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**Music and Technics: the understanding of our aesthetic experience before and after the Industrial Revolution considered through the eyes of Arthur Schopenhauer and Bernard Stiegler**

**(The erosion of imagination)**

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## Abstract

Music has always been a fundamental part of our lives and each time we listen to a melody, certain feelings rush through the surface. Music thus has a strong effect on our affects. Two centuries ago Schopenhauer claimed that through music people were even able to escape from what he defined as an evil world, but music is created and performed in a different way today, especially after the Industrial Revolution. Not only were there new technological inventions but also through them some secrets about humanity were revealed, secrets which influence the change in our understanding of what is called aesthetic experience, namely that we are not only biological and social, but also technical creatures. This is the so-called by Bernard Stiegler general organology. If this organological connection gets disrupted we start losing our individuation. Technic itself, however, cannot be blamed for this disindividuation since it is a *pharmakon* - an artificial memory. Depending on its use it can become either a poison or a cure. The digital era we live in can be seen as a negative outcome of the use of technics but in this paper the opportunities of the healthy relation with technics will be elaborated on.

**Keywords:** Art, Aesthetic conditioning, Aesthetic experience, Music, Participation, Technics

## Introduction

Music as one of the finest arts the world has ever seen can be described as the universal language of all nations and cultures, its medium - the melody knows no boundaries in space but neither in time. We have heard some great pieces of art during the ages which still give us frissons of pleasure. It is the temporality of music which makes this art so unique, it binds with our flow of thoughts and emotions, with our 'stream of consciousness' and has the power to elevate us to some space 'beyond' the world of representation we live in.

Two hundred years ago the famous philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who believed that people live in the worst possible world because all they do is want and suffer, suggested that music as the finest representative of the arts could elevate us, at least temporarily, above our blind and consequently hurtful wishes, and toward our true nature - the Will. In order for this to happen he gave a detailed explanation on how music was created and performed back then. A key ingredient in this invention was the genius with his inborn gift and vivid imagination.

This short introduction of Schopenhauer's philosophy of art is elaborated in the first chapter of this paper. My focus here is on explaining his idea of why people inhabit such a bad, godless world, namely because they are driven by their blind Will, the noumenal aspect of the world. People, however, live and experience themselves in the phenomenal world, the one of the Representation of the Will, where they cannot see the real relations of all the causes they experience and this creates an endless cycle of wanting and suffering. This cycle serves the purpose not only of explaining Schopenhauer's theory but also as a comparison to our contemporary situation of desiring which is shown in the second and third chapter.

Schopenhauer suggests a way of escaping from this evil world, namely through Art as an opportunity of observing the Will despite the causal relations which define the mirroring representation we inhabit. Art is explained by Schopenhauer as the work of a genius, an outstanding creature, who compared to the ordinary person has an inborn talent to see the Ideas (the bridge between the two aspects) or the Will itself. His or her ability to contemplate the Ideas or the Will are explicated by the philosopher with the different types of arts which reveal various aspects of the Will requiring different levels of imagination. The art of music is described as an exceptional art since it is the only one which has no physical medium in contrast to painting or sculpting, for example, where one sees a materialized form. This form is something that is already available to

the viewer thus it cannot be created by his imagination, but the colors of the sculpture or the visualization of the painting in real time can. In music, however, there is no physical object, music is temporal (being in time but not in space) and this makes one embrace one's full imagination.

How this happens exactly is explained further in this chapter, where the function of music is being presented and more precisely the question of *what* it is in music that performs this function is elaborated. As mentioned already, the function of music is to transport people from one place to another. This happens due to its temporality but it is the melody of music which does all the work. In this section an analysis of what constitutes the melody is presented, namely the balance between rhythm and harmony. This refers to the idea that a true artist has the responsibility of creating an outstanding melody in order to help the others make their temporal escape. An ingenuous piece of art then is not just beautiful but it gives rise to a very exceptional feeling, that of the sublime.

This rare type of experience was possible during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and even before that but many circumstances have changed since then, resulting in transitions in our understanding of the world, humanity included as part of it. An important event (or more precisely a set of events that occurred during the 19<sup>th</sup> century) was the Industrial Revolution which transformed the entire modern society. What is remarkable about this period is the dramatic development of technology which gradually became an inevitable part of human lives as it can be seen from today's perspective.

The changes which occurred during and after the Industrial Revolution are the topic of the next (second) chapter, where the invention of the phonograph is explained as one which gave rise to a new understanding of the aesthetic. This was the first device which made it possible for someone to listen to a certain identical melody two times in a row but also always hear a different phenomenon. Edison's invention (which is part of the so-called analog era) triggers a lot of questions when it comes to the repetition of a melody and the way we perceive it. According to Husserl's analysis this happens through our primary retention (perception) and our secondary retention (imagination) which are explained in detail later in the text. The French philosopher Bernard Stiegler, who is influenced by Husserl, adds one more type of retention which, as he explains, for the first time made visible the difference but also the interrelation between the first two retention processes: this is what he calls tertiary retention or our external memory, constituted by technics. Examples of such tertiary retentions are not only the phonograph, but also all the mediums of all arts described by Schopenhauer or the elements in each art which determine the

process of elevation, together with the alphabet which makes possible the transfer of written knowledge through the ages. This is to show that people are not just biological but also technical creatures. In this respect, what seems to be missing in Schopenhauer's genius is that his transcendence to the Will as a one of remembrance (anamnesis) is possible only through technics (hypomnesis) as Stiegler concludes.

Furthermore, humans are not only biological and technical creatures, but also social ones. Every "I" individuates itself always in a "We", namely in a group. An "I" creates its own past but it also adopts the past of the "We", a past without which the "I" would be impossible. This connection is described by Stiegler as always becoming and its disruption leads to one's disindividuation and thus to one's gradual erosion of imagination. It has to be pointed out that this process is not caused by technics itself since they are a *pharmakon* - a dead memory, meaning that they are "good" or "bad" depending on the way they are adopted. In this sense, it can be said that not only we create technics but it creates us as well. Stiegler thus states that the circumstances or the conditions of our individuation are organological, meaning that our biological organs together with the technical organs and the social organizations in which we always participate are interrelated such that they co-construct and co-constitute one another, they co-individuate.

Keeping in mind all the technical inventions during the nineteenth century, it can be said that Schopenhauer's philosophy didn't take into account that we are technical and social creatures instead of just biological ones. The genius, for example, even if born with an incredible talent, must have learned all the musical skills from somewhere. Moreover, he must have heard what music sounds like in the first place before creating it. Considering these utterances, the central question of my thesis is the following: *How does the aesthetic experience of music change after the Industrial Revolution, considering the (change in) organological conditions that define the human being?*

To answer this question I focus on the connection between the *who* (human) and the *what* (technics), thereby following Stiegler. During the analog era this connection is discussed in the way a musician or the artist in general chooses, connects and represents himself and his ideas through the (musical) instrument. This special connection changes dramatically when society shifts to the digital era - this is the subject matter of the final (third) chapter. This chapter begins with a comparison between the use of an instrument and a computer when it comes to the creation of music. The manoeuvre of the latter begins to substitute the former and this results in what Stiegler

refers to as a proletarianization of sensibility or the moderate loss of knowledge since it becomes unnecessary for one to really know how produce, i.e., to read and write music in order to consume it.

This disengagement between the *who* and the *what* (questioning if the former still invents the latter) leads to a process of disorientation in individuals and consequently consumerism (the building block of capitalism) which lies in the idea that it is easier to get hold of something rather than create it. This notion gives rise to a new type of industry, namely the culture or programming industries which use media support to change our aesthetic experience, transforming it into aesthetic conditioning: we are “told” not only what to buy, but also what to think and like. This happens because the temporality of our consciousness can be modulated not only with music but also with a new temporal object which emerged during the digital revolution, namely audiovisual technology. Our consciousness is not only temporal but as explained earlier also technically constituted. These two features are the key ingredient of the way we form communities and cultures but they are not enough. In order for a social group to exist as such they need to follow the same laws and share common goals. In this sense, they need to be synchronized.

The emergence of the culture industries during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, changes the understanding of synchronization. The dramatic use of audiovisual technology which is available from every corner of the world paralyzes one's imagination (secondary retention) because people constantly consume identical, technically produced audiovisual objects. This process intensifies over time and results in what Stiegler calls hyper-synchronization. This is how the “I” starts losing its singular connection with the “We”, resulting in the emergence of the One - a global memory which inevitably affects our psychic and collective individuation thus making it impossible for one to be a singularity again.

This hyper-synchronization is the building stone of the “control society” - a term derived from Deleuze that Stiegler uses to show how people are being manipulated through the aesthetic (and more precisely through music and the audiovisual technology because they are temporal like our consciousness).

The outcome of the control society where one is manipulated about what to do and basically how to do it, is that something very important gets lost, a key ingredient of our real aesthetic experience: this is our participation in the aesthetic; the result of its loss leads to our disengagement from ourselves, from technics. We can no longer project ourselves into the “We”, the collective

memory, and fall into a state of what Stiegler describes as symbolic misery - the existential process of suffering where one cannot make any aesthetic attachments. This type of suffering is interrelated to one's singular loss of desire for life, it is a loss of individuation caused by the inability to participate in the aesthetic.

This loss of participation, according to the French philosopher, is a transitional stage which can be overcome. This means that this disindividuation that society faces is not a literal end of art (in the sense that there is no more art) but on the contrary its death, since the latter always refers to a new beginning. Surpassing this consumerist stage is possible according to Stiegler because of the figure of the amateur: a person who has a desire to learn from his teacher - the artist, and who can regain his belief in what he loves. In other words, he has to become aware of the synchronized world he lives in. What stands out about the amateur in Stiegler's explanation is that his desire may not be connected only to art (in the way Schopenhauer defines it). Art has a broader sense here which comes close to creativity or having a creative stance toward life: it can be the role of a parent, a manager, an entrepreneur, etc.

Stiegler seems to be right when claiming that only through awareness people can overcome the state of misery they are in. In order for this awakening to happen, though, one needs to actually be shaken to their core and thus to realize the potential of not just the death of art, but its literal end. The awareness Stiegler talks about may indeed help us reconnect with our technical nature again, to thus be adoptive creatures again, but how is this claim really connected to the one that "everyone is an artist" (a phrase Stiegler adopts from the German artist Joseph Beuys) or has the potential to become one by regaining one's faith and practice?

By artist, Stiegler refers to the human who is a technical creature in the first place, and by art he understands all fields of creativity. The gap between the artist in potential and the artist in action, however, is much bigger in practice than in theory. Aristotle, for example, thought that action always precedes potential. Schopenhauer seems to have agreed with his claim since he believed in the inborn gift of the genius. Stiegler, on the other hand, suggests that there are situations in life which may drastically change us. The understanding of such events can be seen through the so-called limit situation introduced by Karl Jaspers. The latter describes them as rare and very powerful events whose emergence is actually unforeseeable, accidental, yet crucial to one's existence. An example of a limit situation is the experience of the sublime Schopenhauer



describes. Only through such moments can one regain awareness of one's actions and build a healthy relationship with technics.

The infrequency of such limit situations challenges the claim that everyone has the potential to be an artist since they may never occur in one's lifetime. With this explanation I don't actually argue against Stiegler's understanding that everyone can be an artist but my aim is simply to point out that a clear distinction between the arts should be kept in mind since some of them bind more easily with the flow of one's life and thus people are more prone to become hyper-synchronized and enter the state of symbolic misery. Other types of arts, like the ones Schopenhauer referred to, even though not immune to the hyper-synchronization, offer a better chance for encountering a limit situation.

The emergence of limit situations, nevertheless, doesn't really explain the act of invention itself since it still remains unclear how one's desire appears: does it come with one's awareness or is it inborn, or maybe both? These questions make it challenging for the claim that everyone is an artist to be taken very literally since a process of reduction arises and the mystery of the notion of creation gets lost.

# 1. Art as a temporary escape from evil in Schopenhauer's sense

## 1.1. Living in a bad world

According to Schopenhauer, we live in the worst possible place. This world is presented through its two aspects: Will and its Representation. The author's analogy of what Will is can be found in Kant's hypothesis of the thing in itself, which lies beyond time, space and it is causally undetermined\*<sup>1</sup>. This noumenal aspect according to Schopenhauer has no meaning, no God or goodness, no striving, it is blindness, hence irrational.

