

MENTAL DISTANCING



SARA BARANZONI

"It was, as one might imagine, the strangest experience of my very varied life which has included well-sinking in every continent upon earth. As Professor Challenger was so insistent that the operation should be started from a distance, and as I began to see a good deal of sense in his contention, I had to plan some method of electric control, which was easy enough as the pit was wired from top to bottom. [...] It was delicate and difficult work done in a more than tropical heat, and with the ever-present feeling that a slip of a foot or the dropping of a tool upon the tarpaulin beneath us might bring about some inconceivable catastrophe. We were awed, too, by our surroundings. Again and again I have seen a strange quiver and shiver pass down the walls, and have even felt a dull throb against my hands as I touched them. [...] At the same time our ears were assailed by the most horrible yell that ever yet was heard. Who is there of all the hundreds who have attempted it who has ever yet described adequately that terrible cry?"

A. Conan Doyle, *When the world screamed*

"As you know from your own experience, and there are facts that prove it, the daughters of educated men have always done their thinking hand to mouth; not under green lamps at study tables in the cloisters of secluded colleges. They have thought while they stirred the pot, while they rocked the cradle [...]. *Think we must.* Let us think in offices, in omnibuses, while we are standing in the crowd, watching Coronations and Lord Mayor's Shows, let us think as we pass the Cenotaph; and in White Hall; in the galleries of the House of Commons; in the Law Courts; let us think at baptisms and marriages and funerals. *Let us never cease from thinking.*"

V. Woolf, quoted in I. Stengers & V. Despret, *Women Who Make a Fuss*, 26 (my emphasis).

Mental distancing #1. In search for questions

In many cases, the pandemic has coincided with a great writing engine. Lots of big names have tried to address the actual situation displaying their hit-parade concepts and trying to convince the world that they already *had* the answer. But problem is: to which question? Indeed, we have been listening to these aristocratic sirens singing their off-key refrains, forcing their seasoned concepts to apply to the current situation without even pausing for a moment to *think* about it.

This has been of some annoyance to some others, for whom quarantine has coincided with a profound inability to think and write about anything at all. It wasn't just a kind of desperate apathy, an oxymoronic stillness closed-in-upon-itself that could eventually lead to a snobbish contemplation, but rather the feeling that any of the references that guided us until the present-day had become unserviceable - not just the twilight of the idols, but their actual descent into the darkest of nights. While listening to choruses advocating for social distancing, a form of *mental distancing* was in fact taking possession of me. Do we still need these old references? Are these concepts still functioning or is the present too much also for them?

In the meantime, one single question seemed to be hammering away inside my brain: in which ways will we live on this planet from here on out? Remembering that it was the same question posed by Guattari at the very beginning of his *Three Ecologies*,ⁱ and in the conviction that continuing the stream of empty repetitions was completely useless (if not dangerous) at these heights, I imagined my first auto-therapeutic act as a sort of silent conversation with him. And this indeed seemed urgent, stuck in that moment when the stubborn exhortation to stay at home was putting a new sinister accent on the necessity of inhabiting – the *oikos*, which also gives rise to ecology, and which at a certain point seemed destined to be limited to the search for a safe place to stay and feel comfortable without needing any longer to move. But, quoting Guattari again, “What counts in the *oikos* is not just the walls of the house...”.ⁱⁱ

Here a clarification seems apposite. My concern throughout these musings was not with trying to develop a thought worthy of the pandemic – the intention to explain the hows and whys never arose for me. It was thought itself that occupied me, and that mental distancing in which I felt trapped, and the consequent wave of pessimism about the seeming destiny of thought to which it led, with the impossibility of seeing any escape from it.

So, then, let us look to ecologies extending beyond the walls of the house. What’s left of the ecological crisis that had been the hot topic up to that moment? In terms of environment, a colossal silence seemed to have fallen, and its idols to have vanished from the media stage. On a collective level, social distancing was just the official password for a battleground in which the (falsely) opposed positions of “the other as virus” or “the virus doesn’t exist” were producing the same effect: causing panic. Furthermore, the inert acceptance of the order-word,ⁱⁱⁱ whether taking the form of the

moral obligation towards the other or of individualistic libertarian absolute freedom, while concealing any other alternative, was leading to an even more fatal passivity of thought. What remained of the mental ecology that, according to Guattari, as ecosophy, “will lead us to reinvent the relation of the subject to the body, to phantasm, to the passage of time, to the ‘mysteries’ of life and death [...] to search for antidotes to mass-media and telematic standardization, the conformism of fashion, the manipulation of opinion by advertising, surveys, etc.”?^{iv} Here lies the question. But the echoing answer rebounded unaltered: *mental distancing*.

