Article

The cultural crisis of attention: mechanical repetition and image shock

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Abstract: We elaborate reflections about the contemporary regime of attention and some of its main social conditionings. We focus on discussing attention in mechanical repetition and image shock systems, which we highlight as the basic axes of the study of sensory experience to technical influence. First, we emphasize the influence of machinery development and the rationalization of work on the perceptual activity of the worker in the context of the historical developments of the industrial revolution. Then we examine the perception structure under the perspective of imaging machine development and its products. In this context, we found accelerated repetition and distraction as two modalities of social behavior circumscribed in the problems related to attention.

Keywords: perception, attention, modernity.

Introduction

Perception and, more specifically, attention have been objects of analysis in fields such as philosophy, sociology, social psychology, cultural analysis, and communication, which refer to the influences of modernization on sensory experience. This type of research is not recent, dating back to the repercussions of works by authors such as Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin and Guy Debord. This area of study is dedicated to understanding the constitution of the subject in the midst of social, economic and aesthetic changes, especially in visual and auditory culture (Crary, 2013). We highlight in this scope of research a crisis of perception whose configuration had been outlined since the mid-19h century.

In this article, we aim to present reflections permeated by the assumption of the crisis of perception and motivated by today's experience through the intertextual theoretical analysis of works that allow us to understand the contemporary *regime of attention* and some of its main social conditionings. The specific focus of discussion is the attention on the mechanical repetition and image shock systems, which can be highlighted as basic axes for the study of sensory experience under the influence of technique (Türcke, 2016). First we emphasize the influence of machinery development and the rationalization of work on the perceptual activity of the worker in the context of the historical developments of the industrial revolution. We then examine the structure of perception in the perspective of imaging machines development and its products. In this context, we found accelerated repetition and distraction as two modalities of social behavior circumscribed in the problems related to attention. We hope that analyzes contribute to research focusing on the discussion of an ethical conception of perception.

We adopt a historical perspective in this study, based on the appreciation of the social structure of perceptual behavior according to the modernization patterns in progress since the 19h century. From this point of view, the processes related to the organization of work, in which repetitive and accelerated mechanized activities stand out, acquire a paradigmatic character, which influences the percipient subject's relation with images. We highlight the works of Simone Weil (1951/2002, 1988) and Walter Benjamin (1955/2012, 1980) as central references for the development of our analysis regarding mechanical repetition and image shock, respectively, besides the support in contributions of phenomenology to the construction of our argument. The most recent contributions of Crary (2012, 2013, 2016) and Türcke (2016) in the fields of cultural studies and philosophy deserve to be highlighted as well.

Mechanical repetition

We begin by analyzing how the development of machinery, in the context of the industrial revolution influenced the subjectivity and social reality. This can be thought of from its effects on the worker. It is appropriate to reinforce, from the outset, that the mechanized and standardized work model, which marks the conditions of production from the 19h century on, had repercussions on the most diverse sectors of cultural life (Benjamin, 1955/2012).

In the modern age, the automaton was discovered. In four centuries, from the 17th to the 20th, through an intense process of changes in the mode of production of industry, which reverberated in the process of social production, especially in the means of transport and communication,

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humans began to live with machines powered by steam, gas, and later electric power, and they move repeatedly, taking on human activities. Instead of walking or riding long distances on horseback, people began to travel by train or by car; instead of leveling an object with hand instruments, workers inserted it into planers, for example. Particularly noteworthy are the qualities of machinery developed throughout the 19h century that provided the conditions for the upcoming of the industrial revolution, in which people simultaneously operated a set of tools, while a sole worker was able to handle one tool at a time (Marx, 1867/ 1968; Türcke, 2016).

In the great mechanized industry of the capitalist social organization the human being continued, and continues, to be necessary. However, in the context of the capitalist division of labor, which involves the historical process of proletarianization, the proletariat has assumed the function of human equipment of machines. There is a principle of modern technical devices that becomes reality with industrial machinery; It is an inversion, according to which, instead of the worker using the working conditions, the worker himself is used by them (Benjamin, 1980). Marx (1867/1968) in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* states that in the factory the worker "serves the machine" (p. 503). He must follow it, while in the manufacture the movement of the working instrument departs from the worker. It happens that, according to the words of Türcke (2016), the "competence of machines is a new and superhuman kind of knowing how to repeat" (p. 27). Industrial machines perform schematic and programmed movements. It is then up to factory workers to place their living corporeality at the service of the schematic movement of machines. It follows, according to Marx (1867/1968), the connection of "conscious organs" to the "unconscious organs" (p. 500) of heavy machinery. You have to handle it, adjust it, feed it, pick up its products, watch it, and take care of its operation – operations that do not occur without humans adjusting to the pace of the managed equipment, or even without identifying themselves with them. In the end, there is a process of incorporating the workers into the mechanism. "In dealing with the machine", says Benjamin (1980), "workers learn to conform their own movements to the uniformly constant movement of an automaton" (p. 43).