The Will, inherent to all people, is the deepest and truest essence of the world. It is not just a human aspiration and in this regard a powerful force of one's actions, but also the basis of the world in general. The function of this Will is the intellect which in contrast to it is something temporal, something that people inhabit in a physical world of multiplicity. This is exactly what Schopenhauer calls Will's Representation or the phenomenal aspect of the world. This is the place where humans physically experience reality and engage with Science. Driven by the principle of sufficient reason, according to which everything has its cause in some other ground, people only see causal relations between objects but they don't have an explanation for these relations, meaning the objects themselves. This determines Schopenhauer's pessimism regarding the endless cycle of wanting where "willing is sufficient to ensure our vulnerability to suffering"<sup>2</sup>.

The reason humans are constantly suffering is that "(t)he will is always goal oriented and has aims which it is striving to accomplish incessantly in all levels of its phenomenon."<sup>3</sup> This means that the Will is always trying to embrace itself in nature and thus people living in its Representation experience a never-ending striving which is the process of suffering itself.

Schopenhauer, however, doesn't give in to his pessimism completely and doesn't actually believe that humans are imprisoned in hell for an infinite amount of time. He identifies three main

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<sup>1</sup> \*The Will is something stable, ageless, and indestructible and in this respect not something physical which lies in the principle of sufficient reason. "Schopenhauer therefore denies that our sensations have an external cause in the sense that we can know there is some epistemologically inaccessible object — the thing-in-itself — that exists independently of our sensations and is the cause of them." (Wicks, R. (2017). *Arthur Schopenhauer*; "3. *Schopenhauer's Critique of Kant*; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

<sup>2</sup> Janaway, C. (1989). *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy*, p.272

<sup>3</sup> Singh, R.R. (2010). *Schopenhauer: A Guide For The Perplexed*, p.40

ways\*<sup>4</sup> as an escape from this constant suffering and the one which will be discussed in this paper as mentioned earlier is the escape through Art.

## 1.2.The role of Art

Art is a way of contemplating the Will regardless of the principle of sufficient reason where science lies. In art, the intellect stops serving the Will at least temporarily. Contrary to Kant, who says that we simply cannot have knowledge of the noumenal world, Schopenhauer believes that knowledge actually belongs to the will and more precisely its objectification.

To explain this interrelation the philosopher introduces the notion of the Ideas (in Plato's sense) as a bridge between the two aspects of the world. Contrary to Plato, however, Schopenhauer considers the Ideas as "not the objects of pure thought or reasoning, but of perceptual contemplation"<sup>5</sup>. The Ideas just like the Will are not in space and time, they "lie quite outside the sphere of its knowledge (and) (i)f, therefore, the Ideas are to become objects of knowledge, this can only happen by transcending the individuality of the knowing subject"<sup>6</sup>. This means that they are deprived of the principle of sufficient reason but are not quite noumenal after all since "(t)hey exhibit reality under a very basic cognitive form, the form of representation-in-general"<sup>7</sup>.

The Ideas are supreme examples of individual things that stand beyond the world of phenomena. There are different Ideas, and although this multiplicity presupposes distinctions in them, no Idea contains such plurality, they are united. In this sense, Ideas are independent of "principium individuationis" (principle of individuation) that the mind imposes on the world of phenomena.\*<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> \*“(1) in aesthetic experience and artistic production, (2) in compassionate attitudes and actions, and (3) in ascetic resignation from embodied existence.” (Shapshay, S. (2018). *Schopenhauer's Aesthetics*; “1. Brief Background; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

<sup>5</sup> Janaway, C. (1989). *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy*, p.277

<sup>6</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.228

<sup>7</sup> Hannan, B. (2009). *The Riddle of the World. A Reconsideration of Schopenhauer's Philosophy*, p.12

<sup>8</sup> \*All the objects in the Representation world or the everyday world are manifestations of Ideas, infinitely scattered in space and time. In this respect, the principle of individuation constitutes the way the world simply looks to us (in space and time).

### 1.2.1. Art as the work of a genius

The Ideas are means or forms of the Will and the way we can observe them is through Art, which according to Schopenhauer is the work of a genius who, compared to the ordinary person, is not satisfied with everyday life. He is deprived of its comfort and thus is always alone and always suffering. The only way he can overcome this misery is when he creates art since this is the only time he forgets about the torments of life. In this sense, he sometimes allows himself to stop serving the Will and embraces the Idea in everything. This is possible because compared to the ordinary person, the genius has an inborn gift to observe the beautiful. In this sense, the great artist has a priori knowledge of the Ideas.

The knowledge usually “starts with experience of objects, human beings, or actions as they occur in the nexus of time, space, and causality,”<sup>9</sup> but it goes above and beyond that. To illustrate this, Schopenhauer makes us look at the difference between the genius (who has a prior knowledge) and the scientific or non-genius person (whose knowledge is always a posteriori). The former compared to the latter can create a magnificent piece of art in just a couple of days or even hours.

This happens according to Schopenhauer because the genius has direct access to the Ideas and observing them he ultimately rejects the individual and in this sense himself and his desires. The genius is released from the power of the will by freeing his intellect. In this aesthetic experience one becomes a “pure subject of knowledge”. It is with the predominance of intellect over the Will that Schopenhauer explains why genius people are impractical compared to the ones constantly occupied with science - they are interested in the greater whole which is essential and accessible to knowledge, and not in the small or the insignificant parts which pursues the human will.

Schopenhauer compares genius people to children since they have a very vivid and ongoing imagination which extends their intellectual horizon beyond the limits of the phenomenal world. The function of imagination then is in a sense to complete the incomplete in nature.\*<sup>10</sup>

One more comparison Schopenhauer makes to identify the genius is his connection to the madman since the line between them is very thin. Neither reason nor understanding can be denied to the madman since he has a clear vision of the past and the present but he “mistakes the connection, the relations, and therefore falls into error and talks nonsense. Now, this is exactly the

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<sup>9</sup> Atwell, J. (1995). *Schopenhauer on the character of the world*, p.151

<sup>10</sup> \*This incompleteness will be explained during the elaboration on the different types of arts.

point at which he comes into contact with the man of genius”<sup>11</sup> who as a pure subject of knowledge is free from the principle of sufficient reason. He is confronted with the Idea in its refined form - this is a complete objectification of the Will. In abstraction from the world as an Idea, only the world as Will remains.

“In such contemplation the particular thing becomes at once the *Idea* of its species, and the perceiving individual becomes *pure subject of knowledge*. The individual, as such, knows only particular things; the pure subject of knowledge knows only Ideas.”<sup>12</sup>

Then the question of how other people can also objectify the Will arises. Schopenhauer explains that everyone by nature has just a pitch of the genius’ gift. They are thus able to look through his eyes and appreciate his work of art. This is the technical part of Art which is necessary for the genius to give the opportunity to others to escape temporarily from the evil world by showing them the Ideas through his piece of art.\*<sup>13</sup>

### 1.2.2.The different types of arts

Schopenhauer introduces four types of Arts which objectify different levels of the Will, copying the Ideas, but he discusses one very extraordinary Art which has the possibility to objectify the Will itself.\*<sup>14</sup>

The first one is **Architecture** which expresses the Ideas not in the quality of usefulness for some construction activity, but through its parts which form the harmony in the architectural whole. The main components through which this harmony is shown are the support and the weight, in the sense that there is no weight without sufficient support and no support without its corresponding weight. Architecture thus reveals the lowest level of the Will where it manifests itself as a dark and unconscious aspiration of the mass. The Ideas embodied in this mass are “gravity, cohesion,

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<sup>11</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.257/258

<sup>12</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.239

<sup>13</sup> \*“(That the Idea comes to us more easily from the work of art than directly from nature and the real world, arises from the fact that the artist, who knew only the Idea, no longer the actual, has reproduced in his work the pure Idea, has abstracted it from the actual, omitting all disturbing accidents.” (Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.259)

<sup>14</sup> \*In this regard “art is essentially cognitive. It is not, for instance, expression of emotion. What the artist is attempting to convey is a form of knowledge, an insight into the true nature of things”. (Magee, B. (1997). *The philosophy of Schopenhauer*, p.167)

rigidity, hardness, those universal qualities of stone, those first, simplest, most inarticulate manifestations of will; the bass notes of nature; and after these light, which in many respects is their opposite”<sup>15</sup>.

**Landscape-gardening** is the next level of conveying the Ideas. Compared to architecture which shows the Idea of the non-living, landscape-gardening does the same for the “vegetable world”. This world “offers itself everywhere for aesthetic enjoyment without the medium of art; but so far as it is an object of art, it belongs principally to landscape-painting; to the province of which all the rest of unconscious nature also belongs”<sup>16</sup>. In this sense revealing the beauty of this art comes more from nature itself rather than from the artist.

The next two arts are **Sculpture and Painting** which reveal not just the Idea of the living world but one of man’s essence, freeing him from the accidental, penetrating into the Idea of humanity.\*<sup>17</sup> Sculpture and Painting show just a part of something which the imagination of the receiver needs to complete. The former, for example, provides things with shape but there is no color. The latter, on the other hand, expresses the color and just the appearance of form. In this matter, the noumenal aspect should be distinguished from the represented one, which is a side of the Idea of humanity, revealed by the contemplation of a certain painting or sculpture but the effect of these arts cannot be completely felt since the observer is still “occupied with the restlessness and impetuosity of the will represented”<sup>18</sup>.

Moving up the ladder, Schopenhauer believed that **Poetry** reveals man’s essence in even a greater length than Sculpture and Painting because of its abstract medium - the concept. To explain the concept, Schopenhauer distinguishes it from the Idea. They cannot be identified as the same thing since the genius who is able to contemplate the former uses the concept instinctively. He completely gives in to his feelings and uses words to express the Ideas revealing various aspects of men. In lyrical poetry, for example, “the poet only perceives vividly his own state and describes it”<sup>19</sup>. He elaborates on the hidden thoughts and feelings of humanity in general. This subjective

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<sup>15</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.282

<sup>16</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.287-288

<sup>17</sup> \*“In these representations the objective side of aesthetic pleasure obtains a marked predominance over the subjective. The peace of the subject which knows these Ideas, which has silenced its own will, is indeed present, as it is in all aesthetic contemplation.” (Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.288)

<sup>18</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.288

<sup>19</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.325

notion vanishes in the epic and especially in the drama genre “which is the most objective and, in more than one respect, the completest and most difficult form of poetry”<sup>20</sup>.

### **1.3.Music as a direct objectification of the Will**

Compared to the described above types of arts, there is one which doesn't just objectify the Ideas but reveals the Will itself. This art is Music, and it occupies a very special place in Schopenhauer's philosophy because it is by no means like the other arts.

Here a parallel can be made between the Ideas and Music since they can be seen as two different methods of objectifying the Will. What is extraordinary about Music is that it doesn't have any physical representation as explicitly shown in the other arts but it simply expresses an emotion or a feeling. Moreover it “has a notorious capacity to express and enhance moods and passions”<sup>21</sup>. On this matter, Music doesn't just express a particular feeling of happiness or pain or sorrow but these feelings themselves.

#### **1.3.1.What is the function of music?**

Music is independent from the world of phenomena because it doesn't take Ideas into account. As a reflection of the Will it “exhibits itself as the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, and as the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon”<sup>22</sup>.

This means that the musical genius reveals the essence of the world in a language that man's reasoning cannot understand, “it speaks so strongly to the heart, whereas it has nothing *immediate* to say to the head”<sup>23</sup>. Music in contrast to the other arts doesn't need supporting elements like words or actions. According to Schopenhauer, a really powerful art should be able to achieve its purpose by its own means. Therefore, the text or the action which are sometimes noticed to support music damages its purity and also rationalizes it. This is why Schopenhauer despised the grand

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<sup>20</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, p.325

<sup>21</sup> Hannan, B. (2009). *The Riddle of the World. A Reconsideration of Schopenhauer's Philosophy*; p.112

<sup>22</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1896). *The World as Will and Idea*, pp.342

<sup>23</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2015). *Parerga and Paralipomena*, §218; p.387

opera, where music requires one's focus to shift repeatedly from words and actions of people to understanding love stories for example, or "wishy-washy poetry"<sup>24</sup>.

"*Grand opera* is really not a product of the pure artistic sense, but rather of the somewhat barbaric concept of heightening aesthetic pleasure by piling on different means, simultaneity of completely different impressions and intensification of effect through an increase in the operative masses and forces."<sup>25</sup>

In this sense, opera actually damages music, it ruins its essence. One of the examples Schopenhauer points out to illustrate the destructing effect of opera is its length - if it exceeds its duration it becomes "torment for listeners and an even bigger one for singers and musicians; and so one can imagine seeing here a large audience united for the purpose of self-flagellation, pursuing this with great endurance until the end"<sup>26</sup>.

