

## CHAPTER 17

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# CINEMATIC TIME AND THE QUESTION OF MALAISE

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In *Technics and Time*, Stiegler argues that humanity is distinguished from animal life by its reliance upon technology; material circumstances are changed by technology that, in turn, bring about changes in the organization of consciousness and experience. The term *technics* refers to the way in which humankind has entered a new stage in evolution, that of “epiphylogenesis,” in which the genetic heritage of humankind gives way to new forms of existence and being through technological innovation and practice.

Stiegler begins his account of cinematic time by stating that stories are perennial and appeal to every generation helping forge “the link between the generations.” Their power lies in the promise that they hold out “of the writing of new episodes of future life, yet to be invented.” However, as Adorno and Horkheimer analyzed in “The Culture Industry Enlightenment as Mass Deception”

(*Reader text 3*), the power to invent stories today lies largely in the interests of instrumental Capitalism as controlled by U.S. global industries. Given that both cinema and television have a leading responsibility for the global transmission and dissemination of stories today, with the ultimate effect, Stiegler says, of getting the whole world to adopt “the American way of life,” there is the need for a thoroughgoing critique of the invention and use of stories by capital. While Stiegler recognizes the importance of Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s work in this area, he believes that their critique needs to be developed through an analysis of “[the] *uniqueness* of the techniques that appeared specifically with cinema.”

Such cinematic technics, Stiegler says, have their own capacity to produce an “extraordinary belief effect” in the spectator that is testified to by the experience of watching a film and feeling reinvigorated to the point that “indeed, if the film is good, we come out of it less lazy . . . full of emotion and the desire to do something, or else infused with a new outlook on things.” Cinema, in other words, is an inspirational force for life, and Stiegler’s quest, therefore, is to inquire into the source of this vital energy. This involves Stiegler in an application of Roland Barthes’s theory of analog photography to cinema and in rethinking Husserl’s phenomenological principle of memory retention with regard to melody to theorize the temporal flux at stake in cinema.

In his book *Camera Lucida* (1980), Barthes highlights the uncanny nature of analog photography, which not only presents to the viewer what is past, but does so by means of direct, indexical traces of light that existed at the time the photograph was taken and compose the photographic reproduction itself, “a photograph’s *noème* [meaning a photograph’s essence] is its ‘that-has-been’ . . . *I can never deny the thing has been there.*” There is the indisputable fact that what is present in the photographic image is made visible through traces of light directly connected to the past. This is the uncanny effect of the past breaking through into the present *as* the past and *as* what has disappeared. Such an affect has the intense power, Barthes claimed, to disarm the viewer with a sublime sense of finitude and mortality, “Every photograph is this catastrophe: ‘every photograph declares this future anterior, whose stakes are death.’” Referring specifically to photography, Barthes subsequently oriented this experience around the emotional effect of the *punctum*, meaning a piercing or wounding that opens the subject to a sense of mortality. These ideas of Barthes inform Stiegler’s account of cinema, especially regarding his discussion of the scene from Fellini’s *Intervista* (1987) in which Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg watch themselves performing in *La Dolce Vita* (1960), a film that was made nearly thirty years earlier:

No-one looking at herself again, from thirty years later, having aged those thirty years, could not *not* feel the terrible reality of time passing through the photographic “that has been,” through the “conjunction of reality and the past,”

the silvery coincidence re-animated by cinema's temporal flux. . . . In Anita's case, she is not merely saying this to herself: as image, she is dead *and* she is going to die. She must say to herself: "I am going to die: I am dying." This *present participle* is *precisely that of flux*.

Stiegler's notion of flux, thought grammatically as the present participle "dying," opens life to finitude and death but also to the possibility of change and becoming, as this might be generated by "the writing of new episodes of future life, yet to be invented."

Developing this idea of temporality and loss (together, they define the term *flux*), Stiegler critiques Husserl's ideas about a pure or direct form of phenomenological perception. The key example that Husserl offers in this regard is that of listening to a melody and the particular way in which the preceding (absent) notes continue to inform the present so that nothing is lost in memory as the notes of the melody build on one another, forming an entire ensemble over the flow of time. This is referred to as "primary retention": "When I hear a melody, as a temporal object it presents itself to me as it unfolds. . . . Because the sonorous *now* retains all the notes preceding it, the present note can sound melodic, can be 'musical,' whether it is harmonious or unharmonious: it continues to be properly a *note* and not merely a sound or a noise."

However, Stiegler argues that the perception of the temporal object such as music or recorded music, or, indeed, cinema, is never pure in Husserl's sense, even though it has a certain pertinence for a common understanding of the function of melody in music (especially when it is experienced over the course of the music's duration rather than remembered, say, the next day—this is a distinction that Husserl tries to make between primary and secondary forms of retention). However, for Stiegler, the flow of temporality involved in listening to music or watching a film is *always* a matter of "imaginative" and selective recombinations of experience through what Stiegler refers to as a tertiary form of retention that is, in actual fact, constitutive of primary and secondary forms of retention. Such shifts in consciousness depend on the important fact that memory is a process of forgetting; Stiegler here means not so much everyday forms of forgetting but rather fundamental experiences of change that involve "loss" and form the condition for new becomings of identity and consciousness (in which the notion of consciousness is thought of in temporal terms rather than as a fixed entity). For, if forgetting did not occur, then everything would be retained in memory at the same time in an infinite regress, "If 'to memorize' did not mean already 'to have forgotten' . . . Time has ceased to exist." For Stiegler, phenomenological experience is never the same twice, and this is supported by, and exteriorized through, the technology of reproduction in which to experience the same event (possibly through numerous recordings) is to experience it always differently and otherwise. Stiegler argues that the

