

**QUESTIONING TELETECHNOLOGIES: A STUDY ON
THE NOTION OF INHERITANCE IN DERRIDA**

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September, 2009

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to trace the perspective on media and technology in Jacques Derrida's thought. For this purpose, a discussion of the notion of inheritance is presented. This notion marks essential themes in Derrida's approach to modern teletechnologies. Associations between the notion of inheritance and fundamental questions in the thought of deconstruction such as experience, writing and belief are explored. The questions that arise through the contextualization of modern teletechnologies is put forth by a reading of the philosophical dialogue between Bernard Stiegler and Jacques Derrida. It is argued that the experience of bearing witness, to which Derrida ascribes a constitutive role in the formation of the social bond, obtains a new context by the expansion of teletechnologies.

KEYWORDS: Deconstruction, Teletechnology, Media, Inheritance, Experience, Writing, Testimony

ÖZET

TELETEKNOLOJİLERİ SORGULAMAK: DERRIDA'DA MİRAS KAVRAMI ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Bu çalışma Jacques Derrida'nın düşüncesinde medya ve teknoloji ile ilgili bir perspektifin izini sürmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, Derrida'nın modern teleteknolojileri ele alış biçiminde önemli temaları imleyen miras kavramının bir tartışması sunuldu. Miras kavramının deneyim, yazı ve inanç gibi yapısöküm düşüncesinin temel sorunsalları ile bağlantıları araştırıldı. Modern teleteknolojilerin bağlamlaştırılmasında bu bağlantıların işaret ettiği sorular, Bernard Stiegler ve Jacques Derrida arasındaki felsefi dialogun incelenmesiyle ortaya konuldu. Derrida'nın toplumsal bağın oluşmasında kurucu bir rol atfettiği tanıklık etme deneyiminin, teleteknolojilerin yaygınlaşmasıyla beraber yeni bir bağlam kazandığı tartışıldı.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Yapısöküm, Teleteknoloji, Medya, Miras, Deneyim, Yazı, Tanıklık

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to explore Jacques Derrida's thought through the questions regarding technology and media. For this aim, I will particularly focus on the notion of inheritance which appears as a special figuration of central themes in the thought of deconstruction. This notion marks a critical juncture where the ethical and political concerns of deconstruction are intensified, particularly in a context determined by modern teletechnologies. Thus, this notion will allow us to direct questions on the associations between technology, media and the social, while assuming the fundamental axioms of Derrida's thought. I will trace these axioms through the relations between the notion of inheritance and central problematics of deconstruction such as writing, experience and belief. This approach, will lead us to study not only Derrida's position regarding the ethical and political questions that arise in such a context, but also a significant intervention to this position by Bernard Stiegler, who develops a special deconstructive perspective in the fields of philosophy of technology and media theory. Hence, the dialogue between Derrida and Stiegler will serve us as a point of reference to map Derrida's position in a more explicit manner. I will analyze the stakes involved in this dialogue and argue that the promise and risk of Derrida's thought lies at his radical understanding of belief, particularly within the path I will explore.

In order to clarify the approach developed in this thesis, I should make a few preliminary remarks. First of all, I should note that, I tried to approach Derrida's thought in a way that will not reduce it to merely a mode of critique, but I tried to trace it regarding its broader philosophical stakes. This is not to say that my perspective assumes that deconstruction is not a powerful way of critique or it cannot be used as a tool of criticism; on the contrary, if the thought of deconstruction has a critical power, it is because its basic axioms can be displaced and functioned in various contexts. The unsystematic nature of Derrida's philosophy is its very promise. However, to approach it *merely* as an 'instrument' carries several risks. As Christopher Johnson puts it, for this kind of view "there is a concomitant tendency to forget the specificity (and originality) of the general theory of writing" (1993, p.67). Hence, although this general theory of writing cannot be taken as a base for a systematic philosophy, it certainly has broader implications than a 'tool' of criticism in the narrow sense. In this regard, one could argue that this kind of approach risks neglecting Derrida's general path started with the conceptualization of general writing in his earlier works and that lead him to a radical non-religious understanding of belief in his later works. This path presents connections that forces a reconsideration of Derrida's thought that would not bypass the novelty of it.

Thus, in this thesis, I will try to avoid an instrumental deconstructive logic; that is to say, I will not take deconstruction as merely a mode of critique. Instead, I will chose to investigate a series of conceptual associations in Derrida's thought and trace a general path that would connect to the questions regarding media and teletechnologies. Following the ramifications of the notion of inheritance, I

will try to map a general Derridean perspective on teletechnologies without “forgetting the originality of the general theory of writing.” For this purpose, I will pay attention not to miss how Derrida’s thought unfolds, starting from his earlier works in which he conceptualizes writing, to his later works where political and ethical concerns of deconstruction become more evident.

Secondly, I should note that the purpose of this thesis is not to derive a whole ‘theory of technology’ or ‘theory of media’ from Derrida’s philosophy but to develop a strategy that would demonstrate the engagements of Derrida’s thought with these fields. For, although Derrida frequently refers to the problems that can be classified under these fields, he generally addresses them in relation to another problem or in a broader context. This is the reason why Derrida uses various broader terms than the media, such as teletechnologies, techno-media, teletechno-media, teletechno-science, modern modalities of archivization etc. in various different contexts. All these terms have different denotations and purposes and I will pay attention to their differences. Nevertheless, in order to generalize specific references, I will also try to map their common ground and connotative intersections. Hence, for this purpose, I will both focus on a specific entity, televised image, but also I will try to contextualize this entity in a broader plane. Through this plane, I will deal with a set of more philosophical terms such as technics, *tekhne*, technicity etc. which calls for a wider perspective. Certainly, Bernard Stiegler will also be an important reference while these different planes and matrix of terms are explored.

In order to avoid any terminological confusion and clarify the ‘connotative intersections’ between these terms, especially the basic definition of ‘teletechnology’ should be given before moving any further, since it is the central term that constitutes the main focus of this study. As Samuel Weber indicates, the prefix ‘tele,’ literally meaning distance in Greek, implies the “overcoming of the distance,” in various examples such as telepathy, telephone, telescope, telegraph, television etc. (1996, p.114). It is generally used to signify an apparatus (psychic, mechanical, electronic etc.) that functions to surpass a spatial or temporal limitation, if we assume that distance can be both spatial and temporal. In this sense, teletechnology may be defined as the general term that is used to refer to the category of these devices and apparatus. However, this definition should be re-focused, considering the elementary concerns of this study. Thus, following the way Derrida and Stiegler refer to this term, teletechnologies may be defined as the totality of the heterogeneous networks that encompass both writing in the narrow sense and also modern modalities of archivization and communication such as visual and audio-visual recording and transmitting devices. Throughout this study, this broad definition will serve as the basic point of reference to map the connected terms that are listed above in relation to one another and to problematize these relations.

Now, I may give a brief outline of the chapters. In the first chapter, I will focus on Derrida’s point of departure in developing the notion of inheritance. Together with spectral logic, this notion can be identified as an explicit formulation in Derrida’s reading of Marx. It takes form as a hypothesis through this reading which asserts that the experience of inheritance is always an

inevitable engagement with specters, with the past, and this engagement always manifests itself as a contradictory task, whether one is aware of it or not. On the one hand, this hypothesis is a reformulation of a general deconstructive logic that interrupts binary oppositions, such as life and death, by deciphering the conditions of the formation of the opposition. On the other hand, this reformulation of the general logic under the theme of inheritance is also strongly related to the historical context in which it appears. It is Derrida's response to a specific state of politics in the early 90's that avows the death of Marxism in all domains of politics and culture in an immense rhythm, which not accidentally has taken place simultaneously with the expansion of mass media and teletechnologies. Thus, I will give a brief account of this historical context and, accordingly, I will trace how this reformulation opens up to broader deconstructive themes, particularly the logic of *aporetic* experience. I will analyze how Derrida depicts inheritance as an experience of duty and hospitality that specters force, in order to bring forth the ethical stakes involved. This will lead us to an effect of specters, namely "visor effect" that will clarify the relations between these ethical themes and teletechnologies. In reference to Hamlet, Derrida presents the visor effect as a paradox: a state of heteronomy caused by the gaze of the specter, yet, at the same time, a condition of any responsibility, any experience of inheritance. For Derrida, this effect becomes amplified with an image since it strengthens the non-reciprocity of specters. In this respect, the new rhythm of the transmission of photographic, cinematic or televised image will come into question in terms of the experience of inheritance.

Following this discussion, in the second chapter, I will try to understand the relations of this intensified effect with Derrida's general theory of writing. For, from within the path I will follow in Derrida's thought, one can determine this new rhythm of the visor effect as a "more and more powerful historical unfolding of a general writing" (Derrida, 1982, p.329). In the first part of this chapter, I will analyze Derrida's problematization of the auxiliary status attributed to writing in Western thought; i.e. the deconstruction of *logocentrism*. Derrida determines a general tendency in Western philosophical tradition that considers writing and speech in an oppositional logic, by which writing becomes merely an instrument in the service of full, self present speech. In this sense, this view depicts the history of writing in a teleological movement, in which phonetic writing becomes the most advanced form of writing and of communication, by virtue of its closeness to speech. Thus, Derrida, by deconstructing this view, develops a general notion of writing which is not merely an instrument, but a force field that encapsulates any type of writing, speech, or even the fields of experience and social relations. In this section, I will particularly focus on Derrida's reading of an essay by Condillac, in order to trace Derrida's radical move closely.

This will lead the discussion to the technicity involved in writing and the tension between technicity and singularity of a mark. Derrida refers to this tension under the term "iterability," that which links the repetitive structure of a sign to its alterity and singularity. It is an essential term that marks the common ground of any sign, and on this account, it offers a base for Derrida's conceptualization of generalized writing. As I will argue, when this

generalization reaches its limits as to encapsulate experience and the social, it gains a particular emphasis. Regarding this scope of generalization, iterability marks the tension between the technical and the social. For Derrida, the tension between technics and inheritance can also be read as a variation of this formulation.

At this point, I will refer to Bernard Stiegler's reading of Derrida. Although Stiegler's investigations are not limited to solely his reading of Derrida, this tension between technics and inheritance constitutes his central philosophical focus. I will discuss his philosophical objectives, in order to capture the point where he feels the need to intervene in Derrida's conceptualization of general writing. Stiegler's insistent attempt to determine the specificity of a type of writing, the analogy he constructs between the emergence of alphabetic writing and modern teletechnologies in terms of the social and political fields opened up by their emergence and his concept of "discrete image" will serve us to clarify Derrida's philosophical and political reflexes. Thus, I will approach the dialogue between Derrida and Stiegler as a point of reference to analyze particularly the political tone of Derrida's position regarding teletechnologies.

In the final chapter, I will take this analysis one step further and focus on Derrida's radical understanding of futurity. The political tone of Derrida's philosophy is grounded on this understanding of the "to-come" of the future. According to Derrida, the future always harbors an unnamable, incomprehensible and unexpected reserve, and affirmation of this reserve is necessary to develop any politics that will keep the still-to-come of the future of the social open. This understanding of futurity has two bases in Derrida: an idea

of originary belief, a belief older than all religious discourse, and an idea of originary technicity which is an inevitable consequence of the generalization of writing. These two interwoven axes end up in a conception of a testimony, an experience of bearing witness, in the form of an act of faith that presupposes an elementary iterability, the necessary repeatability of a promise. For Derrida, the experience of bearing witness, as the experience of inheritance is the way in which any social bond is possible. Thus, in the last section of this chapter, I will argue that televised testimony is a point of intensification where the “to-come” of teletechnologies lies as a promise and a necessary risk.

2. SPECTERS AND INHERITANCE

The theme of inheritance that frequently appears in different forms and identities in late Derrida, appears as a hypothesis in *Specters of Marx* (1993), in connection with the more general ethical and political implications of Derrida's philosophy. The source of this hypothesis is twofold: first of all, the historical context it appears through is highly significant considering the stakes involved. It is, in a way, a response to a certain state and rhythm of politics that has developed through the immense expansion of teletechnologies. The second thread is the linkage where the notion of inheritance is opened to a broader set of relations in deconstruction. One may trace the general logic of deconstruction through this linkage. Thus, in this chapter I will try to explore these two interwoven axes without reducing the intricate associations between them: namely, the logic of specters as a manifestation of a broader deconstructive logic and the historical context in which the concept of inheritance appears.

2.1 Inheritance of Marx – Spectral Logic

Then, first of all the question of how Derrida constitutes his hypothesis on inheritance should be traced. In order to trace this question, I will dwell on what Derrida refers to the 'logic of specters'. In *Specters of Marx* (1993), Derrida follows a path to decipher the logic of specters, which reveals itself in

the works of Marx and deploys this logic to develop a critique against the dominant and hegemonic thesis that proclaims the death of Marx and communism in all domains of theory and practice, together with any use of Marxist discourse and its projections (1993, p.52). Derrida describes this thesis as the “tiresome anachronism” of the eschatological themes, such as the “end of history”, “ends of man” or “end of Marxism,” which have reigned the political and philosophical discourse in the 50’s (p.15). With the collapse of the Marxist regimes all over the world, these themes gained a hegemonic tone and became a thesis, which states that the thought of Marx is no longer living in this world and that this is proven by empirical evidence: the legacy of Marxism, as another historical period, has proved itself to be inaccurate; capitalism or the market has won over the thought of Marx or communism. The implications of this thesis can be observed in all domains or apparatuses of culture, which Derrida classifies as the actual politics or properly political discourses, the scholarly or academic culture and also, mass-media culture (1993, pp.52-53).

Derrida responds to this thesis by decoding and deploying spectral logic, which already exists in the works of Marx. In the simplest form, this logic may be defined as follows: death and, by the same token, life is not possible without specters, specters that are, that exist between life and death. The dead, the wholly other, never leaves life, it is never absolutely dead. Whether one is aware of it or not, the specters of Marx haunt us; and to announce the death of Marx and Marx’s thought so loudly shows that his specter had never left us. All these discourses are efforts to do away with his specters. Derrida’s

opening statement, question or demand in *Specters of Marx* (1993), that is “to learn to live” marks exactly this practice of living together with specters:

If it –learning to live- remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death alone. What happens between two, and between all the “two’s” one likes, such as between life and death, can only maintain itself with some ghost, can only talk with or about some ghost [s’entretenir de quelque fantôme]. So it would be necessary to learn spirits. Even and especially if this, the spectral, is not. Even and especially if this, which is neither substance, nor essence, nor existence, is never present as such. (p.xviii)

Hence the logic of specters is not at all limited to the thought of Marx; it is another form of a general deconstructive logic that remains in between the opposition of life and death or any other binarism. Derrida puts the opposition between life and death as one of the two’s in which the opposition results in a hierarchical leveling in favor of one side of the opposition, an opposition that enforces an either/or decision. In connection with a general deconstructive gesture, spectral logic interrupts this either/or decision between life and death by introducing the in-between or in-passage, an entity or a non-entity which is never present as such. Hence precisely because the specter is not substance, is always in-between absence and presence or never present as such, one should learn to be with them and this is the condition of a possible answer to the question or demand: “I would like to learn to live finally” (xvii).