There are two music genres, however, which according to Schopenhauer can fully transcend one to the noumenal world. They are mass and symphony which "provide unclouded and full musical pleasure"<sup>27</sup> since they are able to express feelings and emotions without any supporting elements. In this sense, it can be said that music reveals not only the inner nature of man but the inner nature of everything as well.

### **1.3.2. What is it in music that performs this function?**

This nature according to Schopenhauer is revealed through the melody, "to which the world is the text. But we obtain the actual meaning of the text only through my interpretation of music"<sup>28</sup>. The melody is the medium which transcends the individual to observe the Will. "A melody is a temporal sequence of different tones connected together in a particular way: it is a process with a beginning and an end"<sup>29</sup>. The temporality of melody determined the stages one passes while being transcended to the world beyond phenomena. This transcendence is determined by what Plato calls

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<sup>24</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2015). *Parerga and Paralipomena*, §220; p.390

<sup>25</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2015). *Parerga and Paralipomena*; §220, p.389

<sup>26</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2015). *Parerga and Paralipomena*; §220, p.392

<sup>27</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2015). *Parerga and Paralipomena*; §220, p.391

<sup>28</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (2015). *Parerga and Paralipomena*; §219, p.387/388

<sup>29</sup> Budd, M. (1992). *Music and the Emotions: The Philosophical Theories*; p.87



anamnesis or the process of remembrance where one surpasses one's blind desire of just wanting and then suffering, reaching their true nature.

There are two elements that define melody: rhythm (the quantitative element) and harmony (the qualitative element). "The first concerns the duration of the notes, the second their pitch and depth."<sup>30</sup> Rhythm, Schopenhauer explains, is presented in time the same way symmetry is expressed in space, "namely division into equal parts corresponding to one another, and first into larger parts that are again divisible into smaller parts subordinate to the former"<sup>31</sup>. Harmony, as the other key element for melody, can in a sense be compared to the four levels of representing the Will since its constitutive parts demonstrate (as well) the different aspect of the Will\*<sup>32</sup>: the bass shows natural forces like gravity, the tenor, and alto explicit the plant life and animal life and finally the soprano which reveals the Idea of humanity and thus compared to the other elements "obtains a natural right to deliver the melody"<sup>33</sup>.

These two elements (harmony and rhythm) are inseparable according to Schopenhauer and are both needed for the creation of a complete melody in a great musical piece of art. In this regard, the artist has a responsibility in the creation of a melody so that he can help others make their temporal escape through it. When a certain melody is a creation of a true genius, people listening to it don't just get pleasure by seeing the beauty of it but experience a very rare category of it - the sublime.

Schopenhauer takes this term from Kantian philosophy. The experience of the sublime can be noticed not only in music and the other arts created by genius people but in some natural forces or disasters for example or even a breathtaking scenery. As one of Schopenhauer's systematizers elaborates "the sublime is that part of the beautiful whose detached contemplation involves the suspension of a natural fear"<sup>34</sup>. This suspended fear is exactly what destroys individuality letting one become the will.

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<sup>30</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1958). *The World as Will and Representation*, p.452

<sup>31</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1958). *The World as Will and Representation*, p. 453

<sup>32</sup> \*The analogy between harmony and the Ideas is called the "musical voices" by one of Schopenhauer's systematizers who explains that the "lower musical voices are analogous to the lower Ideas, and the upper voices are analogous to the higher Ideas, with the melodic voice entertaining a parallel with the Idea(s) of human beings (...) Music does not simply express the Idea of humanity, the melodic voice; it is a copy of the whole will. Temporal development (melody) is integrated into and constrained by the metaphysical demands of harmony." (Shapshay, S. – editor (2017). *The Palgrave Schopenhauer Handbook*, p. 204 (...) 205)

<sup>33</sup> Schopenhauer, A. (1958). *The World as Will and Representation*, p.451

<sup>34</sup> Magee, B. (1997). *The philosophy of Schopenhauer*, 164 p.

Schopenhauer distinguished these categories by emphasizing on the pleasurable as something which if repeated too often becomes boring. The beautiful and moreover the sublime on the other hand can be experienced through contemplating a true piece of art where the understanding of the former presupposes the numbness of the Will. The sublime as a special subcategory of the beautiful is manifested when man has become a pure subject of knowledge in the sense that his individuality gets destroyed and thus he becomes one with the world.\*<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> \*The opposite of the sublime is what is charming or attractive, which has an arousing role for the human senses. In art, Schopenhauer explains, the attractive must be avoided since it prevents the attainment of pure and involuntary contemplation. Attractiveness doesn't lead to the liberation of the human intellect from the Will since it is related to certain events or actions explicated for example in the drama which trigger one to take part in them.

## 2. The possibility of an escape from evil in the Industrial age (the change in aesthetics)

The experience of the sublime was possible two centuries ago according to Schopenhauer but a lot has changed since then, namely, there has been a dramatic development of technology in the last two centuries (especially after the Industrial Revolution). This is why in order to see if the escape Schopenhauer talked about is still possible today, even in another form, one has to consider the perspective in which art is created, perceived, and performed today.

As mentioned above, the Industrial Revolution is a period in the development of human society which substantially changed the way people interact with their surroundings, namely through technology.<sup>\*36</sup> This revolution led to a mechanical turn within humanity's perception which steadily changed the understanding of aesthetics. The mechanical twist according to the French philosopher Bernard Stiegler sets the beginning of a new period of grammatization. This term is taken from Stiegler by the French linguist Sylvain Auroux. Whereas Auroux connects grammatization only to the emergence of the alphabet and thus the use of language, Stiegler adds that grammatization is also interrelated with the movements of our bodies, the gestures we make. He defines grammatization then as

“a process of description, formalization and discretization of human behavior (calculations, languages and gestures) which allows their reproducibility (...) grammatization is *the technical history of memory*: it is the history of the supplement, in the sense in which Jacques Derrida spoke of it, but as it consists of a discretization, a discrimination, an analysis and a decomposition of flows”.<sup>37</sup>

The first phase of grammatization (the understanding of which is again borrowed from Auroux) then is the use of the alphabet, the second is the printing revolution which took place

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<sup>36</sup> \* “The technological changes included the following: (1) the use of new basic materials, chiefly iron and steel, (2) the use of new energy sources, including both fuels and motive power, such as coal, the steam engine, electricity, petroleum, and the internal combustion engine, (3) the invention of new machines, such as the spinning jenny and the power loom that permitted increased production with a smaller expenditure of human energy, (4) a new organization of work known as the factory system, which entailed increased division of labour and specialization of function, (5) important developments in transportation and communication, including the steam locomotive, steamship, automobile, airplane, telegraph, and radio, and (6) the increasing application of science to industry.” (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. (21 Feb. 2021). *Industrial Revolution*. Encyclopedia Britannica)

<sup>37</sup> Victor Petit (translated by Robert Hughes). (2013). *Vocabulaire / Ars Industrialis*. Ars Industrialis.

during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, giving people the opportunity of quick access to numerous sources of information for the first time. The third period of grammatization is the one of the industries; the technological revolution which begins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the so-called analog era but develops further during the next two centuries where digital technology progresses.

What is important about this third revolution of grammatization is that (as will be shown in this chapter and the next one) it leads gradually to the process of disindividuation among people in a sense that the connection between the “I” as an individual and thus a singularity loses its connection with the “We” - the collective individuation or the memory of the past through which the “I” was gradually built, adopting the past of others while and creating its own memories at the same time. The understanding Stiegler has of individuation is adopted from Gilbert Simondon’s philosophy where the process of individuation is never the work of a single individual but instead “is the result of technically-articulated processes of singular and collective”<sup>38</sup>. This means that the “I” always builds itself through the collective history of the “We”. What makes possible this individuation process according to Stiegler is the co-evolution of the human body, society, and the technicity or the artificial organs, the latter being absent in Simondon’s theory. Expressed in another way:

“(t)he conditions of individuation are organological: they pass through the organs of perception, but they endlessly recombine the assemblages (*agencements*) of these organs through technical mediations. This can happen, for example, by (artificially) bringing together the ear and the hand through the musical instrument (by an organon that is an artifact), or by bringing together, before art history in the narrow sense of the word, the eye, the mouth, and the hand of the artist who uses a straw to blow pigments on the wall inside the caves of Lascaux.”<sup>39</sup>

What is important about this organological connection is that it is “*structurally incapable of completion*”<sup>40</sup> and in this sense is always in becoming. If it stops changing and in this respect evolving, the individual will be lacking the future capability of imagination and in this respect its differentiation from the others. Stiegler calls this process proletarianization (in Marx’s sense) which “consists essentially in the loss of knowledge and know-how (*savoir-faire*) in individuals

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<sup>38</sup> Crowley, M. (January 2013) *Bernard Stiegler Goes Seal-Hunting with Joseph Beuys*, p.48

<sup>39</sup> Stiegler, B. (2017). *The Proletarianization of Sensibility*, p.17

<sup>40</sup> Stiegler, B (2009). *Acting out*, p.4

and collectives (...) They have lost their ‘knowledge-how-to-live’ (*savoir vivre*) and become ultimately deprived of the joy of life (*joie de vivre*)”<sup>41</sup>.

The process of individuation is always connected to the singular notion of desire associated with one’s endless ambition for knowledge. The desire here is not understood as just wanting something (in Schopenhauer’s sense) but also “seeking to constitute the symbolic coherence of utterances”<sup>42</sup> where the symbolic is connected to the aesthetic experience someone gets when forming “aesthetic attachments to singularities or singular objects”<sup>43</sup>. These attachments are only formed when the “I” is individuating in a group, namely the “We”.

The technological revolution of the nineteenth-century, however, started disrupting this connection since it was the first time mnemotechnologies (technics affecting the memory whose purpose is to record one’s experience) “become the *actual support of industrial life*, fully subjected to the imperatives of the global, mechanical, division of labour”<sup>44</sup>. This division affected every area of human life including the relationships with other people or with products.

## 2.1. The invention of the phonograph

An example of such apparatus is the phonograph invented by Thomas Edison in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.\*<sup>45</sup> This was the first sound recording machine which allowed for one object to produce many phenomena since every time someone listens to a melody they have the opportunity to hear something different, thus getting a new experience.\*<sup>46</sup> This experiential

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<sup>41</sup> Lemmens, P. (2011). *This system does not produce pleasure anymore. An interview with Bernard Stiegler*, p.33

<sup>42</sup> Stiegler, B (2009). *Acting out*, p.5

<sup>43</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.5

<sup>44</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.8

<sup>45</sup> \*This sound recording machine “consisted of a sheet of tinfoil wrapped around a cylindrical drum which, when turned by a handle, both rotated and moved laterally. As it moved it passed under a touching metal stylus, attached to one side of a diaphragm. On the other side of the diaphragm was a small mouthpiece into which the operator spoke. The sound-waves focussed onto the diaphragm caused it to vibrate, which in turn caused the stylus to vary the pressure on the tinfoil. As the drum rotated and moved across the stylus a groove was embossed in the tinfoil consisting of undulations approximating the pressure patterns of the sound-waves. Playback involved placing the stylus at the beginning of the groove made during recording, and winding the cylinder along once again. The undulations in the tinfoil caused the stylus to move in and out, and so the diaphragm to vibrate, which in turn moved the air in the mouthpiece, thus recreating the sound.” (Beardsley, B & Wilkinson, L. D. (2009). *A Brief History of Recording to ca. 1950*; Source: Charm)

<sup>46</sup> \*The phonograph allows for the production of tertiary retentions – grammophone records – repeating one temporal object two or more identical times in a row; “with the advent of technologies of reproduction a third retention, tertiary retention is possible, a support for the prosthetic exteriorization of memory. For example, the invention of the phonograph enables the memory to be exteriorized and repeated”. (Fitzpatrick, N. (2014). *Symbolic misery and aesthetics - Bernard Stiegler*, p.117)

diversity comes from the difference between what Edmund Husserl called primary retention (our memory based on a present perception) and secondary retention (our memory based on our past experience, recalled by our imagination). According to Husserl, these two types of memory shouldn't be mixed because if they were, there would be no perception (primary retention) but just imagination (secondary retention). Stiegler, who builds his theory on this notion, disagrees with Husserl saying that he "completely neglects the phenomenon of recording in his analysis; in fact, he even excludes it"<sup>47</sup>. Because of this, Husserl doesn't see that these two types of memory are interrelated and should not be opposed since their connection is exactly what explains the different phenomena we hear while listening to a single melody. In this respect, one's conscious process always consists of these two types of retention at the same time.

