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Joff P.N. Bradley

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From Hypochondria to Disruption: Hegel and Stiegler on Youth

JOFF P.N. BRADLEY

Teikyo University, Tokyo, Japan

Everybody will be proletarianized... I think that today education is destroyed not only in the university or in school, but in the family. It is destroyed for example by the smartphone; parents who use a smartphone don't look at the babies or the children. Today, society in general is destroyed by social networking, by digital technologies. I say that because if we need to be educated, it is because we are very strange animals. Our main organs are not into our body but outside of the body... This is the reason for which the human being must be educated because he has always to learn how to use artificial organs, that is language, social rules, religion, rituals but also computers, podcasting, et cetera, et cetera. If we understand that education must be based on this process, we have to completely redefine what is education. (Stiegler & Gagliano, 2019)

Considering the quotation above in which Bernard Stiegler (see also Stiegler, Nancy, & Jugnon, 2016) discusses the perceived catastrophic effects unleashed by digital technologies upon societal structures, in what sense can we grant the fundamental technological disruption experienced by the youth of today a proximity and relationship to the self-diagnosed hypochondriasis or hypochondria suffered by G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) in his youth?¹ At first glance, this question is a strange and unconventional one but, nonetheless, it is important and thought-provoking and, indeed, timely, as it informs the struggle for knowledge as such. Moreover, the comparison between the two thinkers is helpful as it explores in a new way the following questions: 1) what knowledge precisely is? and 2) what is the nature of the formation of *Bildung* (liberal learning or culture)? Both questions I assert address shared themes and key issues in both thinkers. The questions also serve to inform the meaning of crisis (κρίσις, *Krisis* in ancient Greek means decision or judgment), both in terms of the personal crisis and philosophical crisis of Hegel, as well as the psychical and societal sense of crisis among youth in the contemporary digital age (Stiegler 2010; 2017). Despite their different contexts and different philosophical traditions, Hegel and Stiegler both offer a philosophy of youth, a philosophy of age, a philosophy of spirit, and because of this illuminate a particular response to the crisis found in the development of *Bewusst-sein* or conscious being. Both are vital thinkers for discussing the trials and tribulations of contemporary youth. With this in mind, a comparison is made between the empty subjectivity of young Hegel's hypochondria—a general

¹ Rosenzweig finds a “philosophy of age” (*Philosophie der Lebensalter*) in Hegel's later lectures. Hegel's self-analysis looks back on a certain “empty subjectivity” or “hypochondria” around the 27th year of life, the so-called Frankfurt period. This is Hegel's “fight” (*Kampf*) with and overcoming of hypochondria. See Rosenzweig, F. (1982). *Hegel und der Staat*. Aalen: Scientia Verlag. See Kaufmann, W. (1978). *Hegel: A reinterpretation*. University of Notre Dame Press; Hegel, G. W. F., Butler, C., & Seiler, C. (1984). *Hegel, the letters*. Indiana University Press.

melancholy or anxiety—and the very disruption of desire itself among contemporary youth who, in facing not only the stark realities of climate change and the Anthropocene, but also robotization, the breakdown of educational institutions and the ongoing deskilling of the workforce, *can no longer envisage a future*. The question is: in what sense is Hegel's hypochondria comparable in any way to the nihilism and alienation of Florian, the teenager in *Dans la disruption* [*The Age of Disruption*] (2016), who Stiegler describes as suffering from a profound loss of belief in the future? The conclusion speculates on whether the current technological era has distorted *the process of individuation* (the becoming of itself of the subject, a concept derived from Gilbert Simondon) to such an extent that the necessity of psychological passage through forms of youthful hypochondria or alienation has been superseded by an altogether different mode of enculturation or inculcation (a mode of automatization or what Antoinette Rouvroy calls “algorithmic governmentality” (2013)).

Any answer to the above set of conundra must understand Hegel's profound hypochondria—his existential crisis—in terms of a response to both the historical moment (the French revolution, politics in the modern world, the consideration of the impossibility of absolute knowledge) and the personal intellectual journey that begins in youth and sojourns its way *towards knowledge*. This passage is seen by Hegel in terms of *Bildung*, or how one becomes an educated moral being. Further exploration of this concept will help to qualify and understand its different psychoanalytical, philosophical, existential, pharmacological senses, as well as the array of disorders such as autism, trauma, hysteria, schizophrenia, *Zerrissenheit* or utter dismemberment, paranoia, melancholia and alienation and the apparently new malady - disruption or unprecedented technological change – which is singled out for particular attention by Stiegler. In other words, it seems essential to examine and confront the epochal differences taking place which are rewriting the meaning of hypochondria, hysteria, *Zerrissenheit* and schizophrenia, on the one hand, and, on the other, the sense of disruption in the present moment.