Simone Weil was able to explore the questions concerning the relation of workers to machines, having adopted attention as a strategic principle of criticism of capitalist rationalism (Bosi 1988)[1]. Weil (1951/2002) points out that rationalization, as a process of improvement of production, involved, in a first moment of the industrial revolution, technical evolution, in the sense of creating increasingly efficient mechanical devices for the exploitation of the forces of nature, and secondly, the concern with "the scientific use of living matter, that is, of men" (p. 303). The basis of the rationalization of work is not, however, the submission of production methods to the examination of reason, as the author asserts, but to prevent workers from determining by themselves the procedures and rhythm of their activities in an industry, and to coerce them, giving the mechanized plant its full working capacity. Discipline in plant work is a basic feature of this system, which is why it was invented, as found in the principles of Taylorism, which Weil has scrutinized. The chain-mounting system therefore consists of replacing skilled workers, with a significant technical base and identified with the craftsman's activity, by a workforce specialized in serial work and intended to perform mechanical and constantly repeated gestures, adapted to the machinery. The worker is thus deprived of the intelligence of work, the possibility of choosing his method, and it is up to him to submit to the injunctions of the industrial mechanisms. The pieces move in and out of their range by default, as stated by Benjamin (1980).

It follows from the programmed cadence of serial industrial activity, accelerated, repetitive and objective, in the pattern of machines, the monotony of work. Weil (1951/2002) notes that perhaps it would be possible to get used to this monotony if people could think of something else while working in industry. However, the cadence of production, which takes place in a continuous succession of moments controlled by the rhythm of machines, demands attention. It is not possible to stick to anything other than work. Here is the paradox of attention that, constantly requested, must at the same time be kept awake without being quickened (Moinat, 2010). The object of attention in the Taylorist organization of labor operations is of no interest. The worker must concentrate minute by minute on manufacturing a certain number of parts within a certain period of time. Weil (1951/2002) refers to this kind of activity as an "attack on workers' attention" (p. 433). It requires, according to the author, a low kind of attention that "empties the soul of anything but concern for speed" (p. 433). Distracting themselves on the assembly line can lead to incidents that lead to a slowdown in production, with consequences for pay and working and employability conditions. According to Weil, incidents, which are frequent in the factory environment, do not diminish the weight of monotony, but dispel its burden of anesthetizing thought and sensitivity. The combination of monotony and uncertainty in the factory adds to the effect of worker distress of not being fast enough as it forces him to become aware of monotony. The worker must stick to his work; avoiding dispersing, he approaches the insipid condition of his/her activity. At this juncture the workers even stop looking for variation in their

1 Weil had remarkable working experiences, first in the Alsthom industries in 1934, then in 1935 at the J.-J.Carnaud and Forges de Basse-Indre plants in Boulogne-Billancourt, and at Renault assembly lines. Certainly, his industrial work initiative does not reveal simple curiosity, but rather the intellectual demand to know the real working conditions of French workers (Janiaud, 2002).

environment; after some time of monotonous work, they become unable to do anything else. That's one of the reasons, according to Weil, why they resist changes in work that are frequently commanded to them[2].

Before we continue, it is worth pointing out the historical course of this scenario and which should serve to strengthen the archaeological strategy adopted by us in this study. We would be mistaken if we suppose Weil's analysis of the mechanized activity of the industry worker is outdated. According to Boltanski and Chiapello (2009), the transformations of work in the context of the expansion and changes of capitalism throughout the twentieth century created a panorama of contrasts in which the maintenance of Taylorism coexists with flexible strategies ranging from highly technical skills to precariousness of employment in the form of freelance, temporary work, with variable hours, among others. The authors allude to research from the 1990s that pointed at that time to the rise of wage earners in the industry, from workers to executives, who claimed to suffer coercion related to the pace of work, either as a result of automatic movement of parts and products, either in due to short deadlines and permanent control by the hierarchy. The "mental load of workers" was also still in question, with the evolution, according to the same surveys, of the percentage of employees who say they cannot "look away from work" (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2009, p. 274). The maintenance, in historical time, of the foundations of the rationalization of work and its effects on the worker, reinforces its interpretation as a paradigmatic behavioral device, as regards the social practices that mark the processes of subjectivation and social domination.

The conflict between performing simplified, successively and automatically operated gestures on which, on the other hand, great attention must be paid is a fundamental aspect of what Moinat (2010) – to whom Simone Weil serves as the basis – calls alienated attention. It is is exhausting precisely because it is contradictory. At the same time as he must follow the monotonous course of labor tasks, the worker must, as Weil says (1951/2002), "find in himself resources to remedy the unforeseen" (p. 334). What is noted in the situation of the worker as described and analyzed by Weil, and which supports the characterization of alienated attention, is the dissociation between the passive and active dimensions of attention, which, moreover, are under great strain (Moinat, 2010). In the context of passive forces, it is observed that the worker is receptive to the conditions that emanate from his environment, such as, for example, a strange noise in the machinery that requires its care. These passive affections are subordinated to the order of the plant, that is, the regime of discipline focused on the fast pace of production. Workers' state of receptivity to stimuli and occurrences obeys this standardized disciplinary context, which is why it is more appropriately distinguished as an alert condition. On the other hand, with regard to the active pole of his attention, there is a need for the worker to voluntarily invest a great psychological effort to concentrate, given the slight and repetitive trait of his activity.

Added to the uniform character of industrial tasks is the destitution of meaning in the face of labor. In the passage from artisanal work, which may even involve high levels of planning, fragmentation and cooperation, to online factory work, under the direct supervision of the capitalist, the worker is stripped of freedom of movement between activities, becoming limited the execution of particular functions based on elementary operations. In this process, the worker does not know what he produces, nor does he feel responsible for the final product of the work. The factory produces supposedly useful things, not him. Their faculties of thinking, mindfulness, movement, and feeling are used in the absence of meaningful constitution (Weil, 1951/2002; Moinat, 2010). We can understand this process of constitution of meaning in a perceptual sense; it is the possibility of recognizing something.

