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Mind Snatchers of the Anthropocene. Can Aspects Dawn within the Gulag Architectonic?

Abstract

It could be said that the real challenge of the Anthropocene is to confront the question of a converted gaze, in a way that requires and exceeds Kant's notion of an extraterrestrial standpoint of standpoints. In a world where political points of view seem contained within impenetrable filter bubbles, how might Wittgenstein's account of aspect-blindness with respect to bistable percepts point us to a new understanding of the loss of disparation caused by what Rouvroy and Berns call algorithmic governmentality? Husserl's account of the melody as paradigmatic temporal object, which is fundamental to Stiegler's account of the controllability of perception, desire and behavior, could be revised in such a light, because the peculiar dimensionality of the visual image is still crucially at stake in any new geopolitics of the sensible to be found or invented in a world dominated by the ubiquitous digital screen.

Keywords

Anthropocene, Immanuel Kant, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Algorithmic Governmentality, Edmund Husserl, Bernard Stiegler, Peter Szendy

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Any question of a ‘revolution’ in the Anthropocene confronts two difficulties of vision: a simpler difficulty and a more complex difficulty. The simpler difficulty consists in imagining the ultimate cataclysm towards which the Anthropocene may well be hurtling: we can certainly understand that it “is possible that entropy will put an end to all life on earth” (Husserl 2011, 131), and that this possibility is currently being hastened in an extreme way. What’s more, there is undoubtedly a *will* to conceive this possibility, just as our unconscious imagination must at some level *want* the nightmares that present to our sleeping selves the negative prospects that must be conjured so as to find within them a means of avoidance, a buried wish functioning as a spur. Yet the difficulty remains of *really imagining* that such nightmares *must* concern us *right now*, when they are occurring at the microscopic level of gas molecule accumulations and the telescopic level of planetary systems.

The more complex difficulty, however, consists in *imagining a realizable exit* from this nightmare, through which to find the will towards a *reasonable belief* in such a revolution. *This* difficulty seems *so* complex, and the belief to support it *so* unsustainable, that it is perpetually tempting to simply luxuriate in prefabricated nightmares, to flee into denial, to tend one’s own garden, or to fall into despair or dread: such is contemporary nihilism.

Is a ‘conversion of the gaze’ possible, through which our very collective dread can function as just such a spur, effecting a shift from the plane of the ordinary to that of the extraordinary, in order, like a seer, to “see what is invisible” (Vernant 2006, 117)? If such a capability is not superhuman, it is at least “sur-human” in the way Bernard Stiegler has evoked, and that he relates to a “sur-realist” (Stiegler 2017b, 79) vision of the cosmos—a locality capable of harbouring highly improbable possibilities in which one can still manage to believe, the possibility of realizing such singular noetic improbabilities being the very definition of neganthropy.

What makes this kind of revolution so difficult to envisage is the unprecedented character of its spatial and temporal coordinates: on the one hand, it is absolutely urgent, while, on the other hand, it must be perpetual and undoubtedly requires vast amounts of time and patience to be addressed. Any new neganthropic leap must address these dimensions, which are ‘telescopic’ both temporally and spatially: as Immanuel Kant says in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, it must have “regard to the whole scope of all the peoples on earth,” a regard that reveals “the prospect of an immeasurable time” (Kant 1979, 161).

It is, then, a question of the *conditions of possibility* of such a conversion of the gaze, through which entropes could be converted to negentropes¹ capable of releasing a revolutionary will of immeasurable spatiotemporal extent. Such questions are implied in Edmund Husserl's reflections on the earth ark: if the world exists "in the ideality of infinity" (Husserl 2011, 117), beyond "what is experienced of the world *from this or that side*" (Husserl 2011, 119), and if, in the "*primordial* shape of its representation [that is, initially, in the beginning], the earth itself does not move" (Husserl 2011, 118), and if the earth, as our irreducible macrocosmic, terrestrial locality, is always *where we are* even if we are *out there*, travelling to her moon, nevertheless, Husserl argues, after Copernicus and the telescope, it *does* in a certain way *begin* to move, in a sense that *we* would argue comes to involve not just its cosmic displacement but its Anthropocenic mutation. But this alteration in the shape of the earth's representation does not follow *automatically* from the telescopic gaze, according to Husserl, but only from a *second* moment, from the *extra-terrestrial conversion* that the gaze permitted by such an invention makes possible:

Only when we think of our stars as secondary arks with their eventual humanities, etc., only when we figure ourselves as transplanted there among these humanities, perhaps flying there, is it otherwise (Husserl 2011, 127).

If addressing the question of an exit from the Anthropocene necessarily involves a conversion of the gaze, how might this also involve Husserl's 'secondary arks'?

