

Bernard Stiegler

A glossary of terms

As the work of French philosopher Bernard Stiegler receives greater attention in the English-speaking world, more and more readers are discovering his rich lexicon of terms. Hence an (abridged!) glossary for the uninitiated:

- *anamnesis*, the process of recollection or remembrance; direct dialogical interaction without having to rely on external memory supports; an antonym to hypomnesis; adopted from Plato.
- *attention*, one's ability to become absorbed, and particularly the capturing and codifying of absorption.
- *desire, the waning of*, the tendential fall in desire and libidinal energies; as desire wanes, drives increase; contrast with Marx's theory of the tendential fall in the rate of profit, Jameson's theory of the waning of affect, and Žižek's theory of the decline in symbolic efficiency.
- *grammatization*, the process of describing and formalizing human behavior into letters, words, writing, and code so that it can be reproduced; compare to Weber's concept of "rationalization" and Agre's concept of "capture"; adapted from Derrida.
- *hypomnesis*, the making-technical of memory; the hypomnemata include all kinds of memory substitutes and externalizations such as writing, photography, machines, etc.; an antonym to anamnesis.
- *I-don't-give-a-fuckism (je-m'en-foutisme)*, the tendency toward social irresponsibility; to neglect the long term for short term interests.
- *mystagogy*, mystical or religious teachings, as opposed to reason, philosophy, or instruction.
- *nootechiniques*, technologies of spirit or mind; often construed as normatively positive.
- *organology*, the industrialization of organization; compare to the concept of protocol; often construed as normatively negative.
- *pharmacology*, the condition of duality in which something is both poison and cure, bringing both benefit and harm; adopted from Derrida.
- *psychopolitics*, a politics of psychical formations; comparable to Foucault's "biopolitics"; often construed as normatively positive.
- *psychopower (psychopouvoir)*, power that is invested in the psychological or immaterial realm; comparable to Foucault's "biopower"; often construed as normatively negative.
- *psychotechniques*, writing and reading, the book, Kant and the Enlightenment, the republic of letters; psychotechniques *cultivate* attention rather than destroy it; often construed as normatively positive.
- *psychotechnologies*, games, computers, SMS, etc.; these constitute part of the culture industry; often construed as normatively negative.
- *retentions*, primary retentions are sense perceptions, secondary retentions are memories, tertiary retentions are media or culture (i.e. cultural mnemonics or what is sometimes called cultural memory); adopted from Husserl.
- *stupidity (bêtise)*, irresponsibility, the corruption of attention, the rise in incivility and boorishness.
- *synaptogenesis*, the formation of synapses in the brain during cognitive development.
- *transindividual*, the realm of culture, the cultural unconscious, memory that transits across individuals and generations; adopted from Simondon.