Moinat (2010) opposes to alienated attention a *heureuse* attention, that is, happy, satisfied. Although it has a distinctly "ideal-typical" character based on a certain level of abstraction from the intertwining and complexities that mark any phenomenon, the definition of *heureuse* attention serves to give us some fundamental parameters for attentive perception. According to Moinat, *heureuse* attention can maintain the dynamism between the restriction of the field of consciousness on an object or theme of perception and the duration of active exploration of that object. "It avoids both a dissipated consciousness, shaken by a chaos of stimuli and an inert consciousness fixed upon an object" (Moinat, 2010, p. 49).

Moinat's (2010) main reference for achieving this definition is Minkowski's (1936) notes on attention. For the latter, attention concerns two closely related basic factors: From the subject's perspective, it implies the experience of stopping at something ("un s'arrêter à"). From object's perspective, relatively to the aspect it acquires by becoming an object of attentive perception, it is necessary to identify how it is detached and highlighted, its "particular delimitation" (Minkowski, 1936, p. 90) in

2 It is worth mentioning that questions concerning the conditions of factory work constitute the central point of Weil's criticism of the revolutionary traditions linked to Marxist culture. Weil (1951/2002) distinguishes the problem of the exploitation of the working class, related to capitalist property and profit, from the oppression concerning industrial discipline, which fundamentally concerns the relations between the worker and the machine, and between the worker and the worker boss. According to the author, the collectivization of plants and factories would leave the production structure untouched, which involves the presence of men and women at the machines in order to extract as many well-made and affordable products as possible from the assembly line, contrary to the satisfaction of the highest aspirations of workers. This contradiction can be linked, according to Weil (1955/2011), to gaps in Marx's own work. Despite its content of social criticism, Marx's thought demonstrates, according to the author, attachment to the "less founded values of his time", such as "the cult of production, the cult of big industry, the blind belief in progress" (Weil, 1955/2011, 358). Weil notes that this unresolved difficulty in Marx's theories, as well as in the Marxist tradition, was not resolved in the order of historical events either, since the problems concerning the working conditions of the workers became more acute in the first half of the 20th century.

relation to the background to which it is inserted, or even considering specific aspects of the object itself, such as its color or the elements from which it is made.

According to Minkowski (1936), the meaning of the act of stopping and highlighting that characterizes the object that is attentively perceived can only be glimpsed from the perspective of "vital contact with reality" (p. 92-93). From this angle, the vitality of attention is emphasized. Thus, contrary to traditional psychological definitions, "attention cannot and should not be fixed on a single object" (Minkowski, 1936, p. 95). Although it presupposes the narrowing of the field of consciousness and action, it continually evolves and transforms, it progresses, and feeds on what surrounds it, what lies beyond the presently exposed aspects of the world. In this direction, Minkowski (1936) states: "She [the attention] should. . ., to subsist and live, to behave, continuously, very fine oscillatory movements of distraction" (p. 95). With this assertion, the author records dynamism within attention between focus and inattention. "Attention," writes the author, "in order to stay *alive*, must necessarily involve an activity analogous to it, but not attentive" (Minkowski, 1936, p. 95, emphasis added). Without this movement, attention would withdraw from the flow of life.

The features of alienated attention, outlined earlier in the context of industry, are in sharp contrast to these latter formulations of attention. At the plant, there is a monotonous environment that prevents the interested evolution of attention. At the same time, given the order of factory work, whose aim is planned and accelerated production, mechanized activity requires rigid concentration. There is no room in this atmosphere for the fluctuation of vitalized attention.

The questions surrounding attention in manufacturing work also highlight elements concerning the difference between what Crawford (2015) calls skilled and practical work and routine work. According to the author, one of the aspects to be emphasized is that, in skillful work, attention is structured so that the tools necessary for its execution are incorporated into our physical-cognitive apparatus, living corporeality. In contemporary psychology this is called cognitive extension. Instruments such as a cane, scalpel, guitar, the various tools of a cabinetmaker's workshop are experienced by beginners in their handling through some effort to interpret the sensations mediated by the instrument and the object it encounters or makes arise, like space, wood or music. As the use of the instrument progresses, there is a direct experience of exploring the perceptual object, without the need for voluntary effort to adapt the body to the tool and even as if there was no mediation of the instrument. Everything happens as if it becomes transparent and disappears as a focus of attention, re-linking the links between the action and the perception of the objects of interest. In fact, when we act according to parameters of minimum ability, we are not focused on our body, our instruments and the movements we must perform, but on what we want to do, take, see.

The very space of action itself can become something of an extension of corporeality to the extent that we are able to situate ourselves very well in it. This is what goes on inside a woodwork shop. The cabinetmaker moves in a familiar environment, so it is unnecessary to spend time and energy searching for his instruments and the best way to use them. Everything is already arranged for attention to be directed to work. There is therefore a spatial structure that serves as a guide to action. What goes on in the assembly line, analyzes Crawford (2015), is that the environment is elaborated in an excessively rigid and heteronomous way, that is, by people distinct from the worker himself. In this case, there is an overdetermined structure that nullifies the proper tension between standardization and autonomy that marks skillful work.