Hypochondria

Hegel presents human life with a sombre briskness. From the dawn of birth to the eternal night, first the child, then the youth full of ideas and projects, give way to the mature man ripe but disenchanted, broken in by social obligations, finally to the old man exhausted and driveling. (Malabou, 2009, p. 24)

What new meaning can we give to the natural course of the ages of life as explored by Hegel? How has this passage of life, as outlined by philosopher Catherine Malabou above, been disrupted by technologically-inflected epochal changes? What meaning can we give to the hypochondria in Hegel's youth and the question of the philosophy of age when we compare the sense of disruption Stiegler discerns in the transindividuation circuits between the generations, that is, circuits between parent and child, teacher and student? This is to understand the process of individuation (or how subjectivity is formed) and the process of transindividuation (or how subjectivity is formed intersubjectively). Here it is important to ask: What is the meaning and significance of the philosophy of age for the philosophy of education? With these questions in mind, and adding several caveats, this essay is not penned as a direct contribution to the considerable scholarship on Hegel and madness. Nor shall we investigate the key roles melancholy and romantic pessimism played in the thinking of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, for example, the sense of *Zerrissenheit* suffered by Lord Byron (Hentschel, 2018) or the sense of Gothic

Zerrissenheit (Mulvey, 2009). Rather the essay's central theme regards the crisis of youth in two different ages of Europe, and their seemingly incommensurable comparison, namely the time of Hegel's youth and the time of youth in the early decades of the 21st century which is Stiegler's concern. Therefore, while it is outside the scope of this essay to explore in detail Hegel's extensive *oeuvre* and his rumination on youth, which is found in several of his key works—namely the *Philosophy of Right*, the *Encyclopaedia* and in the philosophical beauty of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—our endeavour shall limit itself to the question of his personal hypochondria, the existential concern with the loss of knowledge, the crisis of *Bildung*, and how this may together inform the experience of the fundamental technological disruption of our epoch.

With the above provisos in mind, let us examine briefly the young Hegel's depression and hypochondria to understand their underlying reasons and causes. Alexandre Kojève writes that Hegel, at about the age of 27, understands that “a man has to conquer a certain hypochondria.” In Hegel's case, the hypochondria manifests because of a profound understanding of history. The period of deep and lasting depression in his late 20s and early 30s was so severe as “to paralyze all his powers,” in other words, to frustrate his projects and goals. This is usually referred to as the Frankfurt period. At this time, philosophically and personally, Hegel struggled to reconcile the abandonment of Individuality (in youth) with the idea of absolute knowledge. *Zerrissenheit*, or torn-to-pieces-hood, is the effect or limit of death on spirit, and Kojève explains that Hegel came to understand that philosophy must complete itself by interiorizing madness and death in the very movement and passage of spirit. There is simply no escape from this. It is in the surmounting of hypochondria that Hegel essentially becomes a Wise Man; he reconciles a distrusting youth with the wisdom of old age. After such a crisis, Hegel publishes the First Part of the *System of Science* entitled 'Science of the Phenomenology of the Spirit' and declares there will never more be anything new on earth (Kojève & Queneau, 1969, p. 168).

In a letter written May 27, 1810 to Windischmann, Hegel describes his life in the “dark regions” and suggests that only devotion to “science” can cure it (Kaufman, 1978, pp. 328-329). The letter reads:

From my own experience I know this mood of the soul, or rather of reason, which arises when it has finally made its way with interest and hunches into a chaos of phenomena but, though inwardly certain of the goal, has not yet worked its way through them to clarity and to a detailed account of the whole. For a few years I suffered from this hypochondria to the point of exhaustion. Everybody probably has such a turning point in his life, the nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence in which he is forced through a narrow passage by which his confidence in himself and everyday life grows in strength and assurance... Continue onward with confidence. It is science which has led you into this labyrinth of the soul, and science alone is capable of leading you out again and healing you. (Hegel, Butler, & Seiler, 1984, p. 559)

Later that year in a letter dated December 14, 1810, Hegel describes human life with a perfect bitterness (Kaufman, 1978, p. 175). This is reflected elsewhere in the section of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* entitled 'Self-alienated Spirit. Culture: Culture and its Sphere of Reality' where Hegel describes self-understanding as:

