



LINA VIDAUSKYTĖ

Generolo Jono Žemaičio Lietuvos karo akademija, Lietuva
General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania, Lithuania

DIRBTINIS INTELEKTAS: VISUOMENĖS INFANTILIZACIJA IR BEJĖGIŠKUMAS

Artificial Intelligence: Infantilization
and Hopelessness of Society

SUMMARY

The paper is focused on a few ideas of two contemporary philosophers – Bernard Stiegler and Odo Marquard. Stiegler was a critic of contemporary techniques, while Marquard offered some well-aimed ideas about contemporary society in the age of technical progress. Contemporary techniques, at the top of which is artificial intelligence, indicate the well-being of contemporary society. But this well-being perhaps should be written with a negative sign. The loss of the innate technical abilities that make up the essence of an individual means the loss of a technical individual. Technology as memory in the broadest sense is no longer the property of man, but industrial memory. Continuous learning throughout life, aimed at overcoming the backwardness of our consciousness from industrial technology and artificial intelligence, leads to a complete loss of human experience.

SANTRAUKA

Straipsnio pagrindinė ašis sukoncentruota ties šiuolaikinių filosofų – Bernardo Stieglerio ir Odo Marquardo – idėjomis. Stiegleris buvo šiuolaikinės technikos poveikio kritikas, o Marquardas pasiūlė keletą įdomių kritinių idėjų apie visuomenę techninės pažangos epochoje. Šiuolaikinė technika, kurios viršūnėje yra dirbtinis intelektas, nurodo į visuomenės gerovę. Tačiau ši gerovė galbūt turėtų būti vertinama neigiamai. Prigimtinių techninių gebėjimų, kurie sudaro žmogaus esmę, netekimas reiškia techninio individo netekimą. Technika kaip atmintis plačiausia prasme daugiau nebėra žmogaus nuosavybė, bet industrializuota atmintis. Nuolatinis mokymasis visą gyvenimą, kad įveiktume mūsų sąmonės atsilikimą nuo industrinės technikos ir dirbtinio intelekto, veda į absoliutų žmogiškos patirties praradimą.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: gerovė, infatilizacija, bejėgiškumas, Stiegler, Marquard.

KEY WORDS: well-being, infantilization, hopelessness Stiegler, Marquard.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that well-being is an expression of progress. But what does well-being mean, especially when contemporary techniques are considered? My thesis is such: artificial intelligence, including other contemporary techniques, takes away from us all our technical capacities, abilities, and our *know-how*, even our wishes and will. So, how can one combine into a perfect picture of well-being a condition without basic human qualities and the idea of the well-being of the humanity? The loss of the above-mentioned capacities means that there is no longer an individual constituted by techniques. I will come back to this question of techniques later. But now I would like to turn on Odo Marquard's thoughts about progress and well-being. Back on March 12, 1984, in Munchen, at the colloquium on "Working society. The Transformation of its structure", Marquard read a paper "An era of alienation to the world?", in which he spoke about well-being as a form of salvation (Marquard 1996). The German philosopher suggests looking at progress through the prism of human ages. Usually, all theories of progress seek to leave the past and overcome childhood, to become an adult. The last people in history are the most mature

and have the largest baggage of experience. But Marquard insists that at this age of well-being humanity doesn't grow old anymore. First, our knowledge quickly becomes obsolete, because of very fast technical progress. To minimize the gap between our knowledge and capacities, we need to participate in all life learning. However, since we no longer grow up, the world becomes alienated from us. The paradox is that we have to study all the time and sit on the school bench for the rest of our lives, but we cannot have a whole picture of the world. As Elon Musk says, that we need somehow to improve our intellect to be closer to the capacities of artificial intelligence. Simply, we must learn more and more during all entire our life. But in other words, such all-life learning means that we don't have experience anymore – we are like children. Consequently, well-being turns into absolute poverty and even hopelessness.

Despite all efforts of contemporary society, humanity is not able to know the world deeply as one could suggest from all life learning. Seems that the existence of contemporary humanity reached the blind street. Unless we assume that the child's self-awareness is an expression of well-being.