The extra-terrestrial and the filosofictive

Peter Szendy, too, approaches the question of the conversion of the gaze in *Kant in the Land of the Extraterrestrials: Cosmopolitical Filosofictions*. He notices that this is how the French Revolution functions for Kant in *The Conflict of the Faculties*: as an act of *publicity* capable of fostering "a wishful *participation* that borders closely on enthusiasm," or, in other words, an "aesthetic point of view" through which "a revolution's movement of worldwide expansion can be envisaged or seen in advance" (Szendy 2013, 96). Kant argues that, for those like himself who did not *actually participate* in the

¹ On the concepts of 'entropes' and 'negentropes,' alternative names, perhaps, for what Stiegler refers to as 'stereotypes' and 'traumatypes,' see: Ross (2019).

French revolution, *apprehending* the revolution via the aesthetic conditions of publicity may open up an even broader participation, one capable of extending the localized possibility of perpetual progress exposed by the French revolution to the macrocosm consisting of all the peoples of the earth.

That for Kant this worldwide extension of progress implies a cosmopolitanism resides in mankind's unsocial sociability, in the fact that, as he says in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, people "cannot do without being together peacefully and yet cannot avoid constantly being objectionable to one another:" living *together* requires a cosmopolitanism "that is constantly threatened by disunion but generally progresses toward a coalition" (Kant 2006, 236; Szendy 2013, 47). What would necessitate a cosmopolitics would thus be the perpetual problem of managing the tendencies and counter-tendencies involved in the relationships of care between the microcosms that we are and the macrocosms that we produce.

The problem is how to get *from* this 'intra-terrestrial' standpoint, which gropes in darkness to coalesce amidst the clash of micro- and macrocosms, to an extra-ordinary standpoint, an ideality of infinity that would make possible a *truly cosmic* cosmopolitics. Szendy shows how the extension of this perpetual problem to all the peoples of the earth seems to imply the need for a cosmic gaze capable of encompassing this proliferation of standpoints within its purview, and, indeed, Kant frequently invokes this extra-terrestrial gaze (e.g. Kant 2006, 237–38): a *wholly other telescopic gaze* of the extra-terrestrial is required, one intimately haunted by this infinitely faraway regard, if we earthlings hope to achieve a conversion through which to escape the local limits of our microcosmic preoccupations.

Kant argues that the incomparability of human beings lies in our lack experience of any *non-human* rational beings: "we have no knowledge of the *non-terrestrial* beings that would enable us to indicate their characteristic property and so to characterize this terrestrial being [that we are] among rational beings in general" (Kant 2006, 225; Szendy 2013, 47). This implies that the question of cosmopolitan revolution requires the aesthetic judgment of the beautiful, as a standpoint that can arise *only* from a process that is at once purely individual and yet inherently social: in short, it requires a process of psychic and collective individuation aiming, through a process of 'universalization,' at consistences. But it also requires the sublime, because, as what *exceeds* the limits of the capacities of our imagination, the sublime causes every standpoint to tremble: only through this unsettling of every perspective, effected by the experience of the unimaginable, would

it become possible to operate a 'pure reason' speculating in the direction of an immeasurable cosmology capable of authorizing an infinite cosmopolitanism.

Hence Szendy tries to sketch out a pathway "from the aesthetic to the political by way of a speculative cosmology," finding that it is "as if the *each-and-every-one* on the basis of which the judgment of taste is oriented could include humanity as such only when taking a cosmotheoretical detour through the *wholly other* that inhabits extraterrestrial globes" (Szendy 2013, 79). Insofar as this detour through the extra-terrestrial is necessary in order to imagine a cosmic cosmopolitanism capable of staving off the threat of disunion, of embracing the whole earth, Szendy refers to the imperative of cosmopolitical *philosofiction*. How might this cosmopolitical filosofiction marry or fail to marry with Stiegler's sur-realist cosmology composing micro- and macrocosmic scales from the quantum to the astrophysical? What Szendy and Stiegler undoubtedly share is the thought that this irreducible fictive element implies that cosmopolitics must be *essentially* aesthetic—*cosmetic*. Thus Szendy concludes that, today, any revolution must be enacted on a "terrain where a war is being waged whose stakes are a veritable *geopolitics of the sensible*" (Szendy 2013, 79).

The Gaze of the Clone

The terrain on which this cosmogeopolitics of the sensible is being conducted is the mnemotechnical milieu that, today, amounts to the technosphere of what Heidegger called *Gestell*. But it is also each of the individual microcosms that are the psychic apparatuses that each of us form in our inextricable entanglement with the complex socio-technical bodies that we produce. But these complex 'exorganisms' *also produce us*: the possibility that our globalized technical systems might anticipate and post-produce our very psychic microcosm to such an extent as to *automate the will itself* thereby threatens to make this geopolitical war of the sensible unwinnable.

As Peter Sloterdijk has pointed out, this automation of the will has, seemingly inevitably, led to a consumerism in which "what spirals out of control" is the elimination of all final causes: "an end use devoid of ulterior motives" (Sloterdijk 2013, 209). Our descent into this vortex created by the automation of will has now crossed a threshold after which we can indeed speak of an age of 'post-truth'—the nihilistic symptom of a loss of the will to *care* for the *difference* that knowledge or truth *makes*.