The issue of habit in relation to the attention and conditions of successful action, including in the field of work, was greatly emphasized by Simone Weil (1988). According to the author, the signs that are ordinarily recognized as references to attention are, in fact, signs of passion and fascination. His most famous example is that of cyclists. The apprentice cyclist is fascinated by the obstacles, and, by virtue of avoiding them reflexively, addresses them. The learner stiffens with each movement, "he uses his will as if it were a force" (Weil, 1988, p. 384), and in this vigilant disposition turns his attention to gestures that must be avoided. The skilled man, on the contrary, focuses not on himself but on his object, like the skilled cyclist, who turns entirely on the unhindered passages of the road, without reasoning, without "speech to himself", without express body control. It is the habit that, according to Weil, allows this direct link between perception and action. In the condition of habit one does not have the body governed by thought but wholly permeated by thought. Otherwise, the action must be voluntarily controlled, and then attention to the perceptual object is impaired. In this case, instead of paying attention to the object, one pays attention to one's own body.

Habit is at stake in all kinds of work activities. However, it must be recognized that, in the face of machinery, active and skillful work gives way to the regularity of the great industrial apparatus. In this case, it is the "dead work" of machines that exploits the "living force" (Marx, 1867/1968, p. 504), not the man who uses tools. As pointed out by Benjamin (1980), who remains close to Marx's formulations, in manufacturing "experience" is the most appropriate technical form for the work, since it is slowly perfected. Benjamin's reference to experience also fits the idea of Weilian habit. The exercise of conquering the motor habit, which paves the way for attention, is distinct from the worker's learning to work on the machine. In this case, the worker mediates between forces that exceed the proportions and rhythms of his body, either because the machines are too large and

complex, or because the assembly line encompasses a set of programs that cannot be encompassed by the worker's experience. To the extent that the set of operations cannot be configured as the object of his sensitive and active experience, he has to stick to small spheres of production, limited, repetitive and accelerated[3]. Therefore, it can be seen that, in industrial activities, the routinized nature of the actions supersedes the technical aspects of the work, with implications for the type of attention involved in this situation.

In summary, we seek to characterize, in this first part of our study, central aspects of perceptual experience in the context of industrial work. We are interested in highlighting the social and cultural reach of mechanized praxis. Based on the elements related to the worker's attention, discussed from the contributions of Simone Weil, we were able to base certain phenomenological qualities of attention linked to the perceptual dynamics and the role of habit in perception. In the next section, we deal with the perceptual life with the imaging machines and the sensitive excesses to which our physical-cognitive apparatuses are subjected in this context.

The image shock

If, on the one hand, in the workplace, since the late 19h century, a culture of accelerated repetition whose model is industrial activity was instituted and spread on a large scale, on the other hand, our relationship with imaging machines has installed in us a culture of the shock of sensation. In both processes, there is the role of human relationship with technical apparatus. Both can equally be interpreted by the bias of the type of disruptive attentional activity they prescribe, although their patterns differ in form: repetition, monotony and devitalization on the one hand, dispersion and distraction on the other.

A fundamental starting point for the analysis of the contemporary relationship with the image implies, as noted earlier, to recognize the penetration, in the most diverse areas of social activity, of the imperatives governing the rationalization of time and movement in the productive sphere. As Benjamin (1955/2012) highlights, which contradicts the traditional Marxist understanding of the direct relationship between superstructure and infrastructure (Schöttker, 2012), there is a temporal gap between these instances, with changes in the superstructure being slower than infrastructure. According to the author, it took more time for changes in production conditions to affect the most diverse cultural sites. In the context of this influence, from the 19th century onwards, the constitution of the percipient was operated. It can be seen, as is the case in production that the emergence of the new observer coincides with the alignment of the body with machine sets, which, in the case of imaging devices, come from studies of our perceptual capacities and the possibilities of control them.

Crary (2012, 2013) presents and analyzes the essential aspects of the intersection between factory productivity, evolution in the means of perception and the science of perception. Physiological psychology, created in the 19h century, encompassed the quantitative study of perception, including the bias of attention-related problems, and investigated aspects such as perceptual response time, stimulation thresholds, and fatigue thresholds. Crary (2012) is categorical in stating:

> These studies were related to the requirement to know the adaptation of a subject to productive tasks in which the utmost attention was indispensable to rationalize and increase the efficiency of human work. The economic need for rapid eye and hand coordination in performing repetitive actions has required an accurate knowledge of man's optical and sensory capabilities. In the context of new industrial models of production, "inattention" was a serious problem among workers, with economic and disciplinary consequences. (p. 87)

This articulation of scientific psychology with the social and economic demands associated with industrialization in the 19h century exemplifies what science historians call externalist conditions for the establishment of scientific discourses and practices (Ferreira, 2007). From the internalist point of view, demarcated by the conceptual and methodological transformations of a science, it is appropriate to highlight the importance, in these studies, of the interest in investigating the phenomenon of post-image. After-image refers to the presence of sensation in the absence of stimuli, which reinforces, in the context of objective research on subjective phenomena, the idea of an "autonomous view", "produced by and within the subject" (Crary, 2012, p. 99). The fact is that the study of after-image led to the invention of various optical devices, such as the thaumatrope, which was created to be sold as a popular entertainment piece, the fenacystoscope, the zootropium, the kaleidoscope and the stereoscope. All draw on the disparity between stimuli on the one hand and sensations and visual impressions on the other. Its obsolescence has always been linked to the insufficiencies of the ghostly effect generated, and in the evolution of these apparatuses there has been a growing concealment of production in the external appearance of the image. These apparatuses were very popular and were present among the furniture of the 19h century residences.