In this respect, Derrida’s reading of Marx and specters can be mapped in a broader ethical path that follows the point of departure of deconstruction. Nonetheless, the distinctiveness of this reading lies in the historical context of the work. As Derrida mentions in an interview, it was a response to a specific

state of politics, to the extreme rhythm of the transformation of the public space, which has, not accidentally, taken place simultaneously with the transformation and evolution of mass-media and teletechnologies (1994, p.39). The enormous expansion of mass media, in a logic that is firmly tied to the laws of the market was determinative in such a strong and rapid avowal of the death of Marxism. Hence this was the reason why Derrida felt the need to “urgently rise up against the new anti-Marxist dogma” (1994, p.38) by bringing forth the question of specters and inheritance in Marx.

Thus, one can ask the following question at this point: how does Derrida bring forth the question of specters? For this ‘how’ opens up the question of specters to a broader field than the inheritance of Marx, although it takes root in this specific instance. One can trace this question in two interwoven planes; first, the field it opens up; spectral logic as a perspective that opens the “phenomenal form of the world” (1993, p.135) and second, where it sprouts from, the inheritance of Marx in the specific context that is mentioned above.

2.2 Plurality of Specters

The first precondition of inheritance can be found in the multiplicity of specters; specters are always in plural and heterogeneous and inheritance always occurs through engagements with certain specters, which manifest themselves through inherently contradictory injunctions. One should choose between a heterogeneous and contradictory plurality of specters, one should decide in what way he or she would engage with them and their injunctions. In this sense, inheritance is unavoidable; specters always force a condition of

responsiveness onto the inheritor. The advent of specters manifests itself as a call to respond, a call that is inherently contradictory. Yet this inherent contradiction complicates the nature of the response; although absolutely necessary, an active response to the injunction is never adequate. Derrida explains this deed of active response as filtering, sifting, criticizing and sorting out “the different possibles that inhabit the same injunction” (1993, p.16). Hence, precisely because these different possibilities are in contradiction (as Derrida reminds us this heterogeneous contradiction of an inheritance is what distinguishes it from dialectical opposition, as the “difference without opposition” or “a ‘disparate’ and a quasi-juxtaposition without dialectic” (p.16)), activeness should carry a possible risk. To put it in a different way, activeness, as a condition of inheritance, should harbor a deed that is beyond activeness. Active response, as the source of the deed, should harbor the necessary possibilities of its effects that may be beyond any active response. In an interview, Derrida formulates this hypothesis in a refined and clear way:

Hypothesis: there is always more than one spirit. To speak of spirit is immediately to evoke a plurality of spirits, or specters, and an inheritor always has to choose one spirit or another. An inheritor has to make selections or filtrations, to sift through the ghosts or the injunctions of each spirit. Where assignations are not multiple and contradictory, where they are not sufficiently cryptic to challenge interpretation, where they do not involve the unbounded dangers of active interpretation, there is no inheritance. Inheriting implies decisions and responsibilities. Without a double-bind, there is no responsibility. An inheritance must always include an undecidable reserve. (1994, p.39)

Therefore, there must be disjunction, contradiction or cryptic assignations, if there is inheritance. It is impossible to inherit or it is impossible to have a

future when there is “guaranteed translatability, given homogeneity, systematic coherence in their absolute forms” between the different possibles of injunctions (1993, p.35). In a form of a more general statement, Derrida also stresses that deconstruction is about connecting an affirmation of these necessary conditions to the “experience of the impossible,” that is, a “radical experience of the perhaps” (p.35). I will analyze this statement, together with the themes of double-bind and undecidability in order to expose the political and ethical implications of the notion of inheritance at a deeper level.

Inheritance is a notion that can be conceived as a very special figuration of a central theme in Derrida, which specifically marks the “undecidable reserve” of inheritance. This theme is named under the Greek term *aporia*, which Derrida preliminarily describes as “not to know where to go” or “what would come to pass” (1993a, p.12). It has many manifestations in Derrida’s thought, which implies the condition of any responsibility to be possible in a decision. It implies the necessary contradictory injunctions, which every responsible deed and decision must deal with. In Zeynep Direk’s description it is “the necessary coupling of the passage and the non-passage” (2002, p.220) through the experience of contradictory injunctions. Although it is possible to trace this theme in different ways, I will stick to two threads through which I can follow its implications; aporetic analysis of duty and the double logic of hospitality.

First of all, it should be remarked that *aporia* or the undecidability of the double bind does not signify the impossibility of a decision, a situation of

complete paralysis (1993a, p.32). Rather, Derrida refers to “the experience of aporia” as “neither stopping at nor overcoming” the contradictory imperatives that constitute the aporia (p.32). Hence a complete, total decision, a solution of the contradiction is impossible but at the same time, aporia is not not making any decision with regard to this impossibility. On the contrary, in this double logic, the impossibility of a total solution becomes the condition of a responsible decision. In order to explain this double logic in *Aporias* (1993), Derrida refers to the formulation of duty in his other texts such as *The Other Heading* (1992), “Passions” (1992) or *The Gift of Death* (1992). This formulation retraces the experience of duty as an aporia to come up with a term such as “over-duty”: if an action is a duty that follows the double logic of aporia, it should not be an unconditional devotedness to an imperative, to the program of an imperative. On the other hand, this imperative is the very condition of any duty; there can be no duty without any imperative. This inherent contradiction divides duty in itself; an action, if it “conforms to duty” or carries a “sense of duty” (1993a, p.16), in order not to reduce its contradiction, should exceed both of the conditions. Thus the action should break with the conditions in which it is formed, in order to be fulfilled as duty. Otherwise, if it is simply the application of a program of the imperative, it is not possible to say that a responsible decision is involved. It does not carry any risk and so involves no responsibility. Yet conversely, if an action or decision does not carry any norm or rule, it is also impossible to say that the decision carries a sense of duty. An infinite risk means the annulment of any responsibility. In this sense, action or decision should be in a relation of non-obedient obedience to the law of the imperative. Derrida calls this

relation an “over-duty,” which can be maintained by an action without norm but also, which carries the necessary risk of becoming a norm or “technical application of a presentable knowledge” (1993a, p.17). Hence the condition of a decisive and responsible duty is the interruption of any presentable knowledge, which manifests itself as an imperative but at once “maintaining a presentable relation to the interruption and to what it interrupts” (p.17).

This interminable tension between program and the interruption of the program is what constitutes any experience of aporia and, in this case, the experience of duty. To put it more precisely, it is the experience of both the passage and the necessary non-passage of the border between an absolute duty and over-duty. This is the reason why, aporia is the interminable affirmation of the im-possible passage. ‘Absolute duty,’ ‘imperative as the deployment of a program’ or ‘technical application of a rule;’ these concepts are fissured by their others, which are opposed to each of them and which fall beyond the border that determines each of them. Hence, the opposed other shifts the border between itself and its other and makes of it im-possible passage because what is beyond the border is already divided. Thus, in this sense, aporia is an interminable affirmation; it is the experience of borders that are infinitely divided, through the experience of passage (and a non passage) through the borders. In this respect, Derrida’s notion of experience gains a special importance in connection with aporia. An aporetic experience becomes an infinite ethico-political endeavor, a point of resistance against both ultimate, total decisions or absolute duties and also against the passivity

implied by never feeling any sense of duty or conforming to any duty (Direk, 2000, para. 11).

Hence the undecidable reserve of inheritance can be approached from this perspective. Derrida asserts that inheritance always manifests itself as a task (1993, p.54), so it is plausible to suggest that the aporetic analysis of duty is valid for inheritance as well. Active response, shifting, sorting and criticizing different possibilities of contradictory injunctions is indispensable as the imperative of inheritance. Yet responsibility comes not from these calculable instructions of inheritance but from the incalculable, undecidable reserve of the experience, the impossible experience of the task of inheriting. Besides, this reserve should not be thought as separate from the active response but activeness or decision should harbor undecidability. Hence, for Derrida, inheritance as such should also be an infinite ethico-political resistance. It is a resistance against the “unmasterable rhythm of political time imposed on us” (Direk, 2000, para.25), which always involves a program to master specters. If politics always struggles and copes with specters, always offers programs and rules in order to efface the plurality of specters, the experience of inheritance marks the interruption of this program, as in the case of over-duty.

At this point, one may refer to another aporia that would further complicate the concept of inheritance. This aporia, in a relation to Derrida’s argument on duty, concerns the experience of hospitality. Like duty, hospitality should comply with a double imperative, an inherently contradictory law. This law commands an unconditional acceptance of the other, an opening of the

border (Derrida denotes that a border does not just pass between concepts but also contents such as “territories, countries, states, nations, cultures, languages” (1993a, p.17)) in a way that accepts and welcomes anyone or anything. One should offer hospitality to the guest in a way that the guest would feel at home, like the inhabitant. Yet to follow this imperative with absolute fidelity would result with hospitality being completely abolished; if the border is infinitely open to anything, if the passage is possible to anyone or anything that allows the other to become just like the inhabitant, there remains no hospitality to offer since the guest also becomes the inhabitant. Thus, as in the case of duty, one should interrupt this imperative in a way that one could receive or welcome the guest “at once called, desired and expected but also always free to come or not to come” (1993a, p.11). The double-bind in the experience of hospitality is about not reducing the alterity of the coming other and at once offering hospitality.

What is the perspective that the experience of hospitality brings in about inheritance? This question will be discussed further in the last chapter but the connection should be briefly mentioned. The stake of the double logic of hospitality with regard to inheritance is related to the political field it opens up, as Derrida formulates it, to the politics of letting “the future have a future” (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.85). This logic requires a politics which determines the negotiation between contradictory imperatives that would open up inheritance to its future, to its still to come. In accordance with the experience of hospitality, this politics should negotiate between imperatives, such that an event is at once expected but also always free not to come.

Hence, this double-bind is a perspective that would be in parallel with the association between inheritance and “the messianic space,” which marks an aporetic experience of hospitality, that occurs through the coming of the singular event, an event that one can “neither reduce nor deny” (1994, p.11). I will return to the implications of messianic space in the third chapter.

The point reached should be clarified. I approached the logic of specters and inheritance in relation to aporetic experience, since it can be said that, by putting forth this notion, Derrida reveals a condition of being exposed to contradictory imperatives. This condition is determined by the state and rhythm of the dominant politics and inheritance may be considered as both an inevitable situation that is shaped by this rhythm and as a sign of a potentiality against this unmasterable rhythm. Taking into account that the logic of specters is, in a way, Derrida’s response to the transformation of public space and political atmosphere, the logic described above gains a concrete character. This point is important because it manifests the described logic for the case of Derrida as heir to Marx: Derrida approaches the interdependent transformation of teletechnologies and rhythm of politics by assuming the inheritance of Marx; but also by virtue of the very nature of inheritance, of responding to specters, his critique or interpretation transforms the Marxist critique itself. In this sense, although it would be wrong to consider Derrida’s perspective on teletechnologies as an independent detachment from Marx, it would also be equally wrong to ignore how Derrida transforms Marxist critique while inheriting it. Hence, the path

from Marx to Derrida should be traced a bit further, by keeping this remark in mind.

Derrida, in his categorization of the domains of culture (discourse of the political class, media discourse and academic discourse) which announce the death of Marxism, attributes media a special importance and uses broader terms such as tele-techno-sciences or teletechnologies, in order to refer to a force that binds these categories, that exceeds media as an institution. The power of the teletechnologies encapsulates these places or apparatuses of culture, since it inevitably dictates their rhythms of production and transmission in each and every domain, and this results in a homogenization of culture under hegemonic, dominant discourses. Although these domains are not totally homogeneous and involve complexities, techno-mediatic power causes both “politico-economic hegemony” and “discursive domination” to disperse in an unprecedented acceleration (1993, p.53). As Derrida puts it, this is “the new speed of apparition (we understand this word in its ghostly sense) the simulacrum, the synthetic or prosthetic image, and the virtual event, cyberspace and surveillance, the control, appropriations, and speculations” (1993, p.54). Derrida asserts that no resistance is possible against this new rhythm, unless one takes into account “so many spectral effects” (p.54).

Hence, this is one of the sources of the power of teletechnologies which exceeds, traverses all domains of culture; the power to accelerate the speed of apparition or to amplify the “spectral effect.” One should take this effect into consideration in order to develop a resistance against this power which

synchronizes public space with a rhythm that is determined by dominant politico-economic and discursive laws and the laws of the market. Spectral effects are the consequence of this inevitable, non-controllable rhythm, the programming of time by means of teletechnologies. Derrida uses a portmanteau word, “artifactual” time (1994, p.21) in order to refer this new commoditization of time. Through this artifactual time and by means of teletechnologies, specters are more apparent than ever, and the apparition is more invasive than ever. Thus, according to Derrida, one should learn specters, at this very age when they are in such a movement, when teletechnologies set free such powers to control, sift and sort out specters.

As Derrida points out, this analysis, the analysis of specters which calls for a vigilance against spectral effects should assume the inheritance of Marxism, or “its most living part” (1993, p.54). This recall is significant since it characterizes the way in which Derrida approaches Marx’s thought regarding the context constituted by teletechnologies. To think teletechnologies in a spectral logic is not merely and simply employing Marx’s thought as a tool but to assume the plurality of his specters, to assume that inheritance of Marx is also contradictory. Marx’s thought is not an instrument which has a totality and Marx’s heirs are not the receivers of this totality. Thus Derrida’s analysis of teletechnologies, which suggests that these technologies have a force that traverses the domain of culture in an immense acceleration by producing many spectral effects, assumes certain specters of Marx. By taking the contradictions into account, it pays attention not to close the future of Marx’s thought.

Hence, Derrida's approach to Marx reveals the central logic of inheritance. For Derrida, inheritance is not at all to stake a claim on a stock of goods, such as Marxism, but to make it survive. That is to say, inheritance is not an act of possession, which may occur through the operation of the verb *to have*; rather it occurs through the operation of the verb *to be*. By way of inheriting, one does not *have something* but one *is someone/something*. We find ourselves as heirs, before a legacy that precedes us and the inevitability of inheritance shows that in one way or another, we are always inheritors:

To be, this word in which we earlier saw the word of the spirit, means, for the same reason, to inherit. All the questions on the subject of being or what is to be (or not to be) are questions of inheritance. There is no backward-looking fervor in this reminder, no traditionalist flavor. Reaction, reactionary, or reactive are but interpretations of the structure of inheritance. That we are heirs does not mean that we have or that we receive this or that, some inheritance that enriches us one day with this or that, but that the being of what we are is first of all inheritance, whether we like it or know it or not. (1993, p.54)

When thinking this remark together with the discussion on duty, it is evident that inheriting Marx's thought against the artifactuality of media is a resistance to a rhythm. Yet this does not mean that one consciously chooses a heritage and receives something by way of inheriting. Derrida even notes that one does not choose a heritage but heritage "violently elects us," (as cited in Haddad, para.10) although one chooses to keep a heritage alive and to "recast [*relancer*] it otherwise" (as cited in Haddad, para.10). As Samir Haddad points out, '*relancer*' is a critical word, for it is polysemic and different layers of meanings point out to different dimensions involved in inheritance. '*Relancer*', first of all means "keeping the inheritance in play," signifying the active response involved in inheritance (Haddad, para.11).