The primordial possibility of such an age, however, ultimately derives from the fictive element involved in the way that the microcosms that we ourselves are apprehend the world, from the fact that every cosmopolitics involves a cosmetics—as Szendy says, a “touch-up of the sensible” (Szendy 2013, 150). It is this fictive, cosmetic element that makes ‘post-truth’ possible, because it is both the condition that makes *truth* possible in the first place *and* what makes possible the conditioning of the apprehension of the world. If truth emerges from the convergence of different and singular microcosms, then the automated will threatens to so synchronize experience as to eliminate difference and hence threaten the very possibility of veridical processes, leading to *in*-difference to the notion of truth but equally to violent assertion of the *hyper*-difference of each-and-every-one’s own *idiotic* ‘truth.’

This is for Szendy what dawns on viewers of the 1956 film, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, where one beholds a biopower of mechanical reproducibility, a hyper-synchronized process of “metamorphosis without change” (Szendy 2013, 83), a biotechnological, pheromonal anthill effected through a dual movement that snatches bodies and creates a ‘sort of copy.’ But what this mimetic contagion really concerns is the snatching of *minds*: eliminating difference and establishing the reign of the ‘they,’ a transformed and reticulated race of each-and-every-one. For Szendy, for whom film is “above all an affair of point of view,” and “telescopic” in the sense of being “stretched toward” a distance “beyond points of view,” “however close it may be” (Szendy 2013, 129), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* reveals the invaders who do not just come from outside, but inhabit and condition our own point of view: the film allows *our* “indifference to be seen” via the indifferent gaze of the clone, “as if the director’s lens were desperately trying to grasp the ungraspable difference between difference and indifference, the indistinct distinction that cannot be seen but that instead *looks out at us, concerns us* [*nous regarde*]” (Szendy 2013, 84).

The Two-movie Reality

For Stiegler, Husserl’s account of the melodic temporal object implies this fictive element in our apprehension of the world—the fact that secondary retention forms the selection criteria for the anticipation and post-production involved in primary retention and protention, which implies that ‘immediate’ perception involves an *irreducible element of imagination*. Furthermore, tertiary retention introduces *controllability* into the play of pri-

mary and secondary retention and protention, opening up, through the exactitude of mnemotechnics, the processes of adoption and interpretation that lie at the root of politics, law and rational knowledge as the material transcendence (so to speak) of the mere *aspects* provided by individual viewpoints, but where the very same potentials for control also make possible the dissolution of such processes.

The melody is exemplary not just because it is a *temporal* object in the sense that, *like* consciousness, it exists only in the duration of its flowing through consciousness: in addition, the experience of the *aural* temporal object *negates* the question of standpoint. In principle, it does not matter where one is standing or how one is 'physically oriented' or how one may be 'directional' (in the sense of Heidegger 2010, §23) in relation to received aural data. Husserl's example of the melody works *best* if *the listener's eyes are closed*. Bracketing the question of viewpoint is the very way of seeing that what determines the singularity of bearing aural witness are different *horizons of expectation*, rather than varying spatial coordinates, and that these differential expectations derive from the singularity of one's own past.

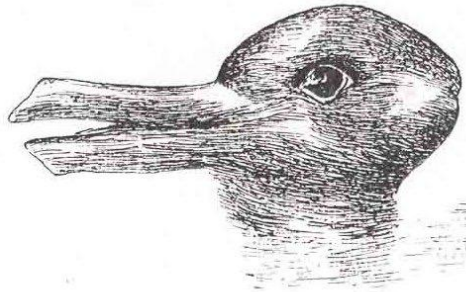
Stiegler addresses this, for example, in *Aimer, s'aimer, nous aimer*: if different witnesses provide different testimonies about the events of an accident, it is, despite being first and foremost something they have witnessed in the sense of being something they have *seen*, *less* to do with their locations on 'this or that side' (as Husserl puts it) of the incident in question, and *more* to do with their different 'performances' of the act of witnessing (Stiegler 2009, 61–62). When we watch a film, this account of what *counts* in the experience of the industrial temporal object likewise has to *assume* that it is reasonable to *discount* the possibility that experiential differences are due in any fundamental way to *where* in the theatre one is seated, or to *what part* of the screen our gaze is directed at.