technics of forgetting and loss in memory is the very condition by which new selections of thought, and therefore new stories, can take place. Given this understanding of memory as loss, and the fact that reproducibility is the condition that means the same never reoccurs, Stiegler is able to mount a critique of American mythmaking that seeks to disavow such difference. To help substantiate his critique Stiegler points out the genealogical link between the psychotic Blanche Dubois in Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and the Southern belle Scarlett O'Hara from *Gone with the Wind* (1939), both characters being played by the actor Vivien Leigh. The last step of this critique is Stiegler's quotation, *America, America*, that refers to Elia Kazan's eponymous film of 1963. This reference serves as a prescient reminder that insofar as America is a symbol of freedom and hope, it is by virtue of being a land of emigrants who do not have a mythical shared origin upon which a regulated, common future can be founded.

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### Desire for Stories / Stories of Desire

The propensity to believe in stories and fables, the passion for fairy tales, just as satisfying in the old as in the very young, is perpetuated from generation to generation because it forges the link between the generations.<sup>1</sup> Insatiable, they hold out the promise, to generations to come, of the writing of new episodes of future life, yet to be invented, to be fictionalized [*fabuler*].

This ancient desire for narrative(s) still orders modern society: it animates the most complex, and most secret, of social movements. But the conditions of this desire's satisfaction have been radically transformed; it has become the object of a global industry.

What Horkheimer and Adorno call "cultural industries" now constitute the very heart of economic development, whose most intimate power is clearly always the most ancient desire of all stories, and the key to (all contemporary) desire in general . . .

Global commerce now develops by mobilizing techniques of persuasion owing everything to the narrative arts. There is no event, no moment, independent of the desire for stories. Media networks and the programming industries exploit this fictionalizing *tendency* by systematizing the specific resources of audiovisual technics. And within the horizon of these immense technological and social issues, *cinema* occupies a unique place. Its technics of image and sound—now including informatics and telecommunications—re-invent our belief in stories that are now told with remarkable, unparalleled power. But at the same time, these technical powers cast doubt on and sow incredulity

into the future of a world to whose disruption they have already greatly contributed.

If cinematic narratives' influence on the public results at its most fundamental level from a desire for the most ancient stories, and if this is a desire that can be found in every age, and if that underlies every era of the arts and all techniques for making such stories believable, it is all the more necessary that we analyze—and in detail—the *uniqueness* of the techniques that appeared specifically with cinema, techniques that more than any others in history have organized the programming industries' production practices, and we must do this in order to account for the incomparable efficacy of “the animated sound-image,” to understand the extraordinary belief-effect it produces in the spectator: to explain how and why the cinema, in *becoming television* (i.e., the technical network as producer and diffuser of symbols through a global industry), combines the universal desire for fiction and, through it, conditions the entirety of humanity's evolution, though always at the risk of exhausting its desire for stories.

This analysis is all the more necessary since that cinematic singularity in turn reveals another singularity: that of the “human soul” as such; the cinematic techno-logically exhumes the “mechanism” of “hidden art” in its “depths.”<sup>2</sup>

## Boredom

Which one of us, on a gloomy autumn Sunday afternoon, one of those afternoons when one feels like doing nothing, bored even with not wanting to do anything, has not had the desire to watch some old film, no matter which, either at some nearby movie house, if it is in town and there are a few dollars to waste, or on video or DVD at home—or (last resort) just turning on the television where in the end there is no film but some very mediocre series, or indeed *anything*? Just to be lost in the flow of images.

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Why don't we turn it off and pick up a book—a book, say, in which we could find a really good story, strong and well written? Why, on such a Sunday afternoon, do those moving images win out over written words in beautiful books?

The answer is that we need only look. And even if what we are looking at is completely inane but the filmmaker has somehow been able to exploit the video-cinematographic possibilities, the cinematic will attract our attention to the passing images, no matter what they are, and we will prefer to see them unfold before our eyes. We become immersed in the time of their flowing forth; we

forget all about ourselves watching, perhaps “losing ourselves” (losing track of *time*), but however we define it, we will be sufficiently captured, not to say captivated, to stay with it to the very end.

During the passing ninety minutes or so (fifty-two in the case of the televisual “hour”) of this *pastime*, the time of our consciousness will be totally passive within the thrall of those “moving” images that are linked together by noises, sounds, words, voices. Ninety or fifty-two minutes of our life will have passed by *outside* our “real” life, but *within* a life or the lives of people and events, real or fictive, to which we will have conjoined our time, adopting their events as though they were happening to us as they happened to them.

If by some lucky chance the film is a good one, we who are watching it in complete lethargy, the core validation of the animated sound-image by which we can leave everything behind and still be completely uninvolved—not even (as with a book) following written sentences and turning pages, careful not to lose the gist of the story; indeed, if the film is good, we come out of it less lazy, even re-invigorated, full of emotion and the desire to do something, or else infused with a new outlook on things: the cinematographic machine, taking charge of our boredom, will have transformed it into new energy, transubstantiated it, made something out of nothing—the nothing of that terrible, nearly fatal feeling of a Sunday afternoon of nothingness. The cinema will have brought back the expectation of *something*, something that must come, that will come, and that will come to us from our own life: from this seemingly non-fictional life that we re-discover when, leaving the darkening room, we hide ourselves in the fading light of day.

