegler, Bernard. Acting Out. Trans. David Barison, Daniel Ross, & Patrick Crogan. Stanford California, Stanford University Press, 2009.
- Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus. Trans. Richard Beardsworth & George Collins. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- . Technics and Time, 2: Disorientation. Trans. Stephen Barker. Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2009