This assumption that the question of viewpoint can be neutralized may well be generally reasonable. In relation to the 'conversion of the gaze,' the question of the *conversion* is probably more important than that of the *gaze*. Nevertheless, given that the subject of these conversions are all those psychic individuals who are each *localized microcosms*, there may be something left to say about what *difference* it makes to this account if we choose not to take aural perception as paradigmatic. Is what counts in the extra-terrestrial gaze simply the fact that it observes from a viewpoint sufficiently broad as to be capable of taking in the multiplicity of terrestrial viewpoints in their multitudinous aspects? Or does such a gaze in fact see something *else*, something other, a genuine shift in the character of insight brought about by training its

telescopes *onto the terrestrial here but as if from the extra-terrestrial 'out there'*? Would such a potential for extra-terrestrial *ex-sight* consist, then, in Heidegger's claim that "Da-sein is initially never here, but over there" (Heidegger 2010, 107, German pagination; see: Stiegler 2017a)?

The threat of disunion contained in unsocial sociability is for Kant the condition of possibility and necessity of cosmopolitanism. But in the age of post-truth, the automated, performative fictioning that surrounds every political narrative means that it becomes a pure condition of impossibility: two utterly divergent audiences (where the condition of being an audience tends to eliminate the condition of being a citizen) perceive the very same mediatized political narratives, but from what seem diametrically and rigidly incompatible viewpoints. The fading away of every veridical process would then lead less to opaque fog² of truth than to its ossification, where each perspective proves absolutely irreconcilable with all the others: one commentator has described this as the advent of a 'two-movie reality', a situation in which *two movies play on one screen*.

This two-movie reality should be understood *firstly* as a *reduction to only two movies*, a fossilized *state of the union* where the same givens lead to rigid, brittle perceptual oppositions, and so to the materialization of the threat of *absolute disunion*, that is, uncivil war. What follows is thus a reflection on the specificity of *visual* temporal objects, via Wittgenstein's notion of 'aspects.' If, as has been suggested, the cosmopolitical question of the geopolitics of the sensible today concerns the conditions of possibility of a 'new perspectivism,' then we must ask: is or is not a perspective the same thing as a point of view?



² Husserl wonders what difference it would have made to our cosmological conceptions had the earth's atmosphere been foggy rather than transparent and the stars therefore invisible (Husserl 2011, 129).

The Duck-rabbit

The duck-rabbit, which Wittgenstein calls a 'picture-object' (Wittgenstein 1968, 194), is an example of a so-called 'bistable percept.' It is not, strictly speaking, a temporal object: it does not exist as a durational flow in the way a melody does. Yet there *is* something temporal about the way this image is apprehended, in the sense that the mutual exclusivity of the duck and the rabbit is *necessarily* experienced across the span of *more than one moment*: hence Wittgenstein distinguishes the 'continuous seeing' of an aspect from the 'dawning' of an aspect (Wittgenstein 1968, 194). *What is it* that changes when an aspect dawns, what kind of *movement* does this involve, and *where* is this change located?

What the bistable percept picture-object makes plain is the possibility that the irreversible dawning of a second aspect (the duck or the rabbit) may be "the expression of a *new* perception and at the same time of the perception's being unchanged" (Wittgenstein 1968, 196). The *external stimulus* has not changed—the perceptual given remains identical *across the temporal divide of a shift in perception*—yet Wittgenstein does not conclude that perception would be *subjective*:

And above all do *not* say "After all my visual impression isn't the *drawing*; it is *this*—which I can't shew anyone."—Of course it is not the drawing, but neither is it anything of the same category, which I carry within myself.

The concept of the 'inner picture' is misleading, for this concept uses the '*outer picture*' as a model (Wittgenstein 1968, 196).

There is no 'inner picture' that we might hope to divorce from the tertiary retention: the picture-object is found in some place that we can locate neither internally nor externally. As Stiegler insists:

The image in general does not exist. What is called the mental image and what I shall call the image-object (which is always inscribed in a *history*, and in a *technical history*) are two faces of a single phenomenon. They can no more be separated than the signified and the signifier which defined, in the past, the two faces of the linguistic sign (Stiegler 2002, 147).

Wittgenstein somewhat imprecisely (or overly precisely) describes the dawning of an aspect as "half visual experience, half thought." To the extent that it *is* something produced in me, it must be "a sort of copy, something that in its turn can be looked at [...]; almost something like a *materialization*"

(Wittgenstein 1968, 199). And because we produce this *copy* of a tertiary retention, and because we can look at it, that is, *reiterate* it, are we not already *interpreting* the picture-object?

But, he then asks, “how is it possible to *see* an object according to an *interpretation*?” (Wittgenstein 1968, 200). What *more* is involved in carrying out such an interpretation? If the dawning of the duck or the rabbit can happen in a flash, nevertheless, as he then notes, there are styles of painting that immediately convey meaning to some people but not to others (not to him). He concludes: “I think custom and upbringing have a hand in this” (Wittgenstein 1968, 200). The duck or rabbit dawns due to knowledge acquired of the form of these animals, but, more generally, due to inscription in a practice of familiarization with a *way* of gazing. It is, in other words, overdetermined by the circuits of transindividuation through which we learn the capability that, alone, *allows* aspects to dawn.