## Cinema’s Two Fundamental Principles

In cinema we never have to be wary of losing a text’s development: there is no text. And where there is none, it enters us without our having to look for it. Cinema weaves itself into our time; it becomes the temporal fabric of those ninety or fifty-two minutes of unconscious consciousness that is characteristic of a being, a film viewer, strangely immobilized by motion.

This is true because of cinema’s two fundamental principles:

1. Cinematographic recording is an extension of photography; photography is an analog recording technique (which I analyze in *Technics and Time*, 2 [12]), like the reality effect Roland Barthes describes in showing that a photograph’s *noēme* is its “that-has-been”:

I call “photographic referent” not the *optimally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph. Painting can feign reality

without having seen it. . . . In Photography, I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and the past. . . .

Looking at a photograph, I inevitably include in my scrutiny the thought of that instant, however brief, in which a real thing happened to be motionless in front of the eye. I project the present photograph's immobility upon the past shot, and it is this arrest which constitutes the pose.<sup>3</sup>

The instant of the snap coincides with the instant of *what is snapped*, and it is in this co-incident of two instants that the basis of the possibility of a conjunction of past and reality allowing for a "transfer" of the photograph's immobility in which the spectator's "present" coincides with the appearance of the spectrum.

2. The cinema adds sound by including *phono-graphic* recording. The phonogram, like the photo, results from an analogic technique of artificial memorization, which is why what is true of the photo is also, to a large extent, true of all phonograms: listening to a recorded concert, I must include in my listening experience the fact that the concert "has been," has already taken place. But the photo's truth is only the same as that of the phonogram to a certain point, since in the phonogram I am dealing with a fluid object, with an unfolding that changes the terms of analysis: the aural object is itself a flux in which it is impossible to isolate a moment of sound: it does not have a Barthesian "pose"; it emerges from the phenomenology of what Husserl calls "temporal objects."

Cinema can include sound because film, as a photographic recording technique capable of representing movement, is itself a temporal object susceptible to the phenomenological analysis proper to this kind of object. A film, like a melody, is essentially a flux: it consists of its unity in and as flow. The temporal object, as flux, coincides with the stream of consciousness of which it is the object: the spectator's.

The power of these two cinematic principles, and thus of the singularity of cinematic recording techniques, results from two other co-incident conjunctions:

—on one hand, the phono-photographic coincidence of past and reality ("there is a double conjoint position: of reality and of the past," which induces this "reality effect"—believability—in which the spectator is located, in advance, by the technique itself);

—on the other, the coincidence between the film's flow and that of the film spectator's consciousness, linked by phonographic flux, initiates the mechanics of a complete adoption of the film's time with that of the spectator's consciousness—which, since it is itself a flux, is captured and "channeled" by the flow of images. This movement, infused with every spectator's desire for stories, liberates the movements of consciousness typical of cinematic *emotion* . . .

## The Kuleshov Effect

Working through the concept of the temporal object in the fifth section of *Logical Investigations*, Husserl attempts to account for the temporality of all consciousness as a structure of flux. The question is thus to analyze the phenomenological conditions constituting this flux. But it is impossible for Husserlian phenomenology to engage in such an analysis of consciousness: its structure being intentional, consciousness is always consciousness *of* something; it is only possible to account for the temporality of consciousness by analyzing an “object” that is itself temporal.

Husserl discovers this object in 1905: melody. A melody is a temporal object in the sense that it is constituted only in its duration. As a temporal object its phenomenality is flow. A glass—say, a plain glass of water—is clearly a temporal object in the sense that it exists *in time* and is thus subject to universal physical laws and to entropy: it is temporal because it is not eternal. This is true of all “real” objects. But a properly temporal object is not simply “in time”: it is *formed* temporally, woven in threads of time—as what appears in passing, what happens, what manifests itself in disappearing, as flux disappearing even as it appears. And the properly temporal object is the ideal object constituting the temporal fabric of the stream of consciousness itself, since the flux of the temporal object precisely coincides with the stream of consciousness of which it is the object. To account for the structure of the temporal object’s flux is to account for the structure of the stream of consciousness of which it is the object.

In the temporal object as melody, Husserl discovers *primary retention*. Primary retention is a kind of memory, but it is nonetheless not the aspect of memory involving recall. Husserl sometimes calls this “re-memory,” sometimes “secondary memory.”

Primary retention is what the *now* of an unfolding temporal object retains in itself from all of its previous *nows*. Even though they have passed, these preceding *nows* are maintained within the temporal object’s current *now*, and, in this respect, they remain present even while perpetually becoming past; they remain present as having happened and in being sustained as having happened in the current *now*—they are maintained as *both* present and absent in the currently occurring *now* and insofar as the temporal object is not completely unfolded, completely past but still *passing* (i.e., temporal).

When I hear a melody, as a temporal object it presents itself to me as it unfolds. In the course of this process each note that is presented *now* retains in itself the preceding note, which itself retains the preceding one, etc. The current note contains within it all the preceding notes; it is the “now” as the maintainer of the object’s presence: the temporal object’s presence is its passing maintenance. This continuity is the temporal object’s *unity*. Because the sonorous

*now* retains all the notes preceding it, the present note can sound melodic, can be “musical,” whether it is harmonic or unharmonic: it continues to be properly a *note* and not merely a sound or a noise.

