**Against the Humiliation of Thought:**

**The University as a Space of Dystopic Destruction and Utopian Potential**

**I**

**The Humiliation of Thought**

My objective in this article is to try to develop a utopian theory of the university through an exploration of the contemporary technological dystopia imagined by the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler. In the first part of the article I explain Stiegler’s critique of the society of systemic stupidity and symbolic misery developed across a range of works (specifically, 2010a, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2016), seeking to capture this social form through the idea of ‘the humiliation of thought’, before suggesting a response to this situation by way of a return to the work of two of Stiegler’s key sources, Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze, in order to construct a utopia of situated, experience-led, educational becoming in the world. In the second part of the article I develop a rationale for returning to Heidegger and Deleuze by staging a problematic encounter between these two philosophers, before concluding the piece through an exploration of what a Stieglerian-Heideggerian-Deleuzean utopia of thought might mean in practice. In reading these three thinkers together I seek to overcome the significant differences between them, which we might best capture through reference to Stiegler’s (1998) objection to Heidegger, that is similarly present in Deleuze’s (1983) critique of phenomenology. This critique revolves around the rejection of the idea of the self-identical subject of experience which is seen to screen out the processual condition of the co-produced individual made, in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1983, 1987) work, through engagement with a pre-individual plane of immanence. Responding to this post-structural critique of phenomenology through reference to Stiegler’s (1998) objection to Heidegger, I suggest that Dasein was never an essential *who* engaged with a inessential *what*, but rather always a *how* or processual, immersive, co-production in exactly the way that Stiegler (1998) suggests in his own reading of hominization through technics. The purpose of this response is to make the case that it is possible to re-read and deepen Stiegler’s critique of nihilism by drawing out his Heideggerian and Deleuzean influences in the name of a new utopia of thinking and learning. But before thinking about Heidegger and Deleuze, I want to begin by outlining Stiegler’s critique of the dystopic conditions of the present.

In a series of books written over the course of the last two decades (from *Technics and Time: Volume I* (1998) through *States of Shock* (2014a) to *Automatic Society* (2016)) Stiegler has painted a nightmarish picture of contemporary neoliberal society characterised by rampant, unthinking consumerism, destructive hyper-attention, and brutal violence carried out in the name of creating some form of meaning and leaving some kind of mark upon a world that seems entirely post-human. In this respect violence is the *final sign*, the only way to say ‘I was here, I left my mark’, in a world (or more precisely an *un-world*) that no longer recognises the importance of meaning for sustaining human life. Recalling existentialism, and the later model of existential psychotheraphy developed through the fusion of existential philosophy, phenomenology, and psychoanalysis, Stiegler’s point here is that humans need to live in meaningful worlds. If these worlds are no longer present, humanity will collapse back into some kind of pre- / post-human state of nature where violence becomes law. In this uncontrollable, automatic society, where reaction and reflex trump human thought and reflection, Stiegler (2012) explains that people live in a state of symbolic misery because the cultural systems that once held them, cared for them, communicated meaning, and maintained the spiritual coherence of life, have been destroyed by an empire of late capitalist instrumental reason that spreads discredit, disbelief, disaffection, and ever more desperate attempts to found some form of significance. This is the reason contemporary society is uncontrollable because, for Stiegler, there are no values, no meaningful cultural systems left to lead people into the future, but only a hyper-cynical, computational, short-term imperative to make profit and take advantage that offers no real sense of direction beyond the need to exploit the immediate situation in the name of making a killing (profit, surplus value). Thus the late capitalist automatic society becomes a kind of high tech simulation of the Hobbesian state of nature, where animal reflex, reaction, and behaviour forecloses the possibility of action based upon deep thought.

Given this late capitalist logic, which is also the behaviourist logic of the neoliberal (dis)individual, Stiegler explains that the future orientation of desire collapses back into the thoughtless, reactive, immediacy of drive and people similarly become uncontrollable. They are uncontrollable first, because they more or less live outside of traditional moral systems and operate on the basis of neoliberal principles such as competitive advantage, which mean they will rationally take whatever action is necessary to secure their position, and second, because in instances where it becomes clear that their situation is hopeless their very rational response will be to seek to establish their existential value (their meaning, their significance in the barren, unworld) through violence on the basis that there is no other way to communicate in a world of symbolic misery. There is, therefore, a kind of ghoulish hope, a stupid, unthinking utopianism, in what Stiegler (2012) calls negative sublimation, which is suggestive of some deep desire to create meaning and escape from the world where nothing seems to matter. This is the hope of last resort and, as I will explain later in this article, it is this pharmacological possibility that Stiegler holds onto in his work and seeks to build upon in the creation of a utopia of thought, creativity, and invention. In this way, he seeks to create a utopia for those who have none.

