

The book "Denken Bis an die Grenzen der Maschine" (Diaphanes 2009) is the German translation of the interview „Entretiens avec Elie Derrida“ (2004) and the short essay „Derrida and Technology“ (2001).

In the first text, Stiegler starts with the explanation of the conditions determining his own thinking. Departing from a short reference to Marx, Stiegler understands the issue of technique as being deeply correlated to the question of practice conceived as "the practice of thought, as thought within practice as well as thought of practice" (26, my translation). It is this "practical" idea of technique which allows the philosopher to draw an intimate connection between the question of technique and that of memory. His investigation does not go along with a philosophy of technics, i.e. a philosophy which is *investigative of* technics in its multiple facets, but rather concerns the *conditions* by which the question of technics gets inscribed in thought and memory since its very beginning.

Paraphrasing Stiegler's words, the question is, *intrinsically* "techno - logical", that is, it concerns the deep conditions of both formation and exteriorization of memory. Technics is thus not a "regional" question of philosophy, but at the contrary, demarcates the very conditions of existence of thought. Stiegler exemplifies his reasoning by figuring out how to drive a car. It is possible, on a basic level, to drive a car without knowing its mechanics. But in order to examine the conditions of possibility that the practice of driving opens, i. e. the (constructive or destructive) potential it entails, it is necessary to come to terms with the working requisites of the machine. This means that thought has to reach the limit of technics, by thinking through the machinic conditions which determine its functioning. It is the elaboration of experience and performative experiments, which concurs to the formation of (transcendental) thought.

This knot linking the „know how“ of the technician - a knowledge characterized on one side by a direct impact on reality, but which nonetheless lacks the ability to reflect upon its own conditions - to speculative reach of the philosopher, is what constitutes a mnemo-technics, i.e. demarcates the link between thought and a materialized version of memory. It accounts for the *exteriorization* of our experience as well as its conscious reelaboration inasmuch as it allows for the connection between our own experiences and others we never had personally, but which nonetheless pertain to the collective social historical dimension. Technique is thus a precondition for culture inasmuch as it provides the means for its transmission.

It is by following this point of view, that Stiegler comes to develop the concept of *tertiary retention*, involving the analysis but also the development of techniques able to connect different layers of personal and collective memory. It is within this moment of passage between different layers of personal and historical memory, that a process of individuation „that *process* by means of which we *become* what we *are*, both individually and collectively“ (70, my translation), takes place. What are the implications of this approach, in relation to the contemporary situation? Stiegler asserts that, in the arch of the last two centuries characterized by the era of industrialization, the process of tertiary retention – allowing for the constitution of the connection between individual

and collective levels of memory - has been captured and frozen. This means that, if we want to inquire the panorama of the contemporary ecology of mind, we have to ask the question of how the actual political and industrial economy is de facto based upon the exploitation of different times of consciousness.

The philosopher sees the problem in the constitution and enhancement of a general state of synchronicity of consciousness. If synchronicity overspreads and comes to prevent the onset of diacronicity – the process of time flow, allowing for the constitution of processes of singularization – we are in the situation in which singularization and subjectivation get broken down into features of particularity and distinctiveness.

In order to restore the feature of diacronicity, it is necessary, for Stiegler, to grasp the roots of the relationship between science and technology. In his perspective, the industrial relationship has caused a deep epistemic transformation of science: science does not anymore function in terms of a description of being, but works instead in terms of an inscription (*Erschreibung*), as an intrinsic constitutive part of the developing general dimension of technoscience. The task of our time, is not that of obstructing this epistemic process, but of understanding the new conditions it produces.

In the following essay, „Derrida and technology“, Stiegler briefly sketches what he means by *thought of technics* and *of tele-technologies*. By referring to Derrida's texts on the Origins of Geometry and on Belief, he comes to assert that the thought of new technologies is deeply connected with the *materiality* of memory. A memory which, by moving outside the lived/living experience, has to come to grips with the question of abstraction. Abstraction accounts for the occurrence between tele *and* technologies, between technics *and* science; it demarcates the basis of a process of exteriorization which, by breaking in, opens the possibilities for processes of break and the creation of different connections. An understanding of these processes could create the possibility for the production of other techniques of memory and storage, allowing us to conceive new approaches for cultural production in the technological era.