Another meaning of the word is “sending away and/or sending on”, which indicates that inheritance is an opening to the future. It also has connotations of banishment and a sending to exile, which operates together with the meanings of “chasing an other anew” and “reprimand or admonish” (para.12). According to Haddad, these connotations and meanings carry a certain sense of aggression towards the heritage, or its alterity (para.13). Hence all of these meanings encompassed by the verb ‘*relancer*’ carries, depict inheritance as a task, which is not simply a conscious and innocent action or choice of receiving and enriching oneself. There is a necessary dimension of struggle in inheritance, which can also be traced in Derrida’s aforementioned question or demand, “learning to live.” Inasmuch as inheritance is a choice to keep an alterity alive, an other past which elects us, it regards the question of this “learning to live.”

To repeat what is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is possible to trace the question of inheritance and specter in this context through two interwoven paths; the first one is to trace how Derrida inherits Marxist critique so as to approach the transforming of public space and rhythm of politics; and the second one is the spectral logic that opens up to a broader deconstructive logic as “phenomenal form of the world.” Although there are more to be said about the first thread in a more actual political context, this task is beyond the scope of this thesis. Now, I will analyze a significant spectral effect that is amplified by teletechnologies, following mainly the second thread.

2.3 Specter as Phenomenal Form

One of the main questions of 'being' regarding the experience of inheritance is what Derrida calls the "visor effect" in reference to Hamlet. It marks the effects caused on us by the apparition of ghosts. When a specter becomes "visible in its invisibility," when we see it in its "almost visibility" we know that it is watching us (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.115). We do not exchange a gaze with the specter but we know that we are under surveillance. This is the sight of the wholly other, the gaze of the dead which always inspects us. In *Echographies of Television* (2002) Derrida explains this effect in detail:

The ghost looks at or watches us, the ghost concerns us. The specter is not simply someone we see coming back, it is someone by whom we feel ourselves watched, observed, surveyed, as if by the law: we are "before the law," without any possible symmetry, without reciprocity, insofar as the other is watching only us, concerns only us, we who are observing it (in the same way that one observes and respects the law) without even being able to meet its gaze. (p.120)

Hence when a ghost appears, when it is in the phenomenal world, our being also changes directly since at that moment the other "watches and concerns us" at our home. Definitely, the most evident form in which this effect manifests itself is through an image. Images are not only spectral because of their phenomenality but because they carry the possibility of the death of the seer; death is engraved in an image. Hence, in this way, images strengthen the non-reciprocity of specters: they always imply the possibility of death. This asymmetry complicates our relation to specters. They are not merely the non-entities that interrupt the oppositions between the "visible and invisible" or "sensible and insensible" (p.117). They also effect us by introducing their

gaze, the gaze of the wholly other. Besides, the fact that we are unable to exchange glances with them puts us in a position of “heteronomy” (p.122). The ghosts watch us, concern us everywhere and any time.

This fact brings forth the question of inheritance in a paradoxical form since this heteronomy is the very condition of any responsibility, any experience of inheritance (p.122). Inheritance is the way of being in the sight of the other without which there would be no *to be* and at the same time no responsibility would be possible. The gaze of the specter is a singular opening to the phenomenal world and I am who I am only insofar as I am under the gaze of the ghosts, the singular opening. In Derrida’s words: “I who am before him, I who am because of him, owing to him [l’autre est avant moi devant moi qui suis devant lui], owing him obedience [lui devant obéissance], incapable of exchanging with him (not even a glance)” (2002, p.122).

Hence the politics that accompanied the expansion of teletechnologies have not developed merely by controlling the plurality of specters, but in a certain respect by unleashing them. Acceleration of the “apparition of specters” (p.122) results in an effect that creates a sense that every act is visible and televised. Thus the domain of tele-media culture does not simply cause a problem of filtration or initialization of ghosts but it also brings about a problem of the transformation of our experience of inheritance itself. That is to say, it creates an excess of the visor effect.

Yet, one should be cautious at this point. Derrida’s position has nothing in common with any contra-technology position that would be the simple defence of the rejection of this excess. To the contrary, what Derrida develops

under the spectral logic shows that there is no conscious way of coping with these forces. It is not possible to simply isolate ourselves from the spectral effects which these technologies unleash and evade from acceleration. Without doubt, technology or, more specifically, teletechnologies are not merely extrinsic factors that have certain effects on us for Derrida. "Visor effect" marks exactly this point: it is not a specific effect of the teletechnologies, or of the photographic, cinematic, televised image; it designates the general nature of the experience of inheritance. It is the indispensable effect that one feels upon oneself, just by being before a past, before the other. What teletechnologies do is to amplify this effect; in this sense, if they condition a new situation for the experience of inheritance, they do it by virtue of perpetuating and intensifying an old tradition. This is the reason why Derrida is so careful to determine new entities introduced by new teletechnologies -such as televised image,- not as extrinsic instrumental entities that come out of nowhere and that have an absolute specific character but as new forms that disclose old, even archaic forces. Yet, this is also not to say that Derrida sees teletechnologies as ineffective; this would be a completely erroneous inference. One may argue that, what Derrida does, is to present the way in which these old forces unfold into new set of social, political, technical relationalities.

This argument requires further justification and this would bring us to a point where the broader set of conceptual associations in Derrida should be explored, regarding the theme of inheritance. For at the linkage between the visor effect and the experience of inheritance, there appear deeper questions

which Derrida explicitly problematizes in various different contexts. First of all, the question of writing as a technique, manifests itself at this juncture. Particularly the intricate relations between writing, technics and the social, and how Derrida conceptualizes these relations will shed light on what grounds the notion of inheritance. At this point, another philosopher, Bernard Stiegler who has a close dialogue with Derrida's thought also concerns us as well, for he particularly challenges Derrida's thought precisely at these junctures.

3. TECHNICS AND INHERITANCE

In this chapter, I will focus on the presentation of the tension between the notion of inheritance and technics in Derrida. For such a purpose, Derrida's conceptualization of general writing and its ramifications in terms of the technicality involved will be primarily discussed. Contesting the *logocentric* view of writing, Derrida employs a logic that will generalize writing so that it encapsulates even the field of experience and social relations. This would bring to the fore the question of the specificity of a species of writing in the restricted sense; a specific relation to a political and social field opened up by the specific character of a type of writing. Bernard Stiegler is the first to formulate and direct such a question to Derrida, both literally and regarding his own philosophical objectives. Following his direction, in the second part, I will explore Stiegler's intervention to the Derridean "grammatological project" in order to capture Derrida's intentions in his responses to Stiegler and, more generally, in order to clarify the political stakes involved in this whole discussion.

3.1 Writing, Technics and Inheritance

First of all, I will dwell on Derrida's formulation of the question of writing in order to move on to its relation with technics in general. Constituting a central axis in Derrida's philosophy, an explicit formulation of this question begins with

Of Grammatology (1967) and also *Writing and Difference* (1967), and continues in various instances such as *Margins of Philosophy* (1972) and *Dissemination* (1972). Especially in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida offers a detailed reading of the status attributed to writing in Western culture, as an auxiliary, exterior, supplementary means or instrument in the service of full speech, which is the primary representation of ideas, meanings, thoughts etc. All of these entities have the common ground of being self-present to a subject, that is to say, they are the absolute condition of true reason. In this regard, Derrida calls this dominant view in Western philosophy 'logocentrism' (Greek word *logos* connects the meanings of reason, "signification of truth" and "the spoken word" (Derrida,1976, p.11)), and analyzes its different implications through various texts by Saussure, Rousseau, Levi-Strauss etc. Yet Derrida does not analyze these texts solely for the sake of revealing the deeply rooted view in Western philosophy, but in order to develop a ground for transforming the notion of writing, to detach a general notion of writing from the teleological history of writing, so that it would be generalized to the extent of encapsulating the field that philosophy refers to as experience. Hence, I will explore what is meant by logocentric view, generalized writing and their relation to technics, starting with Derrida's analysis of an essay by Condillac entitled *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* in "Signature Event Context" (1982). This essay not only harbors a typical logocentric view of writing, but also addresses a very familiar terminology for us today, i.e. a terminology governed by an understanding of ideal communication.

As Derrida explains in detail, according to Condillac, there is a homogenous, purified space of communication that allows the transmission of meanings, contents, ideas without any interruption and this space or field of communication can be extended in a progressive way by technical means such as writing (p. 311). There is an autonomous, self-sustained “linguistic essence” that is waiting to be transmitted or communicated and progressions in modalities of communication, such as the progression from language of action to language of sound, and speech to writing, ending up in a regime that empowers the representational schema between thought, idea and signs. The essence of meaning or idea remains as it is, equal to itself through all these progressions, yet, mechanically, the signs become more economical in terms of efficient accessibility through space and time. Regimes of representation between ideas and signs are in a teleological movement that leads toward an optimal mechanical economy, which ideally would result in a system of signs that transmits the maximum amount of content, in the maximum level of accuracy and transparency in terms of the accordance between idea and sign and through the largest grid of space and time. Thus, Condillac concludes that history of writing is a history of replacements of modalities that result in “succinct abbreviations” of the system of signs, in the sense that the coming step of modality of communication or writing replaces the previous one as its “succinct abbreviation,” from the painting as the simplest analogy between sign and idea to the alphabet as the most refined one (p.313).

Derrida emphasizes that this analogical structure of linguistic essence and sign has another dimension; in this structure, writing can be identified as the form of

communication that is determined by the absence of the addressee. The producer of the written sign has an intention of creating signs that represents a present idea or an original presence to an absent addressee. It operates through a logic that determines a horizon of presence and transmits representational signs through this horizon and “supplements presence” (p.313). The core of this supplementary logic is that, it depicts a homogenous line of presence and extends it by a re-presentation to the non-present or absent. In reciprocity with the conception of original presence and its transparent representation, absence is an absolute non-presence of any addressee. The qualification of absence and presence in a homogenous level, results in a conception of a line of presence, in which writing is a kind of instrument that allows the inscriber to traverse and modify this line safely.

At this point, Derrida claims that this typical conception of writing is under the subordination of an idea of conscious communication of presences. For this typical conception, linguistic essence is always self-present and writing represents the linguistic essence in a way that extends the horizon of communication and presence. However, the first gesture of Derrida’s hypothesis is that, rather than extending the horizon of presence in a continuous way, writing breaks the homogeneous line and this trait can be generalized in any other form of sign, even a “non-linguistic sign” or even “what would philosophy call experience” (p.317). An absolute absence of any addressee or sender is inscribed in every sign, or even in every experience, which ontologically cannot be leveled as pure re-presentation of a consciousness. Derrida explains this hypothesis by way of a thought experiment; if there is a sign system which only

two subjects understand, only a sender and an addressee, and if both of the subjects cease to exist, can we still call this system of signs writing? Derrida's answer to this question is yes, because the absence of any subject as sender or addressee is already inscribed in a sign or a code at the moment it comes to existence. This is the reason why a code or a sign, a system of signs or codes, even when not a single subject on earth knows its content or its linguistic essence, is still readable or repeatable. Derrida refers to this 'still repeatable' of the sign under the notion of "iterability," that which links the repetitive structure of a sign to its alterity and constructs the sign in this linkage; "it [iterability] structures the mark of writing itself, and does so moreover for no matter what type of writing (pictographic, hieroglyphic, ideographic, phonetic, alphabetic, to use the old categories)" (p.315).

Thus, the death of the addressee or the sender, and consequently the absence of any referent is the very possibility of constructing the mark, sign, reference etc.; regardless of the type of writing, it is that which causes the alterity of the sign to survive and interrupts the continuity of presence:

All writing, therefore, in order to be what it is, must be able to function in the radical absence of every empirically determined addressee in general. And this absence is not a continuous modification of presence; it is a break in presence, "death," or the possibility of the "death" of the addressee, inscribed in the structure of the mark (and it is at this point, I note in passing, that the value or effect of transcendentalism is linked necessarily to the possibility of writing and of death). (p.316)

The absence of the referent is not only an effect of the death of the addressee but the possibility of the death of the addressee is, at the same time, the

possibility of the absence of the referent; yet this possibility is not accidental but necessary and constitutive. Derrida determines any “signifying form” as iterable since this necessary possibility does not cause the signifying form (mark, sign, reference etc.) to cease in any way (p.318). Reference is recognizable and repeatable or iterable even when the referent is lost, even in the extreme case of the secret code of the dead subjects, the hypothetical example that Derrida gives. In this regard, Derrida also asserts that there is no difference between the absence of the addressee and of the producer of the written mark (p.316). Hence the loss of the referent is not contingent; the loss is there in the very production of any signifying form. As Derrida denotes, “it [absence of the referent] constructs the mark; and the eventual presence of the referent at the moment when it is designated changes nothing about the structure of a mark, which implies that it can do without the referent”(p.318).

I should emphasize that the point where the possibility of writing is linked to the possibility of death, and as Derrida notes in passing, to the “value or effect of transcendental,” is the point where the notion of writing is opened up and generalized to encapsulate oral speech and even experience. For Derrida, the iterable character of writing can be found in spoken mark or experience; the repeatability of a mark in the absence of its producer or addressee, its potential to break with a context due to its essential iterability is not necessarily specific to the written mark. Hence, when this law of the written mark is generalized, the effect of transcendental temporality, a pure, conscious self-presence or experience becomes a possible outcome of iterability. Yet at this point one should be cautious not to reduce Derrida’s inference; he is not saying that

iterability is the trait of communication that constitutes a transcendental temporality, but he states that the *value or effect* of transcendentality is linked to the possibility of iterability. That is to say, there is no pure transcendentality but only its value or effect; and this effect can only be constituted by the generalizable trait of every mark, i.e. iterability.

This hypothesis brings to the fore a set of questions; first of all, it immediately calls for a question of the origin of writing since it strictly claims that all types of writing are part of broader “chains of differential marks” (p.318). Secondly, the question of the relation between writing and technics comes to the surface, since this generalized writing constitutes a tension between empirical technicality involved in writing and singular experience. And lastly, the question of teletechnologies and inheritance inevitably appears in this picture, if we conceive of these technologies as an epoch of writing, and inheritance as an experience in the Derridean sense.

Therefore, the phrase, ‘chains of differential marks’ which Derrida refers to, brings to the fore the question of origin: what is the primary, elementary mark in these chains? What is the mark prior to all differentiation, all intended signification? From within a logocentric view, this origin is a self-sustained, present-to-itself linguistic essence, and all differentiations in the means of communication are merely instruments that extend its accessibility. Yet, when Derrida suggests that there is no linguistic essence or pure presence before these differentiations, by the same token, the ideal of origin starts to erase itself. Differentiation itself becomes the origin but this origin is always already deferred and never present. This would bring us to the most apparent

formulization of the question of origin in Derrida, i.e. of *différance*: “if *différance* is (and I also cross out the “is”) what makes possible the presentation of the being present, it is never present as such” (1982, p.6).

Hence, by this detour, Derrida displaces the origin of signs, from linguistic essence to *différance*, and this move, first of all, imposes a reconsideration of the very origin of writing; it is no longer simply an origin but an originary field that is “never present as such.” That is to say, if writing, as we know it, is a species of “presentation of the being present,” its origin is inaccessible; hence, all types of writings or signs, regardless of their specificities, refer to a past which is an absolute break in presence and which composes the unity of presence in this very break. Derrida uses different terms interchangeably in order to refer to this field in different contexts: “it is this constitution of the present, as an ‘originary’ and irreducibly nonsimple (and therefore, *stricto sensu* nonoriginary) synthesis of marks, [...] that I propose to call archi-writing, archi-trace, or *différance*” (1982, p.13).