Properly understood, for Husserl these primary retentions cannot be seen as memories in the sense that one can remember, for example, a melody one heard yesterday. That would only be a matter of recall, the recall of something that happened but is no longer present; primary retention, on the contrary, is an originary association between the *now* and what Husserl calls the “just-past,” which remains present in the *now*. Maintaining the just-past in an ongoing present provides continuity to what is making itself present *now*, the most obvious example of which is melody in which a note can clearly only occur through an association with the notes that preceded and will follow it (those to follow being the ones that will resonate as a retention in the *current* note, which will be retained in its turn, but with which it will then share space as a protention concealed and sustained from preceding retentions). This is what has been called the “Kuleshov Effect,”<sup>4</sup> though it is considered by François Albera to be nothing more than a myth since Kuleshov himself never fully described it, and since the experience that catalyzes it can, as Albera emphasizes, be initially attributed to Pudovkin.<sup>5</sup> In any case, historically, the Kuleshov Effect consists of inserting the same image of the actor Mozzhukhin’s face numerous times into a series of sequences constructed around the image,<sup>6</sup> in which each time the actor’s face appears it does so with three other quite different images. The image of Mozzhukhin’s face, though it is always the same, is nonetheless perceived by viewers as three different images, each seeming to produce a different version of the same face.

In fact, it is this cinematic *effect* that ceaselessly produces a particular consciousness, projecting onto its objects everything that has preceded them within the sequence into which they have been inserted and that only they produce. And in fact this is the very principle of cinema: to connect disparate elements together into a single temporal flux.

Husserl’s principle of primary retention is the most productive conceptual basis through which to analyze this “generalized cinema.” Though Franz Brentano was the first to attempt to think through the primary retention of the just-past, according to Husserl he had failed, in that Brentano claimed that primary retention, as the past originarily engendered by the present now of perception, was a product of the *imagination*, originarily associated—as the past—with this perception. In Brentano’s version, it is the imagination that both provides retention with the index of the past and that simultaneously connects the present now to its retentions in an out-flowing in which the passing temporal object finally disappears. But for Husserl such a viewpoint is inadmissible in that it amounts to saying that the time of a temporal object is *imagined*, *not perceived*—and that as a consequence, temporal objects are not realities

but effects of the imagination: this would mean the negation of the reality of time itself.

However, in claiming that primary retention is not a product of the imagination but the phenomenon of the *perception* of time par excellence, Husserl must not only distinguish primary from secondary retention, which would obviously be necessary, but in fact *oppose* them.<sup>7</sup> Opposing primary memory to secondary memory, primary retentions of perception to re-memories, is to initiate an absolute difference between perception and imagination, to propose that perception owes nothing to the imagination, and that what is perceived is in no case imagined; further, this claim must absolutely not be contaminated by the persistent fictions produced by the imagination: life is perception, and perception is not imagination.

In other words, life is not cinema. Nor philosophy.

Life-as-perception of the living present, for Husserl, *does not tell us stories*.

## Selections, Criteria, and Recordings

The Kuleshov Effect in particular and cinema in general nonetheless show that as an interdependence among just-past retentions in the ongoing present of a temporal object, and as the re-memory of the past in general, this primary/secondary opposition is a phantasm.

And if it were possible to demonstrate that lived reality is always a construct of the imagination and thus perceived only on condition of being fictional, irreducibly haunted by phantasms, then we would finally be forced to conclude that perception is subordinated to—is in a transductive relationship with—the imagination; that is, there would be no perception outside imagination, and vice versa, perception then being the imagination's projection screen. The relationship between the two would be constituted of previously nonexistent terms, and this in turn would mean that life is *always* cinema and that this is why “when one loves life one goes to the cinema,” as though we go to the cinema in order to find life again—to be somehow resuscitated by it.

Philosophy would first have to ask: “Where do these phantasms come from?” And then: “What is a life that is in need of being constantly resuscitated?”

I have attempted to confront these questions in exploring the nature of a third kind of memory, not primary or secondary, but tertiary: a memory resulting from all forms of recordings—a memory Husserl designates as *consciousness of image*. Turning our attention to Freud later on,<sup>8</sup> we will see why these tertiary retentions are equally the support for the *protentions* constituting the expectation that animates a consciousness built on archi-protentions: death, desire for reproduction and expenditure—whose core is the unconscious.

Primary retention, says Husserl, is grounded totally and uniquely on perception. The primary retentions constituting a temporal object are not the product of conscious selection, since if consciousness of time's unfolding were to select what it retained from that process, and if as a result it did not retain all of it, then it would no longer be a function purely and simply of perception, but already a kind of imagination, at least by default.

However, it is enough to have heard a melody twice through in order to be able to state that in these two hearings consciousness had not been listening with the same ears: that something happened between the first and second hearing. This is because each provides a new phenomenon, richer if the music is good, less rich if bad, that the melomane (the melody *maniac*) takes in heavy doses. This difference obviously results from an alteration in the phenomena of retention—i.e., from a variation in selection: consciousness does not retain everything.

From one hearing to another it is a matter of different ears, precisely because the ear involved in the second hearing has been affected by the first. The same melody, but not the same ears nor, thus, the same consciousness: consciousness has changed ears, having experienced the *event* of the melody's first hearing.

Consciousness is affected in general by phenomena presented to it, but this affect occurs in a special way with temporal objects. This is important to us in the current investigation because cinema, like melody, is a temporal object. Understanding the singular way in which temporal objects affect consciousness means beginning to understand what gives cinema its specificity, its force, and its means of transforming life leading, for example, to the global adoption of "the American way of life." An inquiry such as this presupposes an analysis of the specifics and the specificity of the recording techniques producing cinematic flux and the effects it engenders in consciousness, especially in that consciousness is *already cinematographic* in its principles of selection for primary memories, a selection that relies on criteria furnished by the play of secondary memory and associated tertiary elements, the combination forming a montage through which a unified flux is constructed (as "stream of consciousness"), but which is identical in form to the cinematic flux of an actual film, as a temporal object and as the result of a constructed montage.

