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## Jegan Wood

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*What significance does Kierkegaard's conception of "the moment" have within the context of his philosophical thought? How does Kierkegaard's conception relate to other philosophical accounts of "the moment"?*

Within Kierkegaard's account of time he appears to afford a certain level of primacy to his conception of 'the moment'. This study will represent an effort to understand the position that the concept of 'the moment' occupies within Kierkegaard's thought as well as an effort to grasp the manner in which the concept functions by means of comparison with other accounts of temporality. I will engage primarily with his *The Concept of Anxiety* drawing from his analysis to present an account of his conception of moment so that we might grasp how it is that this account could be understood conceptually, contextually and historically.

We first encounter Kierkegaard's philosophical engagement with 'the moment' in his critique of the hiddenness of the category of transition in Hegelian logic. He argues that transition is fulfilling some secret or hidden activity within Hegel's dialectical logic that is presupposed and left without explanation. This concealment and this movement undertaken by transition is one he refers to as "dialectical sorcery" and suggests instead that 'transition belongs in the sphere of historical freedom, for transition is a *state* and it is actual' (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.84). The content and aim of this critique seems at first obscured, however it becomes clear that the conceptual effort of his critique lies in disputing Hegel's account of 'the moment' and supplanting it with his own conception.

In *The Concept of Anxiety*, where the most direct effort of this criticism is located, his critique is punctuated by a three page footnote in which Kierkegaard discusses the nature and significance of the Platonic conception of moment. It is here that the seeds of Kierkegaard's own conception of moment are seen to have been sown.

He posits 'the moment' for Plato as 'this strange entity that lies between motion and rest without occupying any time, and into this and out from this that which is in motion changes to rest, and that which is at rest changes to motion' (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.83). By virtue of this conception, 'the moment' is and represents that point at which a quality is altered into another and as such 'the moment' is that which contains neither quality. The moment is in other words then empty; it is a non-being or precisely as Kierkegaard phrases it 'non-being under the category of time' (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.82). According to Kylliäinen, Kierkegaard holds Plato as ending his dialogue *The Parmenides* with a contradiction in which 'the one' both *is* and *becomes* in 'the moment' of time (Kylliäinen, 2010, pp.45-72). In other words he holds 'the moment' as both temporal and eternal (literally) simultaneously.

Kierkegaard posits Plato then of holding there to be a "Now" which lies between "was" and "will become" and which cannot be bypassed; a concept that vacillates between referring to the present and referring to the eternal (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.84). The bringing to light of this vacillation appears to represent for Kierkegaard some

crucial juncture in understanding the nature of 'the moment' and it becomes a key aspect of his reformed account of 'the moment'. It appears therefore, for Kierkegaard, that Plato has highlighted some deficiency in our understanding of 'the moment', namely that it oscillates between a concept of the eternal and a concept of the temporal. Equally, Plato's account seems to highlight something further for Kierkegaard: the non-avoidable nature of 'the moment' with reference to alteration.

What Kierkegaard draws from this and what is significant for our present task therefore is that 'the moment', for Plato, is precisely equivalent to the category of transition that he charges Hegel with misusing in his dialectic.

Under Kierkegaard's interpretation, Hegel in his treatment of transition has through the dialectic collapsed eternity into pure-being, pure-being into nothing and nothing into 'the moment' (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.84). In completing this movement Kierkegaard contends that Hegel is in error, as equivocating eternity and 'the moment' amounts to trying to perform a synthesis with only two aspects and without any mediating third element (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.85). In issuing this contention he thus challenges the conception of 'the moment' as the eternal atom in the logical progression towards spirit, as it is understood by Hegel (Hegel, 2010, p.81). It is opposed to this conception that Kierkegaard repositions 'the moment', partially severing it both from its relation to temporality as Hegel did, but also from its Hegelian shared identity with the eternal.

Kierkegaard seeks instead to locate 'the moment' not as belonging to either the temporal or the eternal but, as Bykhovskiĭ argues, despite his reservations with the term, 'the moment' is conceived instead by Kierkegaard as a mediation (but not a synthesis) between the temporal and the eternal (Bykhovskiĭ, 1976, p.41). As Kierkegaard puts it himself: 'the moment' is that ambiguity in which time and eternity touch each other, and with this the concept of temporality is posited, whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.89). As a result of this intersection and pervasion, 'the moment' must, for Kierkegaard, therefore lie within time; however, time is not and cannot be within 'the moment', for 'the moment' is constituted by something other than time: eternity. The positioning of 'the moment' is thus as the conduit through which eternity enters into time, and the point at which time touches and constantly seeks to become eternity. The moment's existence within time is therefore, as Mercer argues, incidental and therein rests its significance (Mercer, 2001, p.98).

However, if time is not within 'the moment' and is not constituted by it, i.e. 'the moment' is not as previously thought a temporal expression, then how can we come to understand its relation to time and what is it that we understand by time when it is no longer considered to be in 'the moment'?

If we understand time, as Kierkegaard often claims we should, as an infinite succession, then the divisions imposed by the categories of past, present and future only come into effect through the relation of time to eternity and the reflection of eternity in time. However, Kierkegaard argues that 'precisely because every moment, as well as the sum of moments, is a process (a passing by), no moment is a present' (Kierkegaard, 1980,

p.85). The result of no moment being a present is therefore the destruction of the foothold in the infinite succession of time and the loss of the dividing point provided by the present.

For Kierkegaard, 'the moment' has therefore become exactly not the present; for Plato showed that the present is non-being and as such we come to understand the determination of time as a "passing-by" of which the present is not capable. In this regard the denial of the present serves to highlight the character of the very concept that we previously held as signifying it: 'the moment'. 'The moment' must therefore, as time is an infinite succession with no permanent division, be an eternal vanishing passed by in infinite succession whilst itself remaining an atom of eternity.

Yet it seems we are still driven to attempt to annul this succession and re-establish the eternal present alongside the past and the future. We are, according to Kierkegaard, driven to attempt to maintain the existence of these three temporal divisions and the connection between 'the moment' and the present primarily 'because 'the moment' is spatialised' bringing infinite succession to a halt and representing 'the moment' visually rather than as thought (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.85).

It is this spatialisation, for Kierkegaard, that carries out the perversion of 'the moment' and it is this spatialisation which falsely thrusts 'the moment' into the present. It appears therefore that Kierkegaard is rejecting a conception which he took to characterise western thought; namely the notion that we derive our concept of time and thus of 'the moment' from our conception and observation of objects in space. This notion is exemplified by Aristotle in his *Physics* who states that 'for it is by means of the body that is carried along that we become aware of the 'before and after' in the motion, and if we regard these as countable we get the 'now' (Aristotle, 219b).

Kierkegaard is inclined to reject this premise by virtue of the fact that it neglects the primacy of 'the moment' and, in doing so, it reduces 'the moment' into the temporal present and thus condemns it not just to eternal vanishing but to having already vanished. The relation between the 'before and after' and the moment thus becomes inverted in *The Concept of Anxiety* as Taylor explains to us the category of 'the moment' is for Kierkegaard the only manner by which temporality (the before and after) can be posited (Taylor, 1973, pp.311-329). 'The moment' does not represent therefore the logical consequence of the 'before and after' but rather 'the moment' that brings into being the 'before and after'.

The category of moment is significant therefore as it is that category which affords eternity its proper significance. It is, Kierkegaard asserts, only by means of parodying or presenting an image of the eternal that 'the moment' can exist in time without having to succumb to passing by (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.86). It is in 'the moment' and only within 'the moment' that eternity becomes active. It becomes clear therefore that Kierkegaard engages philosophically with the destruction of the moment's signification of the present so that he might rebuild out of its destruction a new conception of 'the moment' as beyond the division between the "was" and "will be".

In this regard therefore, 'the moment' appears to become something more than a simple referent to the present or the eternal; it becomes for Kierkegaard a constructive concept rather than a primarily metaphysical concept

that would describe a temporal or non-temporal state. The theme we trace therefore and the question that we are answering here is what is it that 'the moment' produces that the naively conceived present cannot?

Taylor argues that the notion of 'the moment' is intricately linked to the concept of selfhood and the two represent some of the most central themes of all of Kierkegaard's works. He sets out this link by suggesting that 'Kierkegaard equated the eternal with the self, with spirit, and with freedom' adding that '[h]uman becoming is generated by bringing together aspects of selfhood in the moment of decision' (Taylor, 1973, pp.311-329). What this means is that, for Taylor, Kierkegaard understood the relations of self as characterised, interwoven with and (in a sense) determined by the interplay of temporality and eternity within 'the moment'. He saw the self as an expression not only of the synthesis between the psyche and the body (as he explains earlier in *The Concept of Anxiety*) but also as a synthesis of the eternal and temporal, which as we have established must take place in the moment.

This synthesis or shared identity with spirit and freedom is what represents the self proper for Kierkegaard; however, Taylor progresses to outline two further conceptions of Kierkegaardian selfhood and their relation to the category of 'the moment' (Taylor, 1973, pp.311-329). He indicates first the real self (the finite and embodied self concerned with necessity, the past and the actual) and opposes this to the ideal self (a potential self that is concerned with the possible, the future and infinitude). The relation of temporality and 'the moment' to these two concepts is, we argue here, indicative of the significance of the moment within the wider context of Kierkegaard's thought. For the real self (which is actual and temporal and thus already passing by) in 'the moment' posits the ideal self (which in so far as it is in the domain of future possibility is itself posited only in 'the moment' with reference to the actual self).

'The moment' thus becomes the space in which the synthesis of these two temporal conceptions of self, into the self as such (self as eternal), occurs. By virtue of this we are able to surmise that the activity of self and the activity of freedom as resulting from the self therefore occur within 'the moment' for Taylor and for Kierkegaard. It is through the moment's relation of becoming to the eternal and location within the temporal that Kierkegaard is able to bring about the self-positing of the ideal self and the freedom to potentially become that ideal self. This, with relation to time, is understood as the mediation of the actual (the past or passing by) with the 'future as present' (what it is that is yet to pass by).

The relation of 'the moment' to the "future as present" is, as Kangas argues, precisely anxiety. As Kangas puts it 'The instant ['the moment'] is not the present or integratable into presence, but *everything turns on it*. There is the anxiety' (Kangas, 2007, p.190). To rephrase this there seems to be a tension between the 'future as present' and the 'absolute future' brought forth by 'the moment' in its mimicry of eternity. This tension is expressed fundamentally and most immediately as anxiety. Anxiety represents, therefore the concern that the 'future that passes' may not be the same future as that which 'the moment' has given us the capacity to represent; (draw forward to into the vanishing present). Kierkegaard frames this relation as the expression of spirit/freedom/the eternal's 'possibility in the individuality' that expression being precisely anxiety (Kierkegaard, 1980, p.91). Thus

anxiety is the expression, through 'the moment' of that which cannot by essence come into being in actuality. Spirit, freedom, the eternal and the totality of self (as absolutes) cannot become embodied, temporal or actual; however they can express themselves in the subject's experience by means of anxiety in the context of 'the moment'.

To reach some point of culmination therefore whereby we can come to understand the contextual, conceptual and historical significance of Kierkegaard's account of 'the moment' we need only look back at what it is that we have shown. We have shown that in the production of his account Kierkegaard engages with Plato, Aristotle and Hegel and that much of his conception of 'the moment' is drawn out of respective criticisms of these three figures. We have shown that 'the moment' is not the present and that it is not a temporal expression and this has enabled us to understand it as a significant step in the rejection of time as spatial. We have shown that 'the moment' is an imitation of the eternal within time which has given us the capacity to elucidate the temporally divided nature of the self. In this we were able to demonstrate the capacity of 'the moment' to reconcile this division. We have shown that 'the moment' is that locus in which anxiety occurs and is expressed and in doing so exemplified the interaction between spirit/freedom/the eternal and the temporal embodied experiencing self. We have shown therefore that much of the conceptual labour of Kierkegaard's thought takes place either in, or by virtue of, 'the moment'.

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## Moss Green

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### *Do Photography and the Moving Picture help to Deconstruct the Platonic Ontological Schema of Original and Copy?*

In this essay I am going to look at Walter Benjamin's discussion concerning how the use of photography and film both contribute in deconstructing the Platonic schema of original and copy and discern whether this is indeed the case. I will start by looking at Plato's decision to value the original more than the copy and how Benjamin thinks that we cannot understand art through the Platonic schema anymore. Next I will look at what the 'aura' really is for Benjamin. Then I will discuss Benjamin's essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, where he argues that the 'aura' of the work of art is lost with the advancement of photography and film (Benjamin, 2003, p.255). I will also be looking at the film *Certified Copy*. I will conclude that Benjamin was correct to express that it does help to deconstruct the Platonic schema; the old thought that art is all to do with an original.

Although I am looking at the deconstruction of the Platonic idea of original and copy concerning art, I am aware that Plato had negative views on art. Plato does not care about the difference between the original art and its copy as it is already a copy of reality which is itself a copy of the Forms; the particular that relates to the forms (*Republic*, 597d). In Platonic terms, art is 'two generations away from reality' (*Republic*, 597e). Thus for Plato, art is worse than being in the cave; it is in fact taking us further away from reality (*Republic*, 514a). However, I am just looking at Platonism in relation to the idea of original and copy, so it does help to deconstruct it. The idea of Platonism I have in mind is found in Derrida (Derrida, 2004, p.229). He says that it may not be Plato's care for whether art is an original or a copy. Art would just be a copy of a copy for Plato because it is copying the real person who in turn is a copy of the form of a person (Derrida, 2004, p.139). It is the thought that the copy has to have less truth than the original. This is seen in the *Republic*, where Plato describes how the particulars – everything we see in this world – are subordinate to the forms; the real objects in the world of the forms through which everything in this world comes into being. Thus the particular things of this world are mere copies and have less truth than their forms. It is the ontology that underlies this particular understanding of art which gives meaning to the original. Benjamin calls this understanding 'bourgeois'. This Platonic, ontological schema of original and copy is primarily the idea of how there is more being, truth and value in the original than in the copy. What we can take from Plato's dialogues is that the 'original' relates to the forms, and the 'copy' relates to ideas.

Benjamin's aura relates to Platonism in the way that Plato places the original over its copy. Benjamin uses the word 'aura' to refer to authentic and original art. For him, aura is the Platonic, ontological privilege of the original over the copy. Thus I will be referring to the deconstruction of aura in this essay. He implies that the original is better than a mere copy and that the aura of the original makes us feel there is something exceptional about it. It is the fact that it is one of a kind and 'its inability to be in more than one place at the same time' (Ferris, 2008, p.105). In addition, he describes aura as 'the unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it

may be' (Benjamin, 1999, p.216). In this way, there is a gap between us and the work of art. We cannot see it reproduced everywhere, it is only in a certain location. Benjamin is arguing that film and photography, which are technologically reproduced, interrupts 'the mystical interplay of closeness and distance, contemplation and identification, peculiar to the auratic experience' (Koepnick, 1999, p.110). Benjamin says that the 'social basis for the contemporary decay of the aura' (Benjamin, 1999, p.216) is due to the majority of today wishing 'to bring things closer spatially and humanly' (Benjamin, 1999, p.217). This means we wish to have copies of artworks in our homes and for art to travel to locations near us (Benjamin, 1999, p.217). With multiplicity of a particular artwork, such as photographs for which there is no original, we have an undermining of 'auratic appeals to permanence and uniqueness' (Koepnick, 1999, p.110). Thus he sees the advancement of photography and the moving image as the loss of aura (Benjamin, 1999, p.215).

Benjamin talks about the aura of the original artwork and how it decays. As I've seen, the aura cannot be copied. Benjamin partly relates the aura to the way that the artwork deteriorates, in the way that it lives through time. It is the fact that it had an origin and has deteriorated to the state in which we view it that gives it an auratic quality. This is one reason behind why Benjamin associates aura with religious or cult objects (Benjamin, 1999, p.218). An example of this is the *Shroud of Turin*; a shroud believed to have been laid over Christ's body when he died. Even though it has been scientifically thought to date many years after the era of Christ, people still believe and travel to view it at the certain time of year that it is on show. This demonstrates how the power of belief does not shy away in the face of reason or proof. It still holds an auratic quality. This can apply to any cult or religious objects that we find aura within. Da Vinci himself could have made a copy of the *Mona Lisa* and destroyed the first, or someone else may have replaced it with a forged replica. It is very hard to prove it is an original. It appears we are the ones who project aura onto an artwork. Benjamin in a footnote to *Work of Art* suggests that aura is created retrospectively (Benjamin, 1999, p.237). This means an artwork does not necessitate an aura from the moment of its creation. It just depends on the way we view it and give it meaning after a certain amount of time.