Wittgenstein’s “description of what is seen” (Wittgenstein 1968, 200) thus largely amounts to an account of phenomenological intentionality, the intentionality involved in the dawning of aspects as ‘seeing as’: we can see this picture-object *as a duck* or *as a rabbit*; we can see it *as* ‘like *this*’ or ‘like *that*.’ The relationship of such an account to the melodic temporal object is made even clearer when Wittgenstein himself raises the example of a musical theme, which, on different occasions, as he says, we can *hear as* ‘a march’ or *as* ‘a dance’ (Wittgenstein 1968, 206).

The duck-rabbit image has also been used by Jeffrey Alan Gray to indicate the ‘unconscious intentionality’ involved in the production of perceptual experience: that aspects “spring into consciousness fully formed” shows that this production involves an intentional mechanism operating behind the back of consciousness (Gray 2004, 40–46). This notion of unconscious intentionality, which is nothing other than an account of primary retention, is for Gray intended to bridge the gap between the neurobiological level and the conscious level, but without Gray recognizing that the selection criteria must be supplied by secondary retention, nor that what opens this gap in the first place is tertiary retention. He does not convey the sense that this apprehension of the image is necessarily inscribed in a history, and a *technical* history. Perhaps Wittgenstein is open to the same criticism, yet it is also true that the latter’s account of the intentionality involved in seeing *as* or hearing *as* is an ability that

[...] would only be said of someone *capable* of making certain applications [...]. The substratum of this experience is a mastery of a technique (Wittgenstein 1968, 208).

From this it follows that the dawning aspect, the duck *or* the rabbit, is not just something that is *in* the bistable picture-object: it is “not a property of the object, but an internal relation between it and other objects” (Wittgenstein 1968, 212), which we must *learn* to apprehend. Wittgenstein goes so far as to say: “And I can see it in various aspects according to the fiction I surround it with” (Wittgenstein 1968, 210).

Here, however, we encounter a difficulty. Wittgenstein claims that we *see* according to an *interpretation*, but, surrounding the object with fictive elements, through which we seem to *immediately see* the object *as* duck or rabbit, he wonders if we really *interpret* what we see differently, or whether, on the contrary, we “really see something different each time” (Wittgenstein 1968, 212)? He is inclined towards the latter: the dawning of an aspect *really is* seeing something different, and this is *different* from *interpreting* what we see differently.

Wittgenstein’s reluctance to describe this as interpretation stems from the fact that the difference it involves seems not to reach the threshold of actual noesis. “Having an image” is not interpreting, which is *already thinking*. To see an aspect involves only the power of the imagination, *even if*, as he *also* thinks, it is, indeed, “subject to the will” (Wittgenstein 1968, 213). But even if this dawning does indeed involve an image whose aspect we can *change at will*, it is *also*, in its *initial* occurrence, a change that, a dawning that “produces a surprise” (Wittgenstein 1968, 199). But for Wittgenstein this sur-prehension is not capable of causing the trembling of every comprehension, *even if this is precisely how the duck-rabbit drawing—which is a picture-object, a quasi- or pseudo-temporal object, an image-object and (therefore) a technical object—functions for his own comprehension*.

Aspect-blindness

By taking the bistable percept as a paradigmatic picture-object, just as Husserl took the melody as a paradigmatic temporal object, Wittgenstein succeeds in finding a case of *identical repetition*, as occurs in repeated listening to sound recordings. Wittgenstein’s example is a case of the post-production of primary retention applied to visual perception, but one that is, or at least seems to be, *independent of the question of viewpoint*, while nevertheless being *dependent on the localized conditions of learned capabilities*. For Stiegler, the account of tertiary retention as introducing pharmacological controllability into the play between primary and secondary retention and protention is crucial to any account of the disorders of knowledge and desire

afflicting the Anthropocene. But what difference does Wittgenstein's account of 'noticing aspects' of the bistable percept make to how this cosmopolitical scene plays out?

Having noted that seeing aspects involves imaginative will more than interpretative will, even if it remains dependent on the *learned capability* of seeing something *as* something, Wittgenstein wonders if there "could be human beings lacking in the capacity to see something *as* something," a potential problem he identifies with the name, 'aspect-blindness' (Wittgenstein 1968, 213). One might think that, with this notion of aspect-blindness, Wittgenstein is referring to the kind of visual agnosia that can occur as a result of brain injury. But given that his account of aspectual perception inherently involves learned if unconscious intentionality, what is at stake here is, in fact, the loss of the *transindividuated knowledge that enables someone* to see something *as* something, or, in other words, the possibility of a kind of perceptual proletarianization.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein's concern with aspect-blindness is not, in fact, limited to sense perception. He immediately extends the scope of the question of aspects, and hence of aspect-*blindness*, when he makes a direct connection between "seeing an aspect" and "experiencing the meaning of a word" (Wittgenstein 1968, 214). And this, in turn, is framed in terms of a difference between the *knowledge* involved in the *capacity* to read and the 'information' contained in the words written on the page:

"When I read a poem or narrative with feeling, surely something goes on in me which does not go on when I merely skim the lines for information."—What processes am I alluding to?—The sentences have a different *ring* (Wittgenstein 1968, 214; see also: Stiegler 2017b).