Moreover, our perception seems to be selective all the time, thus choosing from all the possible retentions affecting our consciousness. This is possible because as human beings we are able to forget. If we did not have this possibility there would be no selection process. These primary retentions or selections produce "the sur-prise of the unexpected which affects the consciousness in such a way that it individuates itself"<sup>48</sup>. It is our protention, as Husserl refers to it, which can experience the unexpected, namely our expectation of the next moment. The protention in experiencing a melody, for example, lies in our anticipation of the next note or how the actual sounds come together creating a melody. In the second hearing of a melody, then, "what is present is already known, but presents itself differently, such that the expected appears as unexpected."<sup>49</sup> Even though the two types of memory are interdependent, they shouldn't be confused with one another. To explain what this means the French philosopher describes in detail the act of listening to a certain melody:

"In the 'now' of a melody, in the present moment of a musical object in flux, the present note can only be a note - and not simply a sound - to the extent that it retains in itself the preceding note and that in the preceding note the note that preceded it is still present, which retains in turn the preceding note, etc. This primary retention, which belongs to the present of perception, must not be confused with secondary retention, which is the melody I might have heard yesterday, for example, which I am able to listen to again in imagination through the play of memory, and which constitutes the past of my consciousness."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.13

<sup>48</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.146

<sup>49</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.19

<sup>50</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.34

The understanding of the difference between these two types of retention and especially the role of the secondary one becomes possible only through the so-called tertiary retention - a different type of memory external to the individual. Tertiary retentions are “all forms of ‘objective’ memory: cinematogram, photogram, phonogram, writing, paintings, sculptures-but also monuments and objects in general, since they bear witness, for me, say, of a past that I enforcedly did not myself live”<sup>51</sup>.

This means that all the tools and mediums (like the concept in poetry for example) used to create the different types of arts Schopenhauer described are actually tertiary retentions, memories which have been preserved along the generation due to their technicity, as inscriptions in material objects.<sup>\*52</sup> It follows thus that all arts are actually temporal in the sense that they were created in time 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”<sup>53</sup>. The exceptional temporality of music will be described in more details in the next chapter but in the meantime, it can be said that the transcendence beyond the world of phenomena (through music) Schopenhauer refers to, or the process of remembrance of one’s nature - the anamnesis, is possible only through technics - a dead and artificial memory, or what Stiegler refers to as hypomnesis.<sup>\*54</sup> This dead memory Stiegler describes as a *pharmakon*, a Greek term which Plato used in his philosophy to explain how “writing is at first a ‘useful’, beneficial drug (*pharmakon*), then a detrimental, poisonous deadener of the soul (*pharmakon*). Socrates understands the *pharmakon* as the potential for language/writing to offer a more responsible alternative to sophistry”<sup>55</sup>. Stiegler adopts this term, explaining that as organological

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<sup>51</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.28

<sup>52</sup> \*The tool, as described by Michael Lewis in his analysis of Stiegler’s work, is “something that was made in the past to be used in the future (temporality), and something which stands as a record of an earlier stage of technical development, a trace that can be inherited by later generations (historicity): in this way, the tool, understood as an external memory, constitutes and knits together the temporality and the historicity in which the human being develops.” (Howells, C. and Moore, G. (2013). *Stiegler and Technics*, p.63)

<sup>53</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.14

<sup>54</sup> \*The understanding of our technicity is rooted in Leroi-Gourhan’s understanding of our evolutionary development, namely that right after we started walking upright our hands and face were liberated in the sense that they were free to get involved in other functions than walking - making tools and developing our language abilities. In this regard, Stiegler suggests that “(t)echnicity involves both gestures and tools, sequentially organized by means of a "syntax" that imparts both fixity and flexibility to the series of operations involved. This operating sequence is suggested by memory and comes into being as a product of the brain and the physical environment.” ( Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, 1 The fault of Epimetheus*, p.167)

<sup>55</sup> Howells, C. and Moore, G. (2013). *Stiegler and Technics*, p.271

creatures all the technics we use are *pharmaka*. Stiegler suggests that the first *pharmaka* humans encounter in their lives are the earliest toys or other objects a child attaches oneself to.

The technical object is fundamentally dichotomous. It is a *pharmakon* which has the potential of being either a poison or a cure depending on how it is adopted. An example of such an object is the earlier mentioned phonograph, the use of which may on the one hand lead to one's boredom, but on the other, one may benefit from this repetition and learn something new (as it will be shown in the next subchapter).

## 2.2. The role of repetition

Musical recordings of great symphonies for instance seem a great way for people to escape from the greyness in this world more often since they would be able to listen to a sublime piece of art whenever they want to. However, Schopenhauer would have probably considered this as a simple pleasure which would eventually lead to boredom and thus to suffering again since the sublime according to him is a rare event and the temporary escape lies precisely in this scarceness.

The notion of repetition changes with the rise of technology, nevertheless. If Schopenhauer understood it as part of the cycle which leads to boredom, Stiegler saw an opportunity in this repetition, namely that actually “*there is never repetition (nothing ever happens again in an identical way: the repetition of the same temporal object always produces two different phenomena)*”<sup>56</sup>.

An example of the change of understanding in the role of repetition is the famous jazz musician Charlie Parker, who used not only a saxophone but also his portable phonograph to study the music of another jazz musician he was very influenced by - Lester Young. “What Parker studied in Lester was his ability to play in a way that was even more improbable than it was improvised, in the respect that what was characteristic of Young's playing cannot be notated in the form of graphic writing: this playing is an analog writing”<sup>57</sup>. In this matter, the phonograph and all recording devices, in general, provide the opportunity of one different type of writing.\*<sup>58</sup> This

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<sup>56</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.53

<sup>57</sup> Stiegler, B., & Hughes, R. (2014), *Programs of the Improbable, Short Circuits of the Unheard-of*, p.72 (...) p.73

<sup>58</sup> \*This type of writing is possible to the already mentioned tertiary retention which has actually always existed – from the first time man picked a stick from the ground. By using tools humans have exteriorized and in this sense interiorized their surrounding environment for millennia. This prosthesis (external tools) has always been available, but becomes



analog writing, according to Stiegler, brings forth a “différent identity” which “allows the formal identification of an utterance, its exact reproduction in another context and in a deferred time, thus its repetition, and in this repetition (which is a form or reading), the production of a difference”<sup>59</sup>. Stiegler borrows the term *différance* from Jacques Derrida but combines it with the understanding of individuation (taken from Simondon’s philosophy) in order to explain the relationship between the processes of exteriorization and interiorization which invent the human.

Stiegler defines the process of exteriorization as “the pursuit of life by means other than life”<sup>60</sup>. This means that humans externalize their experiences (in the sense that they externalize certain gestures) and their bodies to the surrounding environment using tools.<sup>\*61</sup> All technologies in this matter are products of the exteriorization process and reflectively the interiorization one (the actual process of learning and understanding). These two processes are reciprocal and co-constitute each other.<sup>\*62</sup>

In other words, this is the *différance* between the “who” (the human) and the “what” (the technics) where “(d)ifférance is neither the *who* nor the *what*, but their co-possibility, the movement of their mutual coming-to-be, of their coming into convention. The *who* is nothing without the *what*, and conversely. *Différance* is below and beyond the *who* and the *what*; it poses them together, a composition engendering the illusion of an opposition”<sup>63</sup>. Without such connection with a prosthesis, human’s knowledge of the (non-lived) past and in this sense, the projection in the future would be impossible.

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clearly visible in the 19th century where machines like the phonograph were invented. “(T)echnical forms of recording open up and configure the fields of writing and the general surfaces of inscription- musical and non-musical. There are techno-logics of music that involve not just musical instruments alone, but technologies of memory, where such technologies are necessary for memory to take place, and memory is necessary for the constitution of any cultural heritage.” (Stiegler, B., & Hughes, R. (2014). *Programs of the Improbable, Short Circuits of the Unheard-of*, p.71)

<sup>59</sup> Stiegler, B., & Hughes, R. (2014). *Programs of the Improbable, Short Circuits of the Unheard-of*, p.74

<sup>60</sup> Stiegler, B. (1998). *Leroi-Gourhan: The Organized Inorganic*, p. 3

<sup>61</sup> \*As Daniel Ross explains in his summary of Stiegler’s book *Technics and Time, 1* “the tool appears to be both the result and the condition of anticipation. The tool is like a mirror, a place of recording and inscription but also a surface of reflection, the reflection that time is, as if the human were reading and linking his future in the technical.” (Ross, D. (2019). *A Summary of Bernard Stiegler, Technics and Time, 1* p.14)

<sup>62</sup> \*“(T)he human being individualizes himself *at the midpoint*, between the exteriorization of the organs *and* the interiorization of the prostheses.” (Victor Petit (translated by Robert Hughes). (2013). *Vocabulaire | Ars Industrialis*. Ars Industrialis.)

<sup>63</sup> Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, 1 The fault of Epimetheus*, p.141

### 2.3.The role of memory

Stiegler shows one very important thing that is visible through the Industrial Revolution, namely that humans don't just use tools but have always been technical creatures.\*<sup>64</sup> This notion is well explained in the first volume of his book *Technics and Time* where he discusses in depth what Martin Heidegger calls Dasein, namely the human being as an existing being that understands the being of beings. In the second part of the book, Stiegler describes Heidegger's Dasein as

“a being that has to be, that is, a historical being immersed in *hermēneia*, sets up the articulation between the *who* and the *what* through the thematic of the clock (...) Dasein, as ‘being-thrown,’ inherits the already-there that is its past, always having preceded it and from out of which it ‘is’ this particular ‘who,’ child and grandchild of so and so, and so on—*its* past, which is not properly speaking *its* past since it did not ‘live’ it. The temporal mode of being of Dasein is historicity, which ‘designates the constitution of the historicizing-being of Dasein as such,’ and the meaning of this historicizing is itself facticity.”<sup>65</sup>

In this respect, tools have always been exteriorizations of the human mind and thus interiorizations when it comes to our knowledge of the past and thus the anticipation we have when it comes to the future.\*<sup>66</sup> Stiegler explains this process through three different types of memory which determine the information process and the accumulation of knowledge and understanding in men. The first type of memory is epigenetic and it consists of the individual experience of the organism (with his own impressions and reflections in his lifetime). This means, according to Stiegler, that when the organism dies, his epigenetic memory vanishes too. How is it then that we have contained the experience of other individuals' memory? Here, Stigler introduces another type of memory consisting of the experience of the species throughout the ages - the phylogenetic memory which is not encrypted in the nervous system of the individual but in the gene pool of the population. This means that even though the epigenetic memory is not heritable, it can be accumulated. What actually makes possible this process of accumulation and thus connects the two

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<sup>64</sup> \*Stiegler's understanding of our technicity and the whole idea of the invention of the human through technics crucially relies on the work of the paleoanthropologist André Leroi-Gourhan.

<sup>65</sup> Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, I The fault of Epimetheus*, p.204 (...) p.207

<sup>66</sup> \*According to Stiegler it is our technicity which allows us to relate to and thus measure time. As he elaborates in the first volume of *Technics and time* “technics is essentially specialization. Technics is not a fact but a result. The history of techniques, then, needs this result to become organized into a history of technics.” (Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, I The fault of Epimetheus*, p.30)

types of memory is the epiphylogenetic memory, a “material memory, sedimented in the technical artefacts of society”<sup>67</sup>. This type of memory is located outside of the bodies and it has existed since the beginning of humanity but, as mentioned earlier, discovered as a specific type of memory a lot later in their evolution.<sup>\*68</sup> The epiphylogenetic memory is a collective system which contains a substantial part of the human experience and the origin of this memory is found in technics.<sup>\*69</sup> Put in other words epiphylogenesis is “the genealogy of technical prosthesis necessary for human existence”<sup>70</sup>. This means that in order to understand the development of humanity we should bear in mind that human beings as living creatures have always exteriorized themselves into non-living matter, namely technics. In this respect, these technical prostheses are namely the constituents of what Stiegler calls “general organology”, i.e., the study of the co-individuation and co-evolution between the psychosomatic organs (the human body), the technical (artificial) organs, and the social organ(inzation)s or societies. Human existence is thus constituted by the exteriorization of tools we use, prostheses that get passed through the generations, establishing tertiary retentions which in the grand scheme form our epiphylogenetic memory.