In his book concerned with the struggle between intelligence and stupidity, *States of Shock* (2014a), Stiegler links possibilities inherent in this ghoulish utopia, this dystopia of symbolic misery, back to the emergence of the post-World War II consumer society. Drawing on Adorno and Horkheimer’s work, and specifically their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997), he explains the emergence of an economy of wants from an economy of needs on the basis of the manipulation of the unconscious created and advanced by public relations experts such as Freud’s nephew, Edward Bernays, who understood the power of mass media and attention capture. In Stiegler’s (2014a) work it is this model that eventually led to the translation of American democracy into the American consumer society which was then globalised over the course of the 20th century under conditions of neoliberal ideology. Following this process of globalisation, Stiegler explores the transformation of consumerism through the unfolding neoliberal revolution where politicians from Thatcher through to Obama have pursued an economic policy of privatisation, deregulation, and financialisation, which projected the costs of consumption into the future in the name of consumer-led growth and development far in advance of what current conditions would have otherwise made possible.

Although Stiegler (2014a) never explicitly explains the transition from early post-World War consumption to the version of the same concept emergent under neoliberal economics from the 1980s onwards, his references to processes of financialisation and the Freudian concept of drive suggest that his understanding of this shift relates to the integration of consumption and a normalised, democratised debt economy that led to the emergence of a highly efficient version of consumerism where desire (premised on wanting and waiting) becomes drive (where wanting and having become more or less identical in the collapse of duration). The problem of this situation that cancels the experience of desire (wanting and waiting in *hope* of satisfaction) is, for Stiegler (2012, 2013, 2014c), that it paradoxically destroys the future in a permanent present characterised by the desperate search for satisfaction that never comes, because no matter what one consumes it is never enough, and a similarly despairing struggle to make enough money to service the debts emerging from this addictogenic situation. The crushing irony of this condition is that the neoliberal political economy, premised upon the value of information, innovation, development, and futurity, therefore becomes a machine for the cancellation of hope and positive futures and a technology that creates a vision of a dystopia of misery and depression stretching out across the abyss of time. There is no end in sight. There is no hope in this picture, beyond that which seems to emerge from Stiegler’s (2016) pharmakon where the toxic effects of alien technology eventually open out onto a space of new post-computational individuations.

In his *What Makes Life Worth Living?* (2013) Stiegler refers to the work of the British psychoanalyst and object relations theorist, D. W. Winnicott who wrote about the importance of transitional objects (teddy bears, comfort blankets and so on) in the positive development of children into adulthood, in order to suggest that the fantastical capitalist commodity has taken over this role in neoliberal society with the result that children grow up and mature through object relations premised on desire and disappointment, rather than security, comfort, and care. The result of this situation, where the traditional social and cultural symbolic system collapses and is replaced by a profane, meaningless, material, economy that invades and restructures human psychology, is that people come to inhabit a depthless, fragile, spiritless (un)world that stupefies and proletarianises them. The idea of proletarianisation, which Stiegler takes from Marx and Simondon, refers to the process of dehumanisation that undermines embodied, lived forms of knowledge, including *savoir faire* (how to make) and *savoir vivre* (how to live), simply because it takes time, attention, and discipline, what Stiegler calls *apprenticeship*, to learn and know, rather than simply *consume* profane information without working it through. It is, of course, precisely this *time* to think, this *time* to learn that is annihilated by the neoliberal short-circuit of financialisation, drive, and symbolic misery which encourages the idea that education means the proletarian consumption of information.

Caught in a world without durable symbolic coordinates to explain how to make one’s way, Stiegler (2012, 2013) suggests that the individual who is really a trans-individual by virtue of the way they are made in social relations becomes dis-orientated and starts to fragment into a schizoid state he writes about in terms of dis-individualisation. Under conditions of dis-orientation and dis-individualisation people fall into a state of wild second nature and try to save themselves through violent negative sublimation where they seek to impose meaning upon their own lives and the world that has cast them out and turned them into nobodies. At this point the social system comes back in the shape of a kind of Weberian, Kafkaesque nightmare, a totally rationalised, instrumentalised, disciplinary universe that insists upon adherence, accountability, and performance, without any of the positive, careful, symbolic markers imagined by Winnicott and the object relations theorists who saw that we become human through our relations in the world that enable us to learn in a safe and secure environment. Against this psychoanalytic model of security, which compares to the Heideggerian notion of care, in the insecure (un)world of neoliberal capitalism where the openness necessary to learn represents a sign of weakness and the honesty one needs to become oneself means naivety, Stiegler (2013) explains that we come to occupy a space of systemic stupidity propped up by a conspiracy of imbeciles profiting from a market of fools who cannot see that their world is heading towards apocalyptic destruction (in his *Automatic Society* (2016) Stiegler calls this a *robot apocalypse*). The reason for this is that the neoliberals have sold off their ability to think and apply human intelligence in the world that cannot be reduced to a programmatic equation and information transfer, but must instead be understood in terms of its abyssal difference, possibility, contingency, and improbability. Understanding this point is key to Stiegler’s utopia of invention.

This is, I would suggest, more or less how Stiegler understands the contemporary battle for control of what we might call *the means of subjectivation*, or the struggle between stupidity and intelligence, where the reign of stupidity refers to the current dead end of neoliberal capitalism characterised by a computational strike through future (~~future~~) of on the one hand endless, impossible debt repayment and looming ecological catastrophe and on the other hand the possibility of intelligence that waits over the horizon in those utopian spaces and places set up for secondary socialisation and higher learning. The university is potentially the key site in this struggle, or battle between stupidity and intelligence, because it has the potential to provide a safe, secure space for the authentic individualisation, revealing, and becoming of the self to maturity, but is also perhaps *the* space of neoliberal nihilism, research, development, and innovation that crushes the potential of the authentic learner who wants to become who they are for the sake of the construction of ever more little robots who will continue the neoliberal (production) line (Featherstone, 2017).