In his *Work of Art* essay, Benjamin is discussing where film and photography have taken art and predicts where things are going with art. He thinks that it is due to the production of a multiplicity of copies in a multiplicity of places, which the unique existence of the original is exchanged for, that we get to a 'tremendous shattering of tradition' (Benjamin, 1999, p. 215). He refers here to the deconstruction of the Platonic ontological schema of original and copy. After all, art was seen in a Platonic way before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He looks at the relationship between art and technology and sees how technology is part of the production process for photography and cinema. He is concerned with two things; how our experience of art changes in the way that art is no longer just for rich people at a certain time in a certain location, but for everybody at any time. Secondly, how our experience of art changes with the invention of cinema and other such technologies that mass produce art. *Work of Art* looks at how the emergence of photography and film brought a permanent change to 'the character and role of art' (Gilloch, 2002, p.173). It is with this emergence of cinema and photography that we are made to rethink what art is.

Benjamin looks at how we cannot understand traditional art, as well as the reproducible arts such as photography and film, through the Platonic schema anymore. He thinks that it is a result of mass reproduction of art that we are no longer able to recognize uniqueness. Because we have the technologies of photography and film, we cannot understand them or art according to the Platonic schema. However, at least we have these new inventions of photography and cinema. It could be that they have helped to destroy the aura, but it is not necessarily a bad thing. It could just be that it is only within the context of art that we cannot use the Platonic schema of original and copy, but not true in reality. It is just the way the individual sees something that gives them a feeling that the item they are viewing contains aura. Benjamin reasons the Platonic ontological schema of original and copy is now destroyed because he cannot see how there can be an original in photographs or cinema. Also, the technological mass reproduction of such art forms is integral to their production process and it seems no original can materialize out of the indistinguishable copies produced. Thus he thinks this ontological privilege of the original, its aura, is lost in the age of mass reproduction. It could be claimed that film negatives are the real originals, but they are not the same as the intended end result. Or we could view old film reels as the originals, because we have films on memory sticks, and films are digital in cinemas now. So it is perhaps just the test of time to see what will be the next thing we deem worthy of having an aura.

Benjamin notes that the 'work of art has always been reproducible' (Benjamin, 1999, p.212), so what is the difference now? The original artwork still holds its authenticity if a copy is made by hand, as tests can be done to reveal the forgery. However, it is different with the technological reproduction of art (Benjamin, 2003, pp.253-254). In *Work of Art*, Benjamin provides two ways to demonstrate this difference and how the aura is destroyed by photography and film due to their existence being owed to mechanical reproduction (Benjamin, 1999, p.214). In both the following ways we see how the copy seems to free itself from the original. In Benjamin's first example he says 'process reproduction is more independent of the original than manual reproduction' (Benjamin, 1999, p.214). Photography is an example of process reproduction in the way that the photograph can provide us with more insight or revelations than the original itself could at first reveal. This is because the camera lens is very different to the naked eye. It shows everything it captures with the same importance. The second example of how the aura is destroyed is that artworks can now move to different locations for the masses to view them with more ease. It is not necessary to travel to Egypt to see the renowned sarcophagus of Tutankhamun. Instead, we can wait for that exhibition to come to a museum near us. The aura in the authentic original can be seen as lost in the way that mechanical reproduction gives us a multiplicity of the image; it can be found in many places (Ferris, 2008, p.105). The deconstruction of the aura is therefore due to 'substituting a plurality of copies for a unique original' (Wolin, 1994, p.188). A direct example of this is the photograph, as the first print can be of exactly the same quality and worth as the 100<sup>th</sup> print. They are identical and indistinguishable from one another. However, it can be seen with pre-20<sup>th</sup> C art also. This is not just because art is taken out of its normal setting, but that the original can be seen in many photographs and film imagery across the globe. Once people would go and gaze upon *The Creation of Adam* in the Sistine Chapel and know they are the only ones who may view it at this given

time. Back then the aura was attached to viewing it with this knowledge. Now we may see the original, but perfect photographs are viewed by many people around the world at the same moment.

The deconstruction of the aura in film is due to film providing 'alienation or distraction, compelling the viewer to assume an active and critical role' (Wolin, 1994, p.90). This is because auratic art is passive, and it is the 'shock-effect' in film that does away with passivity (Wolin, 1994, p.90). In relation to this, Benjamin discusses how the loss of aura, and mechanical reproduction that caused its loss, as not necessarily a bad thing. He credits film with 'revolutionary qualities' as well as 'the potential for class consciousness he attributes to film audiences' (Wolin, 1994, p.192). Another testimony to this is Benjamin's *Work of Art* essay, which he rewrote several times, demonstrating his continued search 'for an adequate account of the revolutionary potential of contemporary art forms' (Ferris, 2008, p.105). Some may want to retain the aura in order to keep the artwork exclusive and preserved. However, surely it is not hard for any Tom, Dick or Harry with bronze in their hearts to appreciate that with the loss of aura we get many benefits. The masses can now view art and the difference between the very rich and the poor is diminished slightly. Thus the loss of aura means the loss of bourgeois exclusiveness as to who may view art and when they may view it (Gilloch, 2002, p.185). Another positive way in which Benjamin perceives film is that it can give us additional insights of reality. He gives the impression of referring to Plato's cave when he discusses film freeing us of the 'prison-world' (Benjamin, 2003, p.265). He says how 'it is another nature which speaks to the camera as compared to the eye (Benjamin, 2003, p.266), which suggests he thinks of film as a positive commodity as it shows a different reality that we otherwise cannot perceive. Perhaps Plato would have also approved of the moving image, because it is providing us with more information on reality that we did not know before, as it has this truthful, documentary character.

I will now look at the film *Certified Copy* by Abbas Kiarostami. It begins with a launch of a new book called 'Certified Copy', which discusses the idea of original and copy in art (Butler, 2012, p.61). One of the characters tells a story of a boy who looks at a statue and believes it is the original. He still gets the sense of awe and wonder from viewing it. This prompted my thought as to whether the original is really lost in film and the moving image. When we view a film we suspend our disbelief to buy into the story. In that moment we take what we are seeing as the real thing. In that moment there is no copy that is better. After all, if the artwork stimulates 'in the spectator or listener a sense of reverence and wonder' (Gilloch, 2002, p.182), providing us with a sense of aura attached to the work, then does it matter if it is the original or not, so long as we believe it is? In the case of the boy and the statue, I wonder whether it matters that it is the original, or if it ever mattered if something was the original. Butler argues that 'although the whole of society runs on the basis of the difference between what is true and what is false, no one can tell the difference' (Butler, 2012, p.65). So maybe the aura comes from how the mind looks at a certain artwork and sees it as the real thing: 'the difference between ... the copy and the original lies deep within the conscious: spiritual, non-objective and ultimately unrepresentable' (Butler, 2012, p.65). This is an important point as it criticises Benjamin's thoughts about the destruction of the aura.

There are many more motifs in the film concerning original and copy. We follow a man and a woman as they take a day trip. At the beginning of the movie she attends a book launch. The opening sequence to the film shows us a copy of the writers' book. Also, the woman owns an antiques shop; some of the items are copies and some originals. Through the film the viewer becomes less convinced that the couple have just met. Whatever the case they are, for at least some part of what we see, pretending to either be or not to be. We are unaware which is the original; the real relationship between the two, and which the copy is; the pretence of a life that they are acting out. I agree with Butler that the interesting aspect of the film is not whether they are married, but that there exists both a copy and an original (Butler, 2012, p.62). The important aspect of this that relates to this essay is that we do not know which one the original is. We can go from seeing an aura in something, to being told it is a copy, to seeing the aura if it is confirmed to be the original. Also this is another motif relating to the copy and the original. Like any piece of art, it may be a copy or the original, because what we see in the relationship of the two people could be either way. In addition, the man says some quite contradictory things during the film. For example, that '*Forget the Original, Just Get a Good Copy*' could have been a more suitable title for his book (Butler, 2012, p.63). He also comments on the trees while they drive in the car, saying that they could be viewed as art and that 'it is our attitude towards them that makes them so and nothing inherent within them' (Butler, 2012, p.63). Thus art contains aura through the mind of the viewer and it is not inherent in the piece. He then discusses how the copy 'only has worth insofar as it leads us to the original.' (Butler, 2012, p.63). This suggests the most important thing is the original. Later in the film it is evident that he does not care for copies. The woman shows him a piece of art that people believed at a time to be the original, but later proved to be a copy. His reaction towards it seems to echo Plato, for he says that a given piece of art could be the original; in this case a painting of a woman, but it is still a copy of the real thing (Butler, 2012, p.63).

Butler argues that it is due to the copy and original not being able to be separated that resulted in the illogicality of the man's dialogue, as well as the story of the film (Butler, 2012, p.64). It is precisely this that adds to the deconstruction of the aura, because without a difference between the two, the original is made redundant. All that exists are a multiplicity of copies. Butler continues by saying that 'if the copy gets too close to the original it is no longer a copy but another original' (Butler, 2012, p.73). If we can no longer distinguish between copy and original then the Platonic ontological schema of original and copy has been made redundant.

In conclusion, Benjamin has shown several ways that film and photography have helped in the deconstruction of the Platonic ontological schema of original and copy, or the 'aura'. He sees the modern age 'as the age that calls into question the authority of aura' (Koenig, 1999, p.137). This is because the aura is the 'phenomenon of a distance' (Benjamin, 1999, p.216); a separation between us and the art, whereas the wish to bring 'things closer spatially and humanly' (Benjamin, 1999, p.217); to have art in our homes and view it on smartphones at our leisure. This has led to the deconstruction of the aura through a multiplicity of originals. Some may mourn the loss of aura because it devalues art with the many identical copies produced. On the other hand, Benjamin has

suggested the advantages. Art is no longer for an elite group, but for everyone. What photography and film have made possible has since contributed to the masses learning about art, and seeing parts of the world, that they would not otherwise get the chance in their lifetime to witness. In the end, there must still be some sort of aura in the more traditional works of art. For what other reason would we wish to see the real *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre? However, it is still illogical to think there is aura in a reproducible photograph, making photography exhibitions appear subordinate to non-mechanically reproduced art forms (Gilloch, 2002, p.185). As I have discussed with both Benjamin and Butler's essays is that we give aura to a piece of art, rather than aura being inherent in it. With the example of the boy and the statue; even if it is not the original, we can still feel aura if we believe it is, so perhaps aura is not completely lost. This can be seen even with film when we suspend our disbelief in order to enjoy and believe the film.

In photography and film there is also a multiplicity of originals, which help to deconstruct the Platonic schema. This is because the aura is lost due to the copy and original being indistinguishable. It is destroyed along with the original, because multiplicities of originals lack authenticity. It could be that with film and photography, even though they can be identically reproduced, what we have is the original film or photograph, not a remake. So perhaps it is just something we have to think about differently. They are all thoughts about the ontology of art; questions that ask where the artwork is and what it is. In any case, we have a multiplicity of originals still with this idea. Finally, we must make some changes in how we understand art. First it seems that we must get rid of the Platonic ontological schema of original and copy, if it is not already deconstructed. In another light, we must change the way we view art with the advent of photography and film, because the opposition of industrial technology and art no longer holds due to technology being at the heart of these art forms.

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## Robert William

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### *Is my mind my own?*

In this essay I will be exploring whether or not I can claim exclusive ownership of my mind. To start this enquiry I shall begin by outlining the functionalist theory of mind as a definition of what mind is. This theory claims that the mind is comprised of a set of functions that are carried out in the brain; these functions, however, as I will show, cannot be considered as exclusively my own. This being the case, I will still consider that while the functions may be the same, the mental states they produce may differ. I will then be exploring the work of Andy Clark and his notion of the extended mind, which stipulates that any cognitive function involving external components to the brain constitutes a part of the definition of what is considered to be mind. While invoking everything from a mobile phone to another human being as partly responsible for my own cognitive functioning, I am still left with the possibility that if in some sense mind is analogous with the brain, then surely I can claim that as exclusively my own. However, as I will go on to show, my brain's functioning is not entirely my own either, as recent work in neuroscience has discovered the existence of 'mirror-neurons', which are closely related with the phenomena of empathy. At this point in the enquiry I will be forced to conclude that my mind is not exclusively my own. Through an exploration of the philosophy of organism as put forward by Alfred North Whitehead (who arguably offers the most compelling and convincing account, not only of nature, but of an individual's relation to nature), I will show that whilst my mind is not exclusively my own, it is my subjective experience that defines the "I" that I am. Whitehead claims in *Process and Reality*, that Descartes in his *Meditations* was really asking the question '[w]hat is it to be an actual entity?', and I shall attempt to find a solution to this question within this essay (Whitehead, 1985, p.144). I shall conclude that the functions of mind cannot be claimed as exclusive to any individual, nor can the activity of the brain, yet we each remain unique beings due to the nature of the soul.

In an effort to try and distinguish what is uniquely my own with regards to my mind I shall briefly consider the concept of *qualia*. Heil describes *Qualia* as being 'those qualitative features of our mental life we focus on when we contemplate what it feels like to be in pain, or view the sun setting in the Pacific, or bite into a jalapeño pepper' (Heil, 2004, p.123). A functionalist would argue against the existence of *qualia* for the reason that they view the mind as comprised of a series of functions and algorithms similar to a computer program. 'Functionalists in the philosophy of mind invoke levels of explanation analogous to hardware and software levels we encounter in explanations of operation of computing machines' (Heil, 2004, p.93). Mental states are the software that run on the hardware of the brain and nervous system. Therefore for a functionalist, *qualia* are not considered as unique to the individual for the reason that 'thoughts, feelings, and computations – are *multiply realisable*. They are capable of being embodied in a potentially endless array of organisms or devices' (Heil, 2004, p.92). For instance it is possible for me to calculate "7 x 5" on my computer, on a calculator, or in my mind. The process of

multiplication is not exclusive to, or identical with, any of the hardware that may run that calculation. 'Just as computational operations are realised by processes in the hardware of a computing machine without being reducible or identical with those process, so states of mind are realised by states of the brain without being reducible to or identical with those states' (Heil, 2004, p.96). The functionalist argues that although the hardware may differ, the software can be effectively cross platform, and run on any type of hardware, therefore our mental states are not unique to us as they can be experienced by many different people. To give an example, my experience of imagining the colour red could be said to be identical with your experience of imagining the colour red. While it may be true many minds can perform the same functions, I find it hard to agree that the mental states of those minds would be the same. For instance, if I were to imagine an Alsatian, as a dog lover this would cause no distress, perhaps even some pleasure, whereas if the same Alsatian were to be imagined by a sufferer of cynophobia the opposite would occur; these would be two entirely different mental states derived from the same function. Similarly, the mental state of an unskilled mathematician practicing the seven times table would be one of a certain level of discomfort, as opposed to a professional mathematician who could easily cope with the same task.