At this point where the question of the origin of writing connects to the constitution of the present, one could ask the status of the writing in the narrow sense, that is to say, the differentiations in the types of writing. Since if one assumes that present is constituted as a nonsimple synthesis of marks, then a present type of writing (as Derrida lists the old categories: pictographic, hieroglyphic, ideographic, phonetic or alphabetic) opens up a temporality, which is also nonsimple. In other words, the technicality involved in a type of writing, its specific repetitive character that connects it to a constitutive past, and at the same time to a future, becomes also a synthesis. Hence, as the purity

of the present is but a mirage, likewise, there is also no type of writing that is purely itself; for example, the 'least bad' of all types of writing, i.e. phonetic writing is never purely phonetic, there are irreducible non-phonetic elements in it: "So called phonetic writing, by all rights and in principle, and not only due to an *empirical or technical insufficiency* [my emphasis], can function only by admitting into its system nonphonetic 'signs' (punctuation, spacing, etc.)" (1982, p.5). Then, for Derrida, the impurity of the experience of the present, the impossibility of the transcendental now is also manifested in the impurity of writing; and it is caused by the "irreducibly nonsimple synthesis of marks" which necessarily implies an "empirical and technical insufficiency."

Insufficiency attributed to writing is not a negative trait in Derrida; to the contrary, a type of writing should be technically insufficient in order to function and this insufficiency is constitutive in any representational economy. Any writing, any mark is iterable in so far as it is technically insufficient. Yet, there arises another crucial result when Derrida refers to writing not in the restricted sense but in the generalized sense: empirical and technical insufficiency becomes the condition of experience. That is to say, since there is no experience prior to the "chains of differentiated marks" and these marks are always already technically insufficient, experience always depends upon an ill formed technicity.

This result is radical with regard to the discourse that is formed around the ideal of communication today. For this discourse is based upon the disavowal of any insufficiency regarding technics; its terminology perpetuates the philosophical tradition by using terms that emphasize accessible, precise,

transparent, immediate communication. That is to say, fully sufficient technologies progressively determine the new medium, in which linguistic essence is freely transmitted at any time to anywhere; one has access to anything, one sends or receives information, one communicates through presences without any limit in space and time. Hence, this understanding of communication and this infrastructure also determine the socio-cultural and socio-political conditions in all possible ways. Concluding “Signature Event Context,” Derrida touches upon certain arguments of famous media theorist Marshall McLuhan in a general tone, as an example of this discourse and of the way in which this discourse has a direct import on the social:

We are not witnessing an end of writing which, to follow McLuhan’s ideological representation, would restore a transparency or immediacy of social relations; but indeed a more and more powerful historical unfolding of a general writing of which the system of speech, consciousness, meaning, presence, truth, etc., would only be an effect, to be analyzed as such. It is this questioned effect that I have elsewhere called logocentrism. (p.329)

As Richard Dienst points out in citing this passage, one of the central issues concerning the complexity of general writing is “social relations” (p.134). The inextricability of writing from a movement of *différance*, its iterable structure and constitutive technical insufficiency determine the nature of experience; and in a general way, this experience is an experience of social relations; otherwise, why would logocentrism ascribe a priority and superiority to speech? From within a logocentric view, speech is the ‘ideal’ condition of any social relation to be constituted. Hence, general writing, unfolding in this historical epoch as modern teletechnologies, is an amplification of all these traits that accordingly

bring to life a “social text” or a “general socius” (Dienst, p.134); and this text is not a transparent medium of calculable meanings, communication of consciousnesses, exchange of ideas; but it is an entangled, heterogenous complex of layers of marks, references without referents, that are always in a movement without a *telos* (such as a transparent medium) and always technically insufficient.

At this point, one could argue that what Derrida develops under the notion of inheritance in a context of teletechnology, and particularly televised image, is rooted in this general structure. Since televisual or photographic reference produces a spectral effect at the moment it is produced, it is an amplification of the effect of “reference without referent.” In a rhythm determined by televisual technologies, the referent is always lost, extracted from its context but there is always a sequential move of references that continues to function at higher speed. Inheritance in the age of televisual technologies is determined by the fact that the social text is a televised text; it cannot be extracted from the effects of this “powerful historical unfolding of a general writing.”

This is the reason why the tension between inheritance and technics is a tension of iterability. Derrida depicts inheritance not as the receiving of something, for example a self-sustained linguistic essence, an intentional message; but *to be something*, to be in an aporetic experience. If we assume that the experience of inheritance necessarily inhabits in the general social text, iterability becomes the law of this experience. To formulate it more clearly, in order “to be” an inheritor, there needs to be a technical possibility of repetition; but this possibility also endangers, or breaks with inheritance itself, since a perfect

repetition, a repetition that is not connected to any alterity is the elimination of any possibility of inheritance.

... technics is, taken by itself, and all by itself, a threat to inheritance. Now, at the same time, the opposite is also true: without the possibility of repetition, of reprise, of iterability, and therefore, without the phenomenon and the possibility of technics, there would not be inheritance either. There is no inheritance without technics. Inheritance therefore stands in a relation of tension to technics. A pure technics destroys inheritance, but without technics, there is no inheritance. This is why inheritance is such a problematic and, ultimately, aporetic thing. (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.87)

One can infer from the above passage that, for Derrida, technics in general and modern teletechnologies in particular have levels of technicity, that there is a border between pure and impure technics and the locus of this border is determined by the condition of impossibility of inheritance. Yet there remains a question to be asked: whether and how the levels of impurity in technics can be determined in terms of the conditions of inheritance. In fact I have already started to explore this question but it should be carried out in a more particular manner, since what was referred to as the connection between iterability and social text opens up broader questions about technics and the political implications of these relations.

For such a purpose, I will refer to Bernard Stiegler's works which particularly focus on this question, both by following the path opened up by Derrida and breaking this path at a critical point. Hence, by tracing the junctures at which Stiegler diverges from Derrida's conceptualization of generalized writing, and the general tone of Derrida's responses to these junctures in the long interview

conducted by Stiegler, I aim to shed light upon the associations between the political explications of this discussion in a more explicit manner.

3.2 Stiegler's Break: Specificity of Writing

The idea of the necessity to grant the rights of the question of *tekhne*, which is generally renounced in Western philosophy, constitutes the main point of departure of Stiegler's philosophy. Stiegler's observation is that starting with Plato and until nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which coincide especially with the emergence of the philosophies of Marx and Heidegger respectively, the question of *tekhne* has been considered to be secondary; technical objects and their relation to humans has not been the object of a thorough philosophical reflection. Hence, in this regard, Stiegler makes extensive readings of names such as Heidegger, Husserl, Barthes, Simondon, Leroi-Gourhan, Rousseau, Derrida etc. in his multi-volume work *Technics and Time*, and orients his philosophical investigations towards the constitutive role played by technical objects in the human evolution.

According to Stiegler, this process of hominization cannot be thought by isolating the human from the technical; to the contrary, the distinctive character of the human species is that it has access to time by means of technical objects. Hence, these material supports of consciousness, technical objects or a special term Stiegler uses to refer to these objects, "organized inorganic matter" is constitutive of the temporalization of the human. This term specifically marks the core of Stiegler's most basic argument; the human species not only gives form to or organizes inorganic matter, but the given form, or the type and

structure of organization extends and encapsulates the human itself. Organization of the inorganic matter determines the organization and also the disorganization of the temporality of man, which necessitates that the evolution of matter be included in the evolution of man. Therefore the question of the human origin is dislocated in a way that the question concerns the complex of both the human and the technical object: “the zootechnological relation of man to matter” (Stiegler, 1994, p.49).

In this sense, the promise and the risk of Stiegler’s argument can be found in his reconsideration of the aporia of the origin of man; human species, by its origin, produces a field to investigate the empirical transformations in the relation between man and technics. As Beardsworth observes, “... this articulation of matter as organized inorganic matter both accounts for the aporia of the origin (suppressed by Plato and the tradition of philosophy) and allows for a history of human culture as the history of the differentiations within the originary complex human-technical object” (1995, p.5). Thus the idea of the aporia of origin, or as Stiegler calls it, the “default of origin” reveals the play between the oppositions such as “nature vs. culture,” “ideal vs. material” or, above all, “transcendental vs. empirical” in terms of the technical object and allows Stiegler depict the history of technological breaks, and by the same token, the leaps in the temporalization of time, in terms of the consequences that this play causes (Beardsworth, 1995, pp.4-6). If the origin of man can not be determined by excluding some sort of technicity, and, conversely, if the origin of technics in general can not be thought in an autonomous way, then it is impossible to assert that technics as prior to man or, vice versa. Equally, it is impossible to mark

technical phenomena as purely empirical or transcendental, and for Stiegler, this would call a reconsideration of the history of life via technics, “the pursuit of the evolution of the living by other means than life” (1994, p.135). Then, it would not be wrong to say that the most important basis of Stiegler’s philosophy, starting with an analysis of the question of origin, is to reveal the play between the transcendental and the empirical opposition, in a way that would reorient the question of technics towards a constitutive place regarding the play and in a way that would lead to a re-reading of the history of technics, and most importantly, of modern tele-technologies. However, this basis is not as self-explanatory and as un-problematic as it seems; there appears a series of arguable problems regarding Stiegler’s reading of Derrida. This reading is one of the primary and dominant paths that constitutes Stiegler’s intuition on the question of technics. These problems will be discussed further in the following section.

The reading of the history of technics, focusing on the transformations that occur through technological evolution and the conditions of emergent specificities of the complex of human and “organized inorganic matter” in certain technological epochs constitutes the radical break between Stiegler and Derrida. This break first of all takes roots in Stiegler’s displacement of the opposition between transcendental and empirical as put forth by Derrida regarding writing and, in an interrelated way, in Stiegler’s reading of Derridean *différance* as the history of life. It should also be noted that these two interwoven axes are also the sources of the divergences between the two philosophers’ approaches towards the relation between philosophy and the

political, especially in terms of the determinative role that each philosopher attributes to technology in general and teletechnologies in particular, in an actual political context.

To follow the first axis: as it is mentioned, for Derrida, writing, starting with the transition from speech to writing, cannot simply be established by positing its historical epochs; all sorts of system of signs or marks, all sorts of languages or even experience are determined by a generalized form of writing, i.e. arche-writing. Arche-writing or arche-trace cannot be reduced to the empirical forms of writing and the epochal transformations that writing has gone through; yet it is what makes these contingent emergences possible. Although it does not rely on any “sensible plenitude,” it constitutes the conditions of the empirical facticity of writing and hence the system of signs as the sensible, the types of writing in which the “gramme [written mark] appear as such” (Derrida, 1976, p.84). Then, arche-trace, or arche-writing is not sensible yet it constitutes a logic that enables the emergence of any system of writing, any supplement of memory; as Stiegler indicates in his article on Derrida and technology, “ ... it is the structure of elementary supplementarity” (2001, p.253). It marks an originary (elementary) field that constitutes the conditions of these emergences and a force that erases the originary field by this very constitution. It is not empirically determinable but, nevertheless, it gives access to any empirically determinable system of signs; hence, in this sense, Derrida characterizes the status of arche-writing as “quasi-transcendental” (Stiegler, 2001, p.247).

The depiction of the arche-trace as a “quasi-transcendental” field is critical for Stiegler, since the “quasi” anticipates the play between the empirical facticity of

writing and its transcendality; “quasi” is an opening that allows Stiegler to unveil the opposition and reassess the history of technics in light of this unveiled opposition. According to Stiegler, this “quasi” status is caused mainly by two reasons; (1) arche-trace marks an ordinary or elementary logic of supplementarity, which amounts to say that “there is no origin” or the “origin is lacking”; and (2) “the supplement is always already materialized, while never simply being material” (2001, p.254). Thus, the logic of the supplement, by distinguishing arche-writing from writing, builds itself by determining arche-writing as originary (or elementary) and the historical appearance of writing, or different systems of writing as accidental. In this sense, the first reason may be mapped as the point, where Stiegler carries the opposition directly to the question of technics via his depiction of the originary complex of the technical and the human; on the other hand, the second reason is where Stiegler finds the starting point of a schema to link the hypothesis of the originary technicity to a reading of the history of technics. The material supplement and its accidental history, which has a quasi-transcendental status for never being simply material, becomes essential for Stiegler. Hence, Stiegler takes this quasi-transcendental status as a guide, in order not to fall into the traps of empiricism and transcendentalism in carrying out the history of the material supplement.

Following this guide and by bringing to the fore the material supplement in all its guises as the central object of his philosophy, Stiegler claims that this path would lead to two main fundamentals: (1) the material supplements of memory, or as the term coined by Stiegler after his analysis of Husserlian phenomenology, i.e. “tertiary memory”, give access to the past that has been

present, by re-presenting a past-present of someone dead and this empiricity is constitutive of a transcendental temporality; (2) and yet, this re-presented past is never full and absolute, which indicates, in Derrida's words, an "originary trace" that "destroys its name" (as cited in Stiegler, 2001, p.255); that is to say, a quasi-transcendental field that is constitutive of the empirical appearances of writing in the narrow sense, but never present as such. Hence, this would allow Stiegler to make a distinction between the logic of the supplement and the history of the supplement in a distinct way that both allows him to establish the history of technics as the history of supplement, while keeping the "originary trace" or "the default of the origin" as non-accessible, as the "absolute past" of this history;

If arche-writing and the logic of the supplement are to be distinguished from the history of the empirical supplements, it is primarily because an absolute past constitutes the impossibility of approaching the trace in terms of a mark, the impossibility of folding arche-writing back upon its irreducible empiricity (made concrete in the history of the supplement) ... It is this absolute and unnamable past that forbids one (it is the law – and the undeconstructible justice beyond law (le droit)) from reducing *différance* to technics. (2001, pp.255-56)

Before coming to the last remark in this passage, the point where Stiegler radically departs from Derrida within this context should be clearly indicated. It should be clear that the general intuition behind Stiegler's philosophical endeavor is highly indebted to the logic of supplement and the notion of arche-writing. Nonetheless, Stiegler identifies a problematic dimension in this notion, which constitutes his point of departure for an analysis of the differences between modalities of writing, a zoom into the specificities of the empirical

types of different supplements of memory. Stiegler coins a special term for these characteristics; the “effectivity” of the supplement, that “designates the historical and contingent unfolding of the effects of supplementarity” (2001, p.267). Thus, for Stiegler, arche-writing, while enabling *gramme* to appear as such, also conceals the differences between effects of supplements. Although generalized writing specifies that all memory supplements inevitably refer to an “absolute past” which is non-accessible, and links the possibility of writing and death (one may note in passing that it can also be read as the specter that is not present but that does not yield itself to absence as it is) to transcendality, it tends to cause a loss in the specificities of empirically determinable effectivities of different systems of writing. Hence, Stiegler points out that if speech is always already writing, or if cuneiform can be characterized as phonetic and ideographic, the effectivity of writing and different types of writing in the narrow sense becomes nearly unrecognizable.