It is worth noting, to conclude this discussion around the first imaging machines, and also based on Crary (2012), the modulation of the relationship between the eye and the optical apparatus in the passage of the 17th and 18th centuries. The darkroom was among the 16th and 17th centuries one of the fundamental visual apparatuses. The

3 Benjamin (1980) states: "The unskilled worker is the most profoundly degraded by machine learning. His/her work is impervious to experience. The exercise has no longer any right in it" (p. 44).

eye and the darkroom were joined mainly by a conceptual or metaphorical relationship, the darkroom being an ideal eye model. Already in the practices and discourses of the early 19h century, it is possible to see a metonymic relationship between the eye and the optical apparatus, which are supposed to act on the same plane of action, but with varying characteristics. In this case it is expected that the limits and shortcomings of one will be complemented by the capabilities of the other. At issue here is the status of these new devices and those to come, such as the camera, cinema, television, and even the latest, such as the computer and smartphones. Apparently, these are not tools that extend the power of the human body, but machines that use human bodily vitality and recode their function as a tool of the machines themselves.

Before we go any further, it is worth noting the position to be taken in view of the rapid evolution of imaging devices. It can be argued that new information and communication technologies, based on digital media, supplant a whole set of earlier cultural forms. This would require us to draw cleavage lines, for example, between social and cultural experiences before and after the 1990s. It is possible, however, to consider, as Crary (2016) does, that analyzes centered on the paradigmatic novelties implied in more recent media can entangle in the transience flow of the products that come and go. We prefer in this paper to focus on the discussion of the reconfiguration of perception in the light of the logic of modernization under development since the late 19h century and the acceleration and shock experiences it entails.

It is Walter Benjamin who refers to the "shock effects" (p. 41) of early 20th century image apparatuses. His analyzes, in the illustrious article *The work of art in the age of its technical reproducibility* (1955/2012), begin with photography. With the camera, ponders Benjamin, the process of reproducing images dispenses with the tasks of drawing and painting. The work of reproduction becomes more simply engaged the eye, which sees through the lens. "Because the eye catches faster than the hand can draw, the image reproduction process has accelerated dramatically," says Benjamin (1955/2012, p. 13). Two elements stand out in this technical progress. First, from the manual processes of drawing and painting to image capture through the relationship between the eye and the objective, there is a transformation of the bond with the instruments, in the direction of what we saw with Crary (2012). It is a complementation bond, characteristic of the machines. In addition, the process of image reproduction is accelerated, which, in addition to the speed in the image production, points to the increase of images available in the cultural environment.

But it is from the analysis of cinema that Benjamin (1955/2012) glimpses the element of shock with which we come to live. In cinema, says the author, we are confronted with constant "changing places and scenarios" that hit the viewer "in the form of successive shocks" (Benjamin, 1955/2012, p. 31). Compare the screen on which the film is projected with that used for painting. The latter invites the viewer to contemplation, to the free association of ideas, while, in the cinema, not so much a scene is projected, and a perceived image, and we are already confronted with another. "There is the shock effect of cinema", analyzes Benjamin (1955/2012), "which, like any shock, requires greater attention effort" (p. 32).

According to Benjamin (1955/2012), in the rapid "change of places and scenarios" lies the distracting element of cinema. Shock, on the other hand, requires us to make a superior effort of attention. We need to reflect on how attention appears in these formulations. On the one hand, it is captured, attracted, by the elements of shock that distract us, on the other, it calls for a conversion of gaze capable, if not to maintain fluctuating attention, of seeking elements for a critical appropriation of the cultural product.

Waldenfels's (2010) analyzes of attention can be instructive for moving further this analysis. The phenomenologist treats it as a double event. It is necessary to recognize that in attentive perception something impresses us and we pay attention to it. On the one hand, there is a dimension of attention raised and, on the other, a dimension of directed attention. Regarding the first element, we highlight the fact that we are affected. In this sense the self is referred to as the instance concerned, to which something happens or appears. In the background, it is evident the answer we give or refuse to give to what appears. It is not appropriate to relaunch in the direction of what we saw with Moinat (2010), the dichotomy between passivity and activity in attention, but to emphasize that our experience depends on what happens to us. "We become what we are being affected by and responding to", writes Waldenfels (2010, p. 36). This assertion is linked to what Benjamin (1955/2012) states about the everyday need to undergo shock effects: it requires "profound changes in the receptive apparatus" (1955/2012, p. 41). In cultures permeated by imaging techniques whose shock effects are linked to fascination in the face of unremitting mobility, the directed dimension of attention acquires distracting contours.

For Benjamin (1955/2012), the distracted mode reception is therefore one of the main symptoms referring to "profound changes in perception" (p. 34). "The public evaluates the film, but does so distractedly", says the author (Benjamin, 1955/2012, p. 34), returning to the analysis of cinema. Distraction even seems to be an essential feature of the "great existential dangers" referred to by Benjamin (1955/2012, p. 41), and "which contemporary men face" (Benjamin, 1955/2012, p. 41).