Generally speaking our common conception of mind is that it is exclusively situated somewhere within the brain, but according to the hypothesis put forward by Andy Clark, this is in fact a fallacy. Clark's hypothesis of the extended mind states that anything used other than the brain in any cognitive process should be considered as part of the mind. The simplest example of this is of using our fingers to count on. The fingers are not directly involved in the cognitive processing of the sum, yet they do play a crucial role in allowing the person doing the sum to effectively have an external source of counting information. 'In effect, they are part of the basic package of cognitive resources that I bring to bear on the everyday world' (Clark, 2000, p.8). This theory can then be extended to include such things as pocket calculators or smart phones, in that they can be 'coupled' with the cognitive process of the brain in order to carry out more complex calculations. 'The human organism is linked with an external entity in a two-way interaction, creating a *coupled system* that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right' (Clark, 2000, p.4). With this hypothesis anything from a pencil and paper to a personal computer could be considered as part of my mind. The idea of the smart phone being part of the extended mind is especially relatable in today's society, and ties in with the second part of Clark's proposal concerning memory. Now, we normally consider that our memories reside somewhere within our mind, but consider the example put forth by Clark; that of an Alzheimer's sufferer named Otto, who uses a notebook to record things that he will need to remember in the future. When the time comes for recalling the information, rather than searching his mental faculties for the answer he desires, instead Otto turns to his notebook; '[f]or Otto, his notebook plays the role usually played by a biological memory' (Clark, 2000, p.11). In relation to the idea of a smart phone, it is now commonplace to rely on the device to remember the contact details for friends and family, and even the dates and times of upcoming commitments stored in the calendar app; an alarm set to remind the user of the event just in time, thus bypassing the necessity of biological memory recall. To return to the idea of an Alzheimer's sufferer, Clark writes about how they can function to a high level within their own environment

using what he terms ‘cognitive scaffolding’ or ‘wideware’. ‘Their unusual success is explained only when they are observed in their normal home environments, in which an array of external props and aids turn out to serve important cognitive functions’ (Clark, 1998, p.22). These props and aids could be such things as labels on various rooms or objects, a ‘‘memory book’ containing annotated photos of friends and relatives’ (Clark, 1998, p.22), or even simple tactics such as leaving important items in plain view so as to relieve the burden of having to remember where they have been put away. While this may be a convincing argument that an Alzheimer’s sufferer extends his or her mind into their environment, do we all use cognitive scaffolding? Well in short, according to Clark, yes we do. Consider the use of a compass and a map, a laptop or even a pen and paper. ‘Our typical neural profile is different, to be sure, but *relative to that profile*, the battery of external props and aids play just the same role. They offset cognitive limitations built into the basic biological system’ (Clark, 1998, p.23). With this in mind, Clark poses the question as to whether it is viable to consider cognition as belonging exclusively to the biological organism, whilst there is a variety of wideware at play in the processes of calculation and memory. ‘Certain aspects of the external world, in short, may be so integral to our cognitive routines as to count as *part of the cognitive machinery* itself’ (Clark, 1998, p.23). The extended mind theory goes further than just items used by an individual to aid in cognition, it also extends to socially extended cognition. Clark argues that ‘[i]n an unusually interdependent couple, it is entirely possible that one partner’s beliefs will play the same sort of role for the other as the notebook plays for Otto’ (Clark, 2000, pp.18-19).

With regards to the idea of a notebook or a labelling system playing a role in memory recall, we find ourselves at an interesting development of the extended mind theory in the form of language. To what extent does language constitute the mind? It cannot be said that language comprises the mind, yet it is undoubtedly a certain mode of thought. Due to the plasticity<sup>1</sup> of the human brain, being surrounded by linguistic communication from birth we ‘surely come to treat such structures as a reliable resource to be factored into the shaping of on-board cognitive routines’ (Clark, 2000, p.10). Via the use of language (i.e. external words and symbols), mankind has been able to communicate and exchange ideas and thus externalise the internal and internalise what has been externalised by others. Whilst Clark does not see language *per se* as part of the mind, he sees it more as ‘linguistic scaffolding’. For instance, one might use a mnemonic or a mentally rehearsed mantra in order to remember a sequence. Clark uses the example of when crossing the road someone might say to themselves ‘look right, look left, look right again, and if all is clear, cross with caution’ (Clark, 2008, p.47). However, the use of linguistic scaffolding goes further than aiding our memories; ‘[t]he act of labelling creates a new realms of perceptible objects upon which to target basic capacities of statistical and associative learning’ (Clark, 2008, p.45). The act of labelling, Clark claims, is in fact a kind of augmentation of reality. We can easily and open-endedly project groupings and structures onto what we can perceive with our senses, thus saving ourselves physically demonstrating our intent. Another further example given of the use of language in cognitive processes is the ability to direct and focus our

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Plasticity is the dominant concept of the neurosciences’ (Malabou, 2008, p.4). In short, the brain is comprised of billions of neurons, which communicate with each other by passing electro-chemical signals via synapses. The synaptic weightings between neurons are ever changing which has led to the brain being described as having *plasticity*. This is how our brains develop over time.

attention on a particular task using internal linguistic representations; 'to temporarily alter ...[the] focus of attention, thus fine-tuning the patterns of inputs that are to be processed by fast, fluent, highly trained sub-personal resources' Clark, 2008, p.48). The extended mind hypothesis does not deny the reality of an internal state of consciousness, but rather proposes that mind should not be considered as exclusively internal as its functioning relies on an external environment, and Clark is keen to account for language within both the internal and external environment. 'Coming to grips with our own special cognitive nature demands that we take very seriously the material reality of language: its existence as an additional, actively created, and effortlessly maintained structure in our internal and external environment' (Clark, 2008, p.59). Also, Clark writes: '[l]anguage, thus construed, is not a mirror of our inner states but a complement to them. It serves as a tool whose role is to extend cognition in ways that on-board devices cannot' (Clark, 2000, p.19). With the extended mind hypothesis under consideration, it would appear that unless I can claim ownership of my external environment, I cannot claim that my mind is my own. Clark writes 'once the hegemony of skin and skull is usurped, we may be able to see ourselves more truly as creatures of the world' (Clark, 2000, p.20). Granted the environment within which I reside is affective towards me and I to it, external props and tools become part of my cognitive machinery, and language bridges the gap between my mind and yours, yet there is surely something which is mine alone; perhaps it is what is contained within my skin and skull.

There are many levels of brain organization, ranging from protein channels in membranes, to neurons, microcircuits, macrocircuits, subsystems, and systems. At many brain levels there are operations fairly describable as computations, and *none* of these levels can be singled out as *the* hardware level. (Churchland, 2002, p.26)

One of the predominant hypotheses underpinning the philosophical pursuit of knowledge of the mind via neuroscience is that: '[i]t is necessary to understand the brain, and to understand it at many levels of organisation, in order to understand the nature of the mind' (Churchland, 2002, p.30). Undoubtedly my brain belongs exclusively within my body, yet there is a peculiar aspect of its functioning which suggests that part of its operation is directly influenced by the activity of others. Commonly we refer to this phenomenon as empathy. 'Empathy occurs when an observer perceives or imagines someone else's (i.e., the target's) affect and this triggers a response such that the observer partially feels what the target is feeling' (Singer, 2009, p.82). So my mental state can be affected on some level, by a mental state that in no way belongs to me. The classical solution to the problem of understanding another person's mind is the so-called argument from analogy, which posits that from reading the body language of another, if it is similar to my own, I may presume we share similar mental states (Iacoboni, 2009, p.666). It is only very recently that the field of neuroscience has started contributing to the understanding of empathy, as Singer notes; '[t]his might be attributed to the complexities inherent in this multidimensional psychological phenomenon as well as to the methodological challenges of bringing such an idiosyncratic and context-dependent phenomenon into a scientific environment' (Singer, 2009, p.82). However, whilst experimenting on macaques towards the end of the last century, it was discovered that in the premotor

cortex there are ‘neurons that discharge not only when the monkey performs goal-oriented actions such as grasping an object, holding it, manipulating it, and bringing it to the mouth, but also when the monkey, completely still, simply observes somebody else performing these actions’ (Iacoboni, 2009, p.659). These neurons are called ‘mirror-neurons’, named so because the neurons fire as if the monkey were watching himself in a mirror. So if I were to witness another person performing an action, say kicking a football, neurons within my own brain would fire as if I had kicked the ball myself. ‘Mirror neurons... provide a prereflective, automatic mechanism of mirroring what is going on in the brain of other people’ (Iacoboni, 2009, p.666). Of course, the activity of my mirror neurons firing whilst watching someone perform a task is completely subliminal so could barely be said to affect my mind on a level I would be conscious of, but in the case of empathy ‘mirror neurons would support the simulation of the facial expressions observed in other people, which in turn would trigger activity in limbic areas, thus producing in the observer the emotion that other people are feeling’ (Iacoboni, 2009, p.665). This is to say that the mental state of another can directly affect not only my mind, but also my physiology and the phenomenology of my experience<sup>2</sup>. At this point in the enquiry it seems I must conclude that my mind, whilst being mine, is not exclusively my own. This being the case I shall now move on to try to determine how it is I remain being ‘me’, the nature of the ‘I’ that claims ownership of a mind, and ultimately my position in relation to nature; to do so I shall focus on the work of Alfred North Whitehead.

According to Whitehead, the ‘separation of body and mind which has been fixed on European thought by Descartes’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.154) is disastrous in our pursuit of understanding nature and our place within it. He then affirms ‘the sharp division between mentality and nature has no ground in our fundamental observation’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.156). In Chapter VI of *Process and Reality*, Whitehead reinterprets within his own lexicon Descartes’ philosophical objective: ‘Descartes asked the fundamental metaphysical question, what is it to be an actual entity?’ (Whitehead, 1985, p.144). In the philosophy of organism, proposed by Whitehead, nature is entirely comprised of what he terms ‘actual occasions’ or ‘actual entities’, and these are ‘the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to find anything more real [...] these actual entities are drops of experience, complex and interdependent’ (Whitehead, 1985, p.18). Therefore, every part of nature is an experiential process; there is ‘a dual aspect to the relationship of an occasion of experience as one relatum and the experienced world as another relatum’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.163). This is because each actual occasion is comprised of a mental and a physical pole, ‘the actual entity on its physical side is composed of its determinate feelings of its actual world, and on its mental side is originated by its conceptual appetitions’ (Whitehead, 1985, p.45). The mental pole is not what we would generally term ‘conscious’ (or synonymous with mind), rather it strives for the satisfaction of its appetite towards its potential, it is temporally one step

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<sup>2</sup> Although emotion is considered by some as being merely electro-chemical processes in the brain, I would argue that they are felt in the body and therefore physiological. William James writes; ‘if we fancy some strong emotion and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no ‘mind-stuff’ out of which the emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains’ (James 1890, cited in Damasio, 2006, p.129).

ahead of its physical pole which is its previously actualised potential and its feelings of the actualised occasions with which it is relational.

If it is true that I am an actual occasion, then in order to define what it is that I am I must begin by recognising that at a fundamental level I must share certain character traits with every other actual occasion. I am not a thing, nor a concrete particular; I rest upon the ever elongated, objectively immortal, actualised past, as I make prehensions of the as yet unactualised potential in my immediate future. Every other actual occasion enters into the composition of the actual entity I am, as we are all interdependent. ‘An occasion of experience which includes a human mentality is an extreme instance, at one end of the scale, of those happenings which constitute nature’ (Whitehead, 1967, p.184), therefore the identity with which I associate differs from such things as inorganic or vegetable occasions<sup>3</sup>, as I am within a physical animal body and entertain the faculties of various sense perceptions and an ability to discriminate<sup>4</sup>. As a human I also have the further faculties of language, reason and the ability for the ‘conceptual entertainment of unrealised possibility’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.26), abilities commonly referred to as ‘mind’. ‘The operation of mentality is primarily to be conceived as a diversion of the flow of energy’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.168). So mentality is the controlled flow of energy in the brain. Whitehead argues that the body is, in its entirety, one centre of experience whilst also being composed of various centres of experience (the limbs, individual organs etc.) which each express themselves to, and receive feelings from, each other. The various centres of experience within the body though are limited as they ‘receive restricted types of emotional feeling, and are impervious beyond such types’ (Whitehead, 1968, pp.23-24). This is the reason I am not always conscious of the individual functions within my body. In *Modes of Thought* Whitehead argues that consciousness arose as ‘the first example of the selectiveness of enjoyment in the higher animals. It arises from expression coordinating the activities of physiological functionings [...] consciousness does not easily discriminate its dependence on detailed bodily functioning’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.29)<sup>5</sup>. Therefore the actual occasion that I am is comprised of a multitude of actual occasions; [e]ach organ in my body is a nexus of occasions, therefore I am a nexus of actual occasions whilst my continual being is the becoming of a society of occasions<sup>6</sup>. ‘We take the infinite complexity of our bodies for granted’ (Whitehead, 1966, p.29).

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<sup>3</sup> The vegetable occasion, while limited by its total bodily organism still exhibits ‘a democracy of purposefulness influences from its parts. The predominate aim within the organism is survival for its own coordinated individual expressiveness’ (Whitehead, 1968, p.27), while the inorganic occasions are entirely determined: ‘The inorganic occasions are merely what the causal past allows them to be’ (Whitehead, 1985, p.177).

<sup>4</sup> By discriminate I mean the ability to discern one from among the many, i.e. the colour yellow from every other colour. Although this may seem like a basic claim, it is not universal amongst actual occasions, and is therefore crucial in discerning the nature of the actual occasion I am.

<sup>5</sup> Selectiveness of enjoyment in the sense of the decision an actual occasion makes with regards its next potential, and also with regards to expression and feeling.

<sup>6</sup> A Nexus is the spatial arrangement of actual occasions – ‘A nexus is a set of actual entities in the unity of the relatedness constituted by their prehensions of each other, or – what is the same thing conversely expressed – constituted by their objectifications in each other’ (Whitehead, 1985, p.24). The term for a plurality of nexus is ‘nexus’. The collective name for a temporal succession of Actual Occasions is a Society. This will account for the likeness exhibited over a passage of time. Defined in *Process and Reality* as ‘a set of entities is a society (i) in virtue of a ‘defining characteristic’ shared by its members, and (ii) in virtue of the presence of the defining characteristic being due to the environment provided by the society itself’ (Whitehead, 1985, p.89).

The process of experiencing is constituted by the reception of entities, whose being is antecedent to that process, into the complex fact which is the process itself. These antecedent entities [...] are termed 'objects' for that experiential occasion [these] are the factors in experience which function so as to express that that occasion originates by including a transcendent universe of other things (Whitehead, 1967, pp178-180).

So whilst my mind is not exclusively my own as it is part of the extended world, my body is also entirely interdependent with nature. However, what is uniquely mine is my continual subjective experience of my body and the objective world. My experiential centre can be called my soul; '[t]he soul is [...] the succession of my occasions of experience, extending from birth to the present moment' (Whitehead, 1968, p.163). This is not the immortal soul of Christian theology, but is closer to the *Psuché* of the Ancient Greeks. 'All the emotions, and purposes, and enjoyments, proper to the individual existence of the soul are nothing other than the soul's reaction to this experienced world which lies at the base of the soul's existence' (Whitehead, 1968, p.163). Therefore the "I" that I am, with which I identify is not my mind but my soul, for it is the part of me that is truly unique. I am 'the one individual [...] coordinated stream of personal experiences, which is my thread of life' (Whitehead, 1968, p.161). As Heraclitus said, '[i]t is impossible to step twice into the same river' (Waterfield, 2000, p.41), whilst it may be possible for the mirror neurons in my brain to allow me to empathise with another, I can never know fully what their personal stream of experience entails as it is theirs and theirs alone. However, it would appear that at times our streams may cross paths. My unique experience is not a series of *qualia* as I do not need to contemplate what it is like to have an experience in order to be an experiencing being, the contemplation of experience is in itself experience.

To sum up the answer to the question 'Is My Mind My Own?', I would have to say that 'Yes' my mind is my own, for it is the mind of which my soul experiences, yet it is not exclusively my own. If Andy Clark's hypothesis is correct then I could not say that my mind is exclusively my own because part of it is the environment which I share with others. Even if Clark's hypothesis is false, my mental states are not solely dependent on my own being, due to the nature of empathy and the discovery of mirror-neurons. Yet still, 'I find myself as essentially a unity of emotions, enjoyments, hopes, fears, regrets, valuations of alternatives, decisions – all of them subjective reactions to the environment as active in my nature' (Whitehead, 1968, p.166).

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## Joe Eveson

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### *Virtu and Fortuna in the Machiavellian vocabulary: Politics, Mythology or Philosophy?*

In the domain of politics, few characters stand out with the sort of historic celebrity that Niccolo Machiavelli enjoys. The admittance of his name into our vocabulary indicates in no uncertain terms that his political significance extends far beyond his own lifetime. But there is perhaps a tendency to express this importance as a sort of infamy; to characterise Machiavelli as a mere proponent of political cunning, duplicity and unscrupulousness in the acquisition and preservation of power. It is, after all, no difficult task to highlight Machiavelli's endorsement of such tactics in *The Prince* (*TP*), where he claims on the basis of experience that 'princes who have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, [...] trick men with their cunning [...] and overcome those abiding by honest principles' (*TP*, 56). On the basis of such claims, it is perhaps reasonable to expect some level indignant rebuke toward the motive and content of Machiavelli's political endeavours. Indeed, this reputation earned him the moniker of 'The murderous Machiavel' (Skinner, 2000, p.1) in Shakespearean prose, reinforcing the notion that his own character was synonymous with evil ambition and political wickedness.