Wittgenstein thus *extends* his account from a kind of visual blindness to a kind of linguistic blindness, itself capable of being generalized to *logos* as the symbolic, the logical, the sensational and the exclamatory character of noetic *différance* in general. Wittgenstein himself, in the passage where he describes the *fiction* with which the viewer surrounds the picture-object, points out that these perceptual questions are not simply physiological, for, here, "the physiological is a symbol for the logical" (Wittgenstein 1968, 210). Even if Wittgenstein does not intend to use the concept of aspect-blindness to diagnose an epoch, this concept nevertheless anticipates, for example, Kaplan's account of 'linguistic capitalism', that is, linguistic proletarianization (Kaplan 2011, 2014).

The virtue of this ‘concept of an aspect’ that is ‘akin to the concept of an image’ (Wittgenstein 1968, 213), then, lies in the way it telescopes its way beyond the visual and the linguistic, to a kind of noetic generality. The dawning of a new aspect exposes the capacity for surprise, showing how a perceptual act that sees the image with a wholly other gaze can make every standpoint tremble, a telescopic, extra-terrestrial gaze with the potential to illuminate the philosophical conditions of the two-movie reality. Is what Wittgenstein is describing by way of the bistable percept not, in this sense, a kind of *general* perceptual *stereoscopy*, a multidimensionality of apprehension, a *dimensionality* that alone makes possible, for example, the experience of a poem’s ‘ring?’ This would be to bring Wittgenstein’s ‘description of what is seen’ into the orbit of Simondon’s account of ‘disparation,’ for which:

To bring about a coherence that incorporates [the separate images of the left eye and the right eye], it is necessary that they become the foundation of a world perceived within an axiomatic in which disparation [...] becomes, precisely, the index of a new dimension (Simondon 1995, 206; quoted in: Stiegler 2016, 128).

As Stiegler has shown, what Rouvroy and Berns (2013) call ‘algorithmic governmentality’ is, above all, the “automatic and computational liquidation of disparation” (Stiegler 2016, 130), which means: the dissolution of all those forms of what Wittgenstein calls ‘custom and upbringing’, or, more precisely, the localized circuits and processes of transindividuation *enabling* disparation, that is, making it possible to notice, as if from an infinitely far-away location, the stereoscopic depth and thickness of aspects, beyond ‘this or that side’, and where there *can be no* ‘horizons of expectation’ without this ‘index of a new dimension.’ Szendy’s ‘telescopic’ implicitly raises the question of the stereoscopic.

The ‘coherence’ of Simondon’s stereoscopic disparation is a matter of how the left and right retinal images compose, whereas for Wittgenstein the mutual exclusivity of the bistable percept shows the *impossibility* of conjoining, in a single ‘moment’ of vision, the two dimensions or aspects of the picture-object’s meaning. Yet this impossibility of overcoming the disunion of the duck and the rabbit does not mean that the two do not co-exist at some point, even if they do so in an ideality occurring only at infinity—*just as* the conjunction of the image perceived by the left eye and the right eye should be, *geometrically speaking*, strictly impossible, meaning that disparation is irreducibly fictive. Sur-prehending the bistable percept as *both-duck-and-rabbit* is, precisely, a question of striving to see, extra-terrestrially, caught

halfway between knowledge and non-knowledge, what is strictly in-visible *from here*, even if we may *feel* sure it is right there, like the figure in the carpet.

As Wittgenstein asserts, in a kind of reversal of Simondon that ends up making the same point, what is 'natural to us' is three-dimensional representation, whereas "special practice and training are needed for two-dimensional representation" (Wittgenstein 1968, 198): in terms of the representational gaze, then, the *reduction* to two dimensions is, in a strange way, *also* the index of a new dimensionality, one that has a long history. Perhaps in this way, too, the reduction to a two-movie reality might, in making plain the absolute failure of vision and imagination effected by the performative automation of the will, contain the potential to be transformed into a cure for our present-day overwhelming aspect-blindness. In any case, at stake in both Simondon's disparation and Wittgenstein's aspect-blindness is a strange kind of step beyond the 'technically possible,' but what Wittgenstein makes clearer, surprisingly perhaps, is that this irreducibly involves practice, training and technique, that is, circuits of transindividuation.

Wittgenstein exemplifies the step beyond information by referring to the 'feeling' with which we apprehend poetry's 'ring'. In addressing the question of the relationship of aspect-blindness to meaning, he asks whether there can really be any kind of 'expert judgment' through which the "genuineness of expressions of feeling' can be adjudicated, and he answers, again rather imprecisely, that 'correcter prognoses will generally issue from the judgments of those with better knowledge" (Wittgenstein 1968, 227). But he immediately gives the kind of knowledge involved, here, it's properly Epimethean character:

Can one learn this knowledge? Yes; some can. Not, however, by taking a course in it, but through '*experience*' (Wittgenstein 1968, 227).

