

## § Introduction

In the last chapter of *Disorientation*, I introduced a thesis claiming that *industrial temporal objects* are the new century's determining elements:

The programming industries, and more specifically the mediatic industry of radio-televisual information, mass-produce temporal objects heard or seen simultaneously by millions, and sometimes by tens, hundreds, even thousands of millions of "consciousnesses": this massive temporal co-incidence orders the event's new structure, to which new forms of consciousness and collective unconsciousness correspond.<sup>1</sup>

I repeated this same idea, though in another form, on the fourth page:

An object is "temporal" when its flow coincides with the stream of consciousness of which it is the object (example: a melody). In this new calendarity, the "stream of consciousness" of global collectivity unfolds simultaneously with the temporal flow of the products of the programming industries, resulting in a disruption of the very process of *eventization* (of "what happens," what takes *place*, what *conjugates* space with time, *as* time). This disruption also affects the biological event, orders digital "real time," etc.

To analyze the industrialization of memory is to re-open the philosophical question of *synthesis* (the unity of the stream of consciousness, of judgment)—but with new baggage: a state of rupture with what, within philosophy, cannot think synthesis that is already prosthesis.<sup>2</sup>

It is this question of synthesis, thought separately from any originary prostheticity, that will constitute the heart of the reflections I offer here through a reading of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Since [the appearance of] *Disorientation*, within the context of the dissemination of industrial temporal objects that has suddenly accelerated and become more complex through the intense process of digitalization that in the network of networks commonly called the internet characterized the concluding decade of the century just past, this question has been posed with increasing clarity. The internet has become the implementer of standard interoperability among digital infrastructures, called TCP-IP, that has made innumerable new services, tools, and uses possible and that, combined with new standards for text, image, and sound compression, has allowed for the colossal phenomenon we now know as the convergence of informational, telecommunications, and audiovisual technologies (to which we must now, with the development of mobile technologies, add “roaming,” the computerization of automobiles, and the new standards of multimedia mobile communications—UMTS—new technologies from metallurgy and the automobile industry).

The resulting disruption, universally recognized as vital to industrial societies and as a decisive stage in the “globalization” process, has been but a first step. The second step, which is taking place currently and which will only result in an increase in digital networking, will produce a new kind of temporal object: one that is *delinearizable* and *inseparable*, produced by hypervideo technologies.

In addition to the concretizing of the processes now in and about to take place, there will doubtless be an increase in the amount of time spent in front of screens of all kinds, which will be then re-conceptualized and re-defined in their functions (becoming terminals of tele-action), their various applications expanding into the thousands, most notably at the professional level; these processes will pursue, at an increasingly complex level and with increasing ease and sensitivity, the industrial temporalization of consciousness. This convergence (cf. Chapter 3 below, and *Technics and Time*, 4), in bringing together industrial logistics (informatics), transmission (telecommunications), and the symbolic (audiovisuals), also integrates the functions of technological, industrial, and capitalistic mnemotechnical systems into the technical systems producing material goods (cf. Chapter 4), in turn facilitating the transmutation of the *industrial* world into the *hyperindustrial*, and subordinating the entire worlds of culture, knowledge, and the mind, along with artistic creation and advanced research and instruction, to the imperatives of development and the market.

*Markets* are above all *consciences*—acting as places for exchange by

consumers whose consciousnesses are themselves consumer “goods,” and for market financiers whose “consciousnesses” are investors and speculators. Yet at the moment at which management has orders to react in real time, thus producing *reactivity* in the double sense of the word (in terms of management, as rapidity and ease of *adaptation*, and in Nietzschean terms, as *ressentiment* and group behavior *against exceptions*), the functional integration of the symbolic and logistic industries produces total control of markets as collectivities of a temporal stream of consciousness always in need of being *synchronized*.

A consciousness, in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sense of the word, is *essentially free*, that is, *diachronic*, or perhaps exceptionally, singularly, *irreducibly mine*—this could also be called *ipseity*. *Diachrony* and *synchrony* are tendencies that form and re-form ceaselessly, and we will see that they cannot be in opposition over a significant amount of time without tragic consequences. Yet their *composition* is precisely what from the hyperindustrialization of temporal objects constitutes the possibility of *de-composition*.