In introductory terms, however, it would be prudent to treat this persona with caution. While it is surely indicative of the negative reception that Machiavelli aroused, such depictions offer little explanatory power toward our understanding of his overall political philosophy. Thus, an attempt to dispel this sinister mystification of Machiavelli's work will encompass the finer objective at hand; that is, to provide a critical assessment of Machiavelli's philosophical credentials and to investigate to what degree *The Prince* can be construed as a work of politics, mythology or philosophy. This objective will be framed with consideration of two dominant concepts that are readily identifiable in the Machiavellian vocabulary and essential to its aims; *virtù* and *fortuna*.

With these objectives in mind, it is worth qualifying some initial details that might inform our interpretation of *The Prince*. First of all, the rather obvious and yet unavoidable fact that it is an overtly political text which can be read, at the most basic level, as a treatise on power; a systematic analysis of how to obtain and maintain it with continual reference to the success or failures of historic leadership. In this sense, *The Prince* can be interpreted as a practical handbook written with a precise political audience in mind; that is to say, an actual political elite – actual *princes*. In his letters to Francesco Vettori, Machiavelli expresses his highest aspiration to become 'useful to our Medici lords' with the hope of ending his political ostracism (Skinner, 2000, 54). The role that *The Prince* was intended to play in this project is palpable. In a letter to Lorenzo de' Medici, Machiavelli writes that there is nothing he values as much as his 'understanding of the deeds of great men' which have been 'diligently analysed, pondered [and] summarised in a little book' (*TP*, 3) to be sent as a token of his devotion and political aptitude. How then are deeds of great men to be understood? At first it might appear incongruous to examine this imperative in relation to *The Prince*, for it is far more accurate to credit Machiavelli with his attention to authority and its power to facilitate greatness than any serious

attempt to qualify what greatness itself consists of. Moreover, beyond the tacit assumption that power ought to be acquired and held onto – an instrumental good – there is a distinct absence of ethical claims regarding what ought to be done with it.

It is a legitimate concern, therefore, to question whether Machiavelli intended *The Prince* to have any significant philosophical impact outside the political sphere at all. Of course, it would be sensible to acknowledge outright that any political discourse contains an unstated framework of ethical precepts, but Machiavelli rarely preoccupies himself with making these explicit. Rather, it is not unreasonable to accuse *The Prince* of being ‘a conceptually loose treatise’ (Donskis, 2011, p.3). Fortunately, Machiavelli does provide some insight into this ethical framework by describing the sort of princely qualities that complement political authority, formulating them into an encompassing concept of *virtù*, and it is through this concept that Machiavelli’s philosophical relevance becomes accessible. Principally, this relies on an acknowledgement that *virtù* cannot be equated with a traditional concept of virtue. That is to say, that Machiavelli is not concerned with depicting an absolute morality that must necessarily be followed by a man of *virtù*. Undoubtedly, virtue ethics were in some part foundational to the philosophical humanism that gripped the early modern period and Machiavelli seems fully aware that his own formulation of *virtù* was a radical departure from that of his predecessors. In Chapter XV of *The Prince* he plainly states that acting virtuously in every way necessarily results in failure, because there are always those who choose to not act virtuously. This dismissal of the sort of universal law or maxims that form the basis of moral philosophy is qualified by Machiavelli’s preference for representing ‘things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined’ (*TP*, 50) as an ideal. Therefore, for a prince to maintain his rule ‘he must be prepared not to be virtuous, and make use of this or not according to need’ (*TP*, 50).

Hence, there can be no doubt that Machiavelli adopts a resolutely consequentialist approach to morality; the right or wrong of an action is to be judged against the outcome rather than the action itself and this is always framed through the necessity of maintaining authority and State. In this sense, vice and virtue are complementary tools for ensuring survival and derive their impropriety only according to circumstance. Here, it is important to emphasise the significance of the teleological leap that Machiavelli seems to be advocating. The reorganisation of morality into a consequentialism of this sort might spur some initial political anxieties for its bold dismissal of any duty to universal maxims, but the philosophical *ends* that justify these means have been construed as equally pessimistic. Hence, the *telos* of political action is distinctly limited to one that values self-preservation, while commitment to virtuosity and refining a concept of what the good life entails is condemned as a kind of quixotic naivety. It is upon these points that Machiavelli receives the brunt of his defamation, for his ‘original set of rules’ (*TP*, 50) undermined the general ethical principles of established humanist treatises; namely, those that tried to reconcile questions of the nature of man and the purpose of government with their connection to a virtuous life (*TP*, xxii). Indeed, it is important to recognise that the general format of *The Prince*, as advice addressed to new or aspiring rulers, was not especially original. Prior to Machiavelli, the traditional humanist discourse was exemplified by Bartolomeo Platina and Francesco Patrizi, who adopted similar *mirror for princes* formats and populated them with long lists of virtues to cultivate and vices to avoid (*TP*, xxii).

Thus, it remains for us to consider how Machiavelli defines his man of *virtù* without the account of absolute morality he is keen to reject. As I have suggested, the response to this approach typically pegs Machiavelli as a mere advocate of nefarious and wicked deeds, but this is only propagated by a facile reading of *The Prince*. In his account of those who come to power by crime Machiavelli is explicit in his condemnation of immoral tactics, arguing that ‘it cannot be called [*virtù*] to kill fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be treacherous, pitiless, irreligious. These ways can win a prince power but not *glory*’ (*TP*, 29), he adds. This preferential account of glory is fitting, for it alludes to an influential ethical precept that characterised humanist doctrines as well as Machiavelli’s; the notion that rulers ought to establish a legacy for themselves by achieving glory and greatness in life, such that their fame and reverence would be immortalised in death (*TP*, xxii). To have any such hope of this, Machiavelli argues, the maintenance of their State must be presupposed and to that end, they must be prepared to commit immoral acts for its greater good. Machiavelli differs from the preceding humanist tradition on this point because he only advocates the authority of the prince on the basis that he has the ability, the *virtù*, to meet these social demands rather than a presumptuous commitment to moral superiority. Furthermore, there is not a sense in which Machiavelli denies a moral existence, nor does he intend for his prince to possess a morality that is especially different from that of ordinary people (Donskis, 2011, p.15). Rather, the prince must recognise that any social action is morally charged and to that end he must be acutely aware of how others will react to him or limit his actions. His *glōria* is dependent on more than the traditional tenets of morality because he must always strive to be an effective and favourable ruler.

These arguments broaden our understanding of *virtù* to some degree but they provide a rather underwhelming definition on their own. Whether Machiavelli actually had a precise concept in mind is another question entirely and one that continues to divide commentators. At first glance, it appears that Machiavelli uses the term freely and inconsistently in a range of contexts, sometimes associating it with willpower, efficiency or even virtue (*TP*, xxxiii). On the other hand, Skinner argues that defining *virtù* with reference to its various contextual meanings isn’t especially problematic when we compare Machiavelli’s usage of the term to that of his predecessors. Essentially, they all agree that it is the set of fundamental qualities that make a person glorious, and in the political sphere there is no greater quality than justice; it is *the* political virtue. Indeed, Machiavelli’s reversal of deontological morality doesn’t prohibit his own concept of *virtù* from achieving this end in any significant manner, though a prince’s hand might sometimes be forced (Wilde, 1928, p.220). *The Prince* recognises social justice and solidarity of the State as both a necessary and laudable component of *glōria* and concepts that ultimately underpin the success of his own life, political or actual. However, there is one further component to Machiavellian *virtù* that we have so far neglected, and this can be understood with reference to its antithesis; that is, the concept of *fortuna*. According to Skinner, *The Prince* is consistent in its treatment of *virtù* as the quality which enables a prince to ‘withstand the blows of Fortune, to attract the goddess’s favour, [...] winning honour and glory for himself and security for his government’ (Skinner, 1981, 35).

Embedded within Machiavelli’s assertion that fortune is in some way integral to achieving *glōria* are the roots of another philosophical claim and comprehension of this can be achieved with reference to the several contexts in which it appears, for like *virtù*, *fortuna* is used unsparingly throughout *The Prince*. From the very first paragraph we are made

aware of their relationship in the claim that a prince wins his dominion ‘either by fortune or [virtú]’ (TP, 7). Machiavelli later qualifies this with special attention to those who succeed on the basis of fortune alone. In this context fortune could be construed as a type of resource, describing men who buy their way into power, or equally, the fortune possessed by others that would aid a prince in his political acquisitions. However, when Machiavelli claims that in matters of fortune ‘it is better to be impetuous than circumspect’, *to gamble ones chances*, he means to show how this resource can be acted upon, and like any resource, depleted (Donskis, 2011, p.8). Therefore, besides the notion that *fortuna* can be possessed and acted upon in terms somewhat akin to wealth, it can likewise be possessed and exercised in a mythological sense; the commonplace idea of *being lucky*. This figurative theme is continued in Machiavelli’s imagery of fortune as a violent river, and another powerful allegorical reminder that ‘fortune is a woman’ (TP, 81), which goes some way to validating any concerns we might have regarding the philosophical rigor of *The Prince* (Donskis, 2011, p.6).

However, this is not the only context in which fortune arises. Perhaps the most philosophical instances of *fortuna* are those where Machiavelli understands them in deterministic terms. Though he makes continual reference to the notion of free will and individualistic liberty, it remains clear that *The Prince* is concerned with drawing the reader’s attention to the ways in which this freedom is constrained. In the case of morality, Machiavelli was keen to point out that a prince’s freedom to act was partly determined by others. Correspondingly, he seems committed to the idea that freedom is at least partly determined by fortune as a concept similar to fate. His reckoning is that fortune is *probably* the ‘arbiter of half the things we do, leaving the other half or so to be controlled by ourselves’ (TP, 79). The relationship between *virtú* and *fortuna* in this sense, is one where political prudence and foresight is required to lessen the uncertainties of fortune, and therefore its power over a prince. Without the qualities of *virtú* to withstand and exercise dominance over fortune, there is very little chance that a prince could maintain his state in the turbulent political climate of renaissance Europe. Indeed, even with such qualities there is no guarantee that fortune won’t undermine a prince’s power, for ultimately it cannot be wholly subdued by political prowess. Cesare Borgia, is one such example that Machiavelli gives of a ruler who acquired his state through the good fortune of his father, laid strong political foundations for his state and yet was still overwhelmed by the ‘extraordinary and inordinate malice of fortune’ (TP, 23).

At this point, there should be no difficulty in recognising the conceptual precariousness of *The Prince*. Returning to the question of whether it can be construed as politics, philosophy or mythology is the final concern to address. Philosophically speaking, there is no doubt that Machiavelli was heavily influenced by the humanism that characterised the renaissance period. The ethical *telos* to pursue ones *glōria* and an emphasis on the concepts of *virtú* and *fortuna* for their ability to achieve these ends is ever-present in his writing. He presents an account of *virtú* alongside his own brand of consequentialism and an account of *fortuna* that demonstrates a compatibilist view of free will. However, as I have argued throughout, the instances in which Machiavelli engages with these problems directly are either too infrequent or lack the conceptual coherence for us to infer a genuine philosophical project. Likewise, while there is significant attention given to discussing the acquisition and exercise of power, Machiavelli seems to have little concern for investigating the *nature* of power itself. It is not unreasonable to accentuate the prominence of practicality over theoretical stability in this regard. Rather, the inclusion of various ethical claims seems to be more a by-product of

Machiavelli's commitment to political discourse and a messianic hope that the political instability of his era might be quelled (Donskis, 2011, p.5).

We might argue that the personification of Machiavelli as a sinister political predator is wholly unwarranted in this regard and is therefore guilty of its own inaccurate mythologisation; an ideological narrative that, however useful in the moral sense, is not reflective of Machiavelli's actual political or philosophical intentions. Though his account of morality would have generated a political and religious backlash from his contemporaries, it should not be mistaken that his ethical principles were intended for universal application; the political virtues are simply not the same as the personal virtues (Wilde, 1928, p.221). In conclusion, we should perhaps remind ourselves that Machiavelli's actual political career was not only fleeting but comparatively unremarkable. Even after the forceful reclamation of Florence by the Medici in 1512 and mistaken suspicions of conspiracy, whatever threat he posed seems to have been resolved by sentencing him to political exclusion and to 'endure the great and unremitting malice of fortune' (*TP*, 4) from the comfort of his own farmland. In death, however, it can be said that Machiavelli achieved more than a fair share of influence and, in turn, a mythology of his own. Whether this fulfils Machiavelli's own concept of *glōria*, or indeed, whether it is attributable to his *virtú* or *fortuna*, is rather indistinct.

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### *Politics and Memory: The Mnemotechnical Implications of Capitalism in Stiegler*

#### Introduction: The Technical Human

*'[T]he question of memory and its technicisation is at the heart of the political struggle which philosophy was from the very beginning' (CPE, 36).*

Bernard Stiegler's book *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus* (TT1) marked the start of a significant philosophical contribution to the field concerning technology and its relation to the individual, culture and society in general. Stiegler's concern is the relation of man to technics. Following from Heidegger, he argues that technics allow us to see the kind of beings that we are, yet he believes 'we exist as humans – *only through technics*' (Howells and Moore, 2013, p.3), an idea I shall expand on in the coming pages. To understand what Stiegler means by technics, we must draw a distinction between what Stiegler calls '*la technique*' or 'technics' and mere technology. Technics refers to 'the technical domain or to technical practice as a whole' (TT1, p.281). In other words, it incorporates 'techniques, technology, and the objects produced by these means' (Lewis in Howells and Moore, 2013, p.53), examples of which include not only modern industrial technologies but also pre-industrial craft. On the other hand, technology should be looked at in terms of the 'specific amalgamation of technics and the sciences in the modern period' (Beardsworth and Collins in Stiegler, 1998, p.281).

Stiegler's central thesis is focused on the idea that we cannot separate man from technics. Insofar as we consider ourselves human beings, we must accept that we are defined by our own technicity. In other words, for Stiegler, our own consciousness and essence is already technical, what it is to be human already contains within it what it is to be technical; we are, in other words, inseparable from technics<sup>1</sup>. Stiegler's work is therefore of a somewhat paleo-anthropological nature, it is concerned with the origin of humanity and of the human itself i.e. it is focused on the past but only in order to understand the present. He argues that to understand the human being we must understand technics as a form of exteriorisation, a relation 'between the living and the non-living' (Roberts, 2006, p.2) in which the interior realm of the human being is exteriorised into tools and other forms of 'organised inorganic matter', (TT1, p.70).

Through Stiegler's reading of Andre Leroi-Gourhan, he posits that the use of tools allows for the preservation of a kind of impersonalised, collective memory trace. These traces are thus conservations of past world interactions

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<sup>1</sup> Stiegler comes to these conclusions through a careful philosophical examination of the work of Bertrand Gille, Andre Leroi-Gourhan, and Gilbert Simondon who he states have already 'elaborated in this century the concepts of the technical system [and] technical tendency' (TT1, p.2).

that are preserved within the tools function; they are the past techniques that are stored externally which provide future generations with the knowledge of the past. The externalisation of our memory in tools is, for the human, a 'third kind' of memory that is separate from the internal, individually acquired memory of our brain (epigenetic), and the biological evolutionary memory that is inherited from our ancestors (phylogenetic); this Stiegler calls *epiphylogenetic* memory or *epiphylogenesis*. We are therefore defined by this process of *epiphylogenesis*, 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' (Howells and Moore, 2013, p.3).

### Tertiary Memory and Temporal Objects

To Stiegler, the technical protheticity that we possess as something fundamental to our being as humans is also fundamental to how we experience time. 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. This idea of time as a creation of *epiphylogenetic* memory is in opposition to the Husserlian conception of memory<sup>2</sup>.

Stiegler argues that Husserl's conceptions of primary and secondary retention are not sufficient to describe our technical memory processes. To Husserl, primary retention is part of the temporal object; Stiegler defines a temporal object as temporal 'when its flow coincides with the stream of consciousness of which it is the object' (TT3, p.1). The example used is that of a melody. A melody is an important example of primary retention in the sense that it constitutes a flow in time, as each individual note appears and subsequently disappears, the newest note contains within it (retains) the previous note. A melody can only be melodic when it constitutes itself temporally in relation to its previous notes. This idea of primary retention is contained within the act of perception, hence why it is primary. However, the problem arises for Stiegler when considering the idea of secondary retention.