This new understanding of the existence and development of humanity happens after the Industrial Revolution. Prior to it only the psychic and the collective individuations were visible (the ones of the “I” and the “We”). The technical individuation, in this respect, is what constitutes humanity as it “introduces cleavage that opens this gap between the psychic and the collective, because it opens a new form of temporality (or temporality as such, in the Heideggerian sense), in the sense that every technical artefact functions, accidentally or deliberately, as a new support of *memory*”<sup>71</sup>. The tertiary retention is not visible in Schopenhauer’s philosophy where it seems that the genius who sees the Ideas independently needs tools only to explicate them to the other people so they can make their escape, namely through his art.

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<sup>67</sup> Howells, C. and Moore, G. (2013). *Stiegler and Technics*, p.23

<sup>68</sup> \*This explains why Husserl was challenged in making the connection between the primary and secondary retentions.

<sup>69</sup> \*Explaining what epiphylogenesis is, Stiegler doesn’t mean only the technology people use but also the language which makes possible the communication and especially the written one without which we would not have access to the past. In this respect, “we are defined by a past that we ourselves, as individuals, have not lived; this past is brought to us through culture which is the amalgamation of the ‘technical objects that embody the knowledge of our ancestors, tools that we adopt to transform our environment’. Indeed, the process of epiphylogenesis is how we, through technics, create time; we invent a future for ourselves that is dependent on the acquired epiphylogenetic memory passed down to us from our ancestors”. (Bluemink, M. (2020). *Stiegler's memory: tertiary retention and temporal objects*)

<sup>70</sup> Fitzpatrick, N. (2014). *Symbolic misery and aesthetics - Bernard Stiegler*, p.116

<sup>71</sup> Ross, D. (2021). *Psychopolitical Anaphylaxis: Steps Towards a Metacosmics*, p.34

What seems to be missing in this scenario is that the genius has actually always been a technical creature. His gift may be inborn as Schopenhauer states but this giftedness must have come from somewhere. Let's take Mozart for example - a child prodigy born in Salzburg on the 27th of January 1756. He developed his passion and talent for music at a very early age becoming one of the most profound musicians the world has ever seen. His incredible talent would have qualified for what Schopenhauer refers to a genius first because it seems that Mozart was born with the gift of music, composing some of the greatest symphonies the world has ever heard in just a couple of hours, and second because his art seen even from today's point of view knows no boundaries of time and space. People today are still being mesmerized by his music and continue to listen to it. They even write books on how to reduce stress or raise children in a healthy environment while listening to Mozart. Furthermore, there are thousands of articles over the internet on various research on how Mozart's music affects the brain and changes its neuronal activity.

It seems so far that Mozart as a genius in Schopenhauer's sense is just born this way. However, what seems to be taken for granted in this case is his musical knowledge and the generations of musicians in his family. The understanding of epigenetics and phylogenetics didn't really exist back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Also, it should not be underestimated that Mozart was listening to music and was seeing how it is performed before he started creating his own pieces of art. This makes it unclear if he really had a priori knowledge of the Ideas in Schopenhauer's sense or if it came with his experience, driven by his desire, where the desire and more precisely its projection can be explained as Stiegler's understanding of what the Ideas represent.

The knowledge from experience belongs to scientific man, according to Schopenhauer, who is strongly differentiated from the genius in his philosophy but it seems that both, more or less, gain their knowledge from exploring the world around themselves through objects, namely tools that didn't just appear but were build up through the life of many generations before them. In this sense, as mentioned earlier, the person (the "who") is and has always been in a co-evolving relationship with tools (the "what").

This relationship became clear with the Industrial Revolution, namely with the invention of recording devices like the phonograph, which made it possible for someone to repeatedly listen to a certain melody and get different phenomena with every other reprise.

However, instruments like the phonograph were used not only for the purpose of listening to music (which was considered a special event before the 19<sup>th</sup> century since it was possible only as a live performance) but also for the creation of music. An example of this was illustrated earlier with Charlie Parker's way of producing music, using a phonograph in combination with his saxophone. It is visible from this example and of course from Parker's biography that he, just like Mozart, was well educated when it comes to the technical way of writing a melody and keeping the balance between the rhythm and the harmony.

#### **2.4. The artist and the musical instrument**

Learning the technical part of music, people like Mozart and Parker inevitably form a special connection with their instruments. There must be a reason why they pick exactly that particular instrument (in the case of Mozart the piano and in Parker's case the saxophone) - it is a definite expression of their minds. By practicing on those instruments they form their style (to the extent that people can recognize that a piece of art is written by them from hearing just the first note) but they also gradually learn the instrument's limits.

To explain what this means I will address Stiegler's example with driving a car and I will compare it with the use of a musical instrument. In his interview book *Philosophising by Accident* the French philosopher refers to the fact that everyone can drive theirs or someone else's car but that doesn't necessarily mean that they can really drive. The actual driving process to him means that the person behind the wheel is familiar with the technology of the car and the technical limits of the latter (how fast it can go, how much time it needs to stop, etc.) This knowledge is necessary in order for one to not cause an accident, for example, and actually enjoy the ride at the same time. The mastering of the car thus comes from continuous driving (practice), the understanding of the way it works and what its limits are.

Phrased differently, the true nature of driving means knowing and carrying the machine to its limits (knowing how the different parts of the car work together).<sup>\*72</sup> The same seems to be

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<sup>72</sup> \*"To know the essence of the machine, and thereby understanding the sense of technics in general, is also to know the place of the human in "technical ensembles." There is general agreement on the change in technics since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, insofar as it causes the appearance of machine apparatus of production that call into question the traditional relation of the human to the technical. A new form of knowledge, founding the competence of the "technologist," becomes necessary to confront this change, and first of all to determine its true nature." (Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, 1 The fault of Epimetheus*, p.66)

applicable to musical instruments not entirely in the sense that one needs to know how to build a piano or a guitar for example but what specific sounds they produce or what pressure to use in order to produce a certain note.

As mentioned earlier, there is a pattern between the musician and the instrument of his choice. It can be assumed that the artist picks a specific instrument because he wants to present a specific view of the world, a certain Idea. This choice of his is connected to the responsibility he has towards society in the way that his vision and talent shown with and through the instrument need to have the perfect balance between rhythm and harmony. Moreover, the choice of instrument is in correlation with how much the artist wants to connect with the public. This can be easily seen in music bands nowadays: the one playing the main melody has the strongest connection with the public.

In order for this person to deliver his message appropriately, though, other factors need to be considered, namely the acoustic in a certain space. The sound of the melody in this matter depends not only on the artist or his connection with the instrument, but with his technical knowledge of the latter as well. The building process of this knowledge doesn't most likely start when one first starts playing an instrument but the more the musician practices the more his hearing, touch, etc. develops in a way that an ordinary person cannot sense.

The famous pianist Krystian Zimerman, for example, chooses a particular piano depending on the place he is going to perform. He doesn't even let other people touch this instrument, he has found his own way to transport it. According to Zimerman

“(s)ounds are produced when the hammers hit the strings, not when the fingers hit the keyboard, a fundamental fact often ignored when we talk about a particular pianist's 'tone'. If I strike a key, it sounds the same as if any other pianist had struck it. It's quite different from instruments like the violin, where you'd spot instantly whether it was me or Joshua Bell drawing the bow across a string. With the piano, it's only in a sequence of notes, their relative duration, volume, pressure, that the characteristics of the individual emerge”<sup>73</sup>.

This is the building knowledge that makes the connection between the musician and his instrument special, making him reach the perfect rhythm and harmony within time.

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<sup>73</sup> Zimerman, K. (2008) - *one keyboard is not enough*; Source: Intermezzo

### 3. From the analog to the digital era

The connection (between artist and instrument) starts changing with the arrival of the digital revolution in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.\*<sup>74</sup> This span sets the actual development of the earlier mentioned third period of grammatization, or “the generalization of informational technologies and the resulting redefinition of knowledge”<sup>75</sup>. For a better understanding of this process, we may compare it to the previous one where people were using analog instruments which had only one function connected to it, namely to the production of music. Nowadays, nevertheless, there are many people who use computer programs for the same purpose.

In this sense, the computer keyboard has partially replaced the function of a musical instrument and this according to Schopenhauer would have qualified for rationalization of music due to the fact that most if not all of these computer applications have already pre-recorded melodies which the “artist” can just combine. Someone may argue, however, that just like artists nowadays can combine pre-made melodies on a computer, great musicians in the past used some of their previous notes to create new pieces of art like Mozart, for example, or have used the notes of other people like Parker.

It cannot be denied, though, that due to the more frequent use of digital technology there is a gradual loss of that special connection that is being built between the musician and his instrument. Moreover, consumerism as one of the outcomes from the arrival of digital technology threatens this connection even more.\*<sup>76</sup> This still doesn’t necessarily mean that artists nowadays don’t use their instruments to perform music or that they don’t know how to write it in the way that

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<sup>74</sup> \*The digital recording is a “method of preserving sound in which audio signals are transformed into a series of pulses that correspond to patterns of binary digits (i.e., 0’s and 1’s) and are recorded as such on the surface of a magnetic tape or optical disc. A digital system samples a sound’s wave form, or value, several thousand times a second and assigns numerical values in the form of binary digits to its amplitude at any given instant. A typical digital recording system is equipped with an analog-to-digital converter that transforms two channels of continuous audio signals into digital information, which is then recorded by a high-speed tape or disc machine. The system uses a digital-to-analog converter that reads the encoded information from the recording medium and changes it back into audio signals that can be used by the amplifier of a conventional stereo sound system.” (Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. (25 Nov. 2011) *Digital sound recording*; Encyclopedia Britannica)

<sup>75</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.54

<sup>76</sup> \*Here the potential transition of the *pharmakon* can be viewed: from something that helps our memory to “an artifice that at the same time causes a *loss* of memory, as we all experience today with mobile telephones, through which phone numbers are both recorded and forgotten. The *pharmakon* thus remedies and overcomes the finitude of our memories, but at the same time increases the deficiency of our memory, and in this sense it is also a drug” (Stiegler, B. (2014). *The Lost Spirit of Capitalism: Disbelief and Discredit*, p.85)

Schopenhauer would have agreed with. On the contrary, digital technology has become a great way for some musicians to embrace their talent. Just as during the analog era there were performers like Charlie Parker who combined the use of their saxophone with a phonograph, today there are musicians who combine musical instruments with the influence of digital technology like Jojo Mayer for example - a famous drummer and jazz musician who “developed a feature uniquely his own - an unparalleled ability to create the illusion of playing like a machine, aided by his aforementioned virtuosity and elevated by the very human element that seemed to restrict him at first”<sup>77</sup>. He explains that this type of producing music helped him see the human interaction with music beyond the machine language of 0’s and 1’s and in this regard, his connection with music became even stronger.

### 3.1. Proletarianization of sensibility

It seems indisputable anyhow that using only digital technology in the face of computer programs with pre-existing and thus prerecorded melodies doesn’t make one a true musician since “within the process of mechanical reproduction there is an inherent loss of knowledge, the ability to read and play music is no longer necessary in order to repeat the music”<sup>78</sup>.

Stiegler calls this gradual process of losing knowledge “*proletarianization of the sensibility* of the consumer through the apparatuses for the canalization and reproduction of perception”<sup>79</sup>. The root of this proletarianization is that our ability to make or create something is being taken away by the emergence and more precisely the use of digital technologies with preformatted options.\*<sup>80</sup> Phrased in another way, humans are gradually abandoning their role as creators and become consumers since digital technologies function automatically and the more they are developing, the more independent of human intervention they may become. Here the difference between the plain *use* of an instrument (in combining prerecorded melodies) and the sustained *practice* of an instrument (taking it to its limits) can be seen.

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<sup>77</sup> Khan, A. - words (2019, 10 September) *Jojo Mayer: ‘Nothing New Can Be Created Without Deviating From The Norm’*

<sup>78</sup> Fitzpatrick, N. (2014). *Symbolic misery and aesthetics* - Bernard Stiegler, p.117

<sup>79</sup> Stiegler, B. (2017). *The Proletarianization of Sensibility*, p.5

<sup>80</sup> In this manner “(t)he worker is no longer a technical individual because the machine has formalized his actions. In this way he becomes proletarian” (Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume I: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.49)



### 3.1.1. Disorientation: the loss of our relation to technics

Before the Industrial Revolution and the rapid rise of technology humans were the bearers of tools: they were technical beings but this changed with the Industrial Revolution (or more precisely the invention of mechanical machines) where machines started having a life of their own, in consequence becoming tool bearers themselves. This resulted in a change of the connection between the “who” and the “what”. It becomes questionable if the former still invents the latter since the person (from an inventor) becomes a consumer and moreover a “producer of the network *where he consumes and which consumes him* (which consumes and exhausts his desire)”<sup>81</sup>.