We have the capacity to learn how to discern what is genuine, to *interpret* it on the basis of the knowledge that alone supplies the criteria for such interpretation. Wittgenstein argues that this is no longer a matter of technique, but what he means by this demands careful reading, that is, interpretation:

What one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments. There are also rules, but they do not form a system and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating-rules (Wittgenstein 1968, 227).

The technical laws involved in any system involving knowledge never eliminate, and in fact demand, the necessity of judgment, that is, just interpretation. Aspect-blindness involves the forgetting of the criteria of interpretative judgment, the elimination of knowledge as the index of a dimensionality that opens the horizons of expectation which, in turn, grant the possibility of a judgment, *with rules, but beyond facts, not without calculation, but exceeding every calculation*. At stake is the possibility of being surprised by noticing another meaning in one and the same object, *without changing anything* in the object, which, in turn, opens the possibility of changing the rules, even if it is for a game we can never master, and so of materializing a new world.

Wittgenstein expresses this possibility in terms, naturally, of language-games: in the *game* of experiencing a word, we speak not only of meaning, but of *meaning it*, that is, of the *difference* such meaning makes. For Wittgenstein, this is a question of adoption, of ‘taking over’ a meaning from one language-game into another. He writes:

Call it a dream. It does not change anything (Wittgenstein 1968, 216).

In this *dream* of learning and adopting a way of judging the “*genuineness* of expressions of feeling,” a dream that does not change anything, just as for Heidegger the extraordinariness of *authentic* existence is nothing other than a ‘modified grasp’ of the ordinariness of everydayness (Heidegger 2010, 179, German pagination), an almost nothing that nevertheless changes everything, we can locate the whole problem of *repotentializing disparation* (Stiegler 2016, 134), that is, of transforming the aspect-blindness of our ‘two-movie reality’ into a new cosmopolitics of relief, by surrounding it with a fiction capable of fostering *the will required for any possible, improbable, exit from the Anthropocene*.

Conclusion

Hence dawns a sense of how to marry Wittgenstein’s account of the ability to notice aspects with Szendy’s account of the need for a telescopic gaze opening a speculative cosmology on the terrain of a war conducted for a geopolitics of the sensible. Stiegler shows that Husserl erred in excluding tertiary retention from the play of primary and secondary retention, a mistake Husserl partially rectified with his account of the origin of geometry in the

techniques of polishing and writing. The import of this revision, for Stiegler, is that the 'large now' of time-consciousness, by which there is no primary perception of the 'present moment' without an extension from the preceding moment and towards the succeeding moment, becomes the 'very large now' of geometry itself, which exists and can exist only in a transmission of the *knowledge* of geometry in an intergenerational *we*, a transmission that is itself possible only on the basis of a technical history. What Wittgenstein's account of the bistable percept suggests is that there is a kind of 'large there,' an irreducible spatial enlargement that is not a matter of measurable quantities but of openings onto other dimensions of ex-sight, themselves technically conditioned and transmitted through what Wittgenstein refers to as custom and upbringing. Does what Szendy is gesturing towards not amount to a kind of 'very large there,' or, perhaps, to a 'very large *over there*' or '*out there*' whose condition of possibility would be the impossibility of *limiting* this character of ex-sight to noticing just this or that aspect of this or that image?

If, today, the starting point of thinking is not awe or astonishment but dread, then among its most recent manifestations, in a vicious circle of symptom and cause, is undoubtedly the constellation of phenomena summarized by the 'surprise' election of Donald Trump and the sense of having definitively entered an age of so-called 'post-truth.' In this constellation we see, feel and dread the depths of that war identified by Szendy as being conducted on the terrain of a geopolitics of the sensible and requiring a speculative cosmology: it is an aesthetic question firstly because Trump's election was the expression of a feeling, a feeling that can be understood only as a kind of suffering, and a suffering whose source can be understood only as an extreme form of proletarianization—the hyper-proletarianization characteristic of the digital age.

Some might object that this is *no longer* a matter of the 'geopolitics of the sensible,' as Szendy claims, but rather, as Benjamin Bratton claims, the 'geopolitics of the cloud,' and that the crucial cosmological fact is that 'the stack' is the 'mechanism of a disruptive cosmopolitics' leading to the 'catastrophic homogenization' of a 'Megamachine' (Bratton 2014). No doubt this is a false alternative. What we are witnessing today is undoubtedly the takeover of many functions by very high-powered, data-intensive computation, whose unfettered character leads Bratton to invoke Carl Schmitt for his own cosmopolitics, in the name of a 'nomos of the cloud' that, as Stiegler has pointed out, neglects the fact that Schmitt's nomos is firstly and foremost a matter of

the division of land, and so tied to locality and to the earth, an earth that, if it moves, always moves along with the neganthropotechnical beings that we ourselves are (Stiegler 2018, ch. 8).