For Husserl, the act of remembering a melody heard yesterday involves a form of imagination rather than merely perception. Secondary memory is therefore a selective repetition of primary memory; it derives from experience rather than constituting it. However, for Stiegler, this means that Husserl does not just distinguish between primary and secondary retention, 'he actively opposes them, he sets up an absolute difference between them, mirroring the distinction between 'perception' and 'imagination'' (Roberts, 2006, p.59). In Stiegler's view, primary retention does not include imagination or indeed selection, it retains everything immediately. For selection to be involved in primary retention would imply a utilisation of the imagination which would in turn

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<sup>2</sup> This is discussed briefly at the end of *Technics and Time, 1* in the passage 'The Husserlian Conception of Memory and the System of 'Whats' as References' and focused on more thoroughly in *Technics and Time* volumes 2 and 3.

deny its primacy. Our perception of a temporal object, for Stiegler, is fundamentally changed if we have experienced that temporal object previously. As Stiegler states, 'from one audition to the next the ear is not the same, precisely because the ear of the second audition has been affected by the first' (Stiegler, 2011, p.62). For example, I may listen to a song once and decide I do not like it, yet upon the second listening I change my mind; my primary retention of the exact same temporal object has been changed. The primary memory I have of a particular temporal object must be being changed by the secondary memory I heard previously. Secondary memory, thus, constitutes experience rather than deriving from it; it has a direct ability to influence our primary retentions in a way Husserl thought was impossible.

The fact that we can experience one temporal object a multitude of times implies that the temporal object is not merely remembered through primary retention or secondary retention; in fact the very idea of perceiving the *exact* same temporal object numerous times implies some kind of technical reproduction e.g. a recording device (either analogue or digital). Thus, Stiegler's main line of argument suggests that as we can experience a melody multiple times, and our experience of that melody changes depending on the multitude of times we experience it, it becomes obvious that there must be some form of technical retention, or 'tertiary retention' that exists outside of ourselves, through which the repeatability of a temporal object becomes possible. This tertiary retention provides the conditions through which we can understand how secondary retention influences primary retention, and indeed that tertiary retention itself can also influence primary retention. Our primary retention is therefore dependant on both the secondary and tertiary forms of retention. So, where Husserl's traditional phenomenology is focused on showing the way in which the temporal distinctions of past, present and future are formed through retention and protention, Stiegler's argument is that 'although external memory supports are empirical derivatives of human memory, they constitute, from the first, the way in which we conceive the past, present, and future' (Beardsworth in Howells and Moore, 2013, p.210). In other words, we must accept that we, as humans, from the day we are born, are defined by a tertiary memory that exists *a priori*. The technical, tertiary form of memory constitutes an imprint of memory that is structurally prior to even our primary retention; it is from this that we temporalise ourselves and the world around us. As Stiegler states, 'tertiary retention always already precedes the constitution of primary and secondary retention. A newborn child arrives into a world in which tertiary retention both precedes and awaits it, and which, precisely, constitutes this world *as world*' (CPE, p.9).

However, what kind of tertiary retentions do we experience within our modern society and how do they affect us? This tertiary memory is by no means limited to the realm of *purely* temporal objects; it also paves the way for 'industrial temporal objects' (objects that are run on the attention and desires of both producers and consumers) that are the cause of the capitalist 'malaise' that is affecting contemporary society and culture on a large scale. Stiegler recalls the statement from *Technics and Time, 2* in the introduction to *Technics and Time, 3*:

[t]he programming industries, and more specifically the mediatic industry of radio-televisual information, mass-produce temporal objects heard or seen simultaneously by millions, and sometimes by tens, hundreds, even thousands of millions of ‘consciousnesses’: this massive temporal co-incidence orders the event’s new structure to which new forms of consciousness and collective unconsciousness correspond’ (TT3, 1).

This statement, as bold as it is, provides a key insight into Stiegler’s views on how our attention and our desires, in particular the desires of the consumer, have been influenced by capitalist industry. It is our tertiary retentions that have had a direct effect on leading the world into a new epoch of globalised capitalism; a hyper-industrial consumerist epoch. I aim to show how Stiegler’s ‘theoretical addition to Husserl inscribes modern phenomenology in a materialist history which [...] proposes a re-writing of Marxist themes compatible with cognitive capitalism’ (Beardsworth in Howells and Moore, 2013, pp.210-211).

### The *We* from the *I*

Following from his own exposition of Husserl in his earlier work that led him to solidify the formulation of the concept of tertiary memory, Stiegler argues in the introduction to: *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, that we need to formulate a new critique:

‘a critique addressing the question of tertiary retention, that is, the question of mnemotechnics – and in more general terms addressing the question of technics which, qua materialization of experience, always constitutes a spatialisation of the time of consciousness beyond consciousness and, therefore, constitutes an unconsciousness, if not the unconscious’ (CPE, p.8).

What Stiegler is doing here is outlining the scope of his project; he is providing a summary of his previous work in terms of this new critique. These external memory supports (i.e. exteriorisations of consciousness) provide a new *collectivisation* of consciousness (the *We*) that exists beyond the realm of the individual (the *I*). The systematic influence of mnemotechnics on individual human consciousness must therefore be looked at as political in itself; if we are to understand technics we must understand how the technical milieu of human consciousness affects us collectively, as a ‘we’, thus affecting us politically. However, the negative consequences of this, for Stiegler, are due to the fact that our technical prosthetisation can itself lead to ‘an unconscious’ (if we are to look at an unconscious as the collective memory of a past that we, as individuals, have not lived): ‘[t]his means that the current prosthetization of consciousness, the systematic industrialization of the entirety of retentional devices, is an obstacle to the very individuation process of which consciousness consists.’ (TT3, p.4)

In the chapter ‘I and We’ of *Technics and Time*, 3, Stiegler argues that ‘the unification process of a *We* is an identification, an organization, and a unification of diverse elements of the community’s past as they project its future’ (TT3, p.93). In order to think politically individuals must collectivise themselves, they must be capable of

projecting or *desiring* a ‘common’ future whilst also becoming aware of the ‘common’ past of their ancestors via tertiary memory supports. However, to Stiegler, this unified commonality that individuals project onto themselves only exists *phantasmagorically*: ‘it assumes that this past of the *We* was never actually lived by this or any *We*, nor by anyone currently living, nor by their ancestors’ (TT3, p.93). In fact this unification has been reached through a process of *epiphylogenetic* adoption, one that peaked in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries with technical media such as radio, television, and indeed modern digital networks i.e. media that produce temporal objects through which individuals have been industrialised. This industrialisation of individual consciousness essentially means that the adoption of the *We*, although it is phantasmagorical, is a question that cannot be separated from the question of political economy as a whole. Indeed Stiegler states that: ‘the question of adoption is indissociable from that of commerce, and therefore the market’ (TT3, p.91) and if the market is a fundamental necessity of a capitalist economy the question of adoption is indissociable from political economy itself.

We can see then, from this passage that the goal of *For a New Critique of Political Economy* (and indeed all of Stiegler’s philosophy that extends to the political realm) is to understand the politicisation of technics, and indeed the politicisation of the human being through technics (in so far as we are referring to technics as the spatial materialisation of experience that exists outside of consciousness) as the technical adoption of a *We*. Stiegler wants to demonstrate how and why the question of the *We* (as a process of collective individuation), and thus the question of tertiary memory ‘opens up a new perspective on political economy and its critique, and, now more than ever, that it makes a new critique of political economy the essential task of philosophy’ (CPE, p.8). For Stiegler, this process of politicisation is first and foremost a process of grammatisation.

### Grammatisation

Stiegler defines grammatisation as the ‘*technical history of memory*, in which hypomnesic memory continually reintroduces the constitution of a tension within anamnestic memory’ (CPE, p.31). Stiegler draws the distinction between *anamnesic* memory and *hypomnesic* memory from Jacques Derrida’s essay ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’<sup>3</sup> in which Derrida develops his deconstruction of metaphysics based on his reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus*. To Derrida, Plato’s dialogue outlines the distinction between philosophical *anamnesis* which is ‘the remembrance of the truth of being’ (CPE, p.29) and sophistic *hypomnesis* which is ‘to mnemotechnics, and in particular to writing as a fabricator of illusion and a technique for the manipulation of minds’ (CPE, p.29). He argues that this reading illuminates an impossibility; it is impossible to oppose the interior (*mneme*) and the exterior (*hypomnesis*); we cannot separate our own living memory from the dead memory of the *hypomnematon* (i.e. the *epiphylogenetic* memory described earlier).

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<sup>3</sup> The essay can be found in Derrida (1981), *Dissemination*, tr. Barbara Johnson. Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 61-171.

Indeed for Stiegler, the metaphysical theorising through which Plato formulates his theory of Forms (or Ideas) is only accessible through 'the abstract thought process that writing makes possible' (Howells and Moore, 2013, p.7). In other words, the philosophical *anamnesis* Socrates advocates in the *Phaedrus* is in fact reliant on the abstraction of thought that is brought about by *hypomnesic* externalities (i.e. writing). The impossibility is thus that the 'remembrance of the truth of being' is not possible without the mnemotechnical supports that are considered by Socrates to be the 'fabricator of illusion'. So, as we have seen, the exteriorisation of memory into technics cannot be looked at as separate from our own memory, but must be seen as merely memory of a different kind: primary, secondary, and tertiary retentions are all part of our human memory, yet they constitute each other in different ways.

Grammatisation, then, is the flow of this process through history, it is 'the process through which flows and continuities which weave our existences are *discretized*: writing, as the discretization of the flow of speech, is a stage of grammatisation' (CPE, pp.31-32). What Stiegler is aiming to show here is that grammatisation is the process of an abstraction or discretization of a continuum. In the course of the transfiguration from speech to writing, speech itself has taken on a new character; it is no longer merely stored in the ever fading biological memory of our internal brains (*mneme*), but endures through writing as an external memory support. Writing thus constitutes a new stage of grammatisation in which speech loses its evanescent character, but gains the power of exact replication; it can provide a dialogue between reader and author that persists and endures throughout time (something that is not possible with communication pre-writing). The key aspect of grammatisation is therefore not only the *individual* exteriorisation of memory, but the discretisation of the *flow* of memory in general; it is concerned with the repeatable, reproducible nature of mnemotechnics as a whole. Thus, we can begin to see, then, how this process of grammatisation both improves memory through *hypomnesis*, yet can potentially damage the *anamnesic* memory that Socrates defends in the *Phaedrus*; it is this dual ability of grammatisation that interests Stiegler. What he proclaims is that this formalisation of human behaviour into repeatable symbols, such as words, writing and most recently computer code, opens up the question of pharmacology, the question of how the hypomnesic or the mnemotechnical is a *pharmakon* in that it is: 'at once poison and remedy' (CPE, p.29).

### The Poison of Proletarianisation

The most important aspect of the *pharmakon*, in so far as it is both the poison and the cure, is epitomised through a relation to desire. Desire is itself the fuel on which the contemporary capitalist economy runs; it captures the attention of the consumers to promote an unsustainable need for consumption. When considering his own critique of political economy, Marx, whilst being focused on formulating a theory of the means of production, failed to foresee the importance of the *question of consumption*, as Stiegler puts it, and the role it would play in modern 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century capitalism. To Stiegler 'the way in which consumption would be reconfigured in

the twentieth century is an essential relation to desire and to its economy' (CPE, p.12). He posits that through grammatisation, contemporary capitalism has created a new kind of proletariat and a new kind of proletarianisation, one that has led not to an increase in class division, or increased separation between producer and consumer, but to the creation of a universal proletariat class whose only purpose is to serve the capitalist machine.

This *new* critique of political economy is therefore no longer concerned with the question of the working class, but with the question of desire in relation to the proletarianisation of labour as a whole. Drawing on terms from Simondon, Stiegler argues that we must view the proletariat as a *disindividuated* worker; he is a labourer who has passed his own knowledge into the machine such that 'it is no longer the worker who is individuated through bearing tools and putting them into practice' (CPE, p.37) i.e. understanding their role as an *I* within society as whole. Instead it is the worker who is serving the machine-tool and the machine-tool that becomes the technical individual, as it is within the machine, and the system to which it belongs, that individuation is produced. This idea of technical individuation is therefore 'a process through which the system of industrial objects becomes functionally integrated and thus transformed.' (CPE, p.37) However, it is the proletarianised worker who is excluded from this transformation, he becomes dissociated from it and thus becomes *disindividuated*. In other words, the worker loses the understanding of his relationship to the collective. Proletarianisation, for Stiegler, is therefore not only concerned with proletarianisation in the Marxist sense, but with the process that excludes the participation of the producer from the evolution of the conditions of production as a whole. In other words the worker, who was previously the technical individual, as may have been the case when Marx was writing, has become the servant of the machine, which takes his place as the technical individual.

Thus, the idea that the exteriorisation of memory equates to a *loss* of memory (the idea that is described in the *Phaedrus*) is to Stiegler one that has gone beyond the realm of memory and language and extended to knowledge as a whole: 'the reality of proletarianization is, more than pauperization<sup>4</sup>, the worker's loss of knowledge, [...] the worker becomes proletarian, which also means that the proletarian ceases to be a worker' (DD1, p.62). The most influential change, then, from the industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century, to the 'hyper-industrial capitalism' of the twentieth century, was the new type of mnemotechnologies that were being developed and implemented on a large scale, amnomotechologies that had the ability to affect our culture, through manipulation of desire, as well our economy and society in general.

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<sup>4</sup> Pauperization refers to the withdrawal of means to survive; it differs from proletarianization in that it is referring to a loss of *savoir-faire* knowledge (see p.22) alone. It is an aspect of deprivation, withdrawing the necessary material conditions for sustaining life. The *Ars Industrialis* manifesto defines pauperisation as reference to 'the loss of *savoir-faire* of workers enslaved to machines, and no longer masters of their tools (craftsmen)'. Stiegler, Bernard (2010), 'Ars Industrialis Manifesto', *Ars Industrialis*, <<http://arsindustrialis.org/manifesto-2010>> (last accessed 27 March 2014).

The nineteenth century industrial revolution that Marx had witnessed (what Stiegler refers to as the ‘first’ industrial revolution<sup>5</sup>) transformed the pre-industrial economy into an economy based on coal, steel, the steam engine, and the vast network of railways that were used to aid the buying and selling of commodities at a never before seen rate. This economy was revolutionised again during the beginning of the twentieth century into an economy reliant on oil, and Fordist production that led to the popularisation of the automobile, along with the increasingly huge road network systems that were built throughout the western world (Stiegler brands this the ‘second’ industrial revolution). However, the most important revolution, when looking at the *new* proletarianisation, is the ‘third’ industrial revolution, an industrial revolution that leads from industrial capitalism to hyper-industrial capitalism. Stiegler argues that ‘if one can speak of a third industrial revolution, then this must also be a matter of a [...] *political, social, and cultural revolution*’ (DD1, p.22). The third industrial revolution, to Stiegler, is first and foremost a cultural revolution. It is a revolution that has implemented a new stage of grammatisation and has therefore transformed the capitalism of the early twentieth century into a new age of capitalism, the hyper-industrial epoch, one reliant on the ever increasingly advancing system of mnemo-technologies (that were initially analogical and are now digital) that are facilitating the increase of proletarianisation through the culture and programme industries. This third revolution, Stiegler argues, is how the apparent globalisation of capitalism was completed; it was achieved through the proletarianisation, not of just the worker, but of the consumer.

Stiegler outlines that this loss of knowledge brought about by the third industrial revolution was enabled through what he calls ‘the extraordinary mnesic power of digital networks’ (CPE, p.30). These digital networks have the ability to make us aware of the apparent infinite recoverability and accessibility of human memory, which in turn leads us more and more to a feeling of powerlessness and obsolescence. Beistegui remarks that the technical process has therefore become a process of ‘standardisation and formalisation that subjects everything it formalises to calculability, thus extending the process of rationalisation [...] and progressively erasing the incalculable and unforeseeable’ (de Beistegui in Howells and Moore, 2013, p.184). What this means for Stiegler is that it leads to a vast process of the loss of knowledge, both in terms of *savoir faire*<sup>6</sup> and *savoir vivre*<sup>7</sup> (CPE, p.30). Whereas the previous revolutions have brought about, through mechanisation, the separation of producer and consumer, with the third revolution, the consumers have also found themselves *disindividuated*: ‘just as workers-become-proletariat find themselves deprived of the capacity to work the world through their work, that is, through their *savoir-faire*, so too consumers lose their *savoir-vivre* insofar as this means their singular way of being in the world, that is, of existing’ (DD1, p.62).