These are some of the preconditions for the association of primary, secondary, and tertiary retentions, of an associated-montage-of-retentions we will explore . . .

Consciousness has altered between two subsequent experiences of a melody, and this is why the same primary memories selected from the first hearing are not selected in the second, the object being the same, the phenomenon being different. But we must then ask how it is possible to say that "one consciousness can listen to the same temporal object twice." And this is in fact, and indeed, impossible without the existence of analog techniques for recording a

melody phono-graphically. In other words, the fact of the consciousness's selection of primary retentions, and thus the intervention of the imagination at the heart of perception, is only made *obvious* by tertiary retention—by a phonogram, in that for the first time it makes possible the identical repetition of the same temporal object, within the context of a multiplicity of phenomena seen as so many diverse occurrences of one and the same object.

Let us examine this remarkable possibility more closely.

I hear, for the first time, a melody recorded on some mechanism, some phonographic support medium, analog or digital. Then later on I listen to the same melody again, from the same disc. Clearly in this new second hearing the sound just-past, insofar as it is now a primary retention into which other, previous primary retentions have been and are being incorporated, *in that it is past* and is no longer passing, yet in some fashion it did not happen *again* in precisely the same way as the first time. If this were not true, I would never hear anything other than what I had already heard. But the sound just-past, combining with other sounds just-past before it, and that pass each time differently from that first time, is absolutely new in its data, the phenomenon being a different phenomenon, the experience of the same piece of music giving me an *other(ed)* experience of that music despite my consciousness of the fact that it was the same music, played a second time, from which two different experiences occurred in me; at the same time, the passing of sound just-past, the primary retention constituting this unfolding in its original, unique construction—all of this “owes” something, in its very passage, to a previous passing that has disappeared, owes something to the preceding hearing: owes *that* hearing its modification.

In its passing, retention is modified and thus itself becomes past: retention-as-passage is essentially self-modification. But this modification is clearly *now* rooted in the secondary memory of the first hearing, even though on the other hand it precisely surpasses (is different from) that first hearing. In the melody's second hearing, what I hear results from the fact that I have previously heard it, yet it results from that previous hearing precisely and paradoxically in that I hear *something else* the second time: the first time, I never actually heard the melody; the second time, the already-known led me miraculously (back) to that unknown. In that second hearing, what is present is already known, but presents itself differently, such that the expected appears as unexpected.

Inscribed in my memory, the anteriority of the melody's first hearing arises from secondary memory, i.e., from the imagination and from fiction. What is strange is obviously that this already gives rise to the *not-yet*; that the already-heard gives way to the not-yet-heard, echoing a protentional expectation that has entered into a play of archi-protentions. Between the two hearings, consciousness has changed because a *clearing away* has taken place: primary retention is a selection process brought about through criteria that have been established during previous clearings away, which were themselves selections

resulting from other, prior clearings. This occurs because as memorization, primary retention is also a primary memory *lapse*, a reduction of what *passes by* to a *past* that retains only what the criteria constituting the secondary retentions allow it to select: secondary retentions inhabit the process of primary retention in advance.

This is the case when I have already heard a melody and am hearing it again, but it is also the case when I have never heard it, since then I hear from the position of an expectation formed from everything that has already musically happened to me—I am responding to the Muses guarding the default-of-origin of my desire, within me. And this occurs because of a memory lapse, a *forgetting*, and because this forgetting occurs only as a function of certain criteria: my ability to construct the object of a critique. If “to memorize” did not mean already “to have forgotten,” nothing could be retained, since nothing would have passed, nothing would have happened.

Imagine hypothetically that I have an infinite memory and that I can remember what happened yesterday. I thus remember every second and fraction of a second exactly identically. When I come to the end of the day, I remember that at that moment I am remembering the entire day, which I begin to do again in remembering myself remembering anew, each second exactly and identically, etc. There is no longer any difference, because there has been no selection: time has not *passed*. Nothing has happened nor can happen to me, neither present (in which something new always presents itself to me, including boredom with the absence of the new) nor past: the present no longer passing, no longer happening; no passage of time is possible. Time has ceased to exist.

In fact, remembering yesterday, having a *past*, means reducing yesterday to less than today, diminishing yesterday, having no more than finite memories of it. This retentional finitude is the grounding condition of consciousness-as-temporal-flux. And what is true of secondary memory is true of all memory, including primary memory; thus primary retention can only be a selection, brought about according to criteria that are themselves the products of selections. However, in the case I have laid out here, i.e., understanding how we hear a melody recorded on any phonographic support mechanism, this secondary memory, indissociable (though different) from primary memory, is also indissociable from tertiary memory, “consciousness of image”—the phonogram as such.

And that is precisely what is at stake.

## Phonographic Revelation

Husserl’s examples of “consciousness of image,” of what I call tertiary memory, are the painting or the bust. For Husserl, this “configuration through

image,” the object of a consciousness of image, plays absolutely no role in the constitution of a temporal object—nor, consequently, in the constitution of the flux of consciousness itself. Not only does such a memory type not appear to perception; it does not even appear to the past flow of consciousness, in contrast to secondary memory, which, though it no longer arises from perception, is inscribed in the flow of consciousness’s past and appears to this living consciousness as its own past, since it was perceived.