TECHNICS AS MEMORY

Bernard Stiegler proposed similar ideas to Marquard's thinking. According to Stiegler, contemporary technics transforms individual memory, will, the no-

tion of time, tradition, and experience. How it is possible? Let's start with some introductory remarks on the philosopher's thinking.

Stiegler is considered as one of the most fascinating contemporary thinkers and perhaps the best title of his interests would be such: *a new type of ontology*. It may be recognized in his famous fundamental multivolume work *La Technique et le temps* (henceforth: *Technics and Time*) (3 vols.) where Stiegler analyses techniques and its interaction with a human. According to Stiegler, technical objects are *inorganic organized beings* (Stiegler 1998: 17). He explores a history of techniques as *epiphylogenesis* – the preservation in technical objects of epigenetic experience. It means a break with genetic evolution which cannot preserve the lessons of experience, but such a break also constitutes the *invention* of the human (Stiegler 1998: 17).

In his later works Stiegler analyses the impact of contemporary technologies and hyper-industrial capitalism on consciousness (Stiegler 2011). According to him, contemporary audiovisual technology has an impact on individual consciousness, and the character of this impact depends on the nature of individual consciousness and technics: audiovisual technologies and human consciousness is a temporal flux (so-called “cinematic constitution of consciousness”). Stiegler revises Kant’s, Bergson’s, Deleuze’s concepts of time. Introducing a new concept of *tertiary retention* (or tertiary memory) Stiegler solves the rela-

tionship of individual and collective consciousness. “Tertiary memory” is a culture itself: it is not just the recording of inner process and sensory/experiential memory, but “long-term” memory stretching across generations. Manifestations of tertiary memory include such things as libraries (also the archives of all kinds), museums, the various technological means of recording memory, making it available “outside” of any individual.

When modern technology enhances human memory, then mnemotechniques turns into memotechnology and an objective, impersonal memory arises and it steals from us our knowledge. Countless contemporary technologies are prostheses of our consciousness and thus we lost our knowledge, our *know-how*. This exteriorized and materialized consciousness became the function of the manipulations of the flux of consciousness and mass projections.

Such consciousness has nothing in common with individual consciousness. Images of mass media, being recurrent, ubiquitous, and repetitive, synchronize different consciousnesses into a common flux of images as well as expose what always has been present at the core of the human – its technogenic nature. Perhaps the best example of how it works is the so-called *cinematic time* and *industrialization of memory*.

CINEMATIC TIME AND INDUSTRIALISATION OF MEMORY

Stiegler develops the idea of tertiary memory through a reading of Edmund Husserl. He is interested in Husserl’s

distinction between primary and secondary retention. In the volume *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal*

Time (1893–1917), Husserl investigates inner or experienced time and prefers objects that have a temporal extension. They are the objects (such as e.g., melodies) different parts of which cannot exist simultaneously but appear only across time (Husserl 1991: 145). Husserl's fundamental claim is that our experience of a temporal object would be impossible if our consciousness were only conscious of that which is given in a punctual now. F. Brentano claimed that we cannot *perceive* objects with temporal extension: we can only *imagine* them. Husserl on the contrary insists that we can perceive temporal objects because consciousness is not fixed in the "now". Husserl operates with a moment of the concrete actions that are narrowly directed toward the now-phase of the object. He calls this moment the primary impression. The primary impression must be situated in a temporal horizon and be accompanied by retention (=an intention that provides us with a consciousness of the phase of the object that has just been) and a protention (= a more or less indefinite intention of the phase of the object about to occur) (Husserl 1991: 30–31). That means, that the primary retention is what I retain in my consciousness of an event during its unfolding. For Husserl, primary retention is part of the very constitution of the temporal object and therefore part of perception in as much as we perceive temporal objects.