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<sup>5</sup> Stiegler uses the term revolution here ‘to the extent that it is a matter of posing that an epoch has passed by and become outmoded [*révolue*]’ (DD1, p.22).

<sup>6</sup> *Savoir-faire* meaning ‘knowledge of how to do or act’.

<sup>7</sup> *Savoir-vivre* meaning ‘knowledge of how to live’.

Conclusion: A Bleak Outlook?

In conclusion, it might seem that Stiegler's outlook is a bleak one, yet, as implied by the adoption of the term *pharmakon*, the mass exteriorisation of memory that has led to the *disindividuation* of the producer and the consumer can also have curative qualities. The extraordinary mnemonic power of digital networks has the potential to bring back *savoir-vivre* through the interconnectivity brought about by the internet. What the internet provides, then, is the potential for a collective unity of psychic individuals that steps beyond the hyper-industrial categories of proletarianised consumers and producers. It is their interconnected desires that have the potential to provide the libidinal energy that is necessary to counteract the negative tendencies of the *pharmakon*. The *savoir-vivre* knowledge that was lost through the hyper-industrialisation of culture therefore has the potential to be regained through the connections brought about by socio-digital network innovations.

What we can see with the development of the internet, then, is a new wave of societal progressions that are not controlled by the industries that have become so powerful in previous years. The internet is the technology that has the capacity to bring us out of the global crisis we have put ourselves into. Through the freedom and unrestrained spread of information that the internet makes accessible to us, and the critical discussion of opinions that this enables, we can see light at the end of the tunnel; the technical *pharmakon* that has previously disindividuated society, is, now more than ever, showing its curative character. It is providing the cure to its own poison.

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## Jools Moon

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### *Condemned to Error – Knowledge’s Vitalist Imperative: An Assessment of the Vitalist Status of Truth and Knowledge in Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze.*

I present here no arguments that shake the ground, no solution to immanent problems. What I intend is to discuss a line of thought connecting Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze. To the first I will demonstrate his vitalism and the role of error in terms of knowledge; that Canguilhem challenges the common conception of truth as progressive and purposeful, and that it is instead merely an instrument of life that resembles life – cyclical and unending. Next I will claim that Foucault has an affinity with Canguilhem evident in his preface to the latter’s *The Normal and the Pathological* and in his own work on medicine and power relations – as that which instantiates the true-false divide. Thus Foucault equally challenges the conception that we as subjects of knowledge are on a glorious, heroic journey leading inevitably to truth that is. Lastly I will look to Deleuze and attempt to argue that he is also a vitalist and has similar claims to Canguilhem. Such as the world being likened to an egg, and that error is vital in our conception of knowledge and thought. Coming to a conclusion I will summarize the paper as tying these three thinkers loosely together in terms of vitalism and the status and role error in truth and knowledge.

#### Canguilhem – Vitalism and Error

Firstly, then, let us look at what the vitalist stance of Canguilhem might be. It is difficult with a thinker and writer such as Canguilhem to pick out his own ideas and opinions. That he was vitalist is beyond repudiation; what that vitalism consisted of, however, is less clear. Nevertheless it seems that for Canguilhem the point of vitalism is to explore the problems of being human in a world that is alive, of living nature as opposed to mere mechanism. This is evidently bound up with his scientific target, biology, as Canguilhem claims ‘[p]erhaps that is what life is. Interpreted in a certain way, contemporary biology is, somehow, a philosophy of life’ (Canguilhem, 1994, p.319). I interpret this as a vitalist stance in science that means biology is the science of life concerned with a world around us that is alive. Especially since for Canguilhem ‘[a] vitalist, [...], is a person who is more likely to ponder the problems of life by contemplating an egg than by turning a winch or operating the bellows of a forge’ (Canguilhem, 1994, p.289). Hence for Canguilhem a vitalist position inscribes life onto world, placing meaning, concern, and significance into that life.

I think we can confidently claim that for Canguilhem nature cannot be reduced to mere mechanism. Hence for Canguilhem ‘[t]o define life as a meaning inscribed in matter is to acknowledge the existence of an *a priori* objective that is inherently material and not merely formal’ (Canguilhem, 1994, p.317). To reduce nature to mere mechanism exalting thought beyond itself must be in error for Canguilhem since ‘the Aristotelian theory of

the active intellect, a pure form without organic basis, has the effect of separating intelligence from life' and that 'science, and in particular the science of life, is an activity of life itself' (Canguilhem, 1994, p.304). This means that we cannot separate thought from nature as though it is the ruse of, a strategy to overcome, or that is already beyond, nature. Thought and nature are simultaneous, contemporaneous and complementary, we think what is in nature and thought is in nature. Hence thought is not transcendent, we do not hold a mirror to nature, from outside, unveiling or grasping the truth that is in nature.

Moving on, the method Canguilhem seems to use is a meandering exposition of concepts, exposing the non-linear transitions of thought throughout history. This already points to Canguilhem's main concern – the relationship between life and knowledge, or thought that has not been adequately accounted for, especially in terms of the history of science. I would claim that it is evident for Canguilhem that concepts must not be accepted as one instantiation of truth along a progressive thread to final truth. Concepts are analysed as a possible solution to a problem, yet inevitably the concept comes to an obstruction and a disjunctive concept gives new impetus to solve the problem differently. This is exactly what I think Canguilhem means when he says 'the history of knowledge [...] is the history of error and of triumph over error' (Canguilhem, 1994, p.319). In the same passage he explains 'scientific techniques, it can be argued, are in fact nothing more than methods for moving things around and changing the relations among objects' (Canguilhem, 1994, p.319). I interpret this to mean that humans are constantly solving the problem of life through concepts that inevitably raise new problems and the possibility of new solutions. Hence for Canguilhem we are condemned to error.

The important point about error is that it is not in thought; it cannot be because there is no truth, there is no right way to think, and hence error is in life. As Canguilhem explains, 'if life has meaning, we must accept the possibility of a loss of that meaning, of distortion, of misconstruction. Life overcomes error through further trials' (Canguilhem, 1994, p.318). Thought is not the original perpetrator of error; error is in life itself. So what is knowledge for Canguilhem? It is the meaning and value brought to bear on life through the vital imperative. As Canguilhem explains, an animal can only know that which it is open to receive – in a reciprocal determination of life and environment. Hence Canguilhem claims: 'to be a subject of knowledge is simply to be dissatisfied with the meaning one finds ready at hand' (Canguilhem, 1994, p.319). Thus to sum up: for Canguilhem the history of biology is not a history of the acquisition of knowledge or progression in the search for truth, but the constant devaluing of meaning and quest for different meaning revitalised with value through trial and error. Here then, I have demonstrated that Canguilhem can be confidently read as a vitalist and I would claim that this leads to his conception of thought and nature, such that thought is within nature and it is only through error that thought progresses without an apparent end. In what sense then can this be seen to influence Foucault?

Foucault – Power and Truth

To move on to Foucault I want to discuss his preface to Canguilhem's *The Normal and the Pathological*. Firstly it is evident that for Foucault the status of knowledge is a concern - especially rationality. 'Reason' Foucault says is 'the despotic enlightenment' (Foucault, 1991, p.12). I interpret the preface as providing a certain rationale for Canguilhem's project, perhaps more clearly than Canguilhem himself, who focused prominently on the sciences via his historical method. For instance Foucault claims that 'he [Canguilhem] brought the history of science down from the heights' and that as production of knowledge it is 'much more dependent on external processes' (Foucault, 1991, p.13). This has two important points I think; firstly that Foucault evidently reads Canguilhem as contesting the status of science, and this may be extended with confidence to knowledge; and secondly that such knowledge is dependent on external relations which I think points to Foucault's notion of the relations of power that are involved in knowledge production.

In correlation with my interpretation of Canguilhem then, Foucault says that 'in the extreme, life is what is capable of error' this shows that Foucault affirms the notion that knowledge production does not permit error in thought, that only the activity or expression of the concept in life has this possibility (Foucault, 1991, p.21). Thus, for Foucault Canguilhem poses the problem of error in relation to truth and life, which shows that knowledge itself is 'rooted in the "errors" of life' (Foucault, 1991, p.23). Further, referring to Nietzsche, Foucault says 'he [Nietzsche] would say that the true false division and the value accorded truth constitute the most singular way of living [...] invented by a life which [...] carried the eventuality of error within itself' (Foucault, 1991, p.22). So through error we have become potential 'knowers' with the imposition that this knowing is capable of error. Hence, for Foucault it is not the case that the history of knowledge is the history of the knower of truth exclusive of those holding falsity as truth; this is the ruse of history or the ruse of reason (Foucault, 1991, p.95). Foucault then, channels Canguilhem's notion of error into the problem of truth, which is dependent on relations of power that affirm one solution over another at the expense of any other solution, thus the hegemony of the production of knowledge is perceived negatively and we must look to what this means for Foucault in his own work.

Foucault claims that truth is bound up with relations of power, ambiguously he says '[truth] is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint' (Foucault, 1980, p.131). I would suggest that what Foucault means is that truth is not expressed in the concept of life, as explained earlier, but that relations of power are tied up in the production of knowledge that constrains such knowledge to a true-false division. So it is a production in a limited form that is perhaps instantiated by a despotic reason. Hence, for Foucault 'there is a battle [...] 'around truth' in terms of 'the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true' (Foucault, 1980, p.132). Thus there is not actual truth but actual regimes of truth that point to relations of power that produced them; the battle is

about 'the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays' (Foucault, 1980, p.133). Thus, power is a political expression of the problem of truth that reflects the problem of life and truth in Canguilhem. Here I have attempted to show how Foucault is influenced by Canguilhem but moves in a very different direction – that of power and truth. Foucault's project was predominantly political, and this is evident in his claim that he did not espouse a metaphysical system, whether we accept this claim or not. Now we can move to discuss Deleuze as a closer approximation to the reading of Canguilhem above.

### Deleuze – The World Egg and Error

Moving on to Deleuze let us firstly look at how we can claim his project to be vitalist. Firstly, we cannot ignore his own claim that '[e]verything I've written is vitalistic, at least I hope it is' (Deleuze, 1995, p.143). It is evident that Deleuze is concerned with life, in its organic and non-organic formations: '[t]here's a pro-found link between signs, events, life, and vitalism: the power of nonorganic life' (Deleuze, 1995, p.143). But what does this mean, and how can we claim that Deleuze's writing is concerned with life and vitalism? The important point concerning Deleuze's vitalism is precisely that all things are *of nature*; the point of a philosophy of difference is not to reduce nature to identity, representation or thought. Like Canguilhem a philosophy of difference does not reduce nature to thought, difference is being and thought is difference, and hence part of nature. For Deleuze the multiplicity or the Problem Idea makes up what is, consisting of both idea and matter, both virtual and actual.

If we take Deleuze's claim that '[t]he world is an egg' we can see just what he is attempting with his metaphysical system (Deleuze, 1994, p.251). The egg he claims 'provides us with a model for the order of reasons: (organic and species related) differentiation-individuation-dramatisation-differentiation' (Deleuze, 1994, p.251). As Protevi explains the first two concern the pre-individual, the multiplicity as virtual, that is prior to expression or becoming (Protevi, 2012, p.243). The virtual in no way resembles the actual, yet it determines the relations of the multiplicity in the process of actualisation. The intensive gradients of Problem Ideas are solved in the neutralisation of intensity that is becoming or produces the actual. The actual then is the dramatisation of intensive gradients; differentiation in the virtual determines the process of actualisation that is its differentiation in becoming actual. On this point Deleuze argues 'individuation precedes differentiation in principle, that every differentiation presupposes a prior intense field of individuation' (Deleuze, 1994, p.247). Thus the virtual contains merely pre-individuated intensities that give rise to, but do not resemble, the actual. Hence the egg contains the virtual that determines but does not represent the actual, similar to the development of an egg, into that which it is i.e. not-egg. Thus Deleuze's metaphysics explains how all things constitute a process of struggle to be differentiated from themselves, to be expressed as actual through vital processes of becoming. As Canguilhem himself put it: '[a] vitalist, I would venture to suggest, is a person who is more likely to ponder the problems of life by contemplating an egg' (Canguilhem, 1994, p.289).

If we now take the status of truth, Deleuze takes opposition to the very image of thought as representation, identity and recognition. Williams says that recognition for Deleuze ‘must operate by breaking down difference into that which has already been recognised’ (Williams, 2003, p.119). If we take recognition to be the right way of thinking, which may be along the right lines, albeit slightly different from what Deleuze actually claims, then it is the correct mode of thought, it is the path of thought to truth. But Deleuze’s problem is that this precise mode of thought is illusory, if difference is being then recognition, representation and identity dissolve difference or being, this mode of thinking then displays only shadows of the actual, ‘re’-presented on the cave wall that is subjectivity. All that exists ‘are imprisoned in individuals as though in a crystal’, contained in the egg, how can we represent what is in the egg, as though we are outside the egg (Deleuze, 1994, p.247)? Thought is equally trapped in the crystal, contained in the egg; we cannot escape the crystal and look inside, as though re-presenting the egg, holding up a mirror to reality – we are the egg, all things are the egg, nothing escapes the egg, least of all thought!

Behind all recognition and all things is the virtual composed of the Problem Idea as multiplicity. This Problem Idea Williams explains is ‘something inevitable [...] that can only lead to a series of creative reactions rather than to a lasting solution (Williams, 2003, p.121). For Deleuze, the Problem Idea is a multiplicity of internal relations of intensity that are expressed in the actual as solutions to the problem. It is important to note, however, that for Deleuze ‘the problem resists any final classification of its responses whereby a direction of correct response or a hierarchy of responses could be determined with respect to a final correct answer or direction of responses’ (Deleuze, in Williams, 2003, p.133). Hence there can be no final truth; each response reciprocally re-structures a multiplicity in terms of intensities and relations that then calls for a new responses. As Deleuze explains ‘[t]he problem is at once transcendent and immanent in relation to its solutions. Transcendent, because it consists in a system of ideal liaisons or differential relations between generic elements. Immanent, because these liaisons or relations are incarnated in the actual relations which do not resemble them and are defined by the field of solutions’ (Deleuze, 1994, p.163). Thus the Problem Idea does not resemble actualisations yet these are conditioned by such a virtual multiplicity, which is then defined by a ‘field of solutions’ thus implying a reciprocal relation of virtual and actual. The status of truth it seems to Williams is tied up with this multiplicity that when actualised we can never have a totalised understanding of ‘since the more clearly it appears, the more things it is inextricably connected to fade back into obscurity’ (Williams, 2003, p.152).

Moving on to error, Deleuze explains ‘[e]verything must [...] be inverted: error is a fact which is then arbitrarily extrapolated and arbitrarily projected into the transcendental’ (Deleuze, 1994, p.150). This seems cryptic but I think it simply means that a transcendental subject is based on an illusory recognition of identity, and error is imposed upon the structure of thought in this subject. Williams explains that for Deleuze ‘we are not fixed selves or subjects. Underlying those identities are mobile individuals, set in motion by unidentifiable intensities’

(Williams, 2003, p.31). Thus 'philosophy should not seek to fill the world with secure truths and norms' (Williams, 2003, p.31). So we could say that behind the identity of a subject is a multiplicity through which the singular expression of a right way to think that progresses to truth constrains the actualisation of intensities that make up what we call the subject; the cave is an illusory expression of subjectivity dependent on identity and representation. This is similar to Foucault's conception of power and truth, as in the former constrains the latter. Equally Williams says that for Deleuze the history of philosophy is a 'collage, the most faithful readings allied to dramatic estrangement through strange juxtapositions' (Williams, 2003, p.31). Which for me reflects Canguilhem's method of exposing the imposition of the subject into history as a true-false pole of thought, again truth is the ruse of reason; there is an "exit" out of the cave but it has been hidden by the ruse of reason, by a despotic enlightenment. To summarise this section then, I have attempted to explore in what sense we can claim that Deleuze is a vitalist that is comparable to Canguilhem. Moreover, I have attempted to show that for Deleuze knowledge is not a progressive grasping of what is 'out there' but an invention of new solutions and problems, new actualisations that are never final, this can be seen to reverberate with both Canguilhem and Foucault.