Stiegler makes this point towards the end of *What Makes Life Worth Living?* (2013) when he writes of the disposability of youth and children who have most to learn, and also most to contribute to a society in desperate need to imaginative renewal, but who are mercilessly thrown to the wolves of the market and sacrificed to the senile Gods of neoliberal capitalism on its last legs (Stiegler points to the entropic, fatal condition of *late* capitalism in his *Automatic Society* (2016)). However, Stiegler’s problem is a very simple one. How to move from the current nihilistic situation, the dystopia of systemic stupidity and symbolic misery, to the utopia of thought, meaning, wordliness, and humanisation? Very practically Stiegler’s question is *the* revolutionary question par excellence, ‘What must be done?’, which he solves through reference to Platonic-Derridean concept of the pharmakon which fuses and confuses toxin and cure in one substance. In the teeth of Stiegler’s dystopia it seems hard to imagine an escape route from the horror of a system that makes people stupid in the name of trying to make them more productive. However, it is precisely because of this hopelessness that Stiegler believes in the emergence of a new skepsis and noesis organised around the need to defend humanity from technology and the violence of what Rouvroy and Berns (2013) write about in terms of algorithmic governmentality.

Drawing on Katherine Hayles’ (2007) work, Stiegler explains that youth are most severely impacted by this new regime, living in a state of hyper-attention constantly stimulated by the automatic super-ego of global media, because their focus, concentration, attention, and emergent subjectivity is endlessly captured by the consumer culture industry. He points out that they suffer from cognitive overflow, addiction to stimulation, depression brought about by the impossibility to think and imagine real change, and finally possession by Freudian Thanatos, the death drive that causes them to seek out ever more stimulation in order to try to *feel* their existence in a world that seems oblivious to their presence. From entropy to negentropy, if there is any hope to be found in this situation it is, for Stiegler, likely to reside in its very extremity. The fact that this society is unliveable is precisely the reason it must become liveable in the future. Of course, this unliveable situation is most painfully felt by Stiegler’s (2010a) *de-generation who represent the possibility of the future*, those children without effective families to ensure primary socialisation; those children who cannot rely on educational institutions to support secondary socialisation and higher learning without sinister motives concerned with the market and profitability; those children who will never achieve adulthood, what he calls the Kantian maturity necessary to learn who they are and participate in the polis on the basis of this self-knowledge. How can these children, these members of the de-generation think, when they have grown up in the era of *the humiliation of thought* by economy? Stiegler’s (2010a, 2013, 2016) pharmacological answer is that *we*, where *we* potentially means the educated, *literate* elites, must find some way to reanimate the durable symbolic systems (phenomenological retentions and protentions) in order to reconstruct chains of signification stretching from the past through the present into the future. In effect *we* must reconstruct the Lacanian symbolic order of the father and the Kleinian secure spaces of the mother which ensure discipline and care and open up possibilities of trans-formation and trans-individualism. This is the role of philosophy in Stiegler’s utopia – the creation of meaningful space to enable durable subjectivation for those who have been ruined and destroyed by neoliberal capitalism. But the problem with this suggestion is, of course, that the utopian space of the university, the utopian space of the campus where it *should* be possible to think, where it *should* be possible to challenge the nihilism of the neoliberal machine, has already become a space of consumerism, technical innovation, humiliation, and brutality towards embodied, lived, human thought. How, then, will the battle between stupidity and intelligence play out on campus?

Given the neoliberalism of higher education, Stiegler (2013, 2014a) suggests that slowness, deliberation, and the turn to a contributory economy of knowledge (rather than the consumption of base, unthought information) might move the university towards a more open model of humanistic thought and tip the struggle between stupidity and intelligence in the favour of those who oppose the profane, economic, model of education where we consume information like little robots. Now in order to unpack this thesis, and understand how Stiegler’s pharmacological thesis might work, I think it is necessary to explore the problem of what we might call the *neoliberal attitude to things* through reference to one of his key sources, Martin Heidegger (2010b, 2013), who opposes lived thought to metaphysics and revealing and becoming to the use and abuse of (human) resources. Despite his Heideggerian vision of technology, which is most clearly developed across his *Technics and Time* (1998, 2008, 2010b) books, Stiegler ultimately tends to mis-read Heidegger’s work, and centrally fail to uncover the ontological politics of his thesis that an exploration of *Being and Time* (2010b) and other works would allow. This mis-reading in based in his view of Heidegger’s radical separation of the humanity of *the who* and *the what* of the technological sphere, which Stiegler himself connects through a theory of co-production, when the contrary was always the case: Heidegger always thought that Dasien emerges in relation to techne (or technics) and the world made through the experience of the ready-to-hand (Zuhanden), rather than estrangement of the condition of the present-to-hand (Vorhanden), where we confront alien things. The reason this mis-reading and most centrally its correction is important is because what it enables is the return to Heidegger to deepen Stiegler’s theory of the pharmakon and his related opposition between computational capitalism and improbability without the intrusion of the notion of phenomenological consciousness, which has been roundly criticised by structuralists and post-structuralists for its failure to understand the constructed nature of the self.