For Husserl, the consciousness of image is not a *memory* of that consciousness; it is an artificial memory of what was not perceived nor lived by consciousness. A nineteenth-century painting is certainly a kind of memory, but one could not say, according to Husserl, that it is a memory of someone looking at it *now*. It is, rather, a memory trace of the painter, who has in some fashion exteriorized and frozen his memory, thus allowing, a century later, another consciousness to contemplate it as an image of the past—but in no case as a memory of his own lived past. In Husserlian phenomenology, only that which arises from conscious, *lived experience*, is, strictly speaking, unquestionable and should be taken into account in any analysis of the constituting conditions of phenomena. Husserl’s phenomenological attitude consists of positioning consciousness as the constituter *of* the world, not something constituted *by* it. Since tertiary memory is a reality *in the world*, it cannot be constitutive of consciousness but must necessarily be derivative of a consciousness that has no real need of it.

However, since the unique event that is the advent of the technical possibility of analogic recording of a *temporal* musical object, and the ability to repeat it technically, the link between primary and secondary retentions has become obvious: clearly, even though each time it is repeated it is the same temporal object, it produces two different musical experiences. I *know* that it is the same temporal object, because I know that the melody was recorded by a technique producing a co-incident between the stream of what was being recorded and that of the machine doing the recording. I know that the recording mechanism’s time coincided with the melodic flux. And this co-incident of machinic flux and that of the temporal object produces, for the flow of consciousness of both the object and its recording, a conjunction of past, reality, and this effect of the real that Barthes identifies in photography and that is replicated in the realm of sound, the difference being that as Barthes points out in the case of photography there is the *pose*, whereas in the case of phonography, of recorded sound (as in cinema), there is *flux*.

Consciousness of image, in the case of the phonogram (though it could also be said of cinematic recording), is what finally roots the primary and the secondary in one another, through the technical possibility of the temporal object’s repetition (and it cannot be emphasized strongly enough that before the *phonograph*, as before the cinema, such repetitions were strictly impossible). At the

same time it becomes obvious that the grounding of the *second primary* is in the memory of the *first primary*. It is obvious only because of the *fact* of recording: it is the phonographic *revelation* of the structure of all temporal objects.

### Returning to *Intervista*

The consequences of this revelation are considerable: the criteria according to which consciousness selects primary retentions, passes them by consciousness, and distills them no longer applies solely to secondary retentions of lived, conscious memory, but equally to tertiary retentions; cinema shows us this most clearly.

To explore this point further, I must return to and extend the analysis I have already begun of a scene in Federico Fellini's *Intervista*.<sup>9</sup>

In the film, Fellini appears in a scene with Marcello Mastroianni, with whom he pays a visit to Anita Ekberg. In the course of the evening the three of them watch the Trevi Fountain scene [of Mastroianni and Ekberg] from *La Dolce Vita*. Thus, in *Intervista* we see an actress watching herself playing a character, and the scene's extreme tension results from its undecidability: Anita is appearing in a film by Fellini, but she is playing watching herself portraying a different character thirty years earlier, and no viewer of the second film, *Intervista*, could escape being certain that as she watches the earlier film—watches her *past* life, her *past* youth—Anita cannot simply play watching herself without knowing that this is a matter of the Quintessential Performance, the most serious one of all, the first and the last engagement, the play of all plays:<sup>10</sup> no one looking at herself again, from thirty years later, having aged those thirty years, could not *not* feel the terrible reality of time passing through the photographic “that has been,” through the “conjunction of reality and the past,” the silvery coincidence re-animated by cinema's temporal flux. We see an actress playing an actress watching an actress playing a “real” character in a fictional film, but we know that she is “playing” at watching herself *having been*, that what she is doing is no longer a simple portrayal, a pure performance any actor might be required to give (to play this or that character), but the absolutely tragic staging of *her own* existence, insofar as that existence is *passing by* irremediably and forever—*forever*, except for what concerns this silvery image she has left on a reel of film: an image in which she has been preserved.

Watching herself performing thirty years earlier, Anita must feel the future anterior so striking to Roland Barthes as he looks at the photograph of Lewis Payne taken several hours before Payne's hanging:

In 1865, young Lewis Payne tried to assassinate Secretary of State W. H. Seward. Alexander Gardner photographed him in his cell, where he was waiting to be

hanged. The photograph is handsome, as is the boy: that is the studium. But the *punctum* is: *he is going to die*. I read at the same time: *This will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What *pricks* me is the discovery of this equivalence. In front of the photograph of my mother as a child, I tell myself: she is going to die: I shudder, like Winnicott's psychotic patient, *over a catastrophe which has already occurred*. Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe (*Camera Lucida*, p. 96).

"Every photograph is this catastrophe;" every photograph declares this future anterior whose stakes are death—and the dramatic outcome of every narrative, every play, every cinemato-graphic emotion.

In Anita's case, she is not merely *saying* this: as image, she is dead *and* she is going to die. She must say to herself: "I am going to die; I am dying," This *present participle* is *precisely that of flux*—that of her past life, of the film on which she has been recorded, and of her current consciousness of this film that, in unfolding, carries her along and makes her pass by, placing her in a time that leads toward the absence of time: non-passing, infinite memory that will no longer be special, where everything will be retained forever in its instant: "*The Instant of my Death*."<sup>1</sup>

But all of that is, in this scene in *Intervista*, the result of the fact that film is a temporal object in which "the actor's body is conflated with the character's; where the film's passing is necessarily also the actor's past, the moments of life of a character are instantly moments of the actor's past. That life is merged, in its being filmed, with that of its characters" (*Technics and Time*, 2:22).