Yet as evident and ineluctable as the integration of the logistic (digital) and the symbolic (alphabetic and analogic) industries may be, nothing indicates that such an integration will always be effective in its (or any) current form—contemporarily, as the systematic and unlimited exploitation of consciousnesses for “market access.” Consciousness as a temporal object is always *in struggle*, today as a core issue of the *current* industrial revolution, as it builds the conditions necessary for what I call in Chapter 3 a *new commerce*—in the broadest sense of the word.

The second half of the twentieth century, through the hegemonic installation of a *tele-vision system* (a billion global tele-viewers as long ago as 1997, but now the entire global population—that is, global consciousnesses—being affected by the same industrial temporal objects) became the era of the initiation of a *tele-action system*. This evolution will continue and expand what began with television as a process of profound transformation of the very *activity* of consciousness, activity that is temporal both in the sense that like a melody it perpetually unfolds, appearing (and *only* appearing) while *disappearing*, and in the sense in which it is formed in history and evolution, since it is not a synchronic given but a conquest, a result, and a passage. There are countless forms of consciousness, even if their *tendencies*, *metastable structures*, and *ideal objects* are preserved across these evolutions.

Prostheticity is a decisive element in such transformations when, as we will see, it creates conditions for what Kant calls *schematism*, the implementing of new forms of what in *Technics and Time*, 2 I call *tertiary retentions*, the material inscription of the memory retentions in mnemotechnical mechanisms I have defined in relation to the Husserlian concepts of primary and secondary retention (a connection to which I will return in the first chapter below). Prosthetization of the synthesis that always includes the flux of consciousness (i.e., Kant's sense of synthesis), with the industrial production of temporal objects, *can* reach a stage at which the transformation of this consciousness is simply destroyed. This means that the current prosthetization of consciousness, the systematic industrialization of the entirety of retentional devices, is an obstacle to the very individuation process of which consciousness consists.

The development and integration of logistic and symbolic technologies mean a *loss of individuation* in the sense in which Gilbert Simondon analyzes it with regard to the manual laborer and the nineteenth-century machine-tool, the "technical individual" replacing the worker who, having had his skills exteriorized, could therefore no longer be *individuated* but was instead condemned to be *proletarized*.<sup>3</sup> The confusing of the logistic with the symbolic—their *non-critical integration*—has led to a straightforward proletarianization of the mind and to the pauperization of the culture.

The result has been a slow destruction of the unifying capacities of the temporal flux in which individual consciousness exists and the destruction of its capacity for *projection*—for *desire*—which can only be *singular* (objective): if an individual consciousness is cut off from "world," it aims either at embedding itself in the archi-flux of the programming industries or being trapped in the webs of "user profiling"—whose goal is to subdivide and *tribalize* them into subcommunities through devices that can observe the behavior of the programmed consumers within the wide variety of informational internet content that then, on the basis of those observations, can create models for the hypersegmentation of the target audiences of advertising, while still giving them the impression that the system is responding to them *personally*, this is obviously pure illusion, since this *system* is always one of industrializing what had never been industrializable—individual *behaviors*—thereby reinforcing them until the consumer, being locked in, can no longer escape; she can be perfectly anticipated and controlled, no longer an individuated and individuating

“person” but in a real sense *Nobody* [*personne; outis*], a perspectiveless cyclops.

This loss of individuation, in which *I* persists as a yawning void, no longer moving toward a *We* who, being everything, the confusion of all possible *I*s in an undifferentiated flux (the totalitarian model of “community”), is condemned to dissolve into a globalized, impersonal *One*. This loss of individuation leads to immense existential suffering: in the most tragic cases, this *quasi-inexistence* produces multiple personalities, and the danger of taking deadly drugs, of violence, tribal or individual, and suicide, which in France has become the second most common cause of death in adolescents and the most common in young adults.

This is the inescapable *malaise* at work today. It would be possible to say that in certain respects this malaise is precisely, itself, “the age of the contemporary being”—were one to think that “the question of being” as Heidegger sees it is still a salient question, and if the contemporary version of the concept has not been completely transformed by a radical parallel shift in the meaning of *becoming*—that is, if “the question of being” is not now dominated by an *ontological indifference*, if this malaise is not the border, the limit, the very question of being within the ever-returning question of suffering: *mis-becoming* as the agent of *becoming-ill*.