Indeed, even if, paradoxically, a lot of attention was being paid to bodies – confined bodies, protected bodies, distanced bodies – all this ended by converting them into a container of security measures – how many meters are an adequate distance? – sacrificing other sensitive aspects of the same bodies and their faculties along with them. With the excuse of controlling their transit, their contacts, or, on the other side of the same coin, of reactivating the economy and reaffirming the empire of the world market, lives (and deaths) at stake passed into second place. Mental ecology was as such transformed into a rigid infrastructure of minds, organized around different platforms for *smart* working, where each one had its own role, its own position.

If the Janus-faced effigy of power mechanisms had succeeded in anything, it was in detaching once again the head from the body, each one managed with its own rules, and with almost no possibility of an intra-action capable of engendering heterogeneous universes.^v A new, dangerous form of mental distancing where subjects don’t even need to exist.

Mental distancing #2. To strike or not to strike, that is the question

November 6th, 2020

The second wave of the pandemic found the very young University where I teach in its worst period. The National Government had cut the budget and most of the staff had not been paid for over two months. Another question hung in the air: will we survive? And if yes, once again, *in what ways will we manage to live on in this place from here on out?* In the middle of the protest, we found ourselves filled with doubt about whether or not to go on strike. It wasn't simply a question of "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer / The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, / Or to take arms against a sea of troubles / And by opposing end them" (Hamlet), but mainly, of gauging what kind of visibility would be possible for any such strike, if the University is already closed and classes are taught online? What would it have meant to interrupt courses, fold our arms defiantly and turn off our tired laptops for a society that would have remained blind to the gesture? Wouldn't it have been just another form of *mental distancing*, without any effect on the network of powers that were trying to transform us into an assembly line for the production of young artists?

This is, of course, a matter of efficacy and opportunity (in terms of timing), which Deleuze and Guattari would have summarized as follows: "At what moment is rebellion called for and at what moment surrender or impassibility? When is dry speech necessary and when exuberance or amusement? Whatever the breaks and ruptures, only continuous variation brings forth this virtual line, this virtual continuum of life".^{vi}

Another time, a single word draws our attention: virtuality. In pandemic times, so-called “virtual learning environments” have rapidly and dramatically changed the landscape of academic relations. Likewise, the “online conference” format has proliferated wi(l)d(e)ly, generating enthusiasm with ease among faculty members whose anxiety to perform has been tickled by the low-cost and easy-organizing features of virtual conferences. The greater availability of speakers as well as the possibility of attracting a larger number of attendees, in both cases without having to leave home, has made some researchers and scientists hope that virtual events could become “the new normal”.^{vii}

Now, regardless of the lack of specific training or the problem of insufficient bandwidth, the energy consumption of devices and all the other technological problems that might affect the success or the value of such initiatives, there’s another illustrious victim of this new vogue, and it is in some sense awkward to see its shards jutting forth between the wrecks of digital devices of all kinds. I do not have the skills required to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the conditions of research and education during a pandemic, but if there is something that has manifested itself powerfully (accompanied by symptoms of mental fatigue and senselessness) within virtuality, it is *the exhaustion of the virtual itself*.^{viii}

What could seem a slightly redundant pun is rather a way of expressing how absurd it is to define “virtual” as a particular way of effecting tasks through machines or within an online environment that allows a user to interact with both the computer and the work of other users.

Indeed, what has been called virtual environment to define the space-time of online activities is not at all producing that “cloud of virtual images [...] composed of

a series of more or less extensive coexisting circuits, along which the virtual images are distributed, and around which they run".^{ix} What is hilarious is that these incorporeal images are called virtual precisely because they open to uncertainty or indetermination: "The virtuals, encircling the actual, perpetually renew themselves by emitting yet others, with which they are in turn surrounded and which go on in turn to react upon the actual"^x. Instead, what "virtual environments" produce is rather what I would call the *incorpo(not)real*, or the technological phantasmagorical double of reality in which everything is feasible: a prosthesis of the actual world that depicts an ideal or imaginary reality that redoubles the one we know or the one that is artificially created in order to cancel the potential limits of the previous.