This confusion puts at stake “the relation to the *pharmakon*, that is, to technics”<sup>82</sup> which gradually leads to the change of aesthetic experience into what Stiegler calls aesthetic conditioning. This is the transition from the way people participated in the aesthetic expressing their individuality to the way they became conditioned to like or dislike something influenced by the industrial technology where the “aesthetics has become both theatre and weapon in the economic war”<sup>83</sup>. The replacement of our aesthetic experience with conditioning is basically the new form of aesthetics which the twentieth century brought, one that changed its function in order to create a consumer and moreover, an addict who loses his autonomy.

The question of how these consumers are being produced arises now. To trace this process one has to make the distinction between the fabrication processes before and after the Industrial Revolution, looking at its consequences. One of them, as mentioned earlier, is the rapid development of technology which started gradually taking human roles in the production: it became much easier for one to purchase something rather than create it himself. This set the beginning of mass production which consequently gave rise to the emergence of a new type of industry, namely the culture or programming industry “(cameras, recording, networks, and digital television)”<sup>84</sup>.

The culture industries in this context “comprise an industrial, and thus systematic, implementation of new, technological tertiary retentions and through them, criteria of selection of a new kind-which are, as it happens, totally subjected to the logic of the marketplace, and thus to

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<sup>81</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.64

<sup>82</sup> Stiegler, B. (2013). *What Makes Life Worth Living. On Pharmacology*, p.18

<sup>83</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, Foreword

<sup>84</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.126

shareholders”<sup>85</sup>. This is how they set the beginning of the modern marketing whose purpose is to fight for the consumer’s attention or put differently his “here and now” experience of reality.

### 3.1.2. The establishment of audiovisual technology

The way marketing systems fight for people’s attention is by a new form of aesthetics which emerges during the twentieth century thanks to the rise of cinema, that is to say a phonograph to which a “visual accompaniment is added”<sup>86</sup> With this audiovisual technology not only our hearing receptors are influenced but also our vision - the strongest among the human senses or more precisely the sense which we rely on the most. Cinema, just like music, is a temporal object and its influence is so overtaking because its flux and structure, or the time and flow of the consciousness is temporal as well.<sup>87</sup>

This means that because of the possibility of fusing with the temporal flow of our consciousness, cinema and music can easily manipulate the latter. As an example of such manipulation Stiegler presents “the century of Hollywood, of large-scale mass-media, of artificial intelligence, of information industries - or the *development of an industry which made consciousness and spirit its 'raw materials'*”<sup>88</sup>. This is the era, then, that transforms the individual from participating in the production of music into being to a simple consumer: the transformation of music and cinema from analog to digital arts intervenes with the process of one’s production since the digital element is performed by a computer instead of a person; this way one doesn’t participate in the creation process but only consumes the product after it is created.

Our consciousness is not only temporal but also technical as Stiegler describes it and as epiphylogenetic creatures, we constitute ourselves through technics. This fundamental feature of humanity is what makes it possible for us to form social groups and build a culture.

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<sup>85</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise* , p.39

<sup>86</sup>\*Thomas Edison, the inventor of the phonograph “commissioned Dickson, a young laboratory assistant, to invent a motion-picture camera in 1888. Building upon the work of Muybridge and Marey, Dickson combined the two final essentials of motion-picture recording and viewing technology. These were a device, adapted from the escapement mechanism of a clock, to ensure the intermittent but regular motion of the film strip through the camera and a regularly perforated celluloid film strip to ensure precise synchronization between the film strip and the shutter.” (Cook, D. A. and Sklar, Robert (2021, February 16). History of film. Encyclopedia Britannica) This was the beginning of the development of audiovisual media resulting in what we today refer to as cinema.

<sup>87</sup> \*Stiegler even describes consciousness as cinematographic since “(i)t has always relied on exterior, technical forms of retention to produce its life as project(ion) of individuation.” (Howells, C. and Moore, G. (2013). *Stiegler and Technics*. p.114)

<sup>88</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.16

### 3.1.3.Synchronization

The formation of such a community is possible through a process of synchronization, that is the way groups of people cooperate, commune and communicate in time in order to live together (following the same laws and having common traditions and goals), but also, to learn and to develop their collective consciousness. For a better understanding of the latter, Stiegler describes the communication process or more precisely the way people share new information:

“If you are listening to me at the moment, it is because you are expecting something from me, something that you don't have: you expect something from my consciousness inasmuch *as it is not synchronized* with yours.”<sup>89</sup>

With the rise of the culture industries, however, the process of synchronization changes in a way that it starts having more negative effect due to the massive use of audiovisual technologies and more precisely the emergence of television which “adds two new photographic and cinematic effects”<sup>90</sup>: it creates the possibility for people to watch the same temporal object from anywhere and consequently it creates a network of audiovisual objects accessible by millions of people across the globe, especially with the wireless connection we have today.

In this respect, the synchronization of the twentieth century is rooted in the idea that the primary retentions of people all around the world get influenced in the same way by the audiovisual tertiary retention, controlling their secondary retentions. Simultaneously, they start losing their connection to the “We”, as explicated above, since “(t)he audiovisual techniques of marketing lead, moreover, to a situation where, through the images I see and the sounds I hear, my past tends to become the same as my neighbour's”<sup>91</sup>. This means that tertiary retentions make possible the manipulation of the secondary ones which consequently makes it possible for primary retentions to be explicitly selected. This process has the potential to change one's entire experience and paralyze one's imagination since “he or she can no longer distinguish between perception and imagination, reality and fiction”<sup>92</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.19

<sup>90</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.33

<sup>91</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.6

<sup>92</sup> Stiegler, B. (2011). *Technics and Time, 3 Cinematic Time and the Question of Malaise*, p.38

This inevitably leads to a process of (what Stiegler calls) hyper-synchronization where people slowly disindividuate themselves and lose their connection to the “We”. Also, they stop being adoptive creatures (creatures who can make a choice, hence make a change), and seem to be only just adapting (in the sense of just adjusting) thus being consumers. To understand better this difference between adoption and adaptation we may look at the changes which influence the process of invention. As explained earlier, humans are organological creatures, bearers of tools organized in a society that constantly develops. This development is precisely the connection between the “I” and the “We” which is always in becoming and in this respect always inventing itself. This bond gets disrupted with the arrival of digital technology where machines start having independence. This creates disorientation among humans: the process of invention stops and a process of erosion of our imagination starts, imagination which gets synchronized with other people making it very challenging for something new, original to occur. This can be illustrated by all the remixes people do today in all artistic fields (movies, songs, and even fashion) where nothing new seems to be brought to light, everything is just reconstructed, redone.

This brings back the notion of repetition which, as explained in the previous chapter, always adds a new element in the creation. In the case of the digital revolution, however, the understanding of repetition appears to be changing in a more negative way: instead of seeing or hearing a new element in something when repeated, we get overwhelmed by the amount of repetitions out there which simultaneously leads to a state of boredom. The repetition of a certain melody, for example, still adds a new element to it but due to the hyper-synchronization of society, where we transform from adoptive creatures to simple consumers, an illusion is created that nothing new is being produced. Put differently, the repetition we witness today is one without *différance* where *différance* represents the co-possibility between the human and the technics - the *who* and the *what*. This again has to show that it is not technology that needs to be blamed for any inconvenience since the latter is an inescapable condition for all aspects of human existence. Put in other words: the notion of repetition is now used by the capitalist industry for another process - the one of innovation.

“Innovation accomplishes a transformation of the technical system while drawing the consequences for the other systems. In other words, the rules of innovation are wholly different from those of invention. The rules of innovation are those of socialization, as

analyzed mainly by economists (...) the logic of innovation is constituted by the rules of adjustment between the technical system and the others.”<sup>93</sup>

When talking about these other systems, Stiegler means the cultural ones which take place in connection between the “I” and the “We” that is always in becoming. With this in view, due to the imbalance of the system influenced by the disorientation, the inventive character between the “I” and the “We” is steadily fading away since there is something exterior to them which operates now. Expressed differently: the psychic “I” and the collective “We” become the technical “One”. The analogy of the One can be found in Heidegger’s *das Man* - the ‘they’ or the ‘Others’.

“By ‘Others’ we do not mean everyone else but me—those over against whom the ‘I’ stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does not distinguish oneself—those among whom one is too... By reason of this *with-like* Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one that I share with Others. (*Being and Time* 26: 154-5)”<sup>94</sup>

When referring to the One, Stiegler considers it a kind of global memory which “has itself finally been subsumed into an industrialization directly affecting our psychic processes and collective identifications and differentiations; that is, individuation itself”<sup>95</sup>. This means that the individual loses her possibility to differentiate herself and be a singularity. Moreover, when people’s singularity (interrelated to their desire) gets taken away, they intend to particularize in line with goods offered by the market.

In this way our lives become driven by something else which starts having a life of its own: this is how people get alienated from themselves and accordingly the process of individuation gets frustrated. The concept of alienation is taken by Stiegler from Marx’s philosophy for the purpose of clarifying the relationship between the “I” and the “We”, i.e., alienation understood in Stiegler’s terms is one’s loss of singularity, a consequence of the hyper-industrialization turning individuals into consumers:

“The relation between the technical and social systems is thus treated as a problem of consumption, in which the economic system is the third component: the development of

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<sup>93</sup> Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, 1 The fault of Epimetheus*, p.36 (...) p.37

<sup>94</sup>Wheeler, M. (2011). *Martin Heidegger*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

<sup>95</sup> Stiegler, B. (2009). *Technics and Time, 2 Disorientation*, p.3

consumerism, accompanying constant innovation, aims at a greater flexibility in consumer attitudes, which adapt and must adapt ever more quickly, at a pace obviously not without effect on the specifically cultural sphere. The twentieth century thereby appears properly and massively uprooting—and this will always provide the theme, in terms of alienation and decline, of the great discourses on technics.”<sup>96</sup>

The process of human’s disengagement from technics and hence from themselves results in their change of participation in the creation of art. This was earlier explained as a transition from aesthetic experience where we engage in the process of art to aesthetic conditioning where we just consume what we are told to consume.

### **3.1.4. Control over societies**

Stiegler describes the process of massive consumption and hyper-synchronization as “the effective reality of the control society”<sup>97</sup>. He takes this term (control society) from the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze opposes the notion of control societies to what Foucault referred to as disciplinary societies, which emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The purpose of disciplinary societies was connected to changing human behavior in an authoritarian way. The discipline according to him was applied and performed by institutions like schools and hospitals. As Deleuze notices “in their turn the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II: a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be”<sup>98</sup>. The disciplinary societies in this regard, were replaced by control societies, “a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future”<sup>99</sup>.

What seems to be different between the disciplinary and control society is that in the latter people are told that they have more freedom when it comes to the choices which they can make. This, however, seems not to be the case, considering the manipulation through marketing turning people from producers to consumers. The way Foucault for example explains disciplinary societies is through the effect of the panopticon: people’s behavior is being observed and they are aware of that, they know that they are going to be penalized if they don’t act according to expectation. The

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<sup>96</sup> Stiegler, B. (1998). *Technics and Time, 1 The fault of Epimetheus*, p.32

<sup>97</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.58

<sup>98</sup> Deleuze, G. (May 1990). *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, p.3

<sup>99</sup> Deleuze, G. (May 1990). *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, p.3

panopticon is constructed in such a way that people actually don't see the watchers so they don't really know if they are under surveillance at a particular moment but the idea of punishment makes them behave accordingly, hence be disciplined. In the societies of control that Deleuze described people are not punished for their behavior but just like in the disciplinary societies they know that they are being watched. People are, however, not encouraged to think about it all the time which simultaneously creates the illusion that they can make a free choice. In this respect, the aim of disciplinary societies is connected to one's change of behavior while in the control societies one can manipulate the desires and affections humans have for their own purposes.

In contrast to Deleuze's understanding of control, Stiegler uses the notion (of control) not as a warning which should scare people because there is a 'new monster' but more as a description of one's place in this world so that they can get understanding and thus awareness of their living situation. Moreover, he adds to Deleuze's analysis that this 'benefit' from people's behavior is manifested by marketing associations and their control strategy. What is also important to Stiegler is that aesthetics play a crucial role in the performance of this control. Put in other words "it has become a matter of controlling the technologies of *aisthesis* (*the audiovisual or the digital, for example*) and, in this way, *controlling the conscious and unconscious rhythms of bodies and souls; modulating* through the control of flows these rhythms of consciousness and life"<sup>100</sup>. Music and the audiovisual art in general occupy a very special place in this control because of their temporality. Being used for the production of more consumers by industries, the audiovisual element helps transforming people from being temporal creatures to becoming controlled through industrial temporal objects in the sense that we become zombies whose attention is being occupied and used for the purpose of those industries: "(t)his is happening because with modernity, and above all with hyper-industrialization, the temporalities of consciousness are becoming meta-markets"<sup>101</sup>. It is precisely this hyper-industrialization by which all retention processes are being influenced and thus controlled.