Explaining the origins of the human, and consequent dystopia of spiritless, symbolic misery and systemic stupidity, Stiegler (1998) picks up Plato’s *Protagoras* (2009) and explores the myth of Epimetheus and Prometheus. In this creation myth the Titan Prometheus is tasked with making sure every animal has the ability to survive in the state of nature. Enter Prometheus’ brother Epimetheus who asks the Titan to allow him to make the decisions concerned with pairing animals and powers and abilities. Once Prometheus agrees, Epimetheus sets about his work, making sure some animals have sharp teeth, some claws, and others wings. Unfortunately, however, he forgets about humanity, leaving humans naked and unable to survive in the new world. At this point Prometheus returns to salvage the situation by stealing fire from the Gods in order to provide humans with some way to survive. On the basis of this crime, Prometheus is tortured for eternity, but humanity starts to live through fire, the civilization fire enables, and the technological development that emerges under conditions of civilization. In Stiegler’s theory, this myth describes the history of hominization and humanity’s (co-)becoming through technology (or technics) that characterises the figure of the human. In this story humanity is born too soon, but survives through its technical mastery and technology, which enables it to live beyond Epimetheus’ original mistake. This mistake represents humanity’s essential default, the species error which we have been making up for ever since through endless humanisation, development, and modernisation, and centrally the origins of the contemporary dystopia Stiegler identifies with *over-development* and the technological nihilism that results in dis-orientation, dis-individualisation, symbolic misery, systemic stupidity, and the problem of unlearning. Here, Stiegler picks up Hediegger’s theory of mechanisation to contrast the original utopia of technics (Greek techne, the art of making, and co-production) with a vision of alien technology and the high tech dystopia that emerges when the lived, embodied, process of making (Zuhanden) is over-taken by the conditions of estrangement, proletarianisation, and the brutal separation of human from thing (Vorhanden).

But while Stiegler’s (1998) account of the origins of the technological dystopia explains the first moment in the evolution of the human world that eventually becomes the alien (un)world, I want to suggest that consideration of his key sources, Heidegger and Deleuze, might deepen his pharmacological theory of escape from systemic stupidity by setting out an ontology of being and becoming able to oppose the technological (un)world. Here, we confront Stiegler’s dystopia of unlearning, his theory of the *default of the default* or universal default that seems to leave little space for the emergence of the new, and start to think through the meaning of his pharmacology founded upon readings of Heidegger and Deleuze. Exploring the fatality of Stiegler’s pharmakon, which picks up Heidegger’s (1991a, 1991b) critique of Nietzschean metaphysics, I want to suggest the following. My suggestion is that in order to imagine an escape from the horror show Stiegler sets up and proposes to resolve across his works, it is necessary to deepen his theory of the pharmakon through reference to Heidegger’s (2010b) ontology which can provide a deeper understanding of the meaning of thought. While Stiegler takes up Heidegger’s theory of the nihilism of technology from his *The Question Concerning Technology* (2013) in the first volume of *Technics and Time* (1998) and then rolls this out across later work, I want to suggest that he loses the ontological backdrop to Heidegger’s philosophy because he imagines a radical separation of a phenomenological *who* and a technological *what* and fails to recognise that Heidegger’s notion of Dasein was always a co-production premised upon an exploration of the processual *how* of individualisation. The effect of this screening out of the Heideggerian *how* is that Stiegler ends up forgetting about the concept of being, the ab-ground of presencing, revealing, and human techne, which could have provided him with an ontological defence to support his pharmacological theory of the need to rediscover the essence of humanisation and culture (what he calls otium, or studious leisure).

Against Stiegler’s (2014a) vision of the contemporary university as a nihilistic space of industrial innovation and the ironic production of stupidity in the form of the agonising humiliation of thought in the very place where thinking should be sacred, what the return to Heidegger’s (2010b) ontology enables is the reconstruction of the idea of the university and the campus as spaces of clearing where the *how* of becoming and revealing take place beyond the constraints of what Heidegger calls Das Man, ‘the they’, or the suffocating limits of everydayness. While the contemporary university has become about the industrial production of knowledge, information, and performance in the name of development and endless modernisation, returning to Heidegger enables the suggestion of a different model of higher learning that opposes the violent imposition of scientific method upon the world, and instead prioritises revealing, ‘letting be’, deep attention, patient listening, immersive thought, and essentially care for this process. This is, of course, exactly what Stiegler (2013) suggests when he writes about the need for the (re)invention of a more human noetic politics based in otium (serious, disciplined leisure, study, or work).

Building upon this view, in the second half of this article I want to start by returning to Heidegger in order to deepen Stiegler’s theory of pharmacology. In this way I propose to explore Heidegger’s (2010b) ontology, taking in reference to key thinkers, such as Iain Thomson (2005), who establish connections between Heidegger’s philosophy and education, before thinking through the political limitations of his vision of revolution most clearly revealed by Heidegger’s own Nazism and later catastrophic attempts to reform the university in the early 1930s. Leaping off from the historical problem of Heidegger’s Nazism, my thesis is that his decision to take up membership of the Nazi Party and to try to align his philosophy with Hitlerism should be regarding as a social, political, economic, and cultural catastrophe of the highest order by virtue of the way in which it ruined the political possibilities inherent in his vision of ontological presencing and revealing and resulted in the domination of the American model, which in his view priorities metaphysics and everydayness, but centrally forgets about being.