Effectivity refers here to the empirically recognizable interference of a system of writing in constituting temporality and accentuates a point of juncture, in which the questions of writing, technics and instrumentality merge. Stiegler mentions this point in his article, without referring directly to the notion of effectivity, by quoting passages from *Of Grammatology* (1976) where Derrida claims that the notion of technics is not adequate to illuminate the notion of writing; and that instrumentality can only work to explain writing in as much as the “question of the meaning of instrumentality” is reconsidered (Stiegler, 2001, p.252). Hence, Stiegler’s response to these claims is to revise the notion of technics and instrumentality, so that he can shed light on the historical

differentiations in the domain of writing in a new, inventive way. However, this would only be possible by a problematization of the notion of arche-trace, since according to Stiegler it creates a risk of effacing the specific effectivity of a system of writing, which is most evident in the case of the effectivity of phonological writing. Stiegler explains at length the reason behind this problematization in the second volume, entitled *Technics and Time: Disorientation* (2009):

Grammatology lays out a logic of the supplement in which supplementary accidentality is originary. The history of the supplement must be understood as awkward, accidental history whose result would be an essential-becoming of the accident – but which would also require speaking of an accidental-becoming of essence. But is the grammatological project not weakened in advance in frequently blurring phonological writing’s specificity, in suggesting that most of the time virtually everything that takes place in it was always beforehand, and in not making this specificity a central issue (and does all of grammatology not, in a certain sense, necessarily banish just such a question)? Does this not bring up the possible objection that in the end, the supplement will really not have been? (p.30)

As it can be inferred from this passage, by making specificity and effectivity a central issue, Stiegler does not simply generalize and apply the logic of the supplement but radically transforms it into something else by strictly distinguishing the logic of the supplement and its history. He defines the blind spot of the “grammatological project” and calls back the question it expels accordingly: what is the specific effect of the emergence of phonological writing or any system of writing in general? For Stiegler, even if Derrida, by introducing the notion of arche-writing, succeeds to show that the privilege and superiority ascribed to phonetic writing is a manifestation of a broader indication inherent

in Western culture, i.e. logocentrism and connectedly anthropocentrism; in the same movement he prevents one from determining a specificity in phonetic writing, “as if it were impossible to state any specificity that would not immediately claim superiority” (p.30).

This point can be marked as the juncture, where the most basic problematic of the “grammatological project,” i.e. logocentrism, is tied up with the question of technics in Stiegler. Since linear alphabetic writing is the closest to speech and in this sense the least supplementary, logocentric view puts this specific type of writing to a superior level in a general teleological movement. This view is not merely a statement about how closer phonetic writing is to self-presence, but, as Derrida shows, it is part of a broader discourse, which produces an entity of human as a species that is superior to any other species, by its capacity to communicate on a level that is closer to a level of full, self-sustained presences and re-presentations. As Stiegler also observes, “to privilege alphabetic writing is to privilege man: ‘phono-logocentrism’ is always anthropo-logocentrism, whatever philosophy may say on the subject in general” (1994, p.136).

On the other hand, for Stiegler, this broader discourse offers another significance; by opposing speech to writing, one not only opposes man to animal but also opposes man to technics (p.136). This is the reason why Stiegler declares that the idea of absolute past forbids one from reducing “technics to *différance*,” which would be to evade the complexity of the origin, the inaccessibility of absolute past. This move would result in a simple reversal of the opposition: rather than privileging an essence of man opposed to technics, it is simply determining technics as the absolute origin of man. Stiegler avoids this

simple reversal since his arguments are not based on a hierarchy between the sides of the oppositions of technics against man or writing against speech. As one of the two axes of his overall investigations – namely the technical default of origin of man and the differentiations of temporality in the history of technics, – he is after the question of the conditions of these oppositions, the very question of its formation. Yet, there remains a question to be asked at this point: is it possible not to reduce the complexity of origin, which can be referred to as arche-trace or *différance*, when there is such a polarization concerning the central issue of this inquiry; when on the one hand, there is the question of the origin before the opposition; and on the other, the specificity of restricted writing?

This question would bring us to the second interwoven point of Stiegler's detour, which is declared before the above formulization of the problematic, in volume one of *Technics and Time*; although the irreducibility of the absolute past, which is referred to by arche-trace, does not allow reducing *différance* to technics, it does not prevent Stiegler from strictly reading *différance* as the history of life. Stiegler establishes his argument based on a passage from *Of Grammatology*, where Derrida discusses Leroi-Gourhan's (a paleoanthropologist who is an important reference for both Derrida and Stiegler) conception of program. As mentioned by Derrida, Leroi-Gourhan explains the "unity of man" as a phase in the history of life, "as the history of the gramme[written mark]," rather than "by the simple possibility of the graphie [manner of writing] in general" (p.84). In this sense, Leroi-Gourhan introduces the notion of program in order to indicate a system which exceeds and

encapsulates any particular form of writing attributable to man. Hence, without employing any of the concepts such as “intelligence, speech, society” etc. to classify man, Leroi-Gourhan sets up a non-anthropocentric anthropological theory based on the notion of program which plays an important role in Derrida’s notion of arche-trace. Arche-trace formulates a logic that allows seeing any form of writing in the restricted sense as manifestations of the differences between forces at work in a field beyond consciousness, and in this way, changes the significance of writing even in the narrow sense. Rather than an external means to man, writing becomes a program, which implies a process of “exteriorization” of life (p.84). Then, Derrida follows Leroi-Gourhan in this line of thought and asserts that all empirical appearances of the *gramme* as such, “beginning from the elementary programs of so-called ‘instinctive behaviour’ up to the constitution of electronic card-indexes and reading machines, enlarges *différance* and the possibility of putting in reserve: it at once and in the same movement constitutes and effaces so-called conscious subjectivity, its logos, and its theological attributes” (1967, p.84). Hence, in this context, Derrida notes in passing that *différance* is this history of life as the history of the *gramme*.

As the point of departure of his argument, Stiegler pinpoints this definition in the first volume of *Technics and Time*: “Derrida bases his own thought of *différance* as a general history of life, that is, as a general history of the *gramme*, on the concept of program insofar as it can be found on both sides of such divides” (1994, p.137). Following this definition, Stiegler reads *différance* as a concept at work, which challenges the oppositions between animal/human,

nature/culture or man/machine and as a field that allows him to pass from *gramme* to technics. According to Stiegler, *différance* as the history of life not only opens up the path to the thought of the technical-human complex, where each continuously invents one another in a “transductive relation” (Stiegler borrows this concept from Simondon, which he explains as “a relation that constitutes its terms, the terms not existing outside the relation” (2001, p.259)) but also calls one to delve into the conditions of this mutual invention.

We are left with the question of determining what the conditions of such an emergence of the *gramme* as such are, and the consequences as to the general history of life and/or of the *gramme*. This will be our question. The history of the *gramme* is that of electronic files and reading machines as well – a history of technics – which is the invention of the human. As object as well as the subject. The technical inventing the human, the human inventing the technical. (1994, p.137)

Hence, the totality of the crucial break that Stigler establishes can be understood in this respect. Since Stiegler’s argument is twofold – as the account of the originary technicity of man and a history of technics, – the question of the conditions of the emergence of consciousness rises to the surface; that is, the temporality of man constituted through the technical object, the moment of the invention of man by the technical. Yet, this question inevitably causes a reduction in the complexity of the origin, the field that Derrida marks with *arche-trace* and *différance*. Moreover, the ceaseless and insistent emphasis on determining the conditions of the leaps in the history of technics, the effort to map the specificities of technical epochs and their political, social consequences, despite all the promising analyses of the epochs of the image object (photographic, cinematographic, real-time image object etc.) as the determinant

object of modernity, produces a series of problems regarding the overlapping dimensions of the two basic axes of Stiegler; namely the reformulation of the originary technicity and history of technics.

Various critics draw attention to these problems which arise in Stiegler's reading of Derrida and its symptoms in his overall deconstructive logic. Geoffrey Bennington utters an objection against Stiegler's assimilation with the logical description of *différance* to Derrida's contextual description as life in general. Bennington asserts that Stiegler falls into a positivism and a humanism, while insisting on determining the conditions of the *gramme* as such and delimiting his overall arguments in a frame where the hypothesis of originary technicity and claims about the history of technics become equivalent, as if these two axes could be developed at the same level (pp.168-169). In this regard, he characterizes Stiegler's effort as, "the most refined example to date of the confusion of the quasi-transcendental (originary technicity) and transcendental contraband (technics)" (p.171).

Following a parallel line of thought, Ben Roberts too criticizes Stiegler's account of *différance*, which presents *différance* as a "conceptual unity" that can function to "oppose a non-anthropocentric concept of man to an anthropocentric one" (para.13). Roberts reminds that, in the essay "*différance*," Derrida insistently refers to *différance* as "neither a word nor a concept" (1982, p.7), and for this reason he finds Stiegler's presentation of it as highly problematic. According to Roberts, by this sort of functional usage of *différance* as a conceptual unity that contests metaphysical oppositions such as animal/human or nature/culture, Stiegler cannot escape from producing the

same metaphysical oppositions, which he allegedly opposes. Roberts justifies his claim by showing the underlying assumptions in Stiegler, such as the designation of the “life as the economy of death” particular only to man and “only after the rupture of the technical;” (para.9) or taking inorganic and non-living as simply synonymous, while making a distinction between organic and inorganic matter (para.10).

Although his position is not that rigorous against Stiegler, since he is less interested in a singular Stiegler “as survivor or inheritor of Derrida” (p.57), Ulrik Ekman too observes an asymmetry in *Technics and Time* (especially in the second and third volumes) that bends toward a positively empirical and historical analysis of the technical objects that obscures Stiegler’s relation to the transcendental, in spite of his accent on the quasi-transcendental status of technics (p.50). Ekman also detects the reason behind this asymmetry as Stiegler’s delimitation of *différance* and suggests that it causes him “to push an otherwise quasi-transcendental analysis towards a positive scientifico-empirical affirmation of technology and technical entities” (p.51). Although this affirmation leads Stiegler even to attribute technical objects or “tertiary memory” a self-sustained autonomy as the “organized inorganic matter,” Ekman points out that this approach to the history of technology is highly delimited, mostly focusing on photography or contemporary developments in visual recording; furthermore, when it comes to the developments that can be classified under techno-science and life sciences, Stiegler remains unconcerned about the efforts in science studies (p.55). Hence, according to Ekman, Stiegler cannot fulfill his promise in giving an account of evolutionary process of the

human-technical complex, which “remains conceptually underarticulated and considerably less differentiated than was already the case” (p.55). Nonetheless, beyond all underdeveloped justifications and problematic symptoms of certain of Stiegler’s arguments, which he analyzes in detail, Ekman also grants the importance of Stiegler’s overall project, relying on his “more or less aporetic oscillation of speed between the “(quasi-)transcendental and the (quasi-)empirical” (p.60); since this oscillation, according to Ekman, triggers the question of the mutual relationship between *tekhne* and *anthropos* today in a particular, atypical and inventive way, beyond merely exhaustive concerns about the new acceleration brought forth by technics.

Although I share Ekman’s concern about examining Stiegler’s works solely based upon his reading of Derrida, in order not to lose focus, I would like to stick to this axis. These objections to the appropriation or assimilation of Derridean *différance* or arche-writing in Stiegler may be to a certain extent legitimate; yet when they strongly appropriate a discourse that unveils Stiegler’s erroneous reading, they remain at the level of showing what he himself intended to do. Although it is not deprived of contradictions or problems, his reading of Derrida constitutes Stiegler’s very rupture and promise. In this sense, he does not claim to be a thoroughly faithful disciple of Derrida, though he is absolutely aware of his debt to Derrida’s thought, more than anyone else. In an interview conducted by Peter Hallward, Stiegler utters the nature of his relation to other philosophers with whom he is in dialogue – by giving reference to the words of the actor and director Sacha Guitry regarding women: “as far as I am concerned, one can only have a dialogue with

a philosopher in so far as, 'one is against the philosopher, right up against him': you are very close to him, but to be close to him, you must not be him" (2003, p.156). In this sense, I would like to stress that, if one wishes to understand in what sense exactly Stiegler is "right up against" Derrida, it is rather unpromising to label this connection merely as a misreading, since the point where Stiegler feels the urge to intervene can serve as a reference point for us not only in understanding Stiegler's general intention but also in mapping the stakes involved in the dialogue between these two philosophers and – considering the scope of this thesis– especially Derrida's position in a political context.

Therefore, at this point, one can ask the following question, even if this move would carry a risk of bypassing several problems: what is the intention behind Stiegler's intervention to the "grammatological project"? Or to formulate it in another way, why does Stiegler insist on the specificity of phonetic writing, or any other modality of writing in the narrow sense? As it is discussed, this project is an incomplete project for Stiegler, to the extent that it blurs the specificity of phonetic writing and, consequently, any other restricted system of writing. Several answers can be given to these questions but, presumably, the most apparent reason is his will to determine the specificity of this age in terms of writing as a technique, without falling into either empiricism or transcendentalism; in his words, in an "a-transcendental" way (2003, p.165). For Stiegler, this description indicates that, although the questions that he is dealing with proceed from the transcendental, his questioning does not accept the distinction between the transcendental and the empirical, since, according

to him, our era contests the distinction between the transcendental and empirical. The cause of this situation is obvious for Stiegler: technics as the main determinant of the modern era and teletechnologies, modern modalities of archivization as the dominant sub-category of technics. Moreover, even in this sub-category, the image produced by technical apparatus gains particular significance, even autonomy, as a form of writing in Stiegler. Not only in the second volume of *Technics and Time*, but also in his essay entitled “Discrete Image” (2002), he analyzes this sub-category of technics and the most pervasive temporal-object that is attributed to it, namely the image-object in great detail. Hence, it would not be wrong to say that image-object or tele-image is a crucial factor in rendering the distinction between empirical and transcendental irrelevant for Stiegler. It can even be claimed that Stiegler’s will to determine the specificity of the tele-image is the main engine working his intervention to the “grammatological project.”

However, this explanation gives only a partial account of the intention behind Stiegler’s detour, since it is strongly tied up with a political concern. For Stiegler, these analog, digital and analogico-digital technologies of the image object have caused a process of “industrialization of memory,” although it is not strictly limited to these. (Stiegler’s list includes technics of virtual reality, internet, biotechnologies; all kinds of exact recording and archiving instruments.) He describes this process as a situation of crisis, “a war of speed” (1994, p.276), since all the criteria of selection and judgment are also industrialized as a result of the temporal acceleration caused by this process. In this sense, Stiegler enunciates the essentialness of a “politics of memory,” which

knows the specificity of this mode of writing, the possibilities of the new reflexivity it provides; and in this way he calls for a politics that is capable of inventing a more open connection to the future. Based on an analogy between the social and political conditions that emerge with writing and modern teletechnologies, Stiegler believes that a “politics of memory” can only be established, if an instrumental and critical culture of tele-image is developed.

This is the point where the theme of inheritance directly rises to surface again. What Stiegler refers to as the politics of memory can also be read as a politics of inheritance. However, Stiegler’s problematization of the grammatological project cannot be evaluated as an isolated move, for it transforms the significations and connotations of the notion of inheritance in the Derridean sense. As it would be expected, Derrida does not remain silent as regards these significations and connotations. Especially in the long interview made by Stiegler (certain passages from this interview are already mentioned several times,) he responds to Stiegler’s questions about the specificity of teletechnologies and politics of memory in a suspicious way to say the least. In Beardsworth’s description, this difference is manifested as a “tension” between their standpoints, although this tension is never properly articulated through the interview (1998, para.5). Nonetheless, certain moments in this interview deserve a closer look, since Derrida’s responses reveal his perspective regarding the field, where the questions of technics and of the political converge today.