Furthermore, this is how temporal objects (like songs and commercials) are not being used to elevate people beyond the struggles and pain from their daily lives but to the place where someone (in control) wants them to be transported to. Stiegler believes that the new instrument for social control is marketing itself: "Marketing, the media, systems of behavioral synchronization

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<sup>100</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.2

<sup>101</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.61

(...) make us adopt a new toothpaste, a new washing powder, a new type of mobile phone, a new optional standard in cars, (...) in order for the economic machine of the global we to function”<sup>102</sup>. In the exact same way we also adopt specific preferences to particular types of making or listening to music.

This can gradually belittle the function of music in three interrelated ways: firstly, the artist may lose his sense of responsibility when it comes to the creation of the perfect balance between rhythm and harmony due to the lack of technical knowledge and imagination needed for the construction of a melody. Secondly, the public is influenced to listen to a particular type of music which may not include great pieces of art like Mozart’s or Parker’s. Finally, this connection between the artist and its public may easily get lost since even if the former creates an outstanding melody, the latter may never get the chance of hearing it. These consequential factors combined with what was described earlier as our gradual disorientation (caused by our disruption as organological creatures) determine what Stiegler calls loss of participation.

### **3.2. Loss of Participation**

In order for someone to develop an appreciation for art they need to participate in it. To explain what this means I refer back to the example with the musician and his connection to the instrument given in the previous chapter. The creation of a great melody doesn’t depend only on the choice of an instrument, but also on the technical knowledge of it. Last but not least, the more the artist practices, the more delicate sensation (hearing, touch, etc.) he develops. This means that for the co-constitution between the process of exteriorization and interiorization described in the previous chapter, one needs to do more than just use an instrument, one needs to practice it repeatedly so that one can really interiorize it and ‘master’ it.

The connection between the artist and the instrument (when it comes to the reflexive relation of exteriorization and interiorization of the latter), however, starts getting disrupted with the arrival of the digital, and in this way it can be said that the community as a feeling one has the potential to start heading towards its destruction in the sense that it will reach a state of apathy with no inventiveness. This process has already started in the way one’s attention is being influenced and more intensely manipulated by the so-called capitalist industry which aims to produce more

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<sup>102</sup> Stiegler, B (2009). *Acting out*, p.44



and more consumers. This type of manipulation is what destroys the individuation of the “I” and its connection to the “We” creating something completely different, namely the One which “designates a loss of individuation, and it is my hypothesis that this constitutes a liquidation of individuation itself: the *one* would be the annulment of a constitutive difference”<sup>103</sup> between the “who” and the “what”.

From this perspective, the psychic “I” is more and more challenged to project itself in the collective “We”. This projection is of great importance since the process of participation has never been addressed only to the psychic “I” but always to the “We” where “I” addresses itself. This means that the third step of grammatization brings one to the limits of this individuation which is a direct consequence of his loss of participation (connected only to its conditioning which replaces the experience itself). This loss, however, is not only conducted in art but it can be said that it is a loss of one’s living knowledge supported by “the love of know-how”<sup>104</sup>, the knowledge we have identified ourselves with, the one of the organological creatures which always exteriorize and reflectively interiorize themselves into the surrounding environment. Our living knowledge is now seriously in danger since we have lost our true relation to technics.

“The *technical* loss of individuation affects the producer: deprived of his working knowledge, he loses his technical skills. The *aesthetic* loss of individuation affects the consumer: deprived of the opportunity of participating in the aesthetic occurrence, he loses his sensibility. He sinks into anaesthesia, indifference and apathy.”<sup>105</sup>

The loss of our individuation as a direct result of the loss of participation: this is what gradually leads us to what Stiegler calls symbolic misery: the “pure suffering” of the “I” which cannot individuate itself in the “We”. In this context, the symbol represents the sharing, the togetherness in the participating process.

### 3.2.1. Symbolic misery

The term symbol comes from ancient Greek (*symbolon*); it is simply something whose semantic or meaningful completeness is determined by its relation to something else, external to

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<sup>103</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.62

<sup>104</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.76

<sup>105</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.23

it.\*<sup>106</sup> The purpose of the symbol in this matter is to transcend one's attention to this "something else" so it can become one with it. Symbols are then the substitutes for the whole; they are (at the same time) an object and a meaning; openness and mystery.

Symbols are generally speaking the way people perceive and give meaning to the world they live in. Thanks to them they are able to surpass the boundaries of the sensory phenomena and thus go beyond time and space. Moreover, symbols are carriers of certain social information, they are an inevitable part of the buildup of cultures, cultures whose ground is based in the connection of the I and the We that is always in becoming. When this bond gets threatened people go into a state of symbolic misery.

"Symbols here being as much the fruits of intellectual life (concepts, ideas, theorems, knowledge) as of sensible life (arts, know-how, mores). And I believe that the present state of generalized loss of individuation can only lead to a symbolic collapse, or the collapse of desire - in other words to the decomposition of the social as such: to total war."<sup>107</sup>

When Stiegler talks about symbolic misery he refers to the existential suffering that prevents individuals to "form aesthetic attachments to singularities"<sup>108</sup>. This type of suffering compared to the one described by Schopenhauer (caused by the endless process of wanting) affects human's desire for life. Stiegler's understanding of suffering then is connected to one's impossibility to express one's desire and thus one becomes unable to individuate oneself in a sense that people lose their 'healthy' connection to technicity. As mentioned earlier the understanding of our technicity is not visible in Schopenhauer's philosophy hence it can be concluded that the philosophers have a very different understanding of what suffering represents.

However, there are some similarities which seem worthy of mentioning: the suffering which Schopenhauer refers to can be overcome by seeing or hearing something beautiful and more precisely sublime. In his example of landscape gardening art, which is the only art that is performed

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<sup>106</sup> "(F)rom Greek *symbolon* 'token, watchword, sign by which one infers; ticket, a permit, licence' (...) from assimilated form of *syn-* 'together' (see **syn-**) + *bole* 'a throwing, a casting, the stroke of a missile, bolt, beam,' from *bol-*, nominative stem of *ballein* 'to throw' (from PIE root **\*gwele-** 'to throw, reach'). The sense evolution in Greek is from 'throwing things together' to 'contrasting' to 'comparing' to "token used in comparisons to determine if something is genuine.' Hence, 'outward sign' of something." (Online Etymological Dictionary; *symbol* / Search Online Etymology Dictionary.)

<sup>107</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.10

<sup>108</sup> Stiegler, B. (2014). *Symbolic Misery - Volume 1: The Hyperindustrial Epoch*, p.5

by nature itself instead of the artist, one can become a witness of a powerful natural force like a hurricane or a tornado, let's say. Looking at such an event one feels scared for one's life but at the same time has the chance to admire something much bigger than oneself. This creates the experience of the sublime, an experience which makes people aware of how small and vulnerable they are compared to the power of nature. At this point of understanding one forgets to want and thus stops suffering. Stiegler doesn't really talk about the sublime but the moment of awareness is also recognised by him as something which may happen any time (just like a natural disaster) and bring back one's desire for life. This point will be elaborated on in the next part of the chapter but for now it is important to be noted that the lack of this desire Stiegler refers to is one's suffering - the loss of individuation caused by one's loss of participation may lead to split personality, drug abuse, and even suicide, it presents a "total threat to the very future of humanity as a life-form capable of making sense of the sensible"<sup>109</sup>.

### 3.3.The death of art

This loss of participation, Stiegler suggests, can be viewed as a transitional stage which can be surpassed. He offers a way of overcoming man's disengagement with the aesthetics through Joseph Beuys' work, a German artist whose famous quote "Everyone is an artist" inspires Stiegler's search for a way out of the symbolic misery.

What Beuys means by the term artist is actually the human being as a creature who has the desire to create and be inventive. Along these lines, not only all musicians or painters for example are artists but also all the "artistic" parents, managers, politicians, etc. In this way, he brings forward a new way of social organization, the so-called social sculpture which aims to overcome the catastrophe of our disengagement with art. The idea of the social sculpture is to reconnect the "I" and the "We", the psychic with the collective.

Stiegler adopts Beuys' concept suggesting that "*all human existence is intrinsically artistic, and that because of this every man is an artist (...) potentially if not in act*"<sup>110</sup> Furthermore, the French philosopher proposes that in order to escape from the symbolic misery is to find a new way of participation or more precisely "a new concept of art must be explored and forged: the concept

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<sup>109</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.41

<sup>110</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.61

of an *extended art*”<sup>111</sup>. By extended art, he refers to the idea that the aesthetic existence is actually the human participation thus his existence as a technical creature; as such one has to go back to the process of adoption of technics so he can relate to himself again.

One issue with this process is that due to the hyper-synchronization and the establishment of the One, the global memory, it is quite challenging even utopian for one to go back where the quantity of technology was less and it was easier for one to adopt it. Stiegler takes this in mind and proposes another way of transforming the question of participation and the fight against symbolic misery, namely by revisiting the notion of repetition, repetition which has changed so much since the invention of the phonograph. In the digital era repetition is viewed from a negative side as a repetition of the same, eventually leading to the process of hyper-synchronization. Stiegler believes that during this change of understanding the repetition, the idea of learning gets lost (visible in Parker’s and Mayer’s case). The idea that repetition is no longer viewed as difference (in Deleuze’s sense) leads to our understanding of symbolic misery as a result of hyper-synchronization and indifferenciation.

The figure who suffers the most from this synchronization according to Stiegler is the one of the amateur “whose aesthetic experience was thought to have been killed off by industrial repetition”<sup>112</sup>. The amateur is the one who has the desire to do what he loves [*ama-tore*] and learn from the artist. This desire is rooted in the act of repetition which actually opens the two possible dispositions of the *pharmakon* described earlier:

“on the one hand it produces long circuits through which it becomes care, entering into the service of the libido orientated through sublimation; and when on the other hand it produces short-circuits, and is thus submitted to the drives, short-circuiting and bypassing sublimation, that is, the binding of the drives. Long circuits connect or bind the drives that are disconnected or unbound by short-circuits.”<sup>113</sup>

Examples of such sublimation are artists like Mozart, Parker, Zimmerman, and Mayer who use technology in its therapeutic effect instead of an addiction, a drug which destroys humanity. With this in view, Stiegler believes that the state of misery people have encountered is not the end of art but simply its death since the latter refers simultaneously to birth or to a new beginning of

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<sup>111</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.72

<sup>112</sup> Howells, C. and Moore, G. (2013). *Stiegler and Technics*, p.128

<sup>113</sup> Stiegler, B. (2013). *What Makes Life Worth Living. On Pharmacology*, p.25

art. He points out that “(t)he end of art, as announced by Hegel, was not the end of artistic *experience*. The possibility of the death of art, on the other hand, is a possibility in which the sensible experience constitutive of art is *replaced* by aesthetic *conditioning* which, today, is marketing’s ultimate aim”<sup>114</sup>.

In order for this new beginning to arrive, the amateur needs to regain his belief through practice, “it is only in this way that the figure of the *amateur* can be constituted, as one *who loves an object*, who *sublimates*”<sup>115</sup>. This process can begin according to Stiegler only by one’s awareness that they live in a hyper-industrial world where “artistic and spiritual questions have become question of political economy”<sup>116</sup>.

The French philosopher has a point in claiming that we live in a transitional age and we need not worry about the end of art. After all, we have seen other examples of death of art during the ages but the fact that we still have great musicians, painters, etc. today speaks for itself that we are indeed in a state of metamorphosis.\*<sup>117</sup> As human beings, we are frightened of the unknown and sometimes think of the worst possible outcomes but this is actually healthy for us in the sense that even though we face only the death of art followed by a new beginning, we need to keep in mind that there is still a possibility of an end.