I have attempted not to solve a problem nor construct an argument stipulating outcomes. I have merely attempted to expose the discerning qualities of three thinkers that in the least can be connected. Firstly, I discussed how Canguilhem can be interpreted as a vitalist, that gives his theory of knowledge and truth a certain flavor. Truth and Knowledge for Canguilhem, I would argue, are modeled on life; we could say that it is a never ending wandering for knowledge, or more poignantly a *philos* – loving of – *Sophia* – knowledge or wisdom. This I would argue can be seen in Foucault's work as being taken up as a method for interrogating the genealogy of our knowledge in the history of humanity. Foucault was evidently influenced by Canguilhem, noticeable in his preface and in his emphasis on medicinal history and error. We can claim however, that Foucault introduced a foreign element that is absent in Canguilhem, power and truth regimes. Yet, this is not a repudiation of the influence but merely a different direction. The fact remains that power relations express yet another dimension of the process of attaining knowledge that is never a final grasping of truth 'out there'. Finally Deleuze was discussed as being a vitalist in an attempt to connect his work with Canguilhem. Moreover he precisely takes the impetus of using an egg to explain the universe, instead of a forge, as stated a vitalist should by Canguilhem. The connection traced between Deleuze and Canguilhem was in the importance of error, that truth is not synonymous with thought or reflection. Instead, just as in Canguilhem, Deleuze argues that we must always be open to interpret things in different ways, open to mere relative truth that changes with new and different(iated) relations. We must not fool ourselves into thinking that our reflective apparatus gives us access, as though from without, to the nature that stands against us – resulting in final truths and knowledge. As a final thought, the case with all three thinkers I would claim is that knowledge and thought is analogous to life, never ending, forever moving, always surprising and never boring.

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## Alex Wilmot

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### *Techné, Tertiary Memory and Eugenics; the Creator as the Created*

Throughout the course of this investigation I will be working towards the conclusion that human technics does not exist solely by virtue of itself, but rather is a “symptom” or “result” of an evolved form of imaginative thinking. It will also be argued that this imaginative thinking progresses alongside the evolution of the mind, meaning that the two share a common history. It will be argued that the progression of this kind of thinking is given a visible history by the production of technics throughout mankind’s past, in other words the increase in conceptual thinking is made visible by the constant progression of technics through evolution forming a kind of ‘tertiary memory’. Finally, it will be argued that throughout this history, an increasing portion of the physical realm is subsumed under human techné, until humanity itself comes to be subsumed, and our own bodies become tools to be evaluated for effectiveness and worked upon accordingly. However, it will also be concluded that the goal of survival must perpetually remain an end ingrained in all organisms, if the nature of the organism is not to be self-defeating, and thus that our bodies post-eugenics become a tool co-created by both man and nature.

In order to do this I will first outline what is meant by the term ‘Technics’ and exactly what the use of the term implies. I will then go through each of the arguments stated above one by one.

For this purpose I will be using the following sources: *Tool Image and Grave* by Hans Jonas (Jonas, 1996), *The Movement Image* by Deleuze (Deleuze, G. 1983), *Technics and Time 3* by Steigler (Steigler, 2011), *Gesture and Speech* by Leroi-Gourhan (Gourhan, 1993) and *The Future of Human Nature* by Jurgen Habermas (Habermas, 2003). I will also be making reference to the film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (Hezrog, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, 2010).

#### Techné

Human Techné is any act of mankind involving either the purposeful making of an object or the thing itself which is made. Human Techné therefore encompasses both the process of constructing an artifice and the finished product, thus encompassing both skill (technique) and artifice (technology). For the purposes of this work we will focus primarily on the construction and existence of tools.

We should note here that techné cannot be the product of accident. As Jonas states, despite the roles which accidents and ‘groping attempts’ may play, the production of tools ‘ultimately has an eidetic element’ (Jonas, 1996, p.98). He goes on to state of the tool that ‘its form, present in the imagination, is forced upon nature’ (Jonas, 1996, p.98). We can see then that techné, whatever its form, must be purposeful; it must be an act

performed or an object created on purpose and with a specific end in mind. If we say that *techne* does not require a specific goal or purpose to be in mind, we eliminate the distinction between skilled mastery of the creation/existence of *technics* and their accidental use, during which the user may not even be aware of their using the tool as a tool. For instance, the skilled production and gradual improvement of spear-heads for the purpose of hunting is clearly different from a rock picked up for use as a weapon in the heat of battle. As Jonas states, such an object does not have 'permanent form' or a 'recurring use' and thus is not countable as a tool (Jonas, 1996, p.98).

Jonas goes on to argue that 'the tool itself is worked on' (Jonas, 1996, p.98). In other words, the tool which is created for a purpose, is worked upon and improved in order to better serve that purpose. The same can be said for any form of *techne*, in that all forms of human *techne* exist for a certain reason/goal, and are worked upon and improved to better suit this goal. For instance, radiography equipment is used to check for broken bones, while gym equipment is used for building strength, and both can be worked upon to better achieve their goals.

This then is our definition of *technics*: the production of an artifice, or the artifice itself, which was produced on purpose and with a specific goal/idea in the mind of its creator, who imposed the form of this idea on reality. The artifice itself is capable of being worked upon in successive processes of construction to better suit the end it serves.

All forms of human *techne* are not phenomenon which exist only in virtue of themselves, but rather are a result, or 'symptom', of a form of increased imaginative thinking. As Jonas states, the creation of a tool 'has an eidetic element' (Jonas, 1996, p.78). The creation of a tool is not the result of a simple form of thinking, but rather a kind of thinking which is enhanced through 'playful imagination' (Jonas, 1996, p.78). Thus, it is not merely through thought (e.g., choosing A over B or vice versa) that tools are made, but through thought which can produce imaginative ways to carry out A or B. This then is how tools come about, they are the result of a kind of thinking which, when presented with a problem, will develop an imaginative way (such as creating a tool) to solve the issue.

A similar kind of thought, Jonas argues, is present in the *techne* of image making, though to a much higher degree. An image, Jonas states, is 'not meant to repeat the original or to pretend that it is the original, but to 're-represent' it' (Jonas, 1996, p.79). In other words, an image is meant to represent the object *as an image*, not the actual thing. Such representation of the object in an image can include, Jonas states, 'exaggeration, distortion' and 'stylisation' (Jonas, 1996, p.80). The form, he argues, is general, and so a drawn image of an antelope is not this or that particular antelope, but is 'an antelope', it is the form of antelope in general (Jonas, 1996, p.80). The principle included in this kind of action, Jonas argues, is the 'intentional separation of form from matter' (Jonas, 1996, p.80). In other words, an object's essence is separated from its actual physical being, and then repeated in

drawings and other art forms. This, Jonas states, is a 'specifically human situation' and is therefore the reason that we do not expect 'animals to make or comprehend images' (Jonas, 1996, p.80). Between the image and what the image is supposed to depict (the object itself) exists 'eidos as such', the essence of the thing, and this is what the image represents (Jonas, 1996, p.80). Hence, when an image is produced, form is separated from matter and reproduced as form, 'eidos is made independent of the presence of the thing' (Jonas, 1996, p.81).

Jonas goes on to say that this 'distinguishes human memory from animal recall' (Jonas, 1996, p.81). Human memory, he states, transcends animal recall in 'imagination's capacity for free reproduction' (Jonas, 1996, p.81). In other words, memory can 'alter images at will', due to possessing the images 'detached from actual sensation' (Jonas, 1996, p.81). We can see then that a similar kind of imagination, present in Jonas' account of tool making, is present also in his account of image making. It is this imagination which, he argues, separates humanity from animality and allows for the existence of human techne.

This separation of the human from the animal in virtue of increased 'imagination' is why, Jonas argues, when we see a cave drawing, we are convinced that 'no mere animal would or could produce an image' (Jonas, 1996, p.79) like the cave drawings depicted in Herzog's film *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. When we first see these images on the walls dated to over 30,000 years old, we are convinced that they must have been made by our ancestors. At one point in the film we are presented with a statue which depicts the merging of a lion and a man, to form a creature with the upright stance of a human being and the physical characteristics of a lion. Here we can clearly see the merging of two essences/eidos, separated from their objects and moulded by the imagination of the human being to fit together into a single whole. Likewise, going back to the paintings in the cave walls, we can see how the concept of movement has been merged with the concept of horse, when horses are drawn with more than four legs, to simulate the movement of their limbs (*Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, 2010).

Tools therefore, like all human techne, are founded upon this higher form of thinking: playful imagination, a cognitive ability which stands above mere recall possessed by animals. We can see how techne, especially in its highest forms, is the result of this kind of mental capacity, and that techne thus separates mankind from the rest of the animal world, in that it is physical proof of man standing above his animal neighbours with regards to his imagination. As techne is a result of a kind of thinking which involves the faculty of playful imagination it would make sense that as this form of thinking develops, so does techne. In the next section I will show this to be the case.

### Tertiary Memory

Leroi-Gourhman states that along the evolutionary chain, all graspers (i.e. organisms with the ability to use their forelimbs to grasp objects) have the capability to utilise techne. (Gourhman, 1993, pp.80-81). As we have seen

however, technical ability cannot simply be a result of the ability to grasp, or for that matter any other purely physical attribute; there must be some cognitive/imaginative ability which these 'graspers' also possess to a greater or lesser degree. Gourhman argues that the fundamental characteristic of the anthropoid family is the adaptation to bipedal locomotion (Gourhman, 1993, p.61). In other words the most basic factor of anthropoids is the adaptation they have undergone/ are undergoing to being a two-footed creature. He goes on to argue that an 'upright backbone means a shorter anterior tooth row' (Gourhman, 1993, p.67). He also states that 'the potential development of monkeys had the consequence of partially freeing the back of the skull from mechanical stresses to the facial block' (Gourhman, 1993, p.67). Thus, the development of the two legged stance and the upright posture has allowed the spine to further support the weight of the skull, allowing it to gradually enlarge and give space for the brain to grow into. The development and enlargement of the brain came after this change in posture and not before, as Gourham states 'the expansive force of the brain cannot have acted as the motive force in the evolution of the skull' (Gourhman, 1993, p.81). We must here however note that the freeing of the hands which also came with the move to an upright stance alongside increased brain space, also fulfilled a condition for technics; it is no good having the ability for playful imagination if we do not have the means (hands) to impress the results of this imagination on reality. Thus although as we stated earlier techne cannot simply be the result of a physical attribute, certain such attributes are necessary to fully realise the possibility for technics.

So the brain grows as a result of the move to an upright stance, and as the brain grows to fill the space added by the expansion of the skull, the level of techne increases. As Gourham states, the Archanthropians had a system of tools and language 'already much more complex' than the Zinjanthropians (Gourhman, 1993, p.115). (Archanthropus lived around 500,000-200,000 years ago, while Zinjanthropus, or 'Australopithecus Boisei' lived 2.3 million years ago. Archanthropus thus existed later than Zinjanthropus). Zinjanthropus, Gourham states, had only a 'single series of technical actions' (Gourhman, 1993, p.115). 'Zinjanthropus' he argues 'made chopping edges by means of a single movement' and 'thus the first Anthropod's technicity was of an extremely simple kind, more or less in line with what we know about their brain' (Gourhman, 1993, p.72). Zinjanthropus, in other words, produced tools in a very simple way; by hitting a piece of stone once in a single direction to create a relatively sharp edge. This kind of techne requires very little power of imagination or forethought on the part of its creator and is thus very simple, a factor which, Gourham argues, is caused by the size of their brain. As he states, this level of technicity remained the same for millennia for Zinjanthropus, 'conditioned by the shape of his skull' (Gourhman, 1993, p.115).

The Archanthropians however, who had a larger skull and a larger brain gradually supplemented this single movement to make chopping edges by adding 'a second series of movements whereby the piece of stone intended to become a tool was struck in a direction no longer perpendicular but tangential to its main axis' producing 'longer and thinner flakes' (Gourhan, 1993, p.95). Archanthropus with its larger brain has, then, improved upon the techne already possessed by Zinjanthropus, just as Jonas states: the tool itself is worked upon.

We can see then that the evolution of the skull and thus the brain corresponds to the development of human *techne*. *Techne* and tool making was present in the most primitive human brains. As the brain develops, *techne* develops, and so the two share a common history. The external tool and the internal mind mirror one another in their development.

We should note here that at some point in development of *techne*, the evolution of the mind ceased and yet *techne* continued to progress. The mind of *homo-sapiens* has not grown since its first creation, nor has our skull expanded in size, and yet our *techne* has increased more in our short existence than it did throughout much of the development of our ancestors. The explanation for this is that the brain has reached the size and complexity needed to work upon/improve and create new *techne* consistently, imagining new ways around every problem and imperfection which arises within *techne*, and does not need to grow any larger to accomplish this.

It would seem then that human *techne* throughout evolution gives us a visible history of our past. When we look at the development of our *techne* since the first cutting edges crafted by *Zinjanthropus* we are presented with a chronological map of the evolution of our consciousness. It gives us a kind of memory akin to Stiegler's 'tertiary memory'. Stiegler states that what he calls tertiary memory is 'the painting or the bust' (Stiegler, 2011, p.20). It is an 'artificial memory of what was not perceived nor lived by consciousness' (Stiegler, 2011, p.20). For example a nineteenth-century painting is not a memory possessed by the person looking at it, but rather is a 'memory trace of the painter' (Stiegler, 2011, p.20). Thus, tertiary memory is the memory of an individual embodied/recorded in a non-organic object.

The obvious objection is that a tool is not a memory. Unlike a work of art, a tool is not a memory of the creator made physical in the form of a painting or carving. How then can a tool be tertiary memory? The answer is to think of *techne* as more of an 'echo', a physical result remaining in time, of human thought. Thus like art, ancient *techne* is the result of the imaginative skill of men moulding nature, transforming thought into physical actuality.

When taken as a whole then, *techne* forms a long tertiary memory, stretching back into man's tool making past. It is a memory of our history of technics embodied in matter/nature. When we look at a tool, we look at the record of someone's creative imagination which has been impressed onto matter. Thus when we look at tools as a whole we see a 'memory' or a 'timeline' of the history of our technical thought. Given the fact that, as Jonas argues, our creative imagination is what separates man as a species from animality, and that *techne* is the physical result of this faculty, we can see that when we look at tools, we in fact look at our memory as a species.

Eugenics

When we look at this 'memory', we see that this history consists in the gradual incorporation of all aspects of nature into the realm of *techne*, a gradual mastering of the material world. For example, the gradual move from simple one movement methods to make cutting tools, to the creation of advanced optics for gazing at the movements of distant stars. More and more of the world is slowly subsumed under *techne*, and made to work for men, the sphere of man's technical mastery grows and expands gradually encompassing more and more of the physical realm, until our bodies themselves become subsumed under *techne*. This subsuming of our own bodies into the realm of *techne* takes the form of genetic-engineering, eugenics and human augmentation. As Habermas states of pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, (whereby parents may look at an embryo before its implantation in the womb and assess its genetic make-up for 'imperfections') the 'categories of what is manufactured and what has come to be by nature [...] de-differentiate' (Habermas, 2003, p.46). In other words, the line between what is natural/grown and what is *techne*/made, is blurred. He goes on to say, quoting Jonas, 'technologically mastered nature now again includes man who (up to now) had, in technology, set himself against it as its master' (Habermas, 2003, p.47). As we can see, technologically mastered nature, nature which has been subsumed under *techne* and mastered, now includes our own bodies. Whereas before our bodies were considered separate from the *techne* we created, they are now themselves a part of mastered nature, a part of *techne*.

However, our bodies exist as a 'natural artifice' regardless of any input on our part. How can an object born directly from nature with no human involvement in its production be considered 'human *techne*'? The answer lies in the possibilities that have dawned with the advent of eugenics technologies. When we change the design of the body to better achieve its ends we transpose its fundamental character from a 'natural artifice' (a result of evolutionary selection) to a human artifice (a tool crafted by Mankind to achieve an end). It is no longer an object constructed by evolutionary selection to fulfil an end, but rather one moulded and shaped by human imagination. And this is the true consequence of Eugenics; the final realisation of humanity's gradual mastering of nature, the melting of the final bastion of natural artifice into the pot of human *techne*, the re-classification of the human body as a tool.