The consciousness that is aware of its disruption and openly declares it, derides existence and the universal confusion, and derides its own self as well; it is at the same time the fading, but still audible, sound of all this confusion. (Hegel, Miller, & Findlay, 1977, p. 319)

What has this struggle to make sense of the world to do with Florian, the young boy of 15 who Stiegler speaks of as rejecting the future? Stiegler claims Florian is of a generation in the first decade of the 21st century that does not or dare not dream. Florian thinks he belongs to the last generation, a directionless, demoralized blind generation, a generation in collective disarray, suffering a profound sense of distress and *anomie*. In *Dans la Disruption*, Stiegler finds it necessary to respond to the crisis of Florian who is quoted as saying:

You really take no account of what happens to us. When I talk to young people of my generation, those within two or three years of my own age, they all say the same thing: we no longer have the dream of starting a family, of having children, or a trade, or ideals, as you yourselves did when you were teenagers. All that is over and done with, because we're sure that we will be the last generation, or one of the last, before the end. (Stiegler, 2018, p. 233)

The loss of hope appears symptomatic of wider social ills and, as such, Stiegler is concerned with the reasons for the loss of desire and the corresponding risks which ensue in the acting out of the drives in violence and asocial behavior (Stiegler, 2009). He is concerned with the plight of youth, with youth suicide, the phenomena of *bikikomori* or social recluse syndrome in Japan which is now witnessed wider afield, with a generation of youth susceptible to terrorism and all manner of other malignant social outgrowths. Stiegler is concerned with the existential despair of youth which has lost “the sensation of existing” (Selve & Stiegler, 2019). This for him is a situation of *immonde*, of wordlessness (see Bradley, 2020). This he finds expressed in widespread depression in China and in Japan where he says mental illness is much graver. In *States of Shock*, Stiegler writes of the scepticism of youth both towards the future and towards the former generations:

This scepticism on the part of youth, this non-recognition by the ‘descendant’ generation in relation to its ‘ascendancy’, which thus loses its ascendancy, unfortunately extends past merely the theoretical and scholarly forms of knowledge: it is also and perhaps primarily ways of life (which are in principle transmitted from one generation to another) that have been discredited. As such, it is education in all its forms that is being challenged, given that education in general is this intergenerational transmission, well beyond school teaching, wherein those who are older – teachers, parents, grandparents – are in principle the representatives of the different forms of knowledge through which they find and from which they draw their authority. (2015, p. 21)

As we have seen, Hegel claims all humans may have to endure a turning point in life: “the nocturnal point of the contraction of his essence” (Hegel, Butler, & Seiler, 1984, p. 559). It is science and science alone which, upon leading one into the “labyrinth of the mind,” is capable of leading one out and, therefore, one can say, following Stiegler, it has a profoundly pharmacological and therapeutic effect: offering both a poison and a cure, a breakdown and breakthrough. Stiegler’s interjection here is to highlight the proletarianization of knowledge and the *de-noetization* of learning, which, if transported back to Hegel’s day, would put the pursuit of science in crisis. For Hegel, during youth one must struggle with one’s own personal and intellectual formation until an inner confidence emerges of *who one is in the world*. One must toil with the unhappy consciousness and seek a path beyond self-alienation. This is to set out on a path to find an “inward, more noble existence” as Hegel writes (Lukács & Livingstone, 1976, p. 109). Hegel derives from this passage of life a theory of *Bildung*, a theory of growth and a philosophy of age. He writes on the nature of *Bildung* in several chapters of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Famously, he says, spirit must

look “the negative in the face” and linger or abide with it. He writes: “This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being” (Hegel *et al.*, 1977, p. 19). This is where consciousness becomes real *qua* spirit. Consciousness becomes conscious being *as spirit* when it reaches the grail of absolute knowledge.

In some ways quite similar to Hegel’s predicament, in the so-called age of disruption Stiegler discerns a sense of escape akin to what Hegel calls “the false hell of a hypochondriac Pessimism” in the *Encyclopaedia* (Rosenkranz, & Davidson, 1871, p. 244). For Hegel, in youthful subjectivity there is no embrace of the actual world. As such, Hegel comes to understand that the ideal of his youth appears unattainable. Why? This is because youth opposes a subjective ideal to the way of the world. In *The Philosophy of Right*, young people are urged to struggle to make peace with the actual world. They are urged to wrestle with the ideal and actual way of things. Reconciliation with the actual world is therefore a passage to manhood and later to old age. So in the dialectic of old and new there is a struggle to win over youth, to reconcile youth with the wisdom of those who come to know better. Hypochondria is understood by Hegel as a type of spiritual depression. In a letter dated 1826 to Daub, Hegel says: “I define hypochondria as the illness that consists in the inability to come out of oneself” (Pinkard, 2001, p. 701). And in the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel argues that to survive one must reconcile oneself with the actual conditions of the world. Prior to this decision (*Krîsis* again as decision in Greek, derived from the root verb *krinein*, meaning to decide) subjectivity subsists in a state of “relative incapacity.” Hegel explains:

In this diseased frame of mind the man will not give up his subjectivity, is unable to overcome his repugnance to the actual world, and by this very fact finds himself in a state of relative incapacity which easily becomes an actual incapacity. (quoted in Pinkard, 2001, p. 701)

Out of this comes the three ages of man: youth, manhood and old age – which is in summed up mischievously by Marabou in the quotation at the beginning of this essay. In this procession, a moralism emerges which puts into question adulthood and therefore historical ethical life as such. Youthful resistance to the compromises made with adulthood and its ideals leads to a form of hypochondria. On the other pole, in the *Encyclopedia* Hegel describes old age as struggling to make sense of the new and unfamiliar. As a consequence, established habits and general guidelines are observed. The loss of hope in actualizing previously affirmed ideals leads to a loss of interest in the present and indeed the future. Hegel writes:

The three ages, youth, manhood and old age can be summarized as follows: the philosophy of youth opposes the subjectivity of the individual to the way of the world, the philosophy of manhood opposes the individual's labor on behalf of the world to the resistance of particular objects. And the philosophy of old age detaches itself from opposition to particular objects or persons and withdraws into a harmonious relation to the universal precepts drawn from past experience of opposition. Old age is an inactive reconciliation, effecting a return to ‘oppositionless childhood’. The philosophy of old age recognizes nothing new produced in the labor of the present. This is a philosophy of ‘complete and lifeless capitulation to its world’. (Hegel, Butler, & Seiler, 1984, pp. 16-17; see Encyclopedia 369, Addition)

In his *Education in Hegel*, Nigel Tubbs (2011) explains the point succinctly:

Childhood is its immediacy; youth is its time of uncertainty in mediation; adulthood is the certainty of the self; and old age is the whole that recollects these stages as itself, as I-philosophy. (p. 145)

For our purposes here, what we can take from this ever so brief sketch of the phenomenology of Hegel is that, in the idea of absolute laceration, in the idea of *Zerrissenheit* or “the state of being torn apart” as Goethe puts it (Schmidt, 1996), that is, in negativity as such, there is the possibility of self-discovery. The process of development or formation we shall call *Bildung*, that is, “an image—a model—of which somebody or something is to become an image or model” (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 341). In the historic and contemporary educational context, this details the contradictions and struggles of youthful men and women who move from the “natural consciousness” to *Wissenschaft*, or knowledge as such. Or in other words, the upbringing of youth is to enable the child to be for itself as preparatory for becoming a rational or spiritual being. Education is the struggle where “the subjective will” attains objectivity and becomes worthy of being the actuality of the Idea, of reconciling itself with absolute knowledge. Because, for Hegel, *Bildung* is the art of becoming ethical, of participation in a community (realized as a people and a family), we will see how Stiegler's view of the crisis of *Bildung* vis-à-vis the formation of the individual *precisely as disrupted by technical relations* has contemporary relevance and a distinctly different emphasis from Hegel's historical moment. It will be seen that technology mediates between the formation of community in both a destructive as well as constructive sense. Yet, both Hegel and Stiegler see that, in alienation, a certain truth of *Bildung* is found. In this moment of devastation and disruption or diremption (Rose, 1992)—where everything that is universal (law, good and right) falls apart and perishes—a certain *truth of being* emerges in Hegel's thought; for Stiegler, a certain truth of being *qua* technicity is found, which is to say, an understanding that technicity is an original supplement to being, that is, it is originally constitutive of the human as such.

Bildung

One surmises that Stiegler would agree that the struggle beyond alienation or hypochondria may well be a necessary step for individuation *as such* (the transformation of subjectivity) and an essential moment in the rites of passage of youth, but Stiegler *at first glance and for the most part* is concerned with how this transformation is *inhibited by technology*, with the result of this inhibition leading to disindividuation (the loss of individuation potentiality) and, *in extremis*, the unbinding of and acting out of the drives from desire as such (Stiegler & Ross, 2013). In other words, although one needs alienation to grow and gain autonomy, technology distracts or disrupts youth from grasping the possibilities of time. In alienation, in one's alienation in and of the world, we must inevitably learn and come to feel at home within it. Since the advent of widespread use of the Internet in the early 1990s, Stiegler's point is that our epoch is witnessing a disruption to the self in an historically and epochally unique way. Technology is intervening in the formation of youth in a profound and historically unique way leading to a crisis of formation and to new forms of madness.