The symbolic misery people have encountered shows such a hazard. The difference between the death and the end of art then lies in the awareness of people, awareness which rises only in a “limit situation” as the philosopher Karl Jaspers defined it. Limit situations or

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<sup>114</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.91

<sup>115</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.91

<sup>116</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.175

<sup>117</sup> \*The concept of death of art has existed for centuries: every time a language gets forgotten or every time a tribe got invaded by another tribe or when a certain population got extinct (part of) their art (as cave paintings for example) lost its meaning and thus died. Some of these examples may seem radical since they show only part of the story. The fact that I cannot read Sanskrit, for example, doesn’t really mean that art written in this language is death. The same applies to the arts of cultures who got extinct. They did not die, they transformed; the same can be said about the various genres in music or painting or poetry. This transformation may not be clear to some people but if we look into the analysis of anthropologists or historians of the different types of arts they can tell us exactly how one genre transformed into another. In this respect, it seems that the concept of death of art is somehow metaphorical. If we look into the example of Jojo Mayer we may see how he integrated computer or ‘artificially made’ music in his style. However, the hyper-synchronization we experience today seems more threatening to us when it comes to the death of art, because in the other situations, as described above, there was some external factor which helped the transformation of art. In the case of symbolic misery that society finds itself in today caused by the loss of participation due to the hyper-synchronization where everyone listens to and does the same thing, the danger of not coming across something external really exists. The transformation needs to happen from the inside, through awareness, but with this we go back to the first objection regarding this process, namely how can someone become aware of something in a totally synchronized world?

“grenzsituationen“ are those “moments, usually accompanied by experiences of dread, guilt or acute anxiety, in which the human mind confronts the restrictions and pathological narrowness of its existing forms, and allows itself to abandon the securities of its limitedness, and so to enter new realm of self-consciousness”<sup>118</sup>. Such a limit situation can be found in the experience of the sublime Schopenhauer referred to: something rare, that shakes you and really awakens you. This awakening, as already mentioned, can be seen in the notion of awareness Stiegler refers to, the one that makes us realize that we are in a toxic relation to our technicity, a relation which needs to be healed.

The idea that we need to be self-conscious of our actions and in consequence able to be adoptive creatures once again, however, doesn't mean that we are all artists or amateurs who have the potential to be artists by regaining our beliefs and practice. The concept of death in art needs to be surpassed by gaining our awareness back but the reformulation of the issue with our lack of participation today when it comes to art is different from the claim that everyone is or can be an artist.

Claiming that all people are artists in potential seems to reduce the aesthetic to the technical thus to the being. Stiegler, following Beuys, claims that everyone has the potential to be an artist since everyone is a human being who is also a technical creature and although it is true that we need technics and the public to create art, the technical is just a necessary condition for the aesthetic but not sufficient. If everyone was an artist in the way Beuys and Stiegler suggest or even if everyone had the potential to be an artist we would have had more people like Mozart, Parker, Zimmerman, or Mayer but we don't: their artistic talent is not seen that often. We know a lot of people who are teachers, parents, managers, or business owners and it can be indeed assumed that they are artists in the sense that they are passionate about what they do and their drive makes them be inventive but this type of artistry binds more easily with the flow of their everyday routine and it is endangered by the notion of hyper-synchronization.

Painters, sculptors, poets or musicians as other types of artists are of course not immune to this threat but their artistry is somehow different, rarer. Mozart for example, spent only 35 years on this Earth during which he created a massive amount of ingenious work which will take years for one only to copy on paper. Moreover, he did not use almost any drafts when composing,

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<sup>118</sup> Miron, R. and Thornhill, C. (2018, 17 July). *Karl Jaspers* (*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*).

compared to many other musicians, suggesting that his music was flowing through his mind. There are many other facts about Mozart's life that puzzle people and it is indeed the infrequency of such talent that has a better chance of triggering someone's awareness. This division between artists that can be seen from the lines above doesn't contradict Stiegler's idea that everyone can be an artist but aims to show that such distinction needs to be acknowledged, especially when it comes to the potential of amateurs who have the desire to learn from artists.

The difference between potential and act is far larger in practice than in theory. This can be viewed through the limit situations which are accidental, meaning that their occurrence is unforeseeable.\*<sup>119</sup> For example it is still questionable if real artists have their potential in their genes or whether it can be adopted from the external environment or both. Schopenhauer for instance believed that it is an inborn gift and even if it is, it is still under debate if this talent can be flourished in every environment. Moreover, according to Aristotle, who says in Book IX of *Metaphysics* that "actuality is prior in substantial being to potency"<sup>120</sup>. This means that what is real, what we see and experience always precedes that which is possible.\*<sup>121</sup>

Stiegler, on the other hand, doesn't seem to believe that we are simply born in a certain way, meaning that our actuality precedes our potential. The limit situations, for example, can be considered a trigger for our potential. A state of symbolic misery can be even seen as such a limit situation. People in this state can either start abusing drugs or commit suicide, but they can also begin searching for anything that can help them avoid such thoughts. In this search people may eventually come across something that will regain their belief in life back, hence in their creativity and/or artisticity. We are familiar with such cases as shown on the news, in movies or in books. To understand the transition from being symbolically miserable to regaining one's belief, one may look at the state of misery itself. No one actually wants to suffer; drug abuse or the suicide option

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<sup>119</sup> \*Accidental according to Stiegler are the short-circuits which are formed by the "adaptive transindividuation process (...) they are incapable of generating the necessary, that which is needed (desire and sublimation), from the default (*das Ding*); they are incapable of generating the feeling and the conviction that the default can and must become that which is necessary" (Stiegler, B. (2013). *What Makes Life Worth Living. On Pharmacology*, p.102). This points out to the idea that pharmakon when viewed as poison is always surpassed but how can one be sure of this when we don't know what our future holds. The dramatic development of technology followed by the change in our psychic-collective process shows that. We need to remain optimistic about the future in order to not fall apart but it cannot be denied that the past couple of years explicit the biggest synchronization (leading to symbolic misery) we have ever bared witness to.

<sup>120</sup> Aristotle (350BC). *Metaphysics Book IX*; p.157

<sup>121</sup> \*An application of this claim can be seen in another book of Aristotle - *On the soul* where he describes the 3 types of souls (of plants, animals and humans) and their function in great detail in Book 2.

can be viewed as simple escapes from the suffering. The engagement in something new or just the act of searching for another solution can also be seen as an escape in the sense that it becomes a distraction from destructive thoughts and in the process of this distraction one has the possibility of coming across something eye-opening, something that will regain one's awareness and thus receive one's artisticity back. The state of misery can be viewed as a potential - a limit situation and thus a trigger and an opportunity for someone to become aware of themselves again.

There is, however, one actuality which precedes our potential (in Aristotle's sense), according to the French philosopher, and this is our technicity, itself rooted in our default of being: the basic condition for someone to be an artist is that he is a technical being in the first place. In this regard, it looks as if our technicity somehow precedes our artistry according to Stiegler: Mozart, for example, wouldn't have become the artist he was if it wasn't for his technical nature. However, there is something more in Mozart's talent that doesn't seem to be found only in his technicity; there is still something in the process of real invention that remains a mystery. Stiegler locates this mystery in the individual's singularity, his singular desire. As shown from the pages above, nevertheless, this singularity can be taken away from the individual. In this manner, it seems that when we say that everyone has the potential to be an artist we end up empty-handed because no one knows when the next limit situation will come, when one will be given a chance to awake from the hyper-synchronized world they live in.

Even if a limit situation occurs in one's lifetime, it still remains a mystery how the process of real invention happens, how one's singular desire gets formed: is it really triggered by a limit situation or was it there in actuality all along, or maybe both? The puzzlement these questions reveal make it challenging to reduce our artisticity to our technicity, or even put a sign of equality between them, since something not yet completely understandable for us gets lost in the way. The actuality of Mozart as a child prodigy, for example, may have not been realized in some parallel worlds but we may never have a definite explanation of his talent in action or in potential.

Questions about reality and possibility seem very tricky since they can never be truly answered. After all, we can examine various "What...if..." situations about past events, make estimations, come up with thought experiments and project the future but we can never change them. The purpose of such questions is to learn from the bygone days. There are numerous possibilities for something to happen but not all of them are actually realized. This means that it is possible for something in potential to become an action but it is not always necessarily true. Worded



differently, the notion of potential seems very problematic and connecting it only to one's awareness of certain circumstances doesn't mean that everyone can become an artist or that they are such.

In this respect, if the claim that everyone is an artist hence a human being gets taken very literally and close to heart, a process of reduction appears and if we reduce art to technicity the rareness gets lost. This simultaneously leads us back to the issue with boredom where the purpose of art is actually to be an escape from such boredom.

If art could be explained only through technics then everyone would have been an artist indeed, but they are not. What is it then that is so special in the notion of potential and more precisely the possibility of the act of invention itself that our technicity alone cannot understand? This question sets the boundary of my paper, boundary which may be overcome in another work triggered by one's curiosity, or may be one's encounter and thus enlightenment by a limit situation.

## Conclusion

Music is the finest art the world has ever seen. As a predominant part of our lives, it has the power to change us due to its temporality which easily binds (with) our flow of thoughts and feelings. The focus of this paper is precisely on this change, the transformation of our aesthetic experience of music. To shed light on this metamorphosis I decided to compare the work of Arthur Schopenhauer according to whom music is viewed as an escape from the evil world, he considered people were trapped in, with that of Bernard Stiegler whose philosophical writings illuminate us about the way we as human beings integrate and participate in this world through technology.

The comparison of these two authors in this paper may have seemed a little odd to the reader in the beginning, since they appear to share nothing in common considering the fact that they are far apart when one looks at the history timeline, a timeline which reveals multiple important discoveries which, as was seen from the pages above, changed people's understanding about their interaction with the world.

What connects Schopenhauer and Stiegler, nevertheless, is their passion for art and the crucial role it has in our lives. It sounds reasonable to me that in order for someone to personally understand their own experience of the aesthetic, they need the help of someone from a different standpoint, someone who lived in a time, unburdened by the technological culture we know today. In this respect, the purpose of Schopenhauer's analysis of music in this paper is to present the understanding of the way melody was created and perceived before the Industrial Revolution because, as pointed out, many of the circumstances regarding our participation in the creation of music and art in general changed after that.

One of the biggest transformations in our understanding about the world we inhabit and thus engage in is that we are not just biological or social creatures, but technical ones too. Stiegler calls this combination organological and according to him the realization of our technicity becomes possible only after the Industrial Revolution, a period of our development during which the world witnessed a rapid transition from hand production process to machine production. The vast amount of technological inventions (in transportation, textile, agriculture, etc.) not only created huge shifts in the way society functioned but it also made people realize that they are more deeply interrelated with technics than they could have imagined.

This revelation changes not only the way we view ourselves, namely as technical beings, but also the way we embrace this technicity. As Stiegler suggests, technics itself is neither good, nor bad: it is a dead, artificial memory that conditions our way of being and which can become a poison or a cure depending on how it is appropriated into our practices and modes of existence - a *pharmakon*. In this sense, it is not only humans who can invent or transform technics but the opposite is true as well. An example of such a situation occurs with the digital revolution during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the way audiovisual technology gets used by the programming industry. This type of industry gives rise to the modern version of marketing which results in a transformation of our aesthetic experience into aesthetic conditioning.

We gradually start losing our ability to be producers and thus inventors and become simple consumers whose attention is being constantly fought for. In this regard, we are told what to like and simultaneously dislike. We thus become synchronized but not in the sense that we form a community with common desires but in the way that we no longer can produce something new. Stiegler calls this process hyper-synchronization, a disindividuation both from ourselves and our collective history. We seem to be living in a world driven by innovations where the primary function of repetition, as always adding a new element in the process of invention, starts having a very negative meaning because people get saturated by the growing number of repetitions out there. They are thus challenged to recognize the real purpose of repetition which eventually leads them to boredom; a state which occurs due to the illusion people are caught into, an illusion which prevents them from seeing the new component in the creation every time something gets repeated.

This disindividuation may lead to the erosion of one's imagination, erosion caused by our disorientation, a result of the disengagement with technics. This loss of participation leads to a state of symbolic misery where symbols represent the way we should interact with this world and other human beings, namely together but we instead become so disconnected, so imprudent that we begin to lose our desire for life.

Some would say that this is a very pessimistic, even fatalistic way of interpreting the world, but it is actually not. As Karl Jaspers suggested in order for someone to realize something, they need to find themselves in a limit situation, a situation which is outside one's comfort zone and thus provokes him or her to change their way of thinking, their perspective. A state of symbolic

misery, *if experienced as such*, can be interpreted as such a limit situation and “(i)t is only by being aware of this, by being prepared in this way, that the struggle can begin.”<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Stiegler, B. (2015). *Symbolic Misery, Volume 2: The Catastrophe of the Sensible*, p.275

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