Regarding the conversion of gaze, which we may call critical attention, it seems to presuppose what Türcke (2016) calls ideal receptors. These are those people who can consistently tell others what they have just seen, have discussions about it, and eventually write a review, analysis, about a movie or some other cultural product. Such activities are based on skills learned

through games, text production, and the observation of various genres of cultural products. It presupposes, in short, an education of the eye. Here lies an important element for a relationship with stimuli that not only offers resistance to its excesses, but that configures a space of freedom and vitality in dealing with the technologies of perception and the techniques of social administration linked to them.

It may be helpful to summarize the attentional characteristics we have identified so far. If we return to Minkowski's (1936) formulations on attention, we see a cross-pattern between what happens in the regime of mechanical repetition and image shock. In industrial production, the interested evolution of attention is hampered by the monotonous and accelerated repetition of the assembly line. This results in the devitalization of attention. In the clash of images, on the other hand, there is the hypertrophy of the vital dynamics of attention. This, according to Minkowski, presupposes the stopping of the gaze, the detachment of the intently perceived object, and the movement toward other objects or other aspects thereof. In the myriad images with which we live and which increasingly come from social technology strategies, such as advertising, we are confronted with repeated imagery attempts to capture and maintain the gaze through successive stimulation. Hence our distractability: from the decompensation of the fine oscillatory movements of distraction, referred to by Minkowski as moments essential to the configuration of attentive perception. Attention cannot continually dwell on something without pauses and oscillations. But when it is concentrated, it cannot get caught up in other things at the same time (Türcke, 2016).

Another aspect to be emphasized in the characterization of the modern percipient, which is in an intensified relationship with the perceptual environment, concerns what Benjamin (1955/2012) calls the decline of the aura of perceptual objects. The aura is not something that is properly perceived, at least not in the gnosiological sense of perception, which allows us to say what we see or hear. The aura is something that enters into us. Benjamin (1955/2012) writes: "As we quietly contemplate, on a summer afternoon, the mountain range on the horizon or the branch that casts shadow over us, we breathe the aura of this mountain, this branch" (p. 16). The decline of the aura has its social constraints, which, according to the author, are based on two points: the desire to get as close as possible to things rather than respecting their transcendence and the desire to overcome them the unique presence of things through the reproduction of images. Benjamin (1955/2012) expresses himself with the following words:

> This description makes it easy for us to understand the social constraints of the current decline of the aura. It is based on two circumstances, and both relate to the growing importance of the masses in today's life: *'Bringing things together' spatially and humanly is as intense a desire of the contemporary masses as their tendency to overcome the unique character of things, thanks to the reproduction*. Each day the need to get as close as possible to the object through its image becomes more irrecusable, or better, through its copy or reproduction" (p. 16, emphasis added).

Let us remember the desire relationship implied in perception and highlighted by phenomenology (Barbaras, 2006). She is at stake here. Every apparition refers back to a system of external horizons, that is, the field of things surrounding the perceived object and internal horizons that refer to the hidden aspects of the perceived object itself. We cannot have expository access to all objects of a perceptual field at the same time, nor to all faces of anything at once. In perception thus rests a dimension of lack that claims our perceptual activity. For Husserl (1966/1998) there is, at this juncture, a dynamic of affection related to the attraction that objects exert on the self. The affective demand is related to the aspiration for a perception that increasingly unveils the objectity of the object, and, equally, to the impossibility of closing the desiring circuit. There is always more to see, always some hidden aspect, as the assumption of one perspective masks others. This is because, in perception, the transcendent character of the perceived object is never undone. It remains outside, distinct from the percipient subject. As close as it is to us, there remains a distance between the object of perception and the subject that perceives. It is in this direction that Benjamin (1955/2012) defines the aura equally as "the unique appearance of something distant, however close it may be" (p. 16). Everything happens, in the context of the culture of images, as if the use of image apparatuses combined with the logic of mass consumption sought to interfere in this circuit, not undoing the desire, since it cannot be extinguished, but stoking it until fatigue, lack of control and anguish, through the ever renewed promise of an ultimate reach of the object.

Benjamin (1955/2012) comments that it is not only the mode of existence of human collectivities that changes throughout historical periods, but also their form of perception. The structure of perception is therefore linked to its nature and history. In the context of historical studies of perception, it is not, in turn, merely to describe the formal characteristics of the perception of an epoch, but also the social upheavals expressed in changes in perception. In dealing with social disturbances, it is worth mentioning the medical designation of the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder that emerged in the late 1970s.

Today the screens are part of our everyday scenario. They are present on television sets, computers and mobile phones. New virtual reality devices are coming, with screens that promise to occupy the entire

field of view (Crary, 2016). This makes the change in places and angles promoted by your images ubiquitous. In this context, Türcke (2016) discriminates three aspects of the image shock we are undergoing today: its physiological power, which attracts the eye through abrupt light changes; its aesthetic fascination, linked to the constant promise of presenting unseen images; and its constant exercise in the ubiquity of the market through advertising techniques. High technology provides a stimulus-filled environment; in him who causes the greatest sensation has the opportunity to be perceived.

The result is a "global regime of attention" (Türcke, 2016, p. 33) insensitive to this uninterrupted overload, that is, unable to concentrate for long without longing for changes in the perceptual field. Television viewers may no longer be able to watch longer broadcasts. Even the written material is progressively submitted to this same system, revealing the need to impose itself on the look, just as the cinematic or television image. The use of photos in texts is praised, and newspapers seek to be increasingly attractive. Even academic eyes lack concentration and resistance for a long, poor read on printed images.