The melody, then, is an example of primary retention in as much as the retention of previous notes belongs to the very act of perception. Without this primary

retention or primary memory, there is no perception of the melody. Husserl distinguishes this type of memory from what he thinks of as secondary retention or secondary memory. An example of this type of memory would be remembering a melody heard yesterday. Stiegler emphasizes that the important point for Husserl is that whereas primary retention belongs to the act of *perception*, secondary retention belongs to the *imagination*. This distinction is, in effect, essential for Husserl in as much as he wants to argue that the temporal object, for example, the melody, is a real object of perception, not an imaginary one. This means that Husserl doesn't just distinguish between primary and secondary retention, he *opposes* them, he sets up an "absolute difference" between them, mirroring the distinction between "perception" and "imagination" (Stiegler, 2011: 38).

Since primary retention never involves imagination, it also never involves any acts of selection: the kind of memory constitutive of primary retention is never selective: it retains everything. For if primary retention involved selection, it would already indicate that, as Stiegler puts it, "a kind of imagination" was at work in that selection process. Against Husserl's absolute distinction between primary and secondary memory, Stiegler outlines the counterexample of what is happening when I listen to a melody more than once, for example when I play a record several times. Husserl completely neglects the phenomenon of recording in his analysis of temporality (Stiegler 2011: 21).

AN ABILITY TO SCHEMATISE AND THE LOSS OF INDIVIDUATION

For Stiegler, transcendental schematism is determined to be mixed with technological exteriorization of humans, because tertiary retention is, in the most general sense, the prosthesis of consciousness without which could be no mind, no recall, no memory of a past, no culture.

But contemporary visual prosthetic mechanisms change the natural schematism of human consciousness. The implication of this is that individual consciousness disappears. Stiegler insists that “[...] the current proselytization of consciousness, the systematic industrialization of the entirety of retentional devices, is an obstacle to the very individuation process of which consciousness consists.” (Stiegler 2011: 4).

By introducing the concept of “cultural industry” Adorno and Horkheimer started a critique of industrial schematism. As we know, Kantianism identifies two foundations without which knowledge for the human subject is impossible: sensibility and understanding. A schematization operating through the imagination permits their association. However, Adorno and Horkheimer described the culture industries and the imaginations’ industrialization as an industrial exteriorization of the very power of schematization (Adorno 1979: 124). They accuse the cinema of paralyzing the imagination and the discernment of the viewer to the extent that the viewer can no longer distinguish between perception and imagination, between reality and fiction. Ostensibly this power of the

culture industry to rob the individual of their schematization seems like Stiegler’s “industrialization of memory” and “loss of individuation.” This is a demonstration of how the program industry constantly solicits our attention, tries to modify our behavior – especially our patterns of consumption. When talking about the industrialization of memory and a “loss of individuation”, Stiegler borrows the terminology from Gilbert Simondon. According to Simondon, industrialization takes individual technical skills away from the worker and replaces them with machine tools. This deprives the worker of the ability to individuate their labor. (Simondon: 1989). The industrialization of memory shifts this loss of individuation to the psychic domain and results in what he calls a “proletarianization of the spirit” or “pauperization of culture.” (Stiegler 2011: 4–5). Simondon’s theory of individuation is exposed in *L’Individuation psychique et collective*, which shows how the individual and the group co-constitute each other through the intergenerational transmission (synchrony) of the pre-individual fund and its adoption (diachrony). The pre-individual fund is the collection of knowledge, experience, and tradition that a group has accumulated over time. It has to be continually reactivated through its simultaneous transmission from one generation to another (for example in schools), and through a singular way in which each receiver of the funds adopts it. For Stiegler, the threat of the program indus-

try to pre-individual funds is due to us adopting the time of the program industry. This stems from the development of “industrial temporal objects” (another of Stiegler’s key concepts). Such an object is industrially produced and exists only for as long as it passes, for example, a film or a television program, where the attention of the viewer is also vital to the existence of the object. Because the market of industrial temporal objects takes short-term profit and newness as its norms, it inescapably clashes with the production and selection processes of pre-individual funds, where longevity and the old are central norms. Whereas the simultaneous transmission of the pre-individual fund and its adoption by the receiver meshes synchrony with diachrony, the program industry aims to have all its receivers at the same time receive and adopt its content and its time. The adoption of cinematic time and collective consciousness leads to a *libidinal economy*. According to Stiegler, libidinal economy unwraps its auto-destructive side through nowadays abnormal and wild consumerism: “We think that this libidinal economy, in its current form, has reached the exhaustion of desire. As a result, it has become auto destructive. (...) when desire is treated industrially, it leads to the destruction of desire, which triggers the demotivation of the worker and the consumer. This is particularly problematic because capitalism “works” (...) through motivation; without motivation, it doesn’t function. There have been techniques to artificially fabricate motivation, and these techniques have ended up destroying it.” (Stiegler 2012: 10). The result of this de-