This implies a notion of reality that is already expected, programmed, pre-existing any possible intervention. The fact of sitting in the safe and warm place called home, not needing to move, and thus avoiding different milieus and connections, portray this same situation in which everything is already given, where the "virtual" is reduced to a pre-determined relation between actuals (already constituted individuals) and the ephemeral to device working problems. Nothing of what can be generated by the vital variation of encounters and the occurrence of unexpected relationships might interfere.

Instead, the agential cut proposed by Karen Barad perfectly explains the opposite situation in which no individuality could be thought as preformed with respect to the exploration of this virtuality, that is, one where no being is as such prior to the event of a set of specific intra-actions, relations that define matters and meanings, as well as the separability of the entities themselves (into subject-object, internal-external, cause-effect, etc.) that are able to touch and as such *respond* to each other.^{xi} This is

how, according to Barad, “boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and [...] concepts (that is, particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful”.^{xii}

It should be clear, then, that what is deflating virtuality is not just the subtraction of the landscape, of the general scenery in which a teaching or a talk is performed – indeed, even moving to another place, it is possible to get stuck on one’s single point, and maintain the individuality of the already positioned. In virtuality, variation is for sure due to its differentiation according to “the environment and the influence of external conditions”^{xiii}, but is also an experimentation, or inter-assemblage, that can occur in a journey-on-place, *distancing* oneself even from the place where one is, which means being able to draw new imaginary territories for thinking.

This might resemble what Deleuze and Guattari defined as the nomadic motionless voyage, a travel in intensity, corresponding to the act of thinking.^{xiv} However, as Guattari states, there are people who cannot stand even this kind of nomadism, “even if it is a nomadism that goes round in circles, on the same trajectory. Unfortunately, it is the same with many theorists and researchers. They are in a clearly marked-out theoretical territory, where they feel at ease, with timetables and work rituals, as if they were clocking in. For me, it is never in that way that it happens. It is through encounters, through systemic ruptures, which from time to time, give me these little transversalist short-circuits.”^{xv}

In this sense, one could assert that “virtuality is a kind of thought experiment the world performs”^{xvi}, and precisely what dodges the present of repetitions of the here and now that happen in any connection, when “the more information spreads out

across the world, the more there is a closing down of enunciative capacity.”^{xvii} Conversely, heterogenesis is what makes performance a matter of real creation, differentiation through lines that don’t pre-exist, but are created along with acts in which increasingly remote potentials are unfolded and freed within encounters.

As choreographer William Forsythe said somewhere, “The virtual attaches itself to the body [...] The virtual is an appendage to life, the interface with life. The virtual belongs to the establishment of reality, not to what the virtual is accused of—unreality, immateriality.”

Devoid of any nostalgia for what we have irremediably lost with this weakened virtuality, then, might we still been able to *make these distanced bodies cry*, that is, dialogue with unexpected material forces (including nonhuman ones) that make them actively *matter*?^{xviii}

Are we still capable of *opening a locality* for thinking, that is, enacting those agential cuts that according to Barad produce (always locally) meaningful subjects and objects of knowledge?

If the virtual dimension of thought is precisely the unfolding of its creative power (*puissance*), then what if what is needed to counter-effect this situation is just a little bit of... *mental distancing*, as the flying fish that can know water only when it leaps out of it?

Mental distancing #3. Machinic and living bodies: *run away from it all?*

August 6th, 2020.

I was finishing an online class when I received a phone call, a shock that definitely *interrupted* my last possibility of being at ease within social distancing.