3.3 Derrida's Responses: Memory vs. Forgetting

At a certain point in *Echographies of Television* (2002), Stiegler asks Derrida a question about developing an instrumental culture of film and television, where the question of technics is continuously under reconsideration by political and juridical practices (2002, p.61). In this question Stiegler makes an analogy between writing and televisual technologies in order to indicate how writing is part of the instrumental culture at school but that contemporary tele-technologies are not yet that instrumentalized. In a more general way, he states that Western tradition takes technique under the category of means rather than taking it as an actively participating element in the constitution of ends, complying with a purely instrumental view of technique. Stiegler also adds that he introduces this theme, having in mind all that Derrida has developed under two terms, "inheritance and spectrality" (p.62).

In his answer, Derrida agrees with Stiegler on the necessity of the development of an instrumental culture and a politics of memory with regard to modern modalities of archivization and televisual apparatus. Thus, he grants the importance of instrumentality for inheritance and this question is even more important in the case of televisual instruments, since the level of precision, accuracy and at the same time the possibility of precise and accurate manipulation or synthesis renders an instrumental knowledge indispensable, in order to develop an open politics of memory. That said, Derrida is quite attentive to designate the limits of this instrumentality and the dangers of "pure" instrumentality. He reminds that instrumental knowledge of televisual technologies, as in the case of writing, is not identical with the knowledge of a

technique. Hence, instrumentality is never adequate to develop a critical culture, if critique is reduced to objectivity and he gives the example of language to show this: one who speaks a language (listing different kinds of language such as everyday language, political language etc., Derrida gives a special importance to the relation between poetic language and its practitioner) does not stand in an objective, instrumental relation to it, such as being a user of that language (pp.63-64). This is not to say that language is not technical but that technique cannot be fully objectified. Hence, Derrida reminds Stiegler that one cannot use one's memory in a totally instrumental way; there is a beyond which cannot be explained by mere instrumental practice or by usage. This would lead Derrida to especially mark a "thought of a critique" that would be superior to critique, which should always accompany any politics of memory. Derrida also adds that the necessity of a politics of memory or even of memory in general can never objectively or critically proven:

The "it is necessary" ["il faut"] we are talking about is itself not critique-able, it is not objectifiable. Why it is necessary to have a memory, in the end? You are never going to prove that memory is better than nonmemory. What is more, memory includes forgetting. If there is selectivity, it is because of forgetting. (p.64)

Derrida's emphasis on forgetting invokes that, if the politics of memory manifests itself as an imperative, as a task, this is because it is not merely limited to a set of rules on selectivity. In other words, for Derrida, politics of memory necessarily forces a set of regulations, norms and criteria on selectivity, and, in this sense, one should always be vigilant about these presentable, objectifiable rules, that they are always more negotiable, more reconcilable.

Derrida's emphasis on forgetting and thinking merge at this point; this "more negotiable," this beyond of critique has nothing to do with memory; contrarily one can not be vigilant about this beyond, that is to say, one cannot think this beyond without forgetting. Thus, if a politics of memory is an imperative, according to Derrida, it is inextricably a politics of forgetting and, in order to keep the future of this politics open, this imperative should imply an affirmation of the politics of forgetting.

This can also be read as a reiteration of what Derrida develops under the notion of inheritance. For Derrida, inheritance cannot be an experience which can be objectified or instrumentalized. As one is not the user of the language he or she speaks, an inheritor cannot use his or her inheritance instrumentally. Although critical participation is a part of it, inheritance cannot simply be explained by an objective, critical involvement. In this sense, when he speaks about inheritance, Derrida refers to a critical vigilance that is also aware that a politics of memory includes forgetting, nonmemory, which is in and of itself not objectifiable.

However, from Stiegler's questions, one may get the impression that this is not exactly what he has in mind when he refers to a politics of memory. As it is mentioned, he recurrently brings up the analogy between writing and teletechnologies in order to explain what this term signifies. He bases this analogy on the question of specificity, that is to say, on a comparison between the modes of connections to the future that each of these techniques establish in a specific way, on the new reflexivity or intelligibility tied up to a new form of temporality. Accordingly, in the case of alphabetic writing, he remarks that its emergence has also been the condition of historical temporality; "not simply of

the science of the historian, but of the relation to the future constituted by historical times: a sudden acceleration, the opening of political space, the practice of geography, a transformation of the relation to territory” (p.102). Then, for Stiegler, there remains the question of how modern modalities of archivization constitute possibilities for a relation to the future and how we can develop a politics of memory in order to keep these possibilities open.

Stiegler approaches these questions mainly from the perspective of a possibility of a new intelligibility, which may emerge via the discrete character of televisual or cinematic image. He analyzes the conditions and possibilities of this emergence in various instances in different forms, but his essay entitled “The Discrete Image” (2002) includes the most compact presentation of his arguments on the process of “discretization” of the image-object.

In this essay, Stiegler starts with a phenomenological analysis of image: he explains that the mental image and the image-object are the two complementary faces of the phenomenon of the image. The image-object as the material, perennial face of the phenomenon of image, can be classified under three historical periods after nineteenth century; namely analog, digital and analogico-digital image (2002, p.148). Each of these periods has different manifestations in terms of the acquired “intuitive technical knowledges of the conditions of production of images” and each of these knowledges matches with “three different kinds of belief” (2002, p.158).

Following Roland Barthes’ phenomenological analysis of analog image in his work entitled *Camera Lucida* (1980), Stiegler describes the intuitive knowledges

that constitute these corresponding kinds of belief. The most basic inference of Barthes' analysis is that, a photograph creates a belief of the kind 'this was': "that what is captured on the paper really was" (2002, p.150). Hence, the rule, the essential intuitive knowledge, or in phenomenological terms, "the intentionality" of a photo is that "what was photographed was (real)" (2002, p.150). Stiegler takes this analysis one step further in order to map the intentionality of the analogico-digital image, or "discrete image," a term he coins to refer this modality. Discrete image is an integrated modality of analog and synthetic, or computer generated digital image; it is the modality in which the essence of technology becomes manipulation. This is not to say that nothing of any manipulability exists in analog image, but just as manipulation is accidental for analog image, "it is nonmanipulation that becomes accidental" (p.153) in the case of digitization. Hence, analogico-digital image is not in an opposition with the analog image; despite its continuity effect, "analog image is always already discrete" (p.155). Moreover, one cannot also say that the intuitive knowledge that leads to the belief of "this was" or a form of continuation is effaced in analogico-digital image.

For Stiegler, this constitutive uncertainty, the specificity of the analogico-digital image caused by the intensification of this process of discretization is the chance of a new intelligibility of movement and light. He gives the examples of possible future technical improvements in digital technology that would enable to break further with the created effect of continuity in animated images, such as a software that would recognize different iterable elements in a film or video and enable us to "find all the occurrences in a film of a set, an object, a character, to

analyze camera movements, identify types of planes, and in the end, every kind of discrete regularity” (p.157). Stiegler puts these examples as some possibilities, which would give a glimpse of the instruments that would help us gain a new intelligibility and allow us to invent new senses out of all the archives of images and in a mutual relation, which would give way to a more open, more inventive politics of memory. Hence, this schema, namely, the opposition between continuous and discrete image, offers a basis for Stiegler to come up with projections about the future of the critical, instrumental culture of image.

Now, in the interview, Stiegler asks Derrida whether he would agree that this discreteness or exactitude of recording is a chance for a new form of intelligibility that would also allow the emergence of a critical culture of audio-visual recordings. Initially, Derrida agrees with Stiegler on this claim, that discretization extends the field of knowledge or intelligibility (p.108). However, he also adds a crucial point to this claim in his answer, which manifests the tension between the positions of these two philosophers without, however articulating an explicit opposition:

[...] meaning and intelligibility can be extended – on the scale of what you have called the “discrete,” the spacing of the discrete – only by multiplying the conditions of this very discreteness, in other words, spacing non-sense, the blank, the interval, everything that bounds [borde] sense and non-sense as it were, exceeds [déborde] or splits it. The origin of sense makes no sense. This is not a negative or nihilistic statement. That which bears intelligibility, that which increases intelligibility, is not intelligible – by definition, by virtue of its topological structure. From this stand point, technics is not intelligible. This does not mean that it is a source of irrationality, that it is irrational or that it is

obscure. It means only that it does not belong, by definition, by virtue of its situation, to the field of what it makes possible. (p.108)

As Derrida, in his previous reply, indicates non-memory against memory, this time, following the same logic, he replies by putting forward the non-intelligible against intelligible, non-sense against sense and the “spacing of the discrete” against discrete. Hence, by bringing up the complementary couples of concepts, in this specific context, Derrida intends to show that, if all these instruments of the discrete image and the instrumental knowledge of them carry the possibility of engendering new forms of intelligibility or reflexivity, it is because “the spacing of the discrete” harbors this possibility just as much as the discrete image. In other words, if there would be a gain in terms of intelligibility, this could only occur by means of an excess of intelligibility, just as there needs to be an excess of memory, a form of forgetting, in order to develop a kind of politics of memory which Stiegler calls for.

Moreover, if these reactions are considered in a more general context, one can take them as Derrida’s general response to Stiegler’s intervention to the “grammatological project”: by his insistent return to the “topological structures” of memory, intelligibility or reason, Derrida reminds Stiegler that it is not possible to determine any specificity without first accepting that specificity or effectivity of a type of writing – for instance if we assume discrete image is a specific type – is never pure, always heterogeneous and stratified; that is to say always already in the movement of *différance*. In this sense, in his review of the interview, Beardsworth comments that Derrida’s responses can be described as “at least odd,” since, rather than engaging with Stiegler’s general inquiry Derrida

chooses to “reiterate a series of propositions that are well-known from with-in and around the thought of deconstruction and post-structuralism” (1998, para.32).

Yet as Beardsworth also analyzes in detail, this odd responses has its reasons: at critical points, Stiegler’s and Derrida’s philosophical objectives become incommensurable. It goes without saying that it is not fortuitous; Stiegler’s reading of Derridean *différance* is a major intervention and hence results in an inevitable divergence, which has several manifestations, including the political implications of these two positions.

It could be argued that the main contradiction in a political context regards each philosopher’s apprehensions of futurity: Stiegler’s thinking is oriented in such a way that his thinking would open a new relation to the future by determining the conditions of this opening. He designates the conditions and terms of a projection and operates through by projecting a historical process to the future: for example, this is what Stiegler does by analyzing the discretization process of the image. In this terms, the present gains a potential that waits for its appropriate conditions to emerge; so Stiegler’s endeavor is to canalize a political will that would set free this potential. What Stiegler refers to as politics of memory is, if not a total set of political outlines and programs, definitely a political will which would push culture to catch up with technics. To recall Stiegler’s argument on writing, he claimed that it had opened up the possibility of historical temporality and, consequently, a new political and critical reflexivity that transformed all political envisions; the idea of citizen, its relation to territory, geography, state etc. In this sense, one could argue that one of the

critical dimensions of Stiegler's effort is to determine the political envisions that correspond to the age of teletechnologies and, accordingly, to the conditions of a politics of memory, an instrumental and critical culture which would maintain an opening to the future. Stiegler tries to keep the future (to-come) of teletechnology and the political field open by way of its specificity, its effectivity, its potential form of intelligibility and affirms interventions in politics based on his projections on the discrete image and what a critical, instrumental culture of discrete image might be like.

On the other hand, one could say that Derrida's position is more ambiguous regarding any intervention, although, as it is discussed in the first chapter, one should be cautious not to equalize this position immediately with a condition of total paralysis. He does not say that any intervention, any decision is useless, nor that we should lay back and just passively contemplate the coming of the future. This is not at all the case. Derrida's main concern is that, when one makes a decision according to an imperative, one should be aware that this decision itself might well change the nature of the conditions in which the decision was taken, so that the decision may remain ineffective as decision. That is to say, every decision is, at the same time, an infinite number of decisions, such that one can only keep the future open if one is aware of this. This is the reason why Derrida recurrently reminds Stiegler that determining the specificity of teletechnologies, the new form of intelligibility and, accordingly, calling for a politics of memory is not sufficient; any decision on the side of politics of memory should take into account the fact that it is impossible to prove that memory is better than forgetting. This is not to say that there is no

need for a politics of memory, but to remind Stiegler that if politics is solely a politics of memory, it risks closing off the future.

Then, taking these remarks into account, one could argue that the incommensurable difference between Derrida and Stiegler is rooted in their approaches to the relation between politics and philosophy. For Derrida, political accent of his philosophy is in a tone of reminder for the present, which does not give the conditions for the future but reminds that there is always a still-to-come beyond our expectations; on the other hand, for Stiegler, philosophy should be able to determine at least the conditions of a politics, which would open up technics to its future. Beardsworth succinctly gives the account of this difference:

Thus, where Stiegler looks for political determination between *différance* and the technical, for the future to remain open, given that determination opens up the future as much as it may close it, with this same horizon in mind, Derrida both looks to political determination and takes distance from the political instance, leaving the future of the technical to be decided, given that, for him, anticipation always runs the risk of filling the future in. (par.27)

Thus both of them have the same horizon in mind, but each of them constitutes the relation between philosophy and political determination differently. Furthermore, this is not a mere effect of their approaches to politics but lies at the heart of their philosophical objectives; it can be argued that this approach is the dominant component of the drive behind Stiegler's intervention to the grammatological project. All the history of technics for Stiegler is a domain to explore the horizon of technics and the new political field that emerges through it.

Roberts make a similar observation on this difference, but from a different perspective. By focusing on Derrida's designation of the notion of inheritance and Stiegler's appropriation of it, he argues that, for Derrida, inheritance cannot be thoroughly theorizable since the visor effect of spectrality, specters that watch and concern the inheritor in an absolute heteronomy, renders the inheritor incapable to determine any terms of inheritance, from within that inheritance (2005, para.16). Thus, if one is an inheritor, it is impossible to have a total objective or instrumental knowledge about the terms of the technicality involved in inheritance. Whereas for Stiegler, technicity, as a condition of inheritance, can be an object of theoretical knowledge; and this is the reason why thinking on technicity today is necessary for him in order to develop a politics of memory that reconsiders the contemporary modalities of archivization in terms of political practices. In this sense, Roberts characterizes Stiegler's *Technics and Time*, as a highly "cogent theory of inheritance" (p.15), which tries to determine inheritance as, in and of itself, intelligible.

Regarding the first point of Roberts' argument, admitting the general tone of this description, I agree that Stiegler's effort can be described as a general theory of inheritance and that he tries to differentiate the specters specific to each epoch of writing. Nevertheless, to assert that this theory aims to render inheritance in and of itself intelligible, would be to neglect Stiegler's ambivalent position towards belief as much as knowledge, although it is true that Stiegler's insistence on the new form of intelligibility in the interview creates an impression of a bias towards pure intelligible knowledge. His emphasis on belief is clearer in not only his arguments on the discrete image, but also in his article

on Derrida: “Every trace calls for a witness, supports a belief, but all traces do not make possible the same beliefs, even if every belief calls upon the absolute past: which is why universalizing reason is required and promised as the absolute of any faith” (2001, p.261). Hence, although the effort to distinguish the beliefs that belong to each trace, or Stiegler’s effort to determine the specificities of different epochs of writing are open to question in terms of inheritance in the Derridean sense, if this effort would have been solely fixed upon intelligibility, it would have necessarily nullified the accent on “beliefs’ call upon the absolute past.” Roberts argument falls short of Stiegler’s emphasis of absolute past.