This is precisely where Stiegler picks up the story in his *States of Shock* (2014a) because his reference to Adorno and Horkheimer and their theory of the culture industry suggests that the post-World War II American model industrialised thinking and culture, consequently foreclosed the possibility of Heideggerian revealing, and then started to become the authoritarian model that eventually emerged fully formed in the planetary nihilism of the neoliberal social, political, economic, and cultural system. Of course, Stiegler (2014a) is sensitive to the shift from the early post-World War II period that saw the emergence of the consumer society theorised by Adorno and Horkheimer to the late capitalist neoliberal period inadvertently brought about, in his view, by the radicals of 1968. In Stiegler’s view the problem of the radicals of 1968 who imagined a new post-authoritarian vision of society is that they paved the way for the contemporary brand of creative (and later computational) capitalism where freedom is made perfectly symmetrical with control through the imposition of biopolitical micro-fascism and what he (2010a) calls psycho-power.

Recognising this critical view of the other side of 1968, which Stiegler picks up in the third volume of his work on disbelief and discredit, *The Lost Spirit of Capitalism* (2014c), the next move in my article involves consideration of the work of one of the key figures of this intellectual movement, Gilles Deleuze, who is also one of Stiegler’s central influences, in order to suggest the democratic rehabilitation of Heidegger’s ontology, which can be accused of authoritarianism by virtue of the way it opens up the possibility of ontic politics concerned with identity and the superiority of ethnic rootedness. Of course, Deleuze and Guattari were critical of Heidegger for precisely this reason in their *What is Philosophy?* (1994) and in what follows I propose to pick up on the Deleuzo-Guattarian focus on ‘difference in itself’ (the minor case) in order to suggest escape from the authoritarian model of capitalism through an inventive *art of control*. Moving beyond this point, I conclude through reference to Deleuze’s (1997) later recognition, picked up by Stiegler, that the politics of *resistance* no longer really work in a late capitalist system organised around difference and in contemporary society by algorithmic governmentality (Rouvroy and Berns, 2013). Noting his subsequent turn to a politics of *invention* through an art of control, I suggest links to both Heidegger (2010a) who understood the connection between art and being, and finally Stiegler (2013), who I want to suggest bases his theory of pharmacology upon a Heideggerian-Deleuzean ontology of being and becoming where is it necessary to balance Heideggerian resolve (and the need to struggle on the basis of an ethic of thought) with a Deleuzean appreciation of difference.

**II**

**The Utopianism of Being Critical**

In his work on Heidegger’s educational philosophy Thomson (2005) explains that it is possible to excavate an ontology of learning from works such as *Being and Time* (2010b) that offer a deep critique of the metaphysical domination of thought and that this might serve as a model for a different way of thinking about education and the role of the university. According to this view, Heidegger’s opposition to metaphysics takes off from his critique of the ontotheological structure that defines the absolute ground of being and the upper limits of the heavens and then identifies the substantial things caught in-between. This is western substance ontology, which Heidegger thought had reached its limit in Nietzsche who recognised the demise of God, but replaced Him with the pure nihilism of the will to power and the eternal recurrence. Now it is this system that eventually led to the cold, meaningless cybernetic circulation of the neoliberal system Stiegler (2012, 2013, 2014b, 2016) paints in his dystopia of spiritless systemic stupidity and symbolic misery. But while Stiegler (1998) starts his sorry history with Plato’s (2009) *Protagoras* and reference to the myth of Epimetheus and Prometheus, Heidegger writes a history of ontology which shows how the nihilism of what he calls ‘the atomic age’ emerged from the Greeks original onto-theological mistakes, starting with Plato, who founded reality in the proto-theology of his theory of forms, and later Aristotle, who brought his teacher back down to earth by locating form in things themselves (Thomson, 2005). At this point, when Aristotle closed the space between idea and thing, Heidegger explains that the metaphysical structure of western thought was more or less set, even though it could never exhaust the bottomless depth of things that stretch back into the abyss of being that the metaphysical mind can no longer think. It is precisely this point, which revolves around the inability of metaphysics to capture being and exhaust its possibilities, that Derrida (1984) would later develop in his philosophy of difference, and following Derrida, Stiegler (1998) will take up in his theory of the essential default of humanity.

However, what I have sought to explain above is that Stiegler’s mis-reading of Heidegger’s ontology, which leads him to mistake the processual aspect of Dasein (*how*) for a radical separation of consciousness (*who*) and technology (*what*), means that he also tends to ignore the potential value in Heidegger’s critique of the nihilistic system which he eventually connects to the nightmare of algorithmic governmentality. Given this problem, it becomes clear that what Thomson (2005) calls ‘Heidegger’s hope’, which means the inexhaustible nature of being that will always exceed metaphysical strategies concerned with the humiliation of things, is comparable to what we might call Stiegler’s (2013, 2014a, 2016) pharmacological utopianism. This response to the desperate, nihilism of the present is not simply about negativity, seeking holes, gaps, nooks, and crannies in technological domination, and then triumphantly holding this up as evidence of the possibility of *resistance*, but rather revolves around *the risk of utopia*, the invention of the new, and the radical suggestion that there is some other way, emergent from the ab-ground of being, and the ideas of presencing, revealing, and becoming, which would be *other* to the metaphysical, technological system Stiegler critiques and that ironically emerged from the thought of the original utopian, Plato.