Of course all life is a process of breaking down, but the blows that do the dramatic side of the work—the big sudden blows that come, or seem to come, from outside—the ones you remember and blame things on and, in moments of weakness, tell your friends about, don't show their effect all at once. There is another sort of blow that comes from within—that you don't feel until it's too late to do anything about it, until you realize with finality that in some regard you will never be as good a man again. The first sort of breakage seems to happen quick—the second kind happens almost without your knowing it but is realized suddenly indeed.^{xix}

The “social robot” that therefore I was was going to enter another kind of “existential crisis”, but not even the time of mourning could be respected, because of the necessity of *not interrupting* the new social practice of 24/7 connection, the only way left to produce knowledge and thought already transformed in a 24/7 cognitive capitalism where to think is not an exception to the flow of life, but must adjust to the cadence of the world (time) economy: working without pause, without limits, and yet feeling increasingly inadequate, not enough available, at the point of arriving at the non-fulfillment of needs and duties.^{xx}

Naomi Klein envisaged it as a “Pandemic shock doctrine” that she calls the “Screen New Deal”, and that can be thought as a “living laboratory for a permanent – and

highly profitable – no touch future.”^{xxi} But to tell the truth, it all doesn’t seem too dissimilar to what was described by many theorists long before the pandemic: a reality in which machines and algorithms drive people all life long, automatizing their behaviors to the point that every aspect becomes calculable and programmable^{xxii}, all this with the excuse of “saving our lives” (smart working as an alternative to the precarization of jobs; geo-technical solutions to solve the environmental crisis; computerized decision-making to protect people from subjective injustice, etc.), but basically for the profit of a handful of private tech companies. It’s not even new that, confronted with such enormous shocks, people find themselves able to suspend any criticism and already pre-existing doubts.

For the third time, the same question was resonating: in what ways will we live on this planet – and with these technologies – from here on out? And also, “What is this civilization in which we find ourselves?”^{xxiii}

On the one hand, social distancing reminded me of that “art of the human body [...] which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely.”^{xxiv} On the other, minds were functionally incorporated in what Guattari defined as “the society of integration,”^{xxv} and where automatic thoughts were replacing any trace of that broken virtuality.

As for myself, the breakdown I was experiencing was in some way redoubled by the shock of not being able to readjust my temporality according to its rhythm, where this was due to the timing that the technical system of which I was a functional gear

was imposing. But as a *pharmakon*, at the same time poison and remedy, it was the same Master that had just passed away who came to offer me some clue about how to create some order within this chaos.

Bernard Stiegler described the shock produced by the introduction of a technical innovation as a stupefaction that makes one *stupid*, in the sense of being unable to act and *think* according to this incoming new epoch^{xxvi}. The forms of knowledge acquired in previous times no longer fit today's novelty, and although inventions (in terms of individual practices and social organizations) are required to face such massive change, this forced *epokhé* provokes a general disadjustment that does not allow individuals to successfully (and healthily) keep up with the times. So there is nothing left but to adapt oneself to what is imposed.

Hence the ever-greater servitude to machines, algorithms and automatic decisions was not only doing away with the virtual, but also acting as an acquired blindness and a more general suspension of thought, a suspension in which *asocial* automatisms were set free, blocking any possibility of developing adequate knowledge – or rendering it *obsolete in advance*^{xxvii}.

Obviously, and despite the mental distancing, my docile mind could not get out of all this. Not only that she, my mind, was even worse than the disciplined bodies described by Foucault, segmented, pigeonholed in a micro-space, ordered in time and divided into tasks – the more obedient the more useful (and vice versa). In addition, she had become less critical, less supportive, a little more herdlike and fearful – also distanced from herself within her own confinement. Notwithstanding the deployment of names and definitions that have been associated with these symptoms,

this seemed to me one of the best examples of “generalized proletarianization”:^{xxviii} on the one hand, the meticulous control of the body and its operations inhibited any movement, and on the other, the mind was sterilized and led to *functional stupidity*.^{xxix} At least, this hypercolonization of time and life was in some way succeeding in sadly reattaching the two.

Epilogue. Toward a mental distancing. For those to whom *the salt of life has lost its savor*

Once again, like the flying fish that can know the water only when it leaps out of it^{xxx}, perhaps, it is only by stepping a little out of this uninterrupted flow that we can face this technocratic micro-bio-politics where the reasons and motives of a calculating reason accustomed to continuous assessments, which distribute not only the sensible, but also rhythms and pauses, are transforming mental ecology into mental alienation.

But beware. It would be too easy to say that this corresponds to the preaching of those who call for us to flee the screens and the reverberations of electric backlights that are causing so much suffering. Rather, it is an invitation to accept that another form of mental distancing is required, one that relates to what Simondon described as an alternation of phases (or phase shift) in the process of individuation^{xxxi}, or to what Derrida referred to when talking about *différance*. In other words, a mental distancing which introduces the necessity of knowing that the suspension of thought that occurs with de-phasing is precisely the first step toward its reactivation – and that, finally, calls us to *never cease from thinking*.