But even if the geopolitics of the cloud is an entirely legitimate question, even if it means finding ourselves subsisting in a *gulag architectonic* (of data,) imprisoning each 'user' within an archipelago of segmented, particularized cells of their own prefabricated will, it bears remembering that this computational overtaking of functions continues to operate through 'terminals' that will for a long time continue to be *screens*. If these screens within the gulag architectonic can at times function as windows, if they frequently convey text, and if they always operate with data, they nevertheless *also* continue to make use of the synthetic power of the visual image. And if anything, this is now more the case than ever, leading Hossein Derakhshan to argue that with Facebook, for example, we are witnessing a shift from a '*books-internet* toward a *television-internet*' (2015). In the becoming-television of the internet, the network or the digital does not replace the audiovisual: as the platform overtakes functions, it *absorbs* the audiovisual. The 'fuel' powering the algorithmic governmentality of platform capitalism may be the data provided by users in the form of digital traces, but the means of solicitation and the products of this pheromonal system are, more than ever, 'picture-objects.'

Does this ubiquity and indeed domination of the visual image legitimate the notion that we require a cosmopolitanism focused on the multiplicity of standpoints? The risk entailed by such a cosmopolitanism is of producing a kind of static perspective founded on a geometry that consists in simply measuring the distances between one point of view and another (according to a calculus of resentment), and which threatens to end with a bad perspectivism of calculable (hence algorithmicizable) differences of interest. It is against the false choice between the geometry of nationalisms and a homogenous internationalism that Szendy draws attention to the horizon of another dimension invoked by Marcel Mauss when he referred to the 'international' (Szendy 2013, 139–140). The twenty-first century translation of this bad perspectivism, as the geopolitics of the macrocosms of the nation-state becomes that of the macrocosms of platform capitalism, is the rise of 'filter bubbles' that ossify into a two-movie reality progressively eliminating the dawning of aspects—until these fragile bubbles burst.

If we can indeed diagnose those who voted for Trump as afflicted with a kind of suffering, and so as expressing a genuine feeling, however ungenue the details of this expression, correcter prognoses depend on seeing that

this was not just, not *only*, a matter of the expression of economic immiseration or the corresponding rise of an anti-systemic, anti-cosmopolitan, insular, nativist point of view, protesting against the rise of the Megamachine. In large measure, the undeniable tendency towards economic poverty is combined with and compounded by processes of immiseration at once symbolic, affective and noetic. What was expressed by this literally *dreadful* election was, in this sense, and more than anything, a desperate *absence* of point of view, a becoming-automaton that is *also* a suffering in which point of view is suspended, because to have a point of view implies an orientation, a reason, a motive or a *rationality*. In the two-movie reality, however, the real itself becomes irrational, without reason, if not without qualities, leading to a quiet or not-so-quiet desperation that begins to *want* the apocalypse, to want to *see* it—and to see it *screened*. In the age of ‘post-truth’, when the real becomes absolutely irrational, that is, a *very bad fiction*, then, as Stiegler has argued, we must transform the very notion of truth so that it can no longer be based on a relation to being, or even to becoming [*devenir*], but only to the future [*avenir*], which is to say, a new, rational (neganthropic) macro-economy (Stiegler 2017a).

If the possibility of escaping the Anthropocene is ‘revolutionary’, what infinitely complicates the question is how to motivate a turn in a world *without culture and so without cosmos*, and how to foster this revolution before, during and after the catastrophe(s), and after the deluge (of data). If in the age of platforms this is still a question of images, it is not just a question of the geometry of spatial standpoints: somehow the image must occupy space and exist in time—it must, in its fictional multi-dimensionality, *move*, even if but a little. And if no apprehension of space occurs in any way other than as an apprehension of space *in time*, opening through the temporal dimension an ex-sight of the possibility of experiencing a surprise capable of causing every comprehension to tremble, then, again, this can only be a question of the image in time, the image that moves, that is, that changes, even if it does not change—a figure in the carpet amounting to a noetic autostereogram.

Only in this way can the question of Wittgenstein’s aspect-blindness be articulated with Szendy’s extra-terrestrial gaze, which is not the same as Kant’s, precisely because the question of points of view is no longer, for Szendy, either *universal* or *transcendental* or *theological*, and because it remains *within* the localized sur-reality of the neganthropic struggle of microcosmological and macrocosmological points of view operating not just from different *positions* but on different *scales* of a ‘very large out there’ with a technical history. Hence we argue that the question of a conversion to and

of an extra-terrestrial gaze, the question of a new revolutionary perspectivism becoming visible only at the limit, necessarily involves the question of the *a-transcendental*.

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