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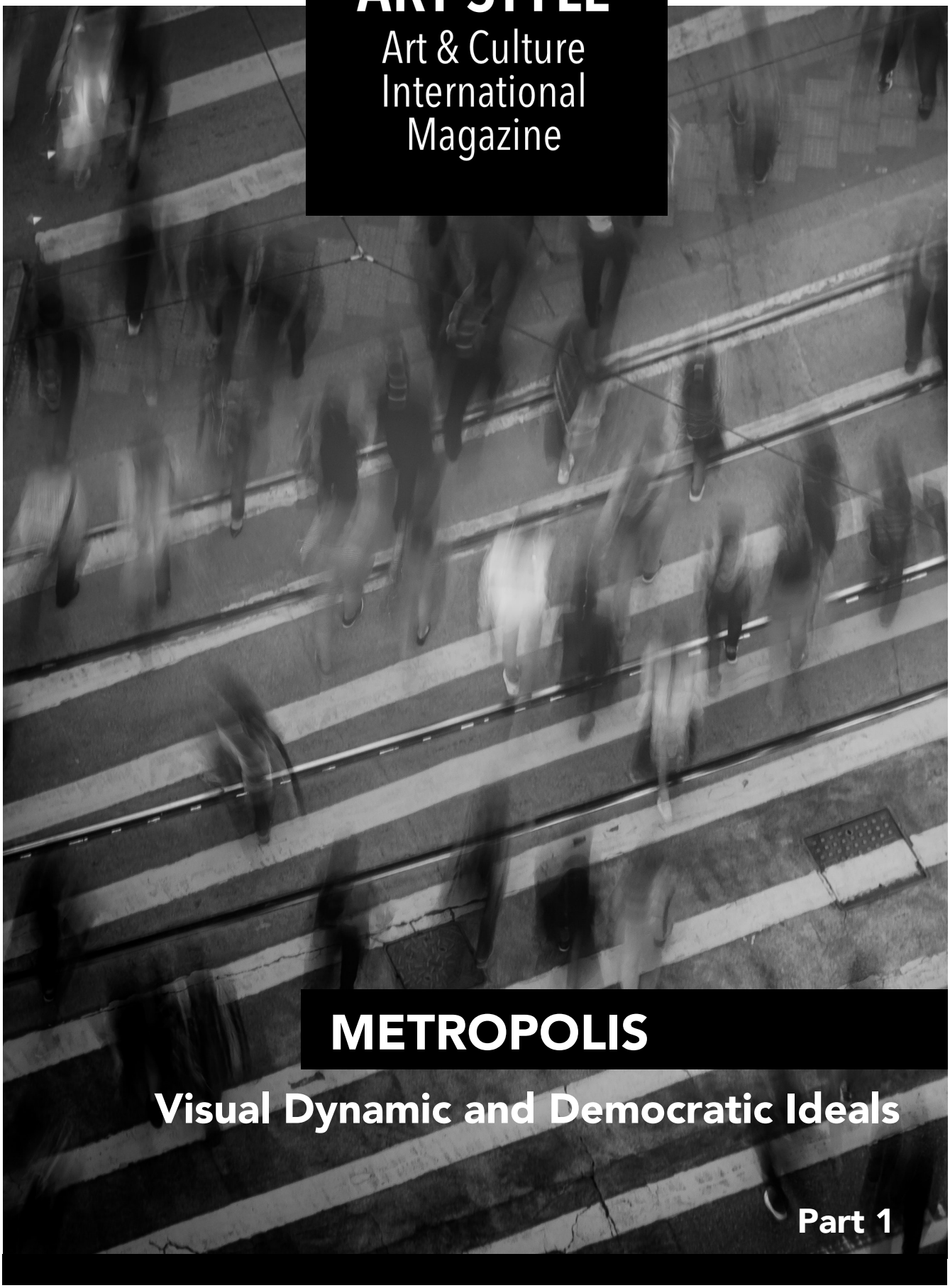
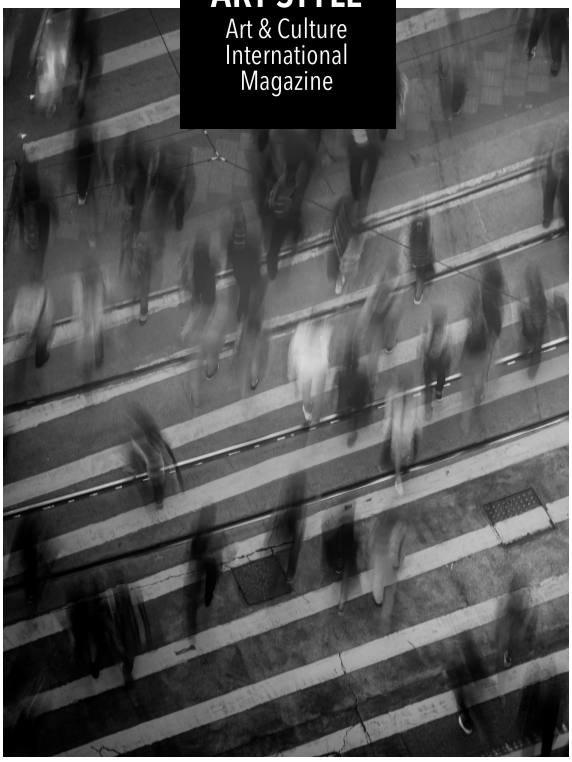