This intermittent character of thought is nothing new to philosophy. Aristotle showed that he was well aware of it, when he affirmed that the sensitive soul is actually sensitive and the noetic soul actually noetic only intermittently, that is to say, that it is perpetually threatened by the possibility of falling back.^{xxxii} So, too, did Alfred North Whitehead, when he stated: "It is said that 'men are rational'. This is palpably false: they are only intermittently rational."^{xxxiii} But even in this case, it is thanks to Stiegler that we can learn to project this intermittence onto an ethical and political dimension. At a time in which knowledge denies itself as knowledge, and thought is subjected to various conditions of impossibility, he didn't condemn, but rather recognized the importance of this struggle between tendencies and counter-tendencies, advocating for the right time and to give oneself the real possibility of rising and falling, progressing and regressing: knowledge *should* be intermittent and as ephemeral as life itself. To rest (in all senses), and in this way allow *incalculable intermittencies*, appears as the possibility for a re-appropriation of time and of its heterogeneous virtual dimension.

What he argued for was thus an economy of care based on what he defined as a *cosmic potlatch*, able to activate bifurcations which could destroy "very large quantities of differences and orders but does so by projecting a very great difference on another plane, constituting another 'order of magnitude' against the disorder of a *kosmos* in becoming, a *kosmos* that, without this projection of a yet-to-come from the unknown, would be reduced to a universe without singularity."^{xxxiv} And where "noesis must always and in principle confront the possibility of its non-human – if not inhuman – constitution."^{xxxv}

A lot of *thinking* remains to be done,^{xxxvi} but to take seriously mental distancing as cognitive intermittency is perhaps what allows us to take care of this planetary *mal-être*. To de-automate our practices and return to sleeping, dreaming, wishing and *thinking*. "To create, fabulate, in order not to despair."^{xxxvii}

Acknowledgments

This writing would not have been possible without the intensive dialogue I maintain with Paolo Vignola. Most intuitions that I have tried to develop here are not *mine*, but have been bred during our infinite lock-down conversations. It is with the same infinity that I want to thank him for the *response-ability* we are trying to train.

Infinite thanks also to Daniel Ross for being able to orient within the virtualities of my English and helping to transform it into writing.

ⁱ See F. Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*. London and New Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, 2000, 28.

ⁱⁱ F. Guattari, in "The Vertigo of Immanence". Interview with John Johnstone, June 1992. In E. Alliez, A. Goffey (eds.), *The Guattari Effect*. London-New York: Continuum, 2011, 25-39: 38.

ⁱⁱⁱ See G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, cap. 4: "November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics".

^{iv} F. Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, 35.

^v The notion of a constitutive intra-action is taken from K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway. Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham-London: Duke University Press, 2007.

^{vi} G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 110.

^{vii} See N. Fleming, "What's on the agenda for post-pandemic meetings?". *Nature*, 3 August 2020, available online at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02254-z>.

^{viii} I owe this illuminating point of view to Paolo Vignola. See final acknowledgements.

^{ix} G. Deleuze, C. Parnet, *Dialogues II. Revised Edition*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 148.

^x G. Deleuze, C. Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 148.

^{xi} Together with Donna Haraway, Karen Barad affirms that all material entities “are entangled relations of becoming”, and that “materiality ‘itself’ is always already touched by and touching infinite configurations of possible others, other beings and times. *In an important sense, in a breathtakingly intimate sense, touching, sensing, is what matter does, or rather, what matter is: matter is condensations of response-ability. Touching is a matter of response. Each of ‘us’ is constituted in response-ability. Each of ‘us’ is constituted as responsible for the other, as the other*”. See K. Barad, “On Touching – The Inhuman That Therefore I Am”. *Differences*, vol. 25, n. 3, 2012, 206-223: 215 (emphasis in the original).

^{xii} K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 139.

^{xiii} G. Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 99.

^{xiv} “We can say of the nomads, following Toynbee’s suggestion: they do not move. They are nomads by dint of not moving, not migrating, of holding a smooth space that they refuse to leave, that they leave only in order to conquer and die. Voyage in place: that is the name of all intensities, even if they also develop in extension. To think is to voyage...”. G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 482.