The loss of individuation that Simondon shows characterized the nineteenth century is also for him the central characteristic of the initial age of a new process of “individualizing” that he calls “mechanology.”<sup>4</sup> Following on Simondon’s suggestions will lead us to a critical enterprise in a new sense, a sense still virtually unheard of in philosophy from Kant to Marx and beyond.<sup>5</sup> This new critique’s possible path is thus what will guide our investigation here, as a critique of contemporary *reality* in the spirit of the Frankfurt School’s “social critique,” assuming it is still possible—and not only possible but necessary, at the cost and on condition of a radical critique of the very roots of modern thought that still remains largely to be undertaken.

As Heidegger understood (in his own inimitable style), the *properly critical* moment in Kant’s thought is the moment in which Kant makes a *choice*, facing the critical *question* par excellence (though more or less blindly), if not within the history of being then at least within the history of modern philosophy, in a manner so limited that it has long circumscribed the framework of *all* critique; this question, then, catalyzes my

inquiry regarding the critical moment in Kant's *schematism*: the question of the Transcendental Deduction.

My central ambition in this volume is to re-visit and contemporize this transcendental moment as *cinematic consciousness* constituting an archi-cinema, at which we will look in Chapter 2 after working through "cinematic time," in the sense in which this phrase designates the art and method of actual filmmaking, which will be the focus of the first chapter.

This in turn will re-direct us to the issue of knowing what kind of orientation for thought is possible in an age in which, having become techno-science and thus dismissing the classical model of science by which Kant operated, it is confronted by the need to decide among a set of possibilities that are just so many fictions—but fictions at the heart of which is the very question of *making a difference*, within ontological *indifference*, as, for example, the fact that it must be possible to distinguish, although all films are only cinema, between good and bad films. This re-opening of the question of orientation—and dis-orientation—which in turn re-activates the Kantian issue of the subjective principle of differentiation, and the theological grounding that is inseparable from it, will occupy us in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Horkheimer and Adorno address schematism by framing their structural critique as an encounter with the American culture industry. The resultant discourse is obviously at once lucid (if not prophetic) and erroneous (if not reactionary); it is in some respects among the first clear expressions of the current malaise, seen as a malady that is in the end not to be apprehended nor distinguished, nor even, properly speaking, critiqued, since it is everywhere—as *the very material of becoming*, this results in a dis-oriented reading of the *Critique of Pure Reason* that is both non-problematic and a-critical. What I read into their analysis, brought back to life after fifty years, which is at once an examination of the United States and a prescient expression of the contemporary malaise as emanating *from* a United States in which industrial technology has played such a central role,<sup>6</sup> just as in the malaise that now *submerges* the public sphere, is the crux of a much more general blockage of thought—and much more than thought.

The situation being critiqued here has a very long life that is far from over—indeed, that may just have begun to pass through us. In both *The Fault of Epimetheus* and *Disorientation I* explore the question and the

conditions of this *passing*, a passing that *is time*. And I explore the question of, and the conditions for, an exceptional contemporary *epochality*, whose exceptional difficulty is what I have characterized elsewhere as the “epochal double re-doubled.” I have called “epochal” the opening out of the conditions of and for any new epoch, suspending the programs in force in the (any) *passing* epoch.

In *The Fault of Epimetheus*, I attempt to show

—that these conditions are always rooted in the dynamic potential of what Bertrand Gille calls the system of technics proper to each epoch that, when it enters into a revolutionary phase, constitutes a first epochal re-doubling and a first suspension of programs;

—that an epoch is only *clearly* constituted as such when “the suspension of programs” engendered by the technical system leads to the constituting of new programs and to a second suspension—a re-doubling of doubling—through which a new unity of space and time is constructed, a new psychic and collective individuation.

The first “moment” of such epochality is that of a process that could be characterized as *becoming technical*; the second is that of the *transformation of this becoming into a future*.

Today, the conditions of the second re-doubling are not integrated.

The re-doubled double has no *place*. *Becoming*, which has been *disrupted*, does not produce a *future*.