

**Review Article***Copyright © All rights are reserved by Xu Zhao*

Interpretation of Stiegler's Philosophy of Technology from the Perspective of Philosophy of Problem

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While diverse academic perspectives exist on Stiegler's philosophy of technology, Ma (2025) presents a novel interpretation through the lens of problem philosophy. By analyzing Stiegler's temporal dimensions of problems, Ma demonstrates how technology interacts with different phases of existence within the ever-changing temporal flow, forming a dynamic and evolving process. This innovative temporal framework not only adds new dimensions to philosophy of problem but also provides theoretical foundations for understanding how technology influences human survival and cognition across historical periods. Ma argues that Stiegler's philosophy of technology is essentially a philosophy of problems. This argument is both novel and persuasive.

Keywords: Stiegler, Lei Ma, philosophy of technology, philosophy of problems**Introduction**

Within Stiegler's conceptual framework, technology transcends being merely a collection of tools—it constitutes a force profoundly shaping human existence. Through reinterpreting Heidegger (1962), Stiegler (2011) demonstrates that technology is intrinsically intertwined with human beinghood, fundamentally molding our existential conditions by influencing our perceptions and modes of thought. Lei Ma (2025) further deepens this perspective. By examining Stiegler's temporal dimension of problems, Ma reveals how technology interacts with different existential phases within the ever-evolving temporal continuum, forming a dynamic and progressive process. This innovative temporal structure not only adds new dimensions to problems but also provides theoretical foundations for understanding technology's impact on human survival and cognition across historical periods. Ma thus argues that Stiegler not only stands out in the philosophy of technology but also develops a unique philosophy of problems. His interpretive perspective on problems is novel and persuasive. Ma's interpretation of Stiegler's philosophy of technology is novel and persuasive.

Three Arguments on Stiegler's Problem Philosophy

From three aspects, Ma argues that Stiegler's philosophy of technology is essentially a kind of philosophy of problem, while simultaneously analyzing temporal structures to reveal new value dimensions in Stiegler's problem philosophy.

Firstly, Ma argues that Stiegler proposes a groundbreaking perspective distinct from Heidegger's approach to examining the relationship between being and technology. Stiegler contends that being does not simply exist within an abstract "Dasein" but is inherently connected to a hetero environment. This "hetero" is not a traditional concept opposing "Dasein" but rather refers to the state of being already situated in an external, heterogeneous context before any questions are raised. In other words, being does not exist in isolation within the framework of self-consciousness, but is already surrounded and shaped by an external, heterogeneous environment. Stiegler transcends the limitations of Heidegger's "Dasein" concept by emphasizing the temporal and contextual significance of questioning. Within

Heidegger's philosophy, "Dasein" as the core of human existence emphasizes individual self-awareness. However, Stiegler argues that this awareness does not always exist independently but is influenced and shaped by external environments. Humans do not begin questioning from a purely abstract state of being rather, their capacity for questioning gradually develops through interactions with the "Alienation" environment. Stiegler asserts that self-consciousness does not spontaneously emerge from nothing but unfolds progressively through human interactions with the external world. Ma further points out within Stiegler's conceptual framework that his understanding of "questioning" demonstrates profound innovation. He emphasizes that questioning does not simply emerge from the intrinsic self-consciousness of "Dasein", but is deeply rooted in an external environment in opposition to "Dasein". This external environment is not static or passive, but rather dynamic and full of tension. By revealing "Alienation," questioning essentially becomes an expression and reflection of the tension between the external world and existence. The process of questioning is not merely an exploration of existing knowledge; it also reflects the contradictions and inconsistencies between existence and the world. In other words, questions themselves do not directly point to definitive answers, but rather expose gaps and dissonances between existence and the environment, prompting deeper human reflection on ourselves and the world. This shift in thinking holds profound significance, offering new perspectives for understanding the relationship between technology and human existence. Ma argues that Stiegler's concept of "technology" is not merely tools in human life, but rather the core force shaping human thought, perception, and modes of existence. In the questioning process, technology is not a simple external tool-it becomes part of this "Alienated" environment, participating in the continuous evolution and unfolding of existence. Thus, questions themselves are not only revelations of "Alienation", but also components of the complex interaction between technology and existence, revealing how humans exist within technological environments. Through this framework, Stiegler's philosophy expands the temporality of questions into three dimensions: before questioning, after questioning, and re-questioning (Ruckfrage). This temporal structure of innovation not only endows the question itself with new philosophical significance, but also provides a groundbreaking framework for understanding the relationship between technology and existence. By revealing the concept of "hetero", Stiegler expands the horizons of existentialist philosophy while establishing a theoretical foundation for philosophical discourse on technology. Within this framework, technology is no longer merely a tool or external entity, but rather deeply embedded in every moment of our existence, continuously influencing and shaping our understanding and responses to the world.

Secondly, Ma further argues that during the "post-questioning" phase, Stiegler's "Dasein" no longer remains confined to initial questioning consciousness but gradually becomes aware of its own limitations, flaws, and inevitable state of ignorance. At this stage, questions cease to merely serve as catalysts for thought and instead become a force compelling existence to confront its shortcomings.