Furthermore, I would argue that Roberts’ claim about Derrida’s approach also bares a confusion regarding the theorizable and the intelligible. Although, Roberts’ point shows the intentions behind Derrida’s responses in connection with the notion of inheritance and clearly depicts the relation between “visor effect” and Stiegler’s general theory, in doing that, it assimilates inheritance with a condition of total paralysis, even in terms of philosophical reflection. It is true that Derrida reminds Stiegler about the non-intelligible reserve of inheritance and that technicity as the condition of inheritance cannot be thoroughly theorizable. But this does not mean that any attempt to theorize inheritance necessarily renders it intelligible, if one is aware of the blind spot which resist theorization. In this sense, accepting the fact that any theorization of inheritance cannot level with the taking place of technics, if Derrida claims that inheritance cannot be theorized within the technicality that makes it possible, he would not have formulated it in quite a specific way. Although Roberts’ argument definitely draws a plausible frame for the stakes involved in

terms of inheritance, strict comparison between Stiegler and Derrida in reference to theorization carries a risk of reducing the sides of the comparison to either complete positivism (for Stiegler) or a position of complete unresponsiveness (for Derrida).

Now, this remark requires further clarification, since one could still have a reasonable doubt on whether and how Derrida's theorization of inheritance is not putting the inheritor in a completely passive position, even a paralysis, but rather intensifies a condition of pure responsibility, of an opening to the future-to-come. Then, in the next chapter, I will try to clarify this point, by focusing on Derrida's emphasis on the still-to-come of the future and how he puts forth the possibility of giving a testimony in order to contest a thought of technical mastery over the future.

4. TO-COME OF TELETECHNOLOGIES

Up until now, in the first chapter I discussed the point of departure of Derrida's theme of inheritance, how it emerged from a particular actual political context, shaped by the overflow of the techno-media culture that avows the death of Marxism in all domains of politics and culture. Then, I explored the question of how this point of departure gets interconnected with a broader field of relations regarding the ethico-political premises and under what conditions the technological epoch is determining in these relations. In the second chapter, this discussion led us to Derrida's conceptualization of general writing and the constitutive tension of the social text, the tension between inheritance and technics, i.e. the tension of iterability. I therefore moved on to Stiegler's significant rupture, his claim on general writing that critically questions whether or not the concept of general writing effaces the specificities of different systems of writing. This move leads him to make a fundamental intervention to Derridean grammatological project and to re-focus the blurred differences between systems of writing, by pushing the question of writing towards the question of technics and, accordingly, developing a theory that not only results with a reformulation of the idea of the originary technicity of man, but also re-situates the technical conditions of inheritance in the modern era. Hence, I analyzed the concerns behind this intervention and its consequences, in order to map the dialogue between the

two philosophers in a broader context, particularly a context that regards their positions towards the political.

Considering the scope of this thesis, the import of this dialogue lies more on Derrida's response to Stiegler's intervention, especially regarding the ethico-political stakes involved. Although Derrida does not explicitly articulate his response, certain suggestions can be read from his objections to Stiegler. These suggestions reveals Derrida's vigorous reflex that stresses the still-to-come of the future against any risk of closing the future off by virtue of an absolute decision. In this sense, Stiegler's intervention served as a reference to track the line beyond which Derrida's reflex is active, particularly regarding political and ethical determinations on the future of teletechnologies. Nevertheless, this exploration should be carried further in order to avoid any quick inferences about Derrida's conception of the future, since his reflections on actuality or teletechnologies cannot be disintegrated from this conception of absolute future that cannot be anticipated, that comes in excess of any anticipation. For Derrida, beyond all exact calculation, all precision provided by these technologies, the future of the social has a future due to a faith, to a belief inscribed in every testimony that encompasses all anticipation. Then, in this chapter I will try to elaborate the following question further that which I already introduced in the previous chapters: if one is to think Derrida's theorization of inheritance, how does the inheritor become a passage to the 'to-come' of the social, particularly in our age when the social text is always already a televised text?

4.1 Elementary Promise and Originary Technicity

First of all, it should be stressed that Derrida's idea of absolute future can be understood as the symmetrical reformulation of the idea of the absolute past. If there is a past that is absolutely non-accessible, if there is always a reserve of a past that is impossible to reanimate either through memory or supplements of memory, through repetition, then this reserve is not solely of the past but also of the future. Hence, what Derrida refers to by addressing the question of origin of writing as arche-writing or *différance*, marks not only the past that makes possible presentation which is never present as such, but also the non-accessible reserve of the future, the impossibility of the full presence of a future. That is to say, for Derrida as the re-presentation of a past is never completely present, likewise, the future always holds a reserve that cannot be anticipated. In this sense, these two ideas constitutes the two sides of the tension of iterability.

Hence, the idea of absolute future manifests itself in Derrida, with a reference to a conception of belief; it has its origin in belief, as much as knowledge. Yet, this belief does not necessarily comply with a religious discourse; in fact, it is a promise older than any religious discourse; or in other words, it retains a possibility outside of any religious discourse. It distinguishes itself from knowledge by this double possibility that harbors within; a religious belief and a belief without religion.

This originary belief opens a future that cannot be expressed in the future present: the space it opens up cannot be projected, expected or determined by

any regulation. Hence, mastery over the “temporal form of a future present” has no right over the to-come of the future (Derrida, 1993, p.65). The temporal form that a promise gives way to, differs from the deferred time. It is the constitution of another temporality that harbors an affirmative opening to the coming of the event, the coming of the other; it is the temporality of absolute hospitality. Yet, this temporality is im-possible; it is the condition of any possibility of an experience of hospitality but, as it is briefly discussed in the first chapter, absolute hospitality, hospitality without reserve means the annulment of the possibility of this experience. In this sense, the absolute future is the “experience of the impossible,” without which the force that keeps the promise of “justice and the event” alive, would be eclipsed (1993, p.65).

In one of his late essays entitled “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ at the Limits of Reason Alone” (1998), Derrida puts this idea and its two axioms as follows:

Axiom: no to-come without heritage and the possibility of repeating. No to-come without some sort of iterability, at least in the form of a covenant with oneself and confirmation of the originary yes. No to-come without some sort of messianic memory and promise, of a messianicity older than all religion, more originary than all messianism. No discourse or address of the other without the possibility of an elementary promise. Perjury and broken promises require the same possibility. No promise, therefore, without the promise of a confirmation of the yes. This yes will have implied and will always imply the trustworthiness and fidelity of a faith. No faith, therefore, nor future without everything technical, automatic, machine-like supposed by iterability. In this sense, the technical is the possibility of

faith, indeed its very chance. A chance that entails the greatest risk, even the menace of radical evil. (1998, p.47)

Before moving further, it should be noted that Derrida does not choose the axiom form without intention; due to the very nature of their content, these two axioms, namely the linkage between the “to-come” and originary technicity; and the “to-come” and elementary promise are not logically justifiable. In other words, these two propositions come before any logical determination; thus, Derrida puts them as axioms rather than a logical deduction. Moreover, this should not be understood as a remark limited solely to this proposition; as Jean-Luc Nancy notes, when Derrida says that “it is necessary” or “one must,” this does not need to be discursively justifiable and the status of these statements is “[t]heoretical and moral, but just as easily neither theoretical nor moral” (p.37). In this sense, in order to clarify further the correspondence between form and content for the above propositions, one could argue that these kinds of axioms are extensions of an elementary promise which can not be proven objectively. Hence, to bypass the connection between the form and content of these propositions would carry the risk of misleading us to look for a thoroughly logical determination of what Derrida refers as to “to-come.” To recall the discussion at the end of the previous chapter, I think, despite the fact that Roberts’ observation is well directed to a certain extent regarding the consequences of Stiegler’s insistence on intelligibility in the interview, when he claims that the technicity involved in inheritance is not theorizable for Derrida, he overlooks the fact that, in the most basic form, the connection between technicity and

inheritance appears in axiomatic form. That is to say, it is the non-justifiable assumption of a theorization.

Then, how do these axioms function in Derrida? The basic inference is twofold: the elementary faith or promise is the condition of the address of the other and originary technicity is the condition of the elementary promise, at least in the form of the confirmation of the originary yes. That is to say, an originary technicity in the form of a performative discourse, the utterance of the “originary yes,” an oath that is older than any religion makes possible a non-religious faith; and this faith or trustworthiness is the condition of any discourse addressed to the other. Hence, originary technicity and promise are not opposed to one another; rather the former is the necessary condition of the latter. The temporality marked by the absolute future or by the promise of justice or event, that is to say, a faith in the “to-come” of the future is not possible without iterability.

A reformulation of this proposition by using the terminology developed in earlier works of Derrida, might be as follows: just as there is no full presence, an ideal technicity that allows ideal representation, there is no passage to a temporality marked by generalized writing. Hence, promise as absolute hospitality to the coming of the other is not possible, but makes possible the experience of hospitality, of fidelity or trustworthiness; just as generalized writing is never present as such but makes possible any representation via the empirical technicity of writing.

Hence these two themes, namely, the logic of general writing in the form of originary technicity and elementary messianism should not be opposed or reduced to one another but should be thought as the two complementary sides of the Derridean “quasi-transcendental.” There can be no promise without originary technicity and no technics without a faith in the future that is absolutely non-presentable. In this sense, Derrida does not attribute any logical or temporal priority to one nor the other; to the contrary, he explicitly stresses that these two logics spring from the same source. This point is crucial regarding its consequences because it allows Derrida to determine modern tele-technoscience in a logic that is not deprived of promise, as “a chance that entails the greatest risk.” It is also an answer to Beardsworth’s question on the “ontological order of the originary technicity and promise” that is asked prior to Derrida’s essay “Faith and Knowledge” and answered by Beardsworth rather speculatively (1996, p.155). In answering this question, Beardsworth argues that although these two logics are inseparable, Derrida quite elusively attributes “an ontological priority” to the promise over originary technicity (p.156). Following this argument, and to indicate a way out of this ontological leveling, in a move that is supported by Stiegler, Beardsworth asserts that, “Derrida’s justified mobilization of religious concepts to think the ‘nonhuman’ other of logic and technics needs ... to be related to the ‘nonhumanity’ of matter” (p.156). Hence, in this respect Beardsworth claims that Derrida’s “mobilization of religious concepts” can be transformed into a strategy that would allow to develop a dialogue between technosciences and philosophy in a new, inventive way. Although he describes it as a “loose speculation” and sharing his highly hesitant attitude

towards making a decision (yet as Geoffrey Benington (2000) also observes, his decision is more than obvious (p.178)), Beardsworth even presents two probable futures of Derrida's philosophy relying on these two ontologically leveled thoughts of origin. The first one would be a "left-wing 'Derrideanism'" that "foregrounds Derrida's analysis of originary technicity" and that would "establish a dialogue between philosophy, the human sciences, the arts and technosciences" (p.156); and the second one would be a "right-wing Derrideanism" that "would pursue Derrida's untying of the aporia of time from both logic and technics" and that would "mobilize religious discourse and prioritize ... the radically 'passive' nature of arts" (p.156).

Accepting that Beardsworth himself puts these projections as speculative, there is no need to show the contradictions of this strict separation of Derrida's propositions in detail. Nevertheless, it should be indicated that, in distinguishing these two logics and interrogating why he does not privilege originary technicity ontologically but instead bases his arguments on the convergence of these two themes, these projections perfectly demonstrate what Derrida's intention is not. Hence, the fundamental proposition of the essay "Faith and Knowledge" that posits the source of religion and reason as common (Derrida, 1998, p.28), can be read as a direct response to Beardsworth's projections on the future of Derrida's thought. It can also be speculatively noted in passing that, if Derrida responded to this speculation, presumably, it would be in a similar tone to his responses to Stiegler.

Then, to return to the basic question, what is the implication of this logic regarding the notion of inheritance? The answer of this question can be traced

in what Derrida refers to as testimony or bearing witness. Derrida, in the aforementioned passage where he refers to “the promise of a confirmation of the yes” puts forward this issue where both originary technicity and originary promise coincide (p.47). What Derrida refers to in this expression is a performative event; it performs an act by virtue of both an originary technicity and an originary faith, and what we call trustworthiness, or fidelity is a consequence of this event. Moreover, this trustworthiness necessarily implies lie or perjury. In this sense, this performative event marks an experience of bearing witness, a promise that is given in reference to the faith of the other and, at the same time, by way of the iterability of the promise, i.e. the repeatability of the promise regardless of the context. And for Derrida, the modern era and all that is linked to it under the idea of reason, or tele-technoscience cannot be isolated from this experience of bearing witness.

On the one hand, the ‘lights’ and Enlightenment of tele-technoscientific critique and reason can only suppose trustworthiness. They are obliged to put into play an irreducible ‘faith’, that of a ‘social bond’ or of a ‘sworn faith’, of a testimony (‘I promise to tell you the truth beyond all proof, all theoretical demonstration, believe me, etc.’) that is, of a performative of promising at work even in lying or perjury and without which no address to the other would be possible. (1998, p.44)

Then, the experience of bearing witness in our era, is also the condition of any “social bond;” and despite all the instrumental mastery, including critique, all the ‘lights’ of reason, this social bond is constituted upon an irreducible faith. This faith might be a religious faith, even a faith which causes radical evil, which we may encounter in various forms in reference to religion. At the same time, it may also be a faith in a “universalizable culture of singularities” that

would allow a “‘rational’ and universal discourse on the subject of religion” (1998, p.18). Thus, in this regard, testimony is the opening of the absolute future, the risk of radical evil and the hope of justice. That is to say, if there is a still-to-come of the social bond, for instance, in the form of “democratic promise” or of “democracy-to-come”, as Derrida refers to in *Specters of Marx* (1993), it is due to this faith as the precondition of a testimony, and to iterability as the precondition of faith. Hence, the “act of faith,” the experience of bearing witness, which happens by way of a certain originary technicity, traverses “all intuition, and all proof, all knowledge” and thereby “conditions every ‘social bond’, every questioning, all knowledge, performativity and every tele-technoscientific performance” (p.63).

If this description of the “social bond” is thought together with the discussion of the “social text” (a term coined by Richard Dienst (1994)) which I addressed in the previous chapter, the picture would become clearer. In contrast with the discourse on transparency and immediacy of social relations that accompanies teletechnologies, Derrida was describing the new teletechnological epoch as a “powerful historical unfolding of a general writing” (1982, p.329). Thus, the social text, which is determined by a general writing, is never freed from the constraints and possibilities of the tension of iterability. In this sense, one may argue that the most elementary form of this tension inhabits in the iterability involved in an act of faith inscribed in a testimony; and this is the reason why testimonial faith is and always will be the precondition of every social bond and tele-technoscientific performance. This logic, rather than putting forth the tele-technoscientific performance as

the sole determining factor that affects social relations, or characterizing the context constituted by tele-technoscience as the infrastructure of social bond, it shows that an act of faith, a singular experience of bearing witness, is always at work in rewriting the social text over and over again, in accordance with the unfolding of a general writing. This is not to say that tele-technoscientific performance has no effect on the social relations, social text or social bond; rather it renders this direct, linear cause and effect relationship between them irrelevant.