This confusion of the actor's life with the filmed one is that of primary, secondary, and tertiary retentions coinciding in a single event: the properly cinemato-graphic event. In this filmic coincidence, which Fellini stages in an extraordinary way by including the fact that, for any viewer of *Intervista* who has already seen *La Dolce Vita*, the latter necessarily also becomes part of the viewer's past, and a reference to the earlier film is not simply a reference made to one fiction in the course of another fiction, which would merely be a citation: this first fiction, *La Dolce Vita*, cited in the second fiction, *Intervista*, is simultaneously

1. a *tertiary retention* (an artificial memory presented in a support medium, of which an extract, a piece of film, is projected into another film and recorded on another piece of film);
2. a *temporal object* that has been seen and re-seen, and that is currently being seen by the viewer of *Intervista*; and further,
3. as a temporal object, the film is a secondary memory for this viewer, a part of his or her past stream of consciousness, then re-activated;

4. ninety minutes of the viewer's past life, the running time of *La Dolce Vita*, have been lived as the extended retention of primary retentions in the *now* of an elapsed narrative entitled (in its entirety) *La Dolce Vita*, and of which a particular sequence is then re-lived (i.e., the section included in *Intervista*); and
5. included in *Intervista's* cinematic flux; that is, in Anita's passing stream of consciousness as well.

Additionally, *La Dolce Vita* is no longer simply a fiction for someone viewing *Intervista*: it has become its past, such that watching Anita watching herself perform the scene in *La Dolce Vita*, the viewer sees himself or herself passing by. This is true even if *La Dolce Vita* is not part of the viewer's past in the same way it is in Anita's, Mastroianni's, and Fellini's past; all three have actually lived what the spectator sees "in the cinema." *Intervista*, as a temporal object, is temporal in making the temporal object *La Dolce Vita*, lived by the characters in *Intervista* just as by its current viewers—each in a particular role—re-appear.

Consequently, the viewer (of *Intervista*) faced with the impossibility of distinguishing between reality and fiction, between perception and imagination, while (each in his or her particular role) *all must* also say to themselves, "We are passing by there." . . .

## America, America

It would be a simple matter to show that this scenario could only result in the most general of structures, structures of haunting and phantasmatic spectrality already predicted by Socrates to the Athenians regarding the immortality of the soul.<sup>12</sup>

"The immortality of the soul" is the screen—confusing perception and imagination, doxa and epistēmē, sensible and intelligible, which must always be distinguished without ever being placed in opposition—onto which that structure will then be projected and dissimulated: as projection screen "the immortality of the soul" is the opening of a great "film," *metaphysics*, introducing the extravagant Socrates played by Plato.

Fellini stages this spectacle's machinery most clearly at *Intervista's* conclusion showing how metaphysics "functions" and beyond that, the "consciousness" that is its product. This structure is revealed in its greatest force, the force of direct evidence, in cinema, and because cinema is a temporal object.

In a similar frame, we might *remember* the characters in Resnais's *My American Uncle*, in which memory is a dense fabric of cinematographic citations. As

he set out on the project, Resnais had imagined making a film consisting entirely of citations but had to abandon the idea for economic reasons:

The idea of only using extracts from existing films existed from the very first scenario. At one point we even thought of making a film exclusively based on scenes drawn from the millions of films that make up the history of cinema. The novel, the cinema, and the theater contain every possible behavior. With enough time and patience, perhaps it might happen. But financially it would be a mad undertaking.<sup>13</sup>

The great French actor Jean Gabin appears in the memory of René Ragueneau, being played by Gerard Depardieu. Gabin was a cinematic presence, “in the limelight” as would have been said before World War II. In that cinematic era there were “stars.” Stars: inaccessible, untouchable, *impassive*, yet visible, perceptible beings; beings balanced between, on the one hand, the intelligible, where they seemed to be fabricated in the spirit of a Greek ideality (and in the pre-philosophic spirit of divinities), and on the other hand, the corruptible, sub-lunary world of the viewer’s eye beholding them, an eye so fragile, so obviously predisposed to vanishing, so flawed: an eye merely passing by.

By the very fact of this juxtaposition of the cinematographic temporal object as between the real life of actors and that of their fictional characters, the Hollywood star could only *become* a star through a play of hauntings in which reality and fiction, perception and imagination become confused together—and along with them primary, secondary, and tertiary memory.

The great case in point that we still remember is Vivien Leigh’s Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*,<sup>14</sup> Blanche is a faded Southern belle who has lost the family house, a “house with colonnades,” one of those residences that the Scarlett O’Hara of *Gone with the Wind* would not abandon at any price.<sup>15</sup> Watching Vivien Leigh playing Blanche, how could one avoid saying to oneself that she, and director Elia Kazan, and all the viewers of *Streetcar*, are haunted by Scarlett: by her extraordinary beauty, her brilliant and unbearable coolness as a mad young Southern woman—how could one avoid it? Who has not seen, loved, and detested Scarlett? *Gone with the Wind* was made a dozen years before *A Streetcar Named Desire* and is, of course, among the greatest successes in cinema history; it is a film that has been seen—that has *passed by*, unfolded, been unrolled—literally everywhere, and with it, Scarlett O’Hara, as played by Vivien Leigh, loved and hated by the entire world. Kazan could neither ignore nor neglect this when he cast his later film. How not to shudder before such a psychotic, at the catastrophe that has unfolded when we see Blanche taken away forever from her “sanctuary” with Stella and Stanley? How not to feel insane ourselves, carried along by this exemplar of the great, mad

American destiny—that never fails at the same time to sell us, through making us laugh and cry in the face of our own fate, the American Way of Life? *America, America!*