For Türcke (2016), these are manifest symptoms of attention deficit. However, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is not a disease in a healthy environment, but a phenomenon that only exists in an attention deficit culture. Its emblem is concentrated dispersion, the concentration of attention on what wears it.

In addition to the distribution of attention among the various places and scenarios exposed by the imaging machines, the sense of distribution of attention linked to the shared and shared social experience must be emphasized. We can also, in this context, identify the influence of the imagery apparatus. Türcke (2016) refers to the notion of joint attention. Tomasello (1999) speaks of a "nine-month revolution" to designate the adoption by babies around this age of actions in which one does not only interact with another person at times, but in which the objects of interests are shared with others at the initiative of the child or his activity partner. This new structure of perception and action is about developing precisely what has become known as the conjugation of attentions. Citton (2014) states, with regard to joint attention: "The attentions of various subjects are, therefore, 'conjugated' in the sense that, because they are attentive to each other, the direction taken by the attention of one impels one another orient in the same direction"(p. 126).

Türcke highlights the phylogenetic sense that joint attention researchers attribute to him. By holding things together and sharing, the baby assumes a specifically human behavior. Through shared attention one learns the form of specifically human community; At the same time, there is no way to learn to conjugate attention except in community. "Human, not just physical-emotional, closeness between parents and children requires that together they turn to something that captivates them", says Türcke (2016, p. 72), referring to Tomasello's (1999) studies. The division of attention with others, the fact of directing one's attention to a shared object, has a constitutive value for proper human attention. Collectivity guarantees not only the duration of attention in the form of persistence about something, a "moment of dedication" (Türcke, 2016, p. 72), but also the objectivity of things, the realistic sense of what we are faced with (Bimbenet, 2015). Seeing and listening together implies the recognition of a common world.

Citton (2014) adds some characteristics that define joint attention more precisely. This refers to situations marked by face-to-face co-operation, that is, the awareness of interacting with others in real time, of sharing an object of common attention in the presence of another. Joint attention also presupposes a principle of reciprocity. Attention in this case circulates bi-directionally; the child follows the adult's gaze and the adult expresses the same effort. Here there is something distinct from the asymmetry structuring the flow of attention in the face of media apparatuses. In joint regime of attention, it also operates an affective correspondence (*accordage affectif)* effort. There is reciprocal adjustment on the part of those involved in the perceptual scene, with sharing gestures of, for example, encouragement, sympathy, concern, comfort or caution. This results in the improvisation practices characteristic of situations of joint attention. In interaction, there are no pre-programmed routines. The action of one depends on the action of the other, entangling the agents in a dynamic of reciprocity and autonomy of interaction, rather than the agents themselves.

It is necessary to consider the interference that the "nine-month revolution", a key phase of human development, suffers in the face of imaging machines. According to Türcke (2016), the screen interposes between the adult and the child. It can be seen and heard as an object common to both adult and child, but often disrupts shared attention. The child does not know what to do with the flickers and noises of a television, but she experiences the absorption of the attention of her reference figures in front of that bright and resonant object, as well as the inconsistency of parental affection in this setting. The television apparatus, as other imaging devices "crosses common attention and its persistence to things" (Türcke, 2016, p.73). In this scenario, the gaze of the mother or father who wanders between the screen and the child often does not configure the triadic interaction between adult, child and common object, but gives way to the breakup of dyadic relations at a time that could be one of reciprocal interaction around something shared. Türcke (2016) concludes: "the first ties of the qualitatively new community, ties that the child is weaving, are being cut recurrently" (p. 73). From this, the author suggests that those children whose contact with imaging machines has been perceived as "elementary attention deprivation" (Türcke, 2016, p. 76)

are the most vulnerable to its mesmerizing effect. According to him, the logic of traumatic repetition is installed, according to which what I fear attracts me. "What steals my attention is what will get my attention, is where I am heading. In what makes me fickle, this is where I seek my constancy", says Türcke (2016, p. 77). As Citton (2014) points out, it is not a matter of blaming caregivers for any disruptions in child care, but rather of pointing out the fragility of joint attention and indicating the relationship between asymmetries in the family ecosystem and imagery that goes back to a broader dimensions of collective attention, of the masses governed by forms of influence increasingly supported by consumer-driven social technologies.

In short, our relationships with imaging devices and their products originate from industrial productivity strategies and the technical dimension of the perception sciences. The proliferation of images, identified since the late 19h century is associated with what Benjamin (1955/2012) calls the shock effect and the declining aura of objects of perception. The culture of multiplication and reproduction of images is also related to forms of distracted perception whose repercussions acquire contours of social disturbance.

Conclusions

We discussed the contemporary regime of attention in light of the critique of capitalist modernity focusing on the analysis of two cultural systems: mechanical repetition and image shock. Devitalized repetition and distraction emerged as modalities of social behavior determined by the contemporary regime of attention.

We support the idea that, despite having distinct characteristics, mechanical repetition and image shock are cultural forms intertwined in a specific relationship. Contemporary image culture reproduces, in the field of perception, what the assembly line imposes on people in the field of production (Hansen, 1987/2012). In this intertwining, attention has become a cultural problem in modern life (Crawford, 2015).