^{xv} F. Guattari, in “The Vertigo of Immanence”, 28.

^{xvi} K. Barad, “On Touching...”, 210.

^{xvii} F. Guattari, in “The Vertigo of Immanence”, 29.

^{xviii} See K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 65. “It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories”. Haraway 12.

^{xix} F. Scott Fitzgerald, “The Crack-up”. *Esquire*, 1936. Available online at: <https://classic.esquire.com/the-crack-up/>.

^{xx} See J. Crary, *24/7. Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep*. London-New-York: Verso, 2013, 18 (ebook version).

^{xxi} N. Klein, “Screen New Deal”. *The Intercept*, May 8, 2020. Available online at: <https://theintercept.com/2020/05/08/andrew-cuomo-eric-schmidt-coronavirus-tech-shock-doctrine/>.

^{xxii} I am of course referring to the analysis of what has been called “algorithmic governmentality” (see as main reference A. Rouvroy, T. Berns, “Algorithmic governmentality and prospects of emancipation. Disparateness as a precondition for individuation through relationships?”. *Réseaux I*, 2013, 177, 163-196) and to the birth of so-called “data behaviourism” (see A. Rouvroy, *The end(s) of critique: data-behaviourism vs. due-process*. In M. Hildebrandt, E. De Vries (eds.), *Privacy, Due Process and the Computational Turn. Philosophers of Law Meet Philosophers of Technology*. London: Routledge, 2013, 143-167), thanks to which human behaviours, once transformed into infra-individual data and associated with patterns and profiles, can be pre-detected and anticipated, becoming in many cases performatively manipulable (through the induction of pre-tailored and customized sensations and “desires”).

^{xxiii} V. Woolf, quoted in I. Stengers, V. Despret, *Women Who Make a Fuss. The Unfaithful Daughters of Virginia Woolf*. Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2014, 73.

^{xxiv} M. Foucault, *Discipline & Punish. The Birth of Prison*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005, 137-138.

^{xxv} “[...] what is affirmed more and more, alongside the society of control, is the he society of integration, of subjective integration, in and by which the subject is modelled so as to function as a social robot. There isn’t even any need to keep the subject under surveillance or control.” F. Guattari, in “The Vertigo of Immanence”, 27. See also B. Stiegler, *Automatic Society 1. The Future of Work*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016, 65.

^{xxvi} This and what follows correspond to the process that Stiegler described as a “doubly epochal redoubling”; one of its most exhaustive explanations of this term can be found in B. Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption. Technology and madness in Computational Capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity, 2019, 14–15.

^{xxvii} See B. Stiegler, *The Age of Disruption*, 8. The passage continues as follows: “What is thereby attained is an extreme stage of rationali

^{xxviii} Diffracting Marx’s notion of proletarianization (the pauperization of workers thanks to their loss of possession of the means of production), Bernard Stiegler made of it a concept able to synthesize the loss of knowledge that humans are subjected to when entering into a relation with a machine, extended from productive skills (*savoir faire*) to ways of living (*savoir-vivre*), and even to theoretical forms of knowledge. See, among others, B. Stiegler, “Anamnesis and Hypomnesis. Plato as the first thinker of the proletarianization”. In L. Armand and A. Bradley (eds.), *Technicity*. Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2006, 15–41.

^{xxix} On functional or systemic stupidity, see B. Stiegler, *Automatic Society 1*, 24 and following.

^{xxx} The image of the flying fish has been used by Bernard Stiegler in many of his works and also as a symbol for his teaching activities. See for instance, *pharmakon.fr*.

^{xxxi} See G. Simondon, *L’individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et information*. Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 2005.

^{xxxii} See D. Ross, “Introduction”. In B. Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*. London: Open Humanities Press, 2018, 7–33: 15.

^{xxxiii} A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality. An Essay in Cosmology*. New York: The Free Press, 1979, 79.

^{xxxiv} See B. Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*, 62.

^{xxxv} B. Stiegler, *The Neganthropocene*, 83.

^{xxxvi} For instance, it would be necessary to further investigate the possible connections between Stiegler’s idea of a “cosmic potlach” (not further developed), Barad’s intra-activity and Haraway’s response-ability, a project that is still in its earliest phases within my own cognitive intermittency.

^{xxxvii} I. Stengers, V. Despret, *Women Who Make a Fuss*, 47.