In its current iteration, the Internet, and the mass media more generally, obliterate the possibility of thinking the transformation of the future *without precedent*, and thus impede the formation of *Bildung*, that is, a form of education or individuation led by *bild* as in a vision, a paradigm, a projection of an image. This is closely tied to the sense of the oblivion of Being of which Heidegger speaks of. *Bildung* then is the reproductive formation of the pre-given, both externally and inwardly. Of course, Stiegler's concern is why the individual struggles to envision and imagine a future in technologically-mediated and permeated

learning environments. For Stiegler, technology in its inhibitive mode deskills or proletarianizes the learner, in the sense that the learner has information but loses knowledge as such. Moreover, if technology in its inhibitive mode intervenes in the transindividual circuit between teacher and learner, parent and child, then knowledge cannot be passed on from generation to generation. His concern is to find counter images that guide the process of individuation. The key point is that one acquires *Bildung* if one has actively been present in its formation or development. On this logic, if youth are under the sway of technology, as Stiegler argues, if youth hand over dreams of the future to the marketing industries and the like, if they hand over desire as such, there is a corresponding loss of *Bildung*. Therefore, in the loss of skills or knowledge, and through disindividuation (the struggle to form subjectivity, that is, the loss of the capacity to bring the subject to being) and the proletarianization of knowledge (the loss of the *saviors*, that is the loss of the skills to know [*savior-faire*], to live [*savior-vivre*], to have theoretical knowledge [*savoir théorique*]), technology becomes the prime driver of formation, with the student left *deformed*, without image, and therefore precisely without *Bildung*.

The remedy to this is that youth must individuate themselves, both psychically and socially, if they are to form transindividuation circuits, that is, circuits between the generations. This is the point at which Hegel and Stiegler speak to each other as philosophers of age and philosophers of spirit. So again without active formation, there is no *Bildung*, and therefore the philosophy of age as expounded by Hegel takes on a starkly different direction and meaning. As Stiegler is anxious to save reason from unreason (*dérason*), and following Horkheimer to understand the diversion (*détournement*) of reason, he is determined to stave off the onslaught and impact of algorithmic governmentality on the development of youthful personality. The impact on the development of youthful personality can be understood as the handing over of decision making to automatic impersonal calculation, where calculation is understood as entropic, that is, curtailing futural possibility. Stiegler insists reason is not reducible to pure calculation because the question is not one of opposing pure calculation *per se* but of transforming entropic calculation into a negentropic form, that is to say, into something that is capable of producing the *incalculable*, the event as such, that is of producing dreams and desires tied to the imagination which are not directed by Big Data corporations and marketing: in summa, to offer a counter image of thought. This is to use calculation against calculation to produce an unanticipated bifurcation, “a vital *différance*” (Ross in Stiegler, 2018, p. 24). For Stiegler, we must bifurcate because our time calls for it, the epoch calls for it, the world calls for it. We must produce *différance*, because *there is no alternative* (Stiegler & Collectif International, 2020).

The task of education is not to merely reproduce the past but to individuate or interpret the past. This demands, for Stiegler, “journeys of knowledge” which cannot be anticipated by computation alone. Elsewhere, he describes this as “negentropic bifurcation” (Stiegler, 2018; see Bradley, 2019), which we can take to mean: that which creates, invents and resists blind calculation. In other words, that which restores, anticipates, and cares for has *protentional capacity* for the future as such. It is quite clear Stiegler is deeply troubled by the epoch in which he lives and has said of it: “An era that is in truth an absence of epoch, no collective protentions, collective retentions, only data and algorithms, only computation” (Stiegler, 2019). For him, our epoch, the time of the Internet revolution and beyond, has not yet adjusted itself to advancements in contemporary technical, social and biological systems. Elsewhere, Stiegler makes the point that the passage through hypochondria is *disrupted* precisely by the denial of a confrontation with the limits of the earth, that is to say, the shock of the Anthropocene which is upon us. Stiegler laments the crisis in which no new form of thought appears on the horizon to conjure the prospects or collective protections of new organizations, institutions, or behaviours.