Against Plato, who I think it is possible to argue formulated his original, ontotheological, utopia (*The Republic*) on the basis of his disenchantment with the polis which had put his own teacher, Socrates, to death, Heidegger opposes the eternity of the idea that shapes things in favour of a dynamic philosophy of being that emerges through Dasein that is always thus a kind of Stieglerian co-production rooted in the experience of the ready-to-hand (Zuhanden). According to Heidegger’s ontology *to be* is *to not be a lifeless thing*, but rather *to become*, and *to become authentically* by resolutely taking a stand on the way being emerges through one’s life in the face of the inertia of everydayness and Das Man that objectifies and ignores revealing. Although Stiegler recognises the way the latter, which is to say everydayness and the related metaphysical system that leads to the humiliation of the thought of being in the assumption of the presence of things, eventually leads to a completely closed, spiritless, stupid world, he limits the critical force of his theory of pharmacology because he loses sight of Heidegger’s ontological concept of being. This means that he cannot effectively describe what he means by intelligence, which I think resides in the Heideggerian approach to meditative thought, listening to being, resolutely taking a stand, and becoming into the future on the basis of ‘letting be’. Understood from the point of view of metaphysics, intelligence ends up meaning knowledge of things, which is precisely why the contemporary university education system has become about the profane, humiliated consumption of information. This is, of course, Stiegler’s dystopia, but what he does not have is Heidegger’s ontological theory of thought, which is premised on a pre-conceptual sensitivity to the revealing and disclosure of being, that I think needs to form the basis of a new utopia of education, and specifically university space characterised by meditative thinking and the ancient idea of techne or bringing forth. In this respect, the value of reference to Heidegger, who Stiegler tends to play down following his critique of the latter’s phenomenology in the first volume of *Technics and Time* (2008), is that his ontology can deepen Stiegler’s (2013, 2016) focus upon otium, studious leisure, and eventually the hacker ethic as a model of authentic learning (ludic noesis).

Although Heidegger (2002) made the myth of the cave central to this idea of what it means to think for oneself through lived experience, his commitment to the Frontgemeinschaft of Ernst Junger and the proto-Nazis meant that his valorisation of thought eventually collapsed into the worst kind of ideological instruction where the learner is simply filled up with, in this case, *hateful information*, rather than encouraged to think for themselves in the name of the development of the knowledge of being. This is, therefore, the humiliation of thought in Heidegger’s own thinking, the risk of his philosophy today, and the challenge that Thomson (2005) and others (See Milchman and Rosenberg, 1997) have taken up, which is to try to somehow separate his enormous achievement from his catastrophic political decision, which threatens to plunge any theory of a utopian university characterised by the idea of the campus as a space of clearing, revealing, and becoming into a nightmarish dystopia, a camp, where the care for Dasein is destroyed by the most advanced form of metaphysics that takes everything for a standing reserve to be consumed in the name of some terrible vision of progress. There is, of course, no final, and conclusive, way to sever this connection and rehabilitate Heidegger because he will be forever tainted by his association with Nazism. The history of utopian thought and practice, from Plato through Robespierre up to Marx, Stalin, and Nazism is also the history of dystopia and Heidegger potentially represents the final chapter in the *modern* story of this nightmare connection which we thought had ended in the fires of Auschwitz. However, the picture that Stiegler paints, the picture of the neoliberal computational dystopia, recalls Heidegger, his theory of technology and the forgetting of being, and requires critical thinkers to try to rethink his project against his own authoritarianism in the name of a future beyond the betrayed liberalism of the present that seemed like a post-authoritarian utopia of freedom in the early post-World War II period, but has slowly become a dystopia where freedom *is* control and people, animals, and the world itself are things to be unthinkingly consumed for the sake of a future nobody really believes will ever come to pass. Following Stiegler, how is it, therefore, possible to rethink Heidegger today?