Our basic question still remains to be answered. As I argued before, what Derrida develops under the theme of inheritance and the logic of specters is, in a way, a special figuration of this broader logic. Or, in other words, the above discussion of social bond is an explicit exploration of the path that the notion of inheritance had opened up in a relatively restricted context which has televisual technologies as its main point of departure. In this restricted context, one may say that Derrida focuses more on the following axiom that he mentions in "Faith and Knowledge": "no to-come without heritage and the possibility of repeating" (1998, p.47). As a consequence of this approach, Derrida formulates a question which reveals the stakes involved in the above picture in a substantial manner: he asks the status of a "televised testimony" (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.95). This question reveals how all the above discussion is not merely 'theoretical' and how all these theorization comes up to the surface in various political, scientific and everyday practices. Thus, in this last section, in order to move the discussion to a more concrete level, and trace the relation between the experience of bearing witness and the

experience of inheritance on this level, I will explore the status of testimony within a televised text.

4.2 Televised Testimony and Evidence

One last point on the theme of inheritance in relation to language and bearing witness needs to be stressed. Derrida mentions this point in reference to Heidegger's reading of a fragment by Hölderlin, in "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" (1981) (as cited in Derrida, 1993, p.180). Derrida mentions this fragment as follows:

To bear witness would be to bear witness to what we *are* insofar as we *inherit*, and that – here is the circle, here is the chance, or the finitude – we inherit the very thing that allows us to bear witness to it. As for Hölderlin, he calls this language, "the most dangerous of goods," given to man "so that he bears witness to having inherited/ what he is" [*damit er zeuge, was er sei/ geerbt zu haben*]. (1993, p.54)

What is significant in this description of language is that the purpose of language is not communication, or transmission of a meaning, nor a linguistic essence, but *bearing witness*; and one bears witness to nothing but the fact that one inherits a language so that one can bear witness. Hence, if one thinks inheritance as a passage from one singularity to another, this passage is the only thing we can inherit. In other words, it is not simply a singularity that we inherit, although there can be no inheritance without singularity, without the singular event. When one bears witness, when one inherits, one needs to be part of the singular passage by way of a performative singular mark in language; a signature, a pledge, i.e. an "act of faith". One becomes part of this circular structure of inheritance, one is inscribed in the social text or one

constitutes a social bond, not by transmitting or receiving a meaning, but by the experience of bearing witness. And this experience of inheritance is the condition of the still-to-come of the future, of the promise or of the event.

However, how is this description of language and bearing witness relevant in any discussion related to teletechnologies, or particularly televised text? The following question can be asked in order to focus the scope further; can one bear witness to anything with a camera?

This is an example of a question that marks a juncture, where arise various practical problems. Derrida gives an example of this kind of problem from a juridical case, the case of Rodney King, in order to show that one cannot bear witness to anything through the instrumentality provided by audiovisual technologies (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.91). As Derrida tells it, in this case that took place in California, a witness equipped with a video camera, fortuitously records some police officers beating up a man named Rodney King. This live image of the event is broadcasted everywhere in the United States and it draws an enormous amount of attention from the public. There is a serious public reaction against the police officers but, eventually, the lawyers of the defendants use this record to prove that the event was self-defense. They analyze the recording second by second in order to prove that Rodney King was actually trying to get up and threaten the cops. The debates grow and each frame is analyzed over and over again, in a way that allows each party to the case can develop their totally conflicting analysis of the video. Consequently, the court does not accept the recording as a testimony but relies on the testimony of the cameraman. Since the cameraman had

sworn to tell the truth before the court, his word is preferred over the video recording.

Taking its point of departure from this case, to which many similar examples can be found, Derrida indicates that an audiovisual recording cannot replace the pledge of the witness (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.92). It is not a testimony but an evidence in the juridical sense. Even if the instruments provide an infinitely repeatable, calculable and precise record of the event, it still cannot be considered as a testimony, or witness. Hence, by giving this example, Derrida emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing between testimony and evidence. Technicity involved in audio-visual recording cannot be adequate to produce a testimony; one can only bear witness by way of a signature or a pledge, a singular connection to the event by way of language. However, this is not to say that there is no technicity involved in a pledge; an originary technicity is the condition of any "act of faith" (1998, p.94). Hence, the discourse of a testimony carries an intrinsic technicity, in the form of iterability. It carries the tension of iterability, the tension between inheritance and technics.

However, at this juncture, one crucial aspect of this instance should be stressed. Through the contemporary technologies of recording, the tension of iterability is intensified in a very specific way. As Derrida points out, this point of intensification is the case of a *recorded testimony*: thanks to the specificity of these apparatuses, a testimony can be recorded, televised and can function in the same way as a living testimony functions (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.95). The question of iterability gains another form in this case because the

originary technicity of the pledge and the technical specificity of the televisual apparatus, namely, real time recording, get into a resonance: for the case of televised testimony, the pledge can be replicated and transmitted artificially and can function as if it were not artificial.

Now, considering that a testimony is the precondition of any social bond, the way in which the circle of inheritance functions or the way in which one is inscribed in the social text, this new situation has immense consequences. For Derrida, if teletechnologies open a new relation to the future, if a new political field is opened up, this is caused by this possibility of recording a testimony; and not by restoring transparency and immediacy to the social relations, not even by the process of discretization. This is what Derrida shows regarding the promise and the risk of televisual recording. If these technologies of recording and transmission have initiated the transformation of the social, not in the form of an extrinsic effect on the social, but as a force that also incorporates itself, it is on account of this possibility.

Without question, the primary transformation caused by a recorded testimony, concerns the status and nature of the event and its representation. If there are problems of this sort in distinguishing between testimony and evidence, it is because audiovisual recording is not the absolute authentic representation of the event; to the contrary, all of these instruments of archivization change the structure of the event, even “produce events” to the same extent that they record (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995, p.17). This is the case, even in the simplest photographic image; their authenticity cannot be taken for granted. Derrida, in response to Stiegler’s question on Barthes’

notion of the “this was” in a photograph, explicitly explains this point. Barthes’ notion leads to a view that considers photography as testimony rather than evidence, since, as Stiegler indicates, for Barthes, the photographic effect is an effect of bearing witness to the “this was” of the recorded event (Derrida & Stiegler, 2002, p.97). Yet Derrida does not agree with Barthes, since this effect can be artificially produced even in the simplest photograph. Moreover, despite the fact that the representation of the “this was” is “more authentic than ever” with these modern instruments, at the same time, they provide the means of perfect manipulation (p.97).

On the other hand, a testimony can be judged on another level of authenticity; it has the right to be wrong without effacing its truthfulness (p.98). One who testifies always swears to tell the truth but this truth may not be an objective representation of the event. Hence, a testimony is a representation which one believes to be the truth (p.98). In this sense, bearing witness cannot be verifiable in an objective way; nevertheless the signature, the oath or the faith of the witness is preferred to the faithfulness of the photographic, televisual instrument. But where is the recorded testimony in this picture? Since it is a recording, it is calculable and verifiable but, at the same, it is a testimony, which is not objective. Of course, a recorded testimony can also be artificially produced but that is not due to the specificity of the recording instruments; as Derrida mentions the possibility of perjury or lie is a necessary condition for testimony. There can be no testimony without these possibilities.

Although I don’t believe that there is a straightforward answer to it, this juncture indicates a deeper question with regard to the event that is

witnessed, in relation to the problem of authenticity. A judgment can be made about the authenticity of the representation of an event, either through evidence or testimony; but is there a value of truth that can be attributed to the event itself? Recalling the passage cited from Hölderlin by Derrida, if one can only bear witness to the possibility of bearing witness, if inheritance is the possibility of inheriting, what judgment can one give about the event that is witnessed, that is inherited? These questions may seem a little vague but it is necessary to take them under consideration in order to distinguish between the problem of authenticity and singularity of the event.

When Derrida speaks of the faithfulness of a testimony, it is not simply a question of the truth value regarding the witness, whether he or she is telling the truth or not. Faith of the witness, the promise implies the passage, the impossible passage to the singularity of the event, its singular value, if I may refer to such a value. Thus, bearing witness to an event is a singular passage that would keep the still-to-come of the event open. When one gives a testimony the event continues to happen. To give a testimony is to render the event always welcomed, but, at the same time, always free not to come. Hence, the truth of the testimony, its authenticity is insignificant in this experience; or to put it more succinctly, this experience cannot ever be determined as utterly authentic. The singularity of an event is irreducible to the authenticity of its representation and this singularity is what renders the event, by its very nature, incomprehensible, incalculable and always unexpected. In another interview with Derrida that is made on the event of September 11, Derrida gives a quite refined description of the event:

The event is what comes and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend the comprehension: the event is first of all *that which* I do not first of all comprehend. Better, the event is first of all *that* I do not comprehend. It consists in *that, that* I do not comprehend: that which I do not comprehend and first of all *that* I do not comprehend, the fact that I do not comprehend: my incomprehension. (2003, p.90)

Then, bearing witness is the affirmation of my incomprehension, and I can only affirm it by the address of the other; on this account, bearing witness is the condition of any social bond. If event “consists in that, that I do not comprehend,” this reserve is common, in so far as I bear witness to an event. One could argue that what Derrida calls the “universalizable culture of singularities,” (1998, p.18) or the promise of democracy may be rooted in this common reserve, where bearing witness is the only chance. Yet, one should be cautious at this point. Since affirmation of a common incomprehension is the dangerous opening to the future, it is a risk, to the same extent that it is a promise. Derrida draws attention to this by stating that “there is no opposition, fundamentally, between ‘social bond’ and ‘social unraveling’” (1998, p.64). This may also be the reason why Hölderlin refers to language as the “most dangerous of goods.” However, this risk can not simply be eliminated; to the contrary, it is the condition of responsibility, of decision.

On the other hand, finally, if I need to mention how this picture imposes itself upon the institution of media, in my opinion, the best we could do is to determine a general symptom. The media, by sorting out, shifting, choosing between testimonies and evidences, detecting, identifying and analyzing them, vehemently and desperately tries to reduce the singularity of the event

to the truth of its representations and to present the event as totally comprehended. This is not simply a problem of manipulation, although this structure cannot be thought without manipulation. And although all manipulation requires an infinite reconsideration, a relentless criticism, the structural problem does not have a direct, straightforward solution since the determined problem is forced by the very nature of the event, by “my incomprehension.” However, what Derrida suggests by bringing forth the essentialness of the experience of bearing witness and the specificity of a recorded testimony, may be read as an indication of the fact that the social text, or the televised text never stops being re-written.

5. CONCLUSION

In this thesis my aim was to explore Derrida's philosophy, focusing mainly on how he contextualizes the modern teletechnologies with reference to the notion of inheritance. I tried to trace the ramifications of this notion and its investments in Derrida's reflections on teletechnologies. I discussed the associations between this notion and broader themes in deconstruction such as experience, writing and promise. This approach helped us to follow the implications of Derrida's perspective on teletechnologies both through a broader plane, through which Derrida addresses questions on technics, technicity and writing; and also in a narrower plane where more concrete questions concerning teletechnologies are discussed.

In the first chapter, I analyzed the point of departure of the notion of inheritance and how it takes form as a hypothesis against a certain state of politics that accompanied the transformation of the public space in early 90's by the unprecedented expansion of mass media and teletechnologies. In a way, spectral logic and inheritance as a hypothesis, which Derrida deciphers through his reading of Marx, can be seen as a response to this specific rhythm of politics. Thus, I tried to study this hypothesis both in its historical context and in its broader connections with Derrida's analyses of aporetic experience of duty and hospitality. According to Derrida, the experience of inheritance is

the experience of finding oneself before a past or before an other; it marks an ethics of engaging with specters. Since specters always manifest themselves as contradictory injunctions, one is inevitably imposed to contradictory tasks and duties through the experience of inheritance. For Derrida, these contradictions, or “differences without oppositions” (1993, p.16) between injunctions are the condition of any experience of inheritance, since one cannot talk about inheritance when there is nothing to contest interpretation. Thus the experience of inheritance is always paradoxical for Derrida. One is always in a state of heteronomy with respect to specters but this state is also the condition of any responsibility. In this sense, the power of teletechnologies, particularly televised image lies exactly at this point: it amplifies and accelerates the spectral effects and strengthens the non-reciprocity of specters for the inheritor by the temporality it constitutes.

I then tried to understand these effects in relation to Derrida’s conceptualization of general writing. According to Derrida, writing is not merely an instrument, but it can be conceptualized and generalized to an extent that even experience is encapsulated within it. Thus, any spectral effect is determined by the traits of this general writing, in so far as the modern teletechnologies are also a part of the movement, the “historical unfolding” of this general writing (Derrida, 1982, p.329). In this sense, Derrida argues that neither the social can be extracted from this movement nor the experience of inheritance. The tension between technics and inheritance is the same tension that constitutes the simplest mark, any type of writing or even experience. Derrida calls this tension “iterability,” that which links the potentiality of

repetition to singularity. At this point, I referred to Bernard Stiegler to discuss the stakes involved in this tension in broader terms. Stiegler argues that Derrida, by generalizing writing to this extent, blurs the differences between specific types of writing. So it also causes the question of a specificity of a type of writing to be effaced. Following this logic, he challenges the Derridean “grammatological project” to direct the question of specificity for different epochs of technics, particularly the era of modern teletechnologies and televised image. Stiegler focuses on the specificity of the image effect and claims that the technical images are in a process of discretization and this process carries a potential to cause new forms of reflexivity or intelligibility. According to Stiegler, a politics of memory should be developed in order to reveal this potential. Thus, I discussed Derrida’s response to Stiegler’s intervention, so that I can map the political tone of Derrida’s perspective in a more explicit manner. I argued that Derrida’s reflex is to stress any risk of closing the future off by determination and projection, and, in this way, to indicate the necessity of an infinite endeavor to keep the still-to-come of the social open.

In the third chapter, I investigated the axioms behind this tone further, and studied Derrida’s idea of futurity and belief. For, Derrida’s understanding of the “to-come” of the future is based upon the convergence of the themes of originary technicity and elementary belief. These two themes appear as axioms in Derrida and ends up in a logic which proposes that an act of faith, a promise older than all religions is constitutive of the “social bond.” Hence, Derrida suggests that tele-technosciences should presuppose this constitutive

role of this originary act of faith in social bond. This act of faith manifests itself as a testimony, an experience of bearing witness which exceeds any calculability, verifiability or authenticity, and offers another level of trustworthiness that also harbors the possibility of lie or perjury. In this sense, since any act of bearing witness should address the other, the elementary promise which comprises the possibility of trustworthiness becomes the ground of social bond. For the case of teletechnologies, this logic results in a displacement of the status of teletechnologies as an infrastructure of the social and shows that the possibility of bearing witness, and, at the same time, of inheritance, is independent from any power of mastery provided by these technologies. Following Derrida, I claimed that the case of recorded testimony marks a special point of intensification, since it can function as exactly same as a living testimony. On this account, I argued that, for Derrida, if there is a still to come of teletechnologies, it lies at the possibility of the multiplication of televised testimonies.

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