Here, both Stiegler's and Hegel's grasp of history and the epoch in which they lived assume a different sense. For Stiegler it is the concept of disruption which explains this disjunction between technical, social and biological systems. The disruption creates a sense of an eternal present without possibility to think across the generations, to think the future as such. From one innovation to another, without time to care or to undergo the process of individuation; simply put, for Stiegler, there is a loss of the collective horizon of expectation (*elpis*) or hope. *Elpis* designates expectation, conjecture, presumption, and foresight (Stiegler, 1998, pp. 196-197). Consequently, as knowledge is no longer transmitted from one generation to the next in traditional forms, that is to say, across the generations, that is, from teacher to student, parent to child, from the old to the young, there is a crisis of formation, and, with it, a crisis of the generations through which futural protention or anticipation cannot be envisaged.

In the story of Florian, Stiegler finds a nihilistic desire to end the world as it is without thought of how or what to replace it with. With the loss of the desire for the future and the rise in violent acts (the acting out of the drives), there a general growth of disinhibition. At the end of *Dans la disruption*, Stiegler's response to this crisis is to ask youth to dream of the "great negentropic bifurcation" (*la grande bifurcation négentropique*) which would disrupt the very disruption of our technologically-mediated world. One imagines this is meant in the sense of envisaging the future *with anticipation*, to bind the drives to desire, to bring something new into the world which would transform the world - riven with ecological, societal, political crises - *for the better*. This is where Stiegler is at his most utopian and speculative as he speaks of the pharmacological possibility of a shift, a "quasi causal possibility of a leap"—borrowing from Gilles Deleuze—that is the affirmation of difference as such that would allow youth to reshape their lot by opening out to a world of futural becoming. A pharmacological shift is always possible for Stiegler, and this is why he affirms "the leap" even though pessimism and crisis abound among youth in the first few decades of the 21st century. For Stiegler, the prevalent sense of madness in Western societies is a disruption and destruction of societal relations. For him, such destruction is accelerated by the conditions of algorithmic life. While, for Hegel, madness is an inevitable stage that the soul must pass through in its struggle with the immediacy of substantial content, disruption for Stiegler carries epochal significance as youth no longer envision the future at all. Put in a more Hegelian way, the unhappy consciousness of youth *in crisis* is not only without desire for a future but, in its aporetic condition, cannot sublimate the crisis-ridden moment. The protentions of youth (that is the desire and expectation of the future) are more and more short-circuited by algorithmic calculation. Yet Stiegler is not propounding any straightforward Luddite manifesto as he urges his readers to understand the pharmacological meaning of technology and technique. Interestingly, he notices that a form of hypochondria is originally tied to humanity's prosthetic reality. In *What makes life worth living* Stiegler insists that the human itself suffers a "primordial prostheticity of the event" that is to say the pharmacological situation of "primordial prostheticity" which incites a "primordial melancholy and hypochondria." In *What makes life worth living*, Stiegler writes:

The primordial prostheticity of the event that we ourselves become... is a pharmacological situation that incites a primordial melancholy and hypochondria, of which the devoured liver of Prometheus in chains is the emblem, and this pharmacological situation is the matrix of desire. (2013, p. 113)

This sense of hypochondria understands our incompleteness as humans, and the supplement of technics which is its necessity. With this understanding of pharmacology in mind, how can the sense of disruption in Stiegler's later work grasp the underlying cause of the long list of maladies affecting and assailing youth? How does this new sense of disruption differ from melancholia, hypochondria (a mood

of the soul), neurasthenia (emotional disturbance), schizophrenia? How can it make sense of the burgeoning and prevalence of illnesses in late capitalism such as autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the *bikikomori* syndrome, game addiction, endemic loneliness, obsessive-compulsive personality disorders, anxiety, phobias, eating disorders and all manner of other manias? With the concerns of youth at heart and in the current technical milieu, Stiegler's concepts of general organology (Stiegler, 2013; Burton & Hörl, 2017)—which we can take to mean a general theory of technical life (the co-individuation of human organs, technical organs, and social organization) and disruption, that is, the current iteration of technology as profoundly disruptive of societal relations—are essential tools to make sense of the loss of the reason to live (the loss of *savoir vivre*) and the decline of knowledge of how to make and do (the loss of *savoir faire*).