My view is that the answer to this question resides in a return to the concept of the Frontgemeinschaft, which Heidegger imagined represented a kind of authentic, resolute community of learners open to anxiety, but also the *demilitarisation* of this idea against its explicit authoritarianism by highlighting what Heidegger (2010b) actually meant when he wrote of the spatiality of Dasein which becomes through exposure to the remote (homelessness) that comes close in order to enable an authentic response to the strange call of being. *Xenos*, the other, the stranger, is, therefore, essential to Heidegger vision of authentic revealing, because the alternative is that Dasein falls back into the inauthenticity of everydayness where there is no other, but only *autos*, the same, which is difference unaware of itself and unable to attend to the call of being. The domination of *autos* is, of course, exactly the problem Stiegler confronts in his recent book, *Automatic Society* (2016), where algorithmic governmentality drives out all possibility, improbability, and contingency, and precisely the reason why it is useful to return to Heidegger, whose philosophy of the uncanny, throwness of being insists upon the irreducibility of these conditions, regardless of the emergence of the authoritarian spaces of technological unthought. Where the image of *autos* represents Heidegger’s dystopia, a space of inauthenticity and authoritarianism where difference is frowned upon, his philosophy of openness to contingency, improbability, otherness, and the revealing of being, represents what Thomson (2005) calls his perfectionism, and I would say his utopianism, which it might be possible to locate within an authentic space of clearing, the campus, where thinking the remote is possible. This is also, I think, Stiegler’s noetic utopianism which resides on the other side of his pharmacological critique of the dystopia of the late capitalist automatic society. Centrally, pursuit of this utopian ideal would *not* mean regression towards intellectual elitism, and elitist institutions, but rather the construction of spaces that are open to that which is primordial about learning, understanding, and thinking – the slow, deliberate working through of knowledge based in lived experience, rather than the lightning fast consumption of meaningless information beyond lived context – through the struggle between intelligence and studipidity.

In this respect, Heidegger (1976) anticipates Stiegler’s theory of intelligence and knowledge when he writes of the way being reveals itself through the ideas of work, craft, and making sensitive to the being of materials that opens up the world, rather than seeks to constrain and construct it in line with some pre-ordained strategic plan, program, or algorithm. Following Heidegger and his reader Stiegler, who writes of the liberation of work from proletarianised labour in his *Automatic Society* (2016), the utopian university campus, the space of clearing and revealing, would, therefore, be about openness, difference, and ‘working with’ in the name of authentic care, rather than the inauthentic version of *being careful* that revolves around managing things and looking after immediate needs without consideration or respect for the abyss of difference. This is, in my view, the utopian Heidegger that we should look to save from the catastrophe of his decision to sign up to the Nazi Party which has, I would suggest, had profound effects upon the history of the 20th century that need to be reversed through a return to his thought for precisely its ability to think ontology beyond technology. That is to say that the catastrophe of Heidegger, which tainted his thought in much the same way that Stalinism ruined the potential of Marxism on a practical, political level, eventually led to absolute domination of the technological model based in the Americanism that emerged triumphant from World War II and brought with it a particular attitude to things expressed in the rise of the consumer society and later neoliberal control society where people are human resources to be performance managed in the name of profitability. This is essentially the planetary nihilism that Stiegler (2013, 2014a, 2016) critiques through his idea of systemic stupidity – a way of *unthinking* in a totally placeless, inauthentic space, where nobody can become, but rather hides in instrumentality in order to *not* think the horror of the humiliation of being – and which he seeks to think beyond through his theory of the pharmakon that we might deepen through a return to Heidegger who imagines a space of being outside of the everydayness of the ontic sphere that seems absolutely hegemonic.

However, it is precisely because of this political hegemony which prohibits thinking utopia on the basis of the history of dystopia that includes Heidegger’s catastrophic error that means that the effort to rehabilitate his thought must pass through the thought of Deleuze (1995) whose own ontology is concerned with difference in order to try to decentre the *potential* authoritarianism contained within the thinking of being. Perhaps Stiegler realises this, which is why he opposes the phenomenological idea of consciousness (*the who*) that experiences things (technology, *the what*), and instead focuses upon the Deleuzean process of the construction of the self in context (individualisation, *the how*), even though this is a mis-reading of Heideggerian thought. Of course, Deleuze sought to think against the authoritarianism of post-World War II capitalism and the sovereign self-identical individual in his own work, first through his attempt to set up an ontology of difference in *Difference and Repetition* (1995), and then in his collaborations with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (1983), *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), and *What is Philosophy?* (1994). Where Heidegger thinks difference in the way being becomes beings (Dasein), Deleuze seeks to construct a theory where being is difference in itself, with the result that there is no question of political authoritarianism, and the domination of the many by the one, unless a new form of authoritarianism were to emerge concerned with control through differentiation. Although this is precisely what neoliberalism would achieve, and Stiegler (2016) suggests that Deleuze (1997) understood this when he wrote his short essay on the control society, his ontological model remained wedded to the idea of difference in itself emerging from primordial chaos. Since there is no concept of identity in Deleuze (which is precisely why he develops his opposition to phenomenology and the notion of consciousness that experiences), but only dynamic interactions and rhizomatic becomings that convert virtual into actual differences, he imagines a philosophy concerned with invention, the creation of concepts, the mapping of relations between multiplicities, and the construction of world views able to understand and respond to the highly mobile situations brought about by differentiation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994).

In this way, Deleuze’s philosophy becomes about situated response and problem solving, which is exactly how Inna Semetsky (2006) comes to understand his thinking in her own work where she writes about education and learning in terms of responding to particular empirical conditions and experiences. While Deleuze and Guattari (1994) would later write about this situational mode of thought through the idea of geophilosophy, Deleuze offers his own example, which Semetsky reflects upon, in *Difference and Repetition* (1995). Recalling Heidegger’s (1976) case of the craftsman who works in sympathy with his materials, Deleuze imagines learning to swim through the idea of situational, empirical, experiential becoming that resists abstract thinking, but instead requires immediate problem solving skills. Now in much the same way that Heidegger sought to take his idea of listening to being forward into university space, leading to his consequent catastrophic decision to sign up to Nazism, I think that it is possible to argue that the post-1968 campus became a testing ground for Deleuzean radicalism and rhizomatic becoming. This is the way Semetsky (2010) imagines higher learning, noting that education should be based upon the 3Cs (the critical, the clinical, and the creative) to enable the schizoid deregulation of sense. Youth are, of course, particularly open to this form of education because they have not yet been completely conceptualised by restrictive Oedipal thought, and Semetsky (2006) write of the utopian possibilities of the nomadic, becoming child. Following this revolutionary line, Bradley (2015) notes that Deleuze himself wanted to save his students from the nihilism of late capitalism through his teaching practice which was based upon his ontological model set out in *Difference and Repetition* (1995).