struction: the libido is constituted by technics. It’s not spontaneous energy, but it is articulated based on technics: of “fetishes” and, more generally, *prostheses*. As Stiegler puts it, “It’s *technè* (...) that constitutes the libido” (Stiegler 2012: 10). Throughout the industrial world, contemporary individuation suffers from a dangerous malady: *desublimation*, which will have the effect of *demotivation* in all areas of life. This is a result of a process of loss of individuation.

Because the industrial temporalization of consciousness became global, individual consciousness disappears: it is “captured”, controlled, and debased by programming industries. For Stiegler one of the key implications of the industrial production of tertiary retentions is that they enable the global spread of cultural content selected for short-term profit motives, as well as for their potential to affect consumptive behavior. For us, capitalism is a libidinal economy, in its current form, has reached the exhaustion of desire, and “as a result, it has become auto-destructive” (Stiegler 2012: 9–15). “[W]hen desire is treated industrially, it leads to the destruction of desire, which triggers the demotivation of the worker and the consumer.” (Stiegler 2012: 9–15). Libidinal industry captures our most basic existential energy, our desire. Desire as such means singularity, which Stiegler calls our primordial narcissism (Stiegler 2009: 39–40). Only when “I” is a part of “We”, such a phenomenon as history is possible. There is no “I” without “We”. Libidinal economy destroys individual consciousness and creates an industrial temporal collective consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence and the programs that are produced industrially and broadcast through various audiovisual media modify the experience of time, notably through our consciousnesses adopting the time of programs, for example by watching the same daily programs, or the same global live broadcasts. By virtualizing a standard of imaginary, it creates industrial schematism. Today the psychological and collective individuation becomes industrial because it is generated by contemporary capitalism. It means the loss of an individual ability to schematize: we have no more the individual function to relate various experiences of senses to fundamental concepts. Instead of individual schematism is done by industry. Industrial temporal objects decompose individual consciousness, and they can-

not be called *ipseity* anymore. It is not singular, but rather collective, which has no history and, perhaps, no future.

It delineates a measure for our worlds – the artificially created ideals that induce the mechanisms of control and reshape the order of desires, and lead to the loss of individual consciousness. The libidinal economy which works hand in hand with globalization and hyper industrialization changes individual patterns of consumerism and restructures the human *psyche*. Infantilization is also associated with the pauperization of the individual. It turns that all modern technologies work on a different level than humanity. We lost our adult age, experience and are no longer able to compete with contemporary techniques, especially with artificial intelligence.

References

- Adorno Theodor, Horkheimer Max. 1979. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Translated by John Cumming. London: Verso.
- Husserl Edmund. 1991. *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*. Transl. by John Barnett Brough. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Marquard Odo. 1996. *Zeitalter der Weltfremdheit? Beitrag zur Analyse der Gegenwart: 76–97. Apologie des Zufälligen. Philosophische Studien*. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun.
- Simondon Gilbert. 1989. *L'individuation psychique et collective*. Paris: Aubier.
- Stiegler Bernard, Neyrat Frédéric. 2012. Interview: From Libidinal Economy to the Ecology of the Spirit, *Parrhesia: A Journal of Critical Philosophy*. 14: 9–15.
- Stiegler Bernard. 1998. *Technics and Time. The Fault of Epimetheus*. Transl. by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Stanford: Stanford University Press, Vol. 1.
- Stiegler Bernard. 2009. *Technics and Time. Disorientation*. Transl. by Stephen Barker. Stanford: Stanford University Press, Vol. 2.
- Stiegler Bernard. 2011. *Technics and Time. Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*. Transl. by Stephen Barker. Stanford: Stanford University Press, Vol. 3.