The desire for answers and anxiety arising from ignorance, as perceived by Stiegler, constitute a form of "poison". This "poison" is not purely negative-it manifests both as distress and unease toward the unknown and as an internal tension driving continuous existential inquiry. In contrast, the process of attempting to answer questions and compensate for ignorance is understood by Stiegler as a form of "therapy". However, this "therapy" is not an ultimate cure but rather a temporary adjustment and mitigation. While each answer temporarily alleviates ignorance-induced anxiety, it may simultaneously introduce new questions and blind spots, thereby generating fresh "poison". Thus, "poison" and "therapy" do not form a simple binary opposition but rather an internally intertwined, mutually transformative dynamic structure. This framework reflects Stiegler's profound insight into the relationship between technology and knowledge from a "pharmacological" perspective: any technology or knowledge can potentially become either poison or healing, depending on specific usage methods and existential contexts. Within this framework, the "post-questioning" phase ceases to be a linear process leading to answers and instead becomes a cyclical, continuously generative movement. In this process, existence undergoes constant alternation between "poison" and "therapy": on one hand, ignorance and uncertainty persistently erode existing cognitive frameworks; on the other, new understandings and interpretations continuously repair and reshape these structures. It is precisely this recurring tension that prevents existence from stagnating in any fixed cognitive state, maintaining itself in a dynamic state of unfolding and stimulation. In this context, Ma emphasizes that Stiegler's concept of "being-in-default" does not confront problems in a singular or closed manner, but rather unfolds through an iterative process. Each response following "questioning" represents both a temporary overcoming of prior ignorance and the beginning of a new cycle of ignorance. This cyclical pattern is far from futile-it constitutes the fundamental pathway for existence to reach truth and self-awareness. Truth, in other words, is not a one-time graspable object but a gradual manifestation emerging from the dialectical interplay of "poison" and "therapy". Thus, within Stiegler's philosophical framework, knowledge generation is no longer understood as unidirectional accumulation, but rather as a pharmacologically balanced dynamic equilibrium. Being deepens its understanding of itself and the world through continuous imbalance and rebalancing. From this perspective, "post-questioning" is not merely the endpoint of inquiry, but rather a critical phase driving Being's ongoing development and continuous meaning-making.

Finally, Ma interprets a pivotal concept by Stiegler- "re-questioning". This concept not only profoundly expands Stiegler's intellectual framework but also provides a new perspective for understanding the complex relationship between existence and knowledge. According to Stiegler, once a question is posed, Being cannot simply remain focused on seeking answers but must continually return to the origin of the question through ongoing "re-questioning". This process signifies that Being does not passively accept external answers but rather engages in constant reflection, reconstruction, and reinvention within the cyclical

process of questioning and resolution. "Re-questioning" is neither mere repetition of questions nor mere continuation of existing inquiries; it represents a fundamental shift in thinking. Through this concept, Stiegler emphasizes that after posing a question, Being should not be constrained by answer-seeking but rather reflect on the question's essence, historical roots, and potential future developments. This approach carries profound philosophical significance-it not only prompts existence to re-examine its relationship with the world but also encourages recognition of its historical and future dimensions, particularly evident in the context of philosophy of technology. In Stiegler's technological philosophy, technology is not a static tool or external entity but a dynamic, ever-changing process. Technology encompasses both retrospective analysis of past experiences and forward-looking anticipation of potential futures. Technological evolution is not linear; it involves continuous navigation between history and the future, blending retrospection with foresight. Through the concept of "retrospection", Stiegler reveals the intrinsic connection between technology and existence: technology is not merely about how humans extract knowledge from past experiences, but also about creating new possibilities for the future through continuous reflection. In this process, "retrospection" becomes the crucial link between existence and technology, compelling humanity to not only revisit and reflect on past technological achievements when facing technological progress, but also transform such retrospection into momentum for future development. Through persistent practice of "retrospection", Stiegler emphasizes that existence not only gains new understanding of the past, but also through this understanding, opens pathways toward the future. In this process, technology is not just an external force-it becomes the core driving force behind existence's constant regression and recreation. Through retrospection, Being does not merely acquire knowledge during the quest for answers, but continuously shapes its own existential meaning through each cycle of regression and recreation. Thus, technology not only advances human cognition of the world but also guides existence toward new futures through ongoing "re-questioning". Stiegler's concept of "re-questioning" highlights the nonlinear characteristics of human thought and technological development, prompting us to reflect on how to understand Being's significance through historical retrospection, present contemplation, and future anticipation in a more dynamic and open manner when confronting technological changes. This philosophical perspective not only enriches our understanding of technology but also provides new directions for humanity's self-positioning amidst waves of technological transformation.

Conclusion

Ma believes that Stiegler's philosophy of technology proposes a unique thought process centered on "questions". This approach does not settle for instrumental or functional interpretations of technology, but rather seeks to explore how technology participates in and shapes human existence. Through critical inheritance and transformation of Heidegger's thinking framework, Stiegler introduces a multidimensional temporal structure, incorporating the relationship between memory, deferral, and technological externalization into analysis. This reveals technology as not merely an operational presence in the present, but also a generative force spanning past, present, and future. Within this framework, technology ceases to be a neutral tool and becomes a crucial condition for constituting subjective experience and collective memory. Using the pharmacological metaphor of "poison and therapy", Stiegler points out that technology can lead to forgetting, alienation, and dependency, while simultaneously harboring potential for repair and regeneration. This duality means that once questions are raised, they do not receive simple definitive answers but require continuous activation and rethinking within evolving contexts. Questions themselves become ongoing processes that drive cyclical deepening of reflection and retrospection. Thus, this philosophy of questions not only reshapes our understanding of technology-human relationships but also emphasizes the importance of critical thinking. It demands constant vigilance and openness when confronting technological developments, requiring prudent judgments between risks and possibilities. Consequently, Stiegler provides a more complex and profound intellectual pathway for contemporary technological contexts, enabling us to persistently question the meaning of existence amidst uncertainty.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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