Similar to the Heidegger case, however, the problem with Deleuze’s model lay in its political reception, or to use Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) own concept, its geophilosophical situation, which ensured that his radicalism ended up lining up with a new form of capitalism, which would eventually become the nihilistic dystopia Stiegler critiques across his works and particularly in the *Automatic Society* (2016) where he discusses Rouvroy and Berns’ (2013) concept of algorithmic governmentality. Thus we confront the eventual humiliation of thought in Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari which involves the collapse of the minor case into the majority world view, the schizophrenic into the paranoid, and difference into control through the invention of kind of network, rhizomatic power. In the context of higher education, research, and teaching practice it is possible to observe this effect through consideration of the site of Deleuze’s radical engagement with the student body, Universite Paris 8 Vincennes, which was from the very start an experiment with power, and specifically the French education minister Edgar Faure’s attempt to seize the potential of the imagination of 1968 in order to support technical innovation and development capable of serving the state. The original radicalism of Universite Paris 8, which comprised a shift from the authoritarianism of the lecture and the pre-ordained programme of study to the democracy of the seminar and modular choice, was therefore always in line with what Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) call the new spirit of capitalism that embraces difference, creativity, and innovation in the name of profitability and would eventually end in the emergence of spaces like the Google University which perfectly fuses the space of (un)learning with a commitment to making money. Herein we observe the humiliation of thought through rhizomatic power that cancels difference in a form of networked indifference that seems boundless.

Although Universite Paris 8, now located at St Denis, remains a space of social mobility, and education for first generation university students, it is also, I would argue, a symbol of the defeated radicalism of 1968 which ultimately led to the rise Stiegler’s (2012, 2013, 2014b) nightmarish (un)world of systemic stupidity and symbolic misery where educational institutions are hyper-accelerated, violent, performance management machines that humiliate thought and being for the sake of the production of ever more little dis-individuals who can no longer think for themselves. But it is precisely here, in the creation of what Deleuze (1997) calls the dividual, that Stiegler finds the hopeless hope of pharmacological invention to come. This is how Stiegler imagines utopia for those who can no longer think. Writing about the sympathy between Deleuzean difference and computational power in *Automatic Society* (2016) in terms of a new kind of algorithmic totalitarianism, Stiegler suggests that the later Deleuze came to recognise that schizoid, rhizomatic strategies for producing resistance would no longer work and that what was required was a new (pharmacological) politics of invention based upon what he called the art of control. The shift in Deleuze’s writings with Guattari from *Anti-Oedipus* (1983) (schizophrenic opposition to the norm) through *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) (rhizomatic resistance to paranoia) to *What is Philosophy?* (1994) (creativity, invention, and the value of art) thus reflects the development of his thinking around the move from paranoid authoritarianism towards diffuse, dispersed, and individualised control. What was possible in the period immediately after 1968 no longer seemed workable in the 1980s and 1990s and Deleuze and Guattari moved from resistance to invention because of the emergence of new technologies of control.

This is what Stiegler picks up in his work and is potentially the reason he develops a utopian politics of invention, rather than a politics of resistance, founded upon a fund of pre-individual energy that resembles Heidegger’s concept of being and his related focus upon the *work* of art that enables authentic becoming. Now it is on the basis of this critique, and the view that more difference will not solve the problem of nihilism, that I want to suggest that we need to focus upon what Deleuze effectively could not, the dark precursor of being beyond all difference (Simondon’s pre-individual), and return to Heidegger’s educational philosophy, and specifically his notion of the universality of revealing and becoming, in order to create the ab-ground for the invention of a new ethics of learning on the other side of the nihilism of the present. Here, technology (defined by Vorhanden, present-to-hand) becomes technics (characterised by Zuhanden, ready-to-hand), which is concerned with the practical application of thought and the expression of lived experience in the world, and higher education transforms into a site of authentic becoming. But this is not to say that it is possible to take Heidegger without Deleuze who has the potential to decentre Heidegger’s authoritarian tendencies in a utopian vision of the university campus as a space of inventive clearing, radical questioning, and being critical for an exhausted world characterised by the dystopic conditions of the humiliation of thought. Finally, I think this is effectively what we find in Stiegler, the critical reader of both Heidegger and Deleuze, when he outlines his pharmacology of systemic stupidity, because it is only when we have encountered the completed nihilism of the *Automatic Society* (2016) that we will be able to find the resolve to take a stand in the name of skepsis, radical questioning, a new politics of knowledge, and a utopia of invention on the other side of profane information and the humiliation of thought.

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