In Stiegler's rethinking of the concept of individuation, the human being is co-constituted with and by technology. Technology *mediates* and *Bildung* is affected by this. And because education is a process of formation, Stiegler will argue that modern education has become a kind of (de)formation of youth as the culture industries (the marketization of the Internet) have come to dominate, and infiltrate educational institutions, leading to a loss of attention and the generalized proletarianization of knowledge which has led to *de-noetization* (the loss of *savoir faire*, knowledge of how to do, of how to make things). Again, we must note here that technology can be the cause of and a type of *Bildung* if, and only if, the individual has contributed to its formation. As Kouppanou explains Stiegler's critique of political economy attacks "the market's determinative role for the formation of our way of life and indicates the need to reveal the economic mechanisms that affect the human-technology relation" (2015, p. 1120). It is not so much growth and cultivation which education fosters but the formation/deformation of the child:

The learning Stiegler is describing contradicts conceptualizations of education as growth and cultivation, but shares common ground with the idea that education is a process of formation or *Bildung*. Either coming from the culture and programming industries or from formal schooling, education is some kind of (de)formation of the child and if, in fact, decisions are not being made, with the child's wellbeing in mind, by the culture industries, then educational institutions ought to make them. (2015, p. 1120)

Crisis

While Stiegler's work is groundbreaking, the concept of disruption is not Stiegler's sole preserve. The concept of disruption is not without precedent. We find it in Edgar Morin's work on crisisology (1976). But it is Stiegler who has reapplied it effectively to expound upon the prevalent crises experienced by young people and in the educational milieu as a whole. As the concept of disruption is found in Morin's work, it is here that a comparison between these two thinkers proves illuminating. Morin was writing in 1976 and responding to a political sense of crisis in Marxism, and the concept of disruption emerges from his crisisology and understanding of systems theory. What we find is an interesting comparison with the language of disruption and crisis found in Stiegler. Indeed, one may interpret Morin's understanding of crisis *pharmacologically* in Stiegler's argot, that is to say, as a radical ambiguity, as a moment that can be at once destruction in action (disorder, dislocation and disintegration), and creativity in action. In Morin's words, crisis is both risk and chance, a risk of regression (risk of death) and chance of progression (risk of life). As such, crisis actualizes both disorganization and reorganization. This seems to resonate with

the significance of Stiegler's ecology of spirit (Stiegler, 2014). Morin suggests the need for a rethinking of the nature of crisis, writing: "Today we must deepen the crisis of conscience in order for the consciousness of crisis to, at last, emerge. The crisis of the concept of crisis is the beginning of theory of crisis" (1976, p. 20). He adds:

As the crisis carries the joint outburst of disintegrative and integrative forces (of 'death' and of 'life'), as it triggers some 'healthy' processes (research, strategy, innovation) and 'pathological' processes (myth, magic, ritual), as it wakes-up and is put to sleep at the same time, the crisis can have a regressive or progressive resolution. (1976, p. 18)

Stiegler too underscores the importance of the concept of crisis in the contemporary milieu. As we have found, for Stiegler, in the post-1993 milieu, the absence of collective protentions (desire, hope) suggests an absence of epoch, an absence of collective expectation. This is what Stiegler describes as the post-truth era. This is to understand the idea of epoch precisely as formed through *Bildung*, through education, through transindividuation. *Without truth, there can be no epoch*. Yet, through a passage of uncertainty, the decisive moment or crisis allows for a diagnosis. Writing in the 1970s, Morin's point is that crisis in that moment signified a lack of decision. What emerges from this is uncertainty and disruption. Morin writes: "Today crisis means lack of decision. It is the moment out of which springs uncertainties as well as disruption" (Morin, 1976, p. 5). It is interesting to note here that Morin uses the concepts of negentropy, reorganization, and disruption to describe system dynamics and that these concepts are somehow revealed by the concept of crisis. These concepts form part of Stiegler's recent architectonic of concepts but it is Stiegler who uses them to suggest it is crisis itself which creates new conditions for action. It is a wound that heals and cures, a notion that appeals to both Stiegler and Deleuze. Crisis, then, is a *disruption* of the unity and passage of the ages. It disrupts the passage of age from youth to maturity and old age. Yet, it is this reign of calculability, which disrupts maturity, that is understood as *Bildung*, as the individual and collective formation of intelligence and knowledge. Stiegler speaks plainly about the nature of crisis and disruption and the wound of the present and he posits the interplay between the verb to dress (*panser*) and to think (*penser*) in his recent work *Qu'appelle-t-on panser?* [What is Called Caring] (2020) to think about the question of healing the open wound:

I'm neither an optimist nor a pessimist — those are just moods. If you're fighting on the front line, you don't ask yourself those kinds of questions. We need to do now what is necessary to get ourselves out of this mess as best we can. We have to be rational. You do need courage, and what is going to stiffen that? It's resolution. Telling yourself that there is no alternative. And, at the same time, it means starting to dress (*panser*) the wounds — that is to say, to think (*penser*) in terms of acting, and acting to heal wounds. (Selve & Stiegler, 2019)