In the first part of the paper, in addition to examining factors linked to perceptual experience in routinized assembly line work, we discussed certain basic aspects of attentive perception grounded in the dynamics between perceptual field closure and continuous fluid flow to other field elements, which makes up the picture of vitalized attention. Based on this, we could identify, in industrial work, traces of devitalization of perception. We also referred to the role of habit of attentive perception, reinforcing the bodily dimension of attention. In the second part of the text, after linking the emergence of new means of perception to industrial productivity and the sciences of perception, we focus on the regime of image shocks, suggesting an hypertrophy of the vital dynamics of attention, which would support the distractability that marks our relationship to the imaging apparatuses. Finally we discussed distractability in the context of intersubjective relations, uniting the interferences in joint attention with the broader social context in which interpersonal relationships are inserted.

It is important to remember that our analyses of both the regimes of mechanical repetition and the image shock were based on the distinction between tools and machines. The latter involve, to a high degree, the use of living corporeality for purposes that are heteronomic in relation to direct contact with technical devices.

The study of perceptual life guided by technique allows, in general terms, to examine a new paradigm of social domination. According to Han (2017), we move from the structure of the disciplinary society, described by Foucault based on the analysis of institutions such as nursing homes, hospitals, prisons and factories, to a performance society. This transition requires renewed efforts to understand the subject that emerges from the conditions of maximization of production. For Han (2017), the clues concerning our sociocultural disposition indicate the conjunction between an "overactive acute activity" (p. 52) and a "hyperpassivity" (p. 52) in view of the myriad of impulses and stimuli we are exposed to. These elements are compatible with those highlighted in the culture of work and images, and which converge to ways of coercion introjected in the form of a continuous need for activity, whether for production or consumption, including images.

As a final word, we make a brief consideration on an ethical conception of perception, which we alluded to in the introduction of the text and would justify a work such as ours. We found mentions of an ethics of perception, or attention while researching Waldenfels (2010), Depraz (2014), Citton (2014), Laugier (2014), Crawford (2015) and Türcke (2016). Despite the variations from one work to another, we believe it is possible to highlight, as a point of convergence, the indication of a sociological and cultural reframing of perception. In addition, three levels of analysis are integrated not only with each other but also with the sociocultural dimension of perception. At the functionalist level, we emphasize the investigation of what happens when we perceive or pay attention. At the moral level, the emphasis is on the social distribution of the resources involved in perception, and on the sense of justice and injustice verified in this distribution, highlighting the possibility of analyzing the factors of social domination involved in contemporary perceptual experience. And at the ethical level, the perceptual experience would be under study in the light of a good, balanced life possibility, in addition to the perception of a "receptive ethics" view (Depraz, 2014, p. 467), focusing on our relationship to people with whom we jointly perceive, respond, care and are cared by. These dimensions of psychosocial analysis of perception converge to the establishment of an ethical texture of perceptual experience that may serve to critique contemporary cultural problems.

A crise cultural da atenção: repetição maquinal e choque de imagem

Resumo: Elaboramos reflexões acerca do regime de atenção contemporâneo e alguns dos seus principais condicionantes sociais. O foco específico de discussão é a atenção nos sistemas da repetição maquinal e do choque de imagem, que podem ser destacados como eixos básicos para o estudo da experiência sensível sob influência da técnica. Ressaltamos, primeiramente, no contexto dos desdobramentos históricos da revolução industrial, a influência do desenvolvimento da maquinaria e da racionalização do trabalho sobre a atividade perceptiva do trabalhador. Examinamos, em seguida, a estrutura da percepção no contexto do desenvolvimento das máquinas de imagem e dos seus produtos. Circunscrevemos, sob este panorama, a repetição acelerada e a distração como duas modalidades de comportamento social legíveis a partir dos problemas relativos à atenção.

Palavras-chave: percepção, atenção, modernidade.

La crise culturelle de l'attention: répétition machinale et choc d'image

Résumé: Nous élaborons des réflexions sur le régime d'attention contemporain et certains de ses principaux déterminants sociaux. Le point spécifique de la discussion c'est l'attention dans les systèmes de la répétition machinale et du choc d'image, qui peuvent être relevés comme des axes fondamentaux pour l'étude de l'expérience sensible sous l'influence de la technique. Nous soulignons d'abord, dans le contexte des développements historiques de la révolution industrielle, l'influence du développement de la machinerie et de la rationalisation du travail sur l'activité perceptive de l'ouvrier. Nous examinons ensuite la structure de la perception dans le contexte du développement des machines d'image et ses produits. Sous ce panorama, nous circonscrivons la répétition accélérée et la distraction comme deux modes de comportement social lisibles à partir des problèmes relatifs à l'attention.

Mots-clés: perception, attention, modernité.

La crisis cultural de la atención: repetición maquinal y choque de imagen

Resumen: Elaboramos reflexiones sobre el régimen de atención contemporáneo y algunos de sus principales condicionantes sociales. El foco específico de discusión es la atención en los sistemas de la repetición maquinal y del choque de imagen, que pueden destacarse como ejes básicos para el estudio de la experiencia sensible bajo influencia de la técnica. En el contexto de los desdoblamientos históricos de la Revolución Industrial, resaltamos, en primer lugar, la influencia del desarrollo de la maquinaria y de la racionalización del trabajo sobre la actividad perceptiva del trabajador. En segundo lugar, examinamos la estructura de la percepción en el contexto del desarrollo de las máquinas de imagen y de sus productos. Bajo este panorama, circunscribimos la repetición acelerada y la distracción como dos modalidades de comportamiento social legibles a partir de los problemas relativos a la atención.

Palabras clave: percepción, atención, modernidad.

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