## Notes

1. For a further reading of this theme, see Stiegler's recent *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations* (2010), from Stanford University Press. "Taking care" for Stiegler means caring of/for the continuity of generational (collective) individuation possible only through technics—through grammatization. The discussion makes extensive use of Kant's "Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" and the history of European public education since its advent in the late eighteenth century to interrogate the way in which pedagogy, and the educational tradition, has "grammatized," shifting from the oral/familial to the written/public—though grammatization is "writing" in the largest sense; "exteriorized" onto programmed (semiotic) media that, as Derrida points out, has always been the case with "language," is all the more so in an age of icons, logos, text-messaging, and a general grammatization. The entire notion of the "tertiary" is predicated on its lack of dependence on the "human," but rather on techniques of recording that "transcend" the human in the sense that they are not dependent on any life or life experience but on a collective (i.e., "super" individual) medium of ex-expression, in a number of forms, ranging from writing to music to images to sounds.—TRANS.
2. "This schematism of our understanding in regard to phenomena and their mere form, is an art, hidden in the depths of the human soul, whose true modes of action we shall only with difficulty discover and unveil." Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1965). Henceforth CPR.  
The standard French translation used by Stiegler, by Treinesaygues and Pacaud, contains different language: "Ce schématisme de notre entendement, relativement aux phénomènes et à leur simple forme, est un art caché dans les profondeurs de l'âme humaine et dont il sera toujours difficile d'arracher le mécanisme."—TRANS.
3. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), pp. 76, 78. Henceforth CL.
4. Xavier Lemarchand first compared this analysis to the Kuleshov Effect in his dissertation, "Différance et audiovisuel numérique," at the Université de technologie de Compiègne, 1998.
5. Cf. François Albera, "Introduction to Lev Koulechov," in *L'Art du cinéma et autres écrits*, vol. 2 (Lausanne: L'Age d'homme, 1994). Henceforth FA.
6. Ivan Ilyich Mozzhukhin (1889–1939) was a leading actor in Russian cinema. In 1910 he left law school at Moscow University to join a traveling theater troupe. His is the face of Lev Kuleshov's experimentation with image perception employing a film-as-image psychological montage alternating Mozzhukhin's face with other unrelated images; the effect was that Mozzhukhin's face itself seemed to undergo alterations related to the surrounding images, produced by fading memory.

Mozzhukhin left Russia during the Revolution, arriving in Paris in 1919 and quickly becoming a star of French silent cinema, his hypnotic stare appearing on many European film magazine covers. Mozzhukhin wrote his own films in which he experimented with the perception of reality, for example, building sets that made the actors

seem much smaller than normal, and juxtaposing incongruous visual elements in scenes (e.g., the camera entering a detective's office to find a chorus line of men in tuxedos waltzing about the room).

Novelist Romain Gary claimed to be Mozzhukhin's son; on a final cinematic note, Gary's novel *La promesse de l'aube* (*Promise of Dawn*), which fictionalizes the story of his mother and Mozzhukhin, was adapted into a screenplay and then a 1970 film directed by Jules Dassin (who plays Mozzhukhin).—TRANS.

7. Jean-Michel Salanskis, in his very meticulous assessment of the first two volumes of *Technics and Time* ("Ecce faber," *Les temps modernes*, no. 608 [April-May 2000]), seems to me not to have understood this concluding chapter of volume 2, saying that in it I denounce Husserl's distinction between primary and secondary memories (that is, it must be noted, between perception and imagination). On the contrary, my goal there is precisely to reaffirm this distinction, asserting that it is weakened by the fact that Husserl himself understands it as an opposition. My claim is quite simply that a distinction is not an opposition, and further that this confusion is the origin of metaphysics—to which we will return at length. In this volume, and in volume 5 of *Technics and Time*, we will also return to a number of matters addressed in my good friend Salanskis's article.
8. In Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 4: Symbols and Diabols, or the War of the Mind*, forthcoming.
9. This analysis was first presented in Rome in 1985 at the invitation of Jean Lauxerois and published in *La Revue Philosophique* in 1990 under the title "Mémoires gauches." I returned to it in the first chapter of *Technics and Time, 2*. Here I will extend those analyses, addressing their consequences for the temporal object, initiated in the last chapter of *Technics and Time, 2* . . .
10. "Il s'agit du Grand Jeu, du plus sérieux: du premier au dernier enjeu, de l'enjeu de tous les jeux"—TRANS.
11. Stiegler is playing a *double jeu* here, not only taking Barthes's future anterior to its conclusion but relating it directly to that other multilayered *punctum*: Maurice Blanchot's "L'instant de ma mort," in which Blanchot recounts the real or fictional narrative of his own "pricking," the reportedly transfiguring experience of having been placed before a German firing squad, only to face a *mock* execution. Blanchot himself is recalling Dostoevsky's 1848 experience of just such a "theatrical" event. The layers of "play" and "playing" involved in "the instant of my death," particularly in light of that impossible first-person pronoun, are parallels to Stiegler's citation of "reality and the past" in Fellini's film and its relation to the temporal object.—TRANS.
12. Cf. Stiegler, *Technics and Time, 4*.  
It should be remembered that *âme*, here clearly "soul," was not for Socrates, nor for Aristotle, what the word has meant in the modern era. The Greek ψυχή, generally rendered in Latin as *anima*, is closer to "life force" or *élan vital*.—TRANS.
13. Alain Resnais, "La vie est un roman," *L'Avant-Scène Cinema*, no. 263 (March 1981): 7.
14. Elia Kazan's 1951 film released in France with the title *Un tramway nommé Désir*.
15. *Gone with the Wind*: Victor Fleming, 1939; in French, *Autant en emporte le vent*.