*A second objection arises from this:* In order for any artifice to be a tool and thus 'techne', it must have an end (a purpose for its existence, a job to perform). But if, as we have seen, the human body began, and remained for the majority of its development, a natural artifice, surely the changing of hands of the responsibility for that development from nature to man, from evolution to eugenics, does not by extension confer an end, and so the body is not *techne*?

The criterion of 'permanent form' proposed by Jonas provides a possible response to this objection. We could say that until a natural artifice is absorbed into human *techne*, it cannot possibly possess recurring form. A rock

used to pry open a clam is not a tool, as soon as we take that rock and set it aside, saying it is *for* opening clams, then it is given an end, a purpose, a recurring use, and thus emerges as *techne*.

The same criterion apply for the human body. Only when it is altered by mankind outside its natural course does it obtain an end. The child born with purposefully elongated fingers to allow mastery of the piano is born with a body designed to suit an end. It would therefore be not only possible that the human body only obtains a purpose and thus becomes *techne* after it has been developed by man, it is also entirely necessary.

It could however then be argued that the human body was originally crafted by the unconscious process of evolution to achieve the end of the propagation and continuity of genes. The prolonging of life and the passing down of genetic code was the primary function of the body, and surely no matter how we alter it and no matter what end we re-build the body to fulfil, genetic continuity must always be its primary and founding goal, underlying all others? If this is the case then we must concede that the body remains an artifice of nature, and does not become one of man.

In response we could argue that in the 'animal kingdom', survival and the handing down of genetic code is the primary and foremost goal of any organism. In complex human society however, many individuals choose a different primary function for their body. For instance, the body builder who gives their body the primary end of growing muscular and symmetrical.

Despite this however, the drive to the end of survival remains ever present, and will endure even when the body has withered and all hope of strength and beauty has faded. It is more primary, more constant and more enduring than any other end our species could give to our bodies.

So the body can never truly be an artifice, a tool, built by man, due to nature's ever present designs on our form. But neither, post-eugenics, can it be solely an artifice of nature. Man has altered and made his own the very founding fabric of our body, disfiguring nature's original design though never destroying it.

The answer must be then that the body becomes an artifice of both nature and man: a co-project resulting in two ends residing in one tool, a strange twilight, neither day nor night where man's ends and nature's ends mould into a single organism.

How far, however, could Eugenics take us with regard to moulding the body into Human *techne*? What if, through eugenics, we become able to eliminate that which makes the body at least partly an artifice of nature, and

remove the fundamental goal of survival which the body possesses? What if we were to make a body which is in no way designed to survive, only to fulfil some other goal?

To do so however would be self-defeating, as an organism with no will to preserve its own life, utterly indifferent to its continued existence, would simply cease to be, thereby rendering all other ends pointless. This fact proves how foundational, and how un-changeable the end of survival is. It must always underlie all other goals in order to make them possible of necessity, and therefore the body must always partly be an artifice of nature if it is to exist at all.

We have seen then that human *techne* does not exist in virtue of itself, but rather is a 'symptom' of a kind of imaginative thinking. I have shown that as this imaginative thinking develops as a result of the growth of the brain, so does human *techne*, and thus that the two share a common history. Finally, we can see that this history takes the form of ever-expanding circles of *techne*, whereby more and more of the physical world becomes mastered by humanity until our own bodies become subsumed into the realm of *techne*. We have also seen however that the body cannot become solely a human artifice, but remains a tool co-created by both nature and man.

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### Was Machiavelli an Egoist?

My task in this essay will be to assess whether Machiavelli was an egoist. I will assess the similarities Machiavelli's thought holds to the three different kinds of egoism: psychological, ethical, and rational, and show how each, aside from rational egoism, are not sufficiently similar to Machiavelli's thought to constitute a good reason for labelling Machiavelli as one either an ethical or psychological egoist; but first, a disclaimer:

I must be careful in this project because Machiavelli's most famous writings are not moral treatise, instead they are political discourses on the nature of states and politically concerned individuals, how they can obtain power and how they can keep it – that is, in the case of *The Prince* and *The Discourses*.<sup>1</sup> In the case of *The Art of War*, a Socratic dialogue, the purpose is to attempt to restore some form of virtue to the military institutions that have turned away from the ancient manner of doing things (Machiavelli, 2005, p.15). Machiavelli's fourth work that is worth mentioning in the same breath as the aforementioned is a play – 'The Mandrake Root' – a comedy, and not of much philosophical relevance. So we see, Machiavelli has never directly engaged in ethical discourse and to have done so, for him, would seem to be contrary to his project as a political scientist/statesman/military tactician. For the purpose of Machiavelli's thought is to inform the reader as to the state of affairs *as they really are* not as we think they should be (Machiavelli, 2005, pp.90-91); even in *The Art of War* he is discussing virtue, not ethics in the traditional, Christian sense – a fine distinction to be sure!<sup>2</sup>

### Machiavelli's View on Human Nature

Machiavelli deals explicitly with the nature of man in the infamous Chap. XVII of *The Prince*, titled 'Cruelty and Compassion; and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved Than Feared or the Reverse.' He describes men in this passage as: 'fickle, liars...deceivers, [cowards], greedy, [loyal so long as danger is remote, but will turn on you if you are in danger]' (Machiavelli, 2005, p.96). He argues that it is better to be feared rather than loved because, owing to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Prince* and *The Discourses* are considered a good condensation of Machiavelli's thought by all accounts I have read.

<sup>2</sup> See Section 3 regarding Berlin's distinction between the two.

the above mentioned “wretched” nature of men, the bond of love is one that men will ‘break when it is to their advantage to do so’, however “dread” of punishment is something that is ‘always effective’ (Machiavelli, 2005, p.97). The section of this passage that is relevant to my purposes, however, is that pertaining to man’s natural tendency to betray those that he loves when it is in his advantage to do so.

One could plausibly take the above passage concerning loyalty as evidence to suggest that Machiavelli may be a psychological egoist; that is, someone who holds that all of humanity will only ever act in its own self-interest and that even apparently altruistic acts, such as donating bone marrow to someone dying of leukemia (a very painful procedure), are really in the interests of those doing them i.e. the donator really was behaving in a self-interested manner when electing to undergo the procedure. However, it does not seem that he is positing any empirical facts about the *psychological* nature in the contemporary sense of the term; he does not seem to be saying that men are incapable of being selfless, instead he seems to be saying that, *in general*, men are cowardly, fickle, etc. and that in general they will do what is in their interests

The generalization above is of course evidenced, as Machiavelli tends to do, with examples from history. In this instance we are pointed towards Hannibal and Scipio, thus we see that Machiavelli simply is making a modest generalization, based on the evidence provided by history, regarding the tendency of man to be conniving and self-serving; he saying: ‘history shows us that men are like this therefore behave in a manner such that you will not be caught out by man’s fickle nature’ instead of what a psychological egoist may assert which is something akin to: ‘it is universally the case that if something is a man then it is incapable of an action that does not directly benefit his self-interest’. For, Machiavelli concedes that men will shed their blood for a prince so long as the “danger is remote” – this qualifies as a selfless act, it is merely tempered in regularity by circumstance. So we have seen that Machiavelli is not really a psychological egoist, he does not hold that men are incapable of immoral acts.

The [un]ethical Egoist?

Could it be that Machiavelli was an ethical egoist? Ethical egoism is a normative position within ethics that whatever is in an individual's *self-interest* is what she *ought* to do, that is to say, a *necessary and sufficient* condition of an action being *ethical* is it being in the *self-interest* of the actor (Shaver). *Prima facie* this argument may seem to have appeal; Machiavelli could be read as arguing that, owing to the fickle and unreliable nature of man, the only person to look out for oneself is oneself. Since each individual is a morally relevant entity, it is the duty of that agent to protect herself from all other external dangers.

Machiavelli, in Chap. XV of *The Prince*, claims that there is a “gulf” between the things a man should do and the things a man must do, and goes as far to say that if a man were to live according to how he should behave, he would be on the road to “self-destruction”. He argues this on the grounds that there are always people who are “not virtuous” and would quickly take advantage of any weakness caused by virtuous behavior. This is a particularly important passage in *The Prince* for it is the only (if not one of very few) instance of Machiavelli mentioning how one *ought* to, or *should*, live. Someone who has read *The Prince* will notice that the text features Machiavelli arguing that the Prince *should* do this or that action in a high number of places, however this is usually in the context of a ‘Kantian hypothetical imperative’ which take the form of ‘[i]f you want to achieve x do y’ instead of the ethically normative sense of the word as we will see below (Berlin, 1980, p.53).

If we examine the term that Machiavelli uses we may glean more of an insight into exactly what he means: the sentence in question is as follows: ‘the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide’ (Machiavelli, 2005, p.91). The term “should” here is key; Machiavelli is making a normative claim. The original Italian he writes is ‘*dovrebbe*’, the infinitive of which is ‘*dovere*’ which is the noun for duty in Italian (bab.la).<sup>3</sup> So Machiavelli acknowledges that a prince may have duties, however on occasion he must set aside these duties in the interest of self-preservation. In the *Discourses*, Machiavelli puts the point across more vividly by providing the example of Philip of Macedonia’s (Alexander the Great’s father) methods for controlling populations; he was said to have ‘moved men from province to province just as shepherds move their flocks about’. Machiavelli argues

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<sup>3</sup> Interestingly this derives from the Latin for debt – *dēbēō* (OED Online).

that these 'extremely cruel methods' are 'inimical to every way of life' and that any man should opt to live as a private citizen rather than be forced to take this 'evil course of action [so as to] maintain himself' (Machiavelli, 1997, p.81).

Parkinson in his essay 'Ethics and Politics in Machiavelli' argues for the same gulf: 'Machiavelli, though he holds that the morally good action is often useful, *does not seem to hold that it is morally good because it is useful* [my emphasis], so that when a moral law such as 'Keep your promises' is broken on the grounds that it is not useful to observe it, the action is genuinely immoral' (Parkinson, 1955, p.42). Eric Cochrane also argues similarly that Machiavelli did not deny Christian morality, but rather he held that any political decision that was based upon Christian ethical principles would either be disastrous or immoral depending on the level of adherence to them (Cochrane, 1961, p.115). Let it be noted, Machiavelli does not state that a man should not hold virtuous things to be virtuous and evil things evil. Instead he insists on presenting things as they really are (Machiavelli, 2005, p.90). The Prince must act immorally so that his rule will be consolidated, but he does not need to enjoy doing so nor consider it the virtuous course of action. So we see that Machiavelli did not hold an ethical egoist position for he did not hold that doing what is in one's own self-interest was ethical, in fact he held that some self-interested acts that a prince must do in the political arena must be thoroughly unethical –according to the Christian conception of ethical that is.

### Berlin's Machiavelli

So if it is the case that Machiavelli is not an ethical egoist what is he? An immoralist? For that is the term for an individual who, knowing the morally required course of action, willingly and without any coercion chooses the immoral one. There seems to be some truth to the assertion that Machiavelli's ideal statesman is an actively immoral character, however that assertion must be hedged. The statesman is not reveling in immorality for immoralities sake, instead he is 'taking the bitter pill' of immorality in order to properly go about the business of being in power. However, as we will see, Machiavelli's prince, if you believe some is not an immoralist *simpliciter*.

Isaiah Berlin<sup>4</sup> argues that in fact Machiavelli does not divorce ethics from politics at all. He distinguishes between Machiavelli's apparent polarization of politics and the moral realm citing commentators such as Cochrane, and originally Benedetto Croce, and his own perception of a strong ethical undercurrent in Machiavelli's work which is rooted in the Aristotelian conception of man as a communally engaged individual – the *polis* (Berlin, 1980, pp.52-53). He argues that Machiavelli's work, if taken as a whole i.e. by taking *The Prince* and *The Discourses* together, is concerned with an ethical teleology just as much as the Christian ethical system is, and that Machiavelli is 'indeed rejecting Christian ethics, but in favour of another system, another moral universe ... a society geared to ends just as ultimate as the Christian faith' (Berlin, 1980, p.54). So instead of flouting all of Christian ethics in favour of power, Machiavelli is simply taking an alternative ethical stance to the traditional Christian one – he is favoring the kingdom of earth (Florence and Italy in general) over the kingdom of heaven.

This ethical fork is discussed by Machiavelli in the example we discussed above in section two concerning Philip of Macedonia. In this section of the *Discourse* Machiavelli asserts that every man must choose between the evil yet self-sustaining or the moral yet self-effacing. A key passage in Berlin's work illustrates the fork in the road that every man must navigate more explicitly:

'a man must choose. To choose to lead a Christian life is to condemn oneself to political impotence: to being used and crushed by powerful, ambitious, clever, unscrupulous men; if one wishes to build a glorious community like those of Athens or Rome at their best, then one must abandon Christian education [read morality] and substitute one better suited to the purpose' (Berlin 1980, p.47)."

As this passage shows, Machiavelli is not advocating a violation of individual Christian moral dogmas, instead he is asking men to choose between Christian self-effacement and a different, nonetheless, ethical system, with different values. Readers may notice the similarity between this project and Nietzsche's transvaluation of values, this has been thoroughly elaborated upon by Helen Ciacciarelli in *Johns Hopkins's Undergraduate Philosophy Journal* (*Ethical Transvaluation and Consequentialism*). So we can conclude that Machiavelli is no immoralist,

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<sup>4</sup> Most famed for his essay 'Two Concepts of Liberty'.

some actions he advocates are immoral in Christianity's eyes, yes, however Machiavelli admits this. In general, he is vouching for a different ethical system valuing the *polis* rather than the Christian ethical dogma.

### Machiavelli's Virtue

We have seen that, for Machiavelli, Christian morality does not cut the mustard in the political arena. Instead he urges his intended readers<sup>5</sup> to favour a model of man centered on *realpolitik*<sup>6</sup> – the acquisition and maintenance of power – in the political arena. As far as my original project is concerned, Berlin and Parkinson both explicitly deny the fact that Machiavelli is in any way attempting to posit an alternative moral system to Christendom's: 'Machiavelli is not 'reversing moral values'. [...] He does not think that the strong and successful ruler puts himself beyond the reach of moral disapproval' (Parkinson, 1955, p.44); 'It is important to note that Machiavelli does not formally condemn Christian morality, or the approved values of his own society' (Berlin, 1980, p.48).

However there is one final kind of egoism left to examine, that of 'Rational Egoism' which holds that an action is rational *iff* it maximizes one's self-interest (Shaver). It seems there is a fitting correlation between Machiavelli's virtuous man utilizing fox like cunning and the ferociousness of a lion (Machiavelli, 2005, p.110) and a rational egoist; in the same way that a virtuous Machiavellian will consider it only prudent to engage in the dark arts of *realpolitik* so as to maintain himself and his state, a rational egoist will consider it only rational to pursue her own self-interest to the best of her abilities. Of course this is not a perfect correlation, Machiavelli frequently refers to a wise or prudent ruler in his writings which is not the same concept as rationality (a wise person may paradoxically consider it prudent to be irrational on occasion). A more accurate way to describe the relationship is to draw the parallel between the virtuous *realpolitik*-statecraft that Machiavelli advocates and the rationality that the rational egoist advances such that the rationality may constitute Machiavelli's statecraft.

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<sup>5</sup> In the case of *The Prince*, the book is a gift to Lorenzo de' Medici the Duke of Urbino at the time in the hopes that in his position of power, the Duke would smile down upon Machiavelli who undeservingly had been flung out of political life by fate. The *Discourses* are a gift to Zanobi Buondelmonti and Cosimo Rucellai; both were interlocutors in *The Art of War*, Buondelmonti was forced to flee Florence in 1522 after the discovery of an anti-Medici plot he was involved in.

<sup>6</sup> *Realpolitik* was a term first employed by Ludwig von Rochau in his work *Grundsätze der Realpolitik* (Grounding of Realpolitik) (Rochau).

Conclusion

In closing, I have shown that neither Psychological nor Ethical egoism are sufficiently similar to Machiavelli's thought to constitute a real correlation. I, on the other hand, have shown that, while not identical, there are striking enough parallels between rational egoism and Machiavelli's virtuous statecraft to constitute a tentative link between the two.

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