METROPOLIS

Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals

Part 1

ART STYLE
Art & Culture
International
Magazine



Cover photo by Mike Chai.

Art Style | Art & Culture International Magazine

editorial@artstyle.international

+1 347 352 8564 New York
+55 11 3230 6423 São Paulo

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Theodor Herzi, 49 | 05014 020 Sao Paulo, SP | CNPJ 00.445.976/0001-78
Christiane Wagner is a registered journalist and editor: MTB 0073952/SP

Art Style | Art & Culture International Magazine is an open access, biannual, and peer–reviewed online magazine that aims to bundle cultural diversity. All values of cultures are shown in their varieties of art. Beyond the importance of the medium, form, and context in which art takes its characteristics, we also consider the significance of socio-cultural and market influence. Thus, there are different forms of visual expression and perception through the media and environment. The images relate to the cultural changes and their time-space significance—the spirit of the time. Hence, it is not only about the image itself and its description but rather its effects on culture, in which reciprocity is involved. For example, a variety of visual narratives—like movies, TV shows, videos, performances, media, digital arts, visual technologies and video game as part of the video's story, communications design, and also, drawing, painting, photography, dance, theater, literature, sculpture, architecture and design—are discussed in their visual significance as well as in synchronization with music in daily interactions. Moreover, this magazine handles images and sounds concerning the meaning in culture due to the influence of ideologies, trends, or functions for informational purposes as forms of communication beyond the significance of art and its issues related to the socio-cultural and political context. However, the significance of art and all kinds of aesthetic experiences represent a transformation for our nature as human beings. In general, questions concerning the meaning of art are frequently linked to the process of perception and imagination. This process can be understood as an aesthetic experience in art, media, and fields such as motion pictures, music, and many other creative works and events that contribute to one's knowledge, opinions, or skills. Accordingly, examining the digital technologies, motion picture, sound recording, broadcasting industries, and its social impact, Art Style Magazine focuses on the myriad meanings of art to become aware of their effects on culture as well as their communication dynamics.

Content

Editorial

Essays

Metropolis: Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals

Part 1, Editorial

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that *Art Style Magazine* presents the following issue on *Metropolis: Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals*. Numerous recent events in major metropolitan centers have highlighted democratic ideals in the international arena through the media and the arts. These events have encouraged me to think about visual dynamics, as elaborated in this issue. In this consideration, the image analysis focuses on the visual aspects allusive to the metropolis' daily life, in the context of a social aesthetic (Berleant 2017). These images have appeared in cultural events, media, and the most diverse areas of public space. In addition, the visual phenomena give rise to discussions and present new elements that need to be analyzed and discussed concerning media image, artifacts, contemporary art, and the metropolis' daily rhythm. For this purpose, *Art Style Magazine* selected articles supporting the relationship between the image and urban life for this issue on *Metropolis: Visual Dynamic and Democratic Ideals*. Specifically, the theme focuses on the awareness of the representativeness of citizenship while respecting the international norms of human rights regarding the exercise of freedom of expression and communication. Therefore, the analysis is based on the elements that constitute democratic society, with common and reciprocal values for quality life and the politicization of the individuals who compose that society. A visual analysis of these elements in their social context, as aesthetic, political, and fundamental experiences of freedom by the social actors, has become essential. In these conditions, images produced as part of the urban culture and rhythm—art, photographs, films, videos, dance, theater, advertising, design, architecture, fashion—are part of the complex system of the visual dynamics of society and democratic ideals.

While using these theoretical fundamentals, this issue focuses on technical advances in visual arts, moving images, and other aesthetic and political experiences related to the rhythm of society. The visual dynamic offers narratives as an "image of reconciliation" and democratic ideals, which positively enables aesthetic experiences through the moving image or cinematography (Schoolman 2020). In this way, Schoolman's work is highlighted, with a focus on urban rhythms exploring the moving image and political-cultural aspects positively, in opposition to Adorno's aesthetic conceptions (1970). Therefore, I introduce this issue with my article on the structures of the metropolis by discussing public space and arriving at an interpretation of Schoolman's work, comparing private and public space on democratic enlightenment and aesthetic education. Following my article, I present an exclusive interview with Schoolman.