Conclusion

My argument is that, while there appears a significant gulf between Stiegler's take on the general, societal technological malaise, and Hegel's ideas on individual hypochondria or melancholy and from that Hegel's architectonic of knowledge, what can be drawn out from their respective discussions on madness and its cures is salutary and thought-provoking. In the light of Florian's existential crisis the question arises: In

what sense has modern education failed because young people can no longer critically reflect upon ethical principles of the age and decide existentially to adopt them for the betterment of the wider society? My answer is that the comparison between 1) young Hegel's "turning-point in life"—his own emotional and intellectual crisis and struggle to make sense of the world and history—and 2) the loss of noetic method and the proletarianization of knowledge in the hyper-digitized moment in Stiegler's time and *oeuvre*, illuminates, in a very important way, the epochal crises European societies and societies further afield are currently passing going through.

While for Hegel it is in alienation (*Entfremdung*) and the "devastating tearing apart" of the self (*Zerrissenheit*) that founds the constitution of *Bildung*, and while *Zerrissenheit* or fragmentation has a clear founding principle in the account of *Bildung*, for Stiegler, in the time of disruption, there is greater, more entrenched pessimism. For him, the search must begin in earnest for an ecology of spirit, indeed a restoration of spirit which must think beyond the atemporal stasis of the "devastating tearing apart." Why? Because, in this moment, the ideals of youth seem unattainable precisely because the process of psychic and social individuation is *disrupted* by calculation, marketing, and algorithmic governmentality. The philosophy of age and youth becomes a philosophy of death.

Mesmerized by intricate algorithmic pathways, for Stiegler, our present moment has lost the path of thinking and being. In summa: we live a fundamental disruption and a disruption of spirit. If we can understand hypochondria as a "journey towards knowledge" (Stiegler, 2018), in what sense can we give philosophy such a role? A journey of knowledge must be projected *potentially* toward the future as such. But it must also be a passage of *Bildung*. But how can philosophy, as "a journey of knowledge," lead youth out of the disruptive aporia of the present to construct or invoke a new future and expectation, that is an "incalculable" future? Philosophy, it would seem, is tasked with thinking this, with thinking the profound loss of feeling for existence, a loss that excrescently manifests itself in violent frustration and madness, that is despair and desensitization (*dénoétisation*), and the destruction of cognitive capacities as such. This question has clear implications and ramifications for the philosophy of education, as education is a discipline which must open out the future to young people who face it with trepidation. Stiegler insists that confronting these endemic problems demands nothing less than "a battle for intelligence" (2010, p. 5), a question of maturity, and *Aufklärung* and a noopolitics, which is to say, a battle for the mind and intelligence (Stiegler, 2010). My question from beginning to end has been: In what way is this battle for intelligence epochally different from the one which Hegel experienced in his youth? I have found that Stiegler is keen to examine the pharmacological and organological condition for a new individual and collective intelligence because, in it, he senses there is a promise of a new maturity and new critique. He writes:

If we are to carry out a battle for intelligence, that is where we must begin: we must organologically reform the *Bildung*, reconstituting and re-forming psychosocial attention in the face of these psychotechnologies of globalized psychopower. (2010, p. 5)

Daniel Ross, Stiegler's main English translator, puts the point well, insisting the philosophy of Stiegler is concerned with reinvention and a new beginning, a return to the base of knowledge as a prelude to constructing a new future:

I think Stiegler is a true philosopher and as a true philosopher he is right to be concerned with the way in which philosophy is something that leads to a possibility of constructing a new future. (Ross & Withers, 2015)

Both Hegel and Stiegler have been used here to contrast the passage of youth across the generations, the moment of crisis in youth and the senses and experiences of madness in two different epochs. I have examined both philosophers of spirit to think the role of philosophy as a discipline which thinks the future, which thinks of desire and hope for the future as something that emerges out of the madness and disruption of the present.

This essay on hypochondria and disruption comes after the untimely passing away of Bernard Stiegler in August 2020 at the age of 68. I wrote it in the present tense and leave it as it is as it remains difficult to make sense of my own present crisis *in an epoch now without the philosophy of Stiegler*.

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About the Author

Joff P.N. Bradley is Professor of English and Philosophy in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Teikyo University, Tokyo, Japan. Bradley is a visiting professor at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi, India, and a visiting research fellow at Kyung Hee University in Seoul, South Korea.