The primary purpose of this interview is to bring the reader closer to the subject of aesthetics and politics—that is, the correspondence of art images with public life regarding the ideals of organization of a city, state, or nation. In this sense, considering the object of aesthetics, art is to think about the reception of art forms and their subjects in contemporaneity interacting with the metropolis' everyday life and its democratic ideals. Thus, the meaning of the visual dynamics of society and democratic ideals would be social aesthetics, where the reflection on the arts is linked to political-cultural aspects. In that way, among the many forms in which art manifests itself, the experience and the effect of greater global perception have been seen in Schoolman's work through the moving image and, consequently, film. Specifically, concerning politics, the focus of this interview is on the arts—in this case, cinema, and the effects of politicization, citizen awareness of their cultural diversity, and differences. At this point, Schoolman's work becomes essential for democratic enlightenment. To discuss the essential values of democracy is also to understand the complexity of respect for difference. Therefore, the democratic ideal faces the central challenge of combating violence toward difference. In this way, Schoolman's theory has been built upon the challenge of "overcoming identity's construction of difference as otherness." One of the ways to overcome this identity construction is through reconciliation images by way of aesthetic education designed to meet democratic enlightenment. Schoolman developed his theory of the reconciliation image through the moving image and the cinematographic image. Hence, this interview aims to better understand political and aesthetic values, specifically through cinema, to enlighten visual dynamics and democratic ideals. Further, this issue presents topics related to images and social reality. These images portray the sociocultural context through human beings' capacity to create narratives that configure the collective consciousness and shape public opinion (Wagner 2014, 2017). Thus, this edition directly implies finding sensitive values with humanistic expectations still present in the traditional-innovation, real-digital, and true-false interfaces, which establish the dichotomies and polysemy in the visual representation of the metropolitan visual dynamics. Visual culture and studies on its iconography, history, cultural anthropology, and semiotics compose this edition through adoption of an interdisciplinary focus on human and social sciences, contributions with political-cultural approaches to the arts and communication, and proposals relating music to the visual arts, architecture, and design.

Along the approach of democratic ideals, this issue has the honor to present an essay on freedom of thought and speech by Marc Jimenez—philosopher, essayist, and professor emeritus at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne upholding truth and democracy—"From Friedrich Nietzsche to Elon Musk." Jimenez leads us to a near future, conditioning us to see the consequences of the impoverishment of the use of language as a threat to the democratic ideal intrinsic to the dynamics of the public space, which results from the technological development of artificial intelligence and the forms of increasing control over individuals exercised by algorithms and the use of words designed to meet the common and superficial understanding of immediate communication for the efficiency of a pragmatic society.

Then, we have the article by Pamela C. Scorzin, "On the Contemporary Scenopolitics Urban Protest in Major Cities." The author starts from an analysis of Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-vous !* as an axis of study on the current global culture in its democratic participation manifesting in the public space beyond words and writings, mainly through "significant scenographic scenes and creative actions" in the main metropolises of the world. The author uses the term "scenopolitics" for this phenomenon of manifestations in public space where visibility concerns political issues for a symbolic democracy as a form of empowerment of those who are not eligible to exercise power. Scorzin is an art, design, and media theorist and professor of art history and visual culture studies at Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Department of Design (Germany), and has been vice-dean since 2019.

Still in the scenario of manifestations in search of democratic ideals beyond words and writings, the focus extends to popular music compositions with one of the greatest sociologists of Brazilian culture, Waldenyr Caldas. Specifically, in the context of socio-political reality and Brazilian popular music, Caldas contributes to this issue with his essay "Music and Democracy: The Binomial Aesthetics and Politics." Next, situating music and visual arts through iconography, the artistic practices that involve the universe of music and society are analyzed in the essay, "The Intersection Between Art, Music, and Society: Musical Iconography's Social Dynamics Impact" by Edson Leite, which includes artworks from the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of São Paulo (MAC USP)—one of the most significant collections of contemporary art in Latin America. Professor Leite has been the president of the Research Commission of MAC USP and focuses his research on arts, music, cultural heritage, and communication, concentrating mainly on Latin American cultures.

To finish the first part of this issue, focusing on manifestations, performances, and appropriation of public space, the essay "Singular-Plurals in Contemporary Choreography: From Aesthetics to Social Aesthetics" by Iris Julian conceives the democratization of the dance field as a form of creative collaboration. Julian emphasizes the inherent variations and sensory experience by bringing choreography closer to social reality. Her essay has been considered the conceptual analysis of how the democratization of dance is constructed while simultaneously examining the sociocultural context of choreographers concerning the receptivity of the representation of "singular and plural in collaboration." Nevertheless, these articles do not complete the complex theme of this issue, which continues with a second part.

Enjoy reading this first part,

Christiane Wagner
Editor-in-Chief

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Structures of the Metropolis

The Image of Unity in Diversity

Christiane Wagner

Abstract

This article aims to present a visual and theoretical analysis based on the ideals of a democratic society. The cultural paths of social, political, and economic history have always been transferred to art. For this reason, in this paper, artistic realizations are analyzed in terms of the reproductive forces—infrastructural and superstructural—embedded in the ideological context of modern times to situate contemporary society, its global dynamics, and the effect of media in relation to everyday aesthetics. Consequently, this article explores metropolises' structures and social dynamics of functioning, organizing, and restructuring the possible image configurations produced by the cultural context as reality, which is found mainly in significant social and aesthetic theories from the 1960s to the current times. Understanding these theories requires, above all, a discussion about the new interpretations that are still possible. Therefore, new insights form the basis for exploring innovative concepts, particularly in the transition from the 20th to the 21st century, which has sought to define the ideal of freedom in democratic societies. Based on the context that has marked modern times and shaped the path to current times, this article focuses on the role of the arts and media and the cultural effects aimed at democratic values, which prevail through the transparency of information. In this sense, media are significant participants in fulfilling their essential purpose: the "mediation" between society and the state. In short, this article is about the power of images and visual narratives representing the global culture's ideal of democracy. Moreover, it is about the vision of the democratic ideals that guide society toward its fundamental rights, not only as an ideology or image but also as a social reality. These rights respond to the need to maintain the social order—a unity—with regard to the cultural diversity manifested in the arts and media.

Christiane Wagner, Structures of the Metropolis: The Image of Unity in Diversity,
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Leaving Modern Times

This article discusses the transformation of visual phenomena through political and social change processes, and how they relate to the new images broadcast by media, given the political implications of the global visual culture. The examination of the images provides an overview of the message, emphasizing its novel character from conception to realization as the medium of productive forces. Thus, the relationship of the productive forces to the metropolitan dynamics has determined actions, transformed meanings, and influenced the media's trajectory as a worldwide mass culture that seeks democratic messages through the image. Consequently, the historical approach to democratic ideals is based on the relationship between art, technique, and industry in its creative conception and the cultural influences of its practice in economic, social, and political development. Therefore, to better understand this relationship, this article seeks to understand the place of art, communication, and politics in modern times through a brief retrospective of some significant aesthetics and critical theories. Through this panorama, essential to the meaning of art and democratic ideals, the historical significance of freedom of expression and the media within modern times are also considered, while focusing mainly upon the period from 1960 to the present day. Accordingly, the quest for freedom is paradoxical. Consequently, this analysis seeks to understand better the social significance of art and its right to express ideas and opinions in their universality by means of theoretical foundations and through examples of significant artistic achievements since modern times.

In this paper, on the one hand, the creative practices are observed by considering the resources and sociocultural *stimuli* under the ideological context of reproductive forces and democracy. On the other hand, art is related to the universality of democratic ideals and aesthetic and social reflections upon the cultural context that exists in today's globalized world. The various visual manifestations through media, cinematography, art exhibitions, and visual culture aim to discuss democracy and the sociopolitical context regarding inequality, post-colonialism, the exploitation of minorities, immigration, ethnicity, gender, and climate change. These visual manifestations of social issues shape the dynamics of the global city, structuring the productive forces and its reproductions aiming at democracy. First, however, it is worth considering how these productive forces are conditioned regarding the intentions of the dominant system of governance. The reproduction of the productive forces—the means of production with their technologies and their labor force—subsist under the condition that the reproduction of its "qualifications" and system reproduction are dependent on the dominant ideology, which is exercised mainly through existing practices in arts

and communication. In the daily practice of communication, the image must be represented as an essential element. Ideas and images are perceived as the power capable of molding society by economic and political development objectives. In other words, institutions play a role in each of the state's ideological apparatuses, and through this form, the system works. The state's ideological apparatuses are formed by institutions and organizations and constitute a system that regulates the mode of the functioning infrastructures. Thus, each ideological state apparatus is itself ideological (Althusser [1970] 1976, 172). This reasoning on the "ideological state apparatuses" (ISAs) has its origins in structuralist Marxism and was heavily criticized in France in the 1960s and 1970s but simultaneously exerted considerable influence in the following decades in Latin America. Many other contemporary thinkers were adherents of this school of thought, including Jacques Derrida, Anthony Giddens, Judith Butler, and Slavoj Žižek.

The ideologization exercised by institutions is not only formed by ideas. It is necessary to materialize them, that is, to put them into order and submit them to action, to achieve their realization. For an ideology to exist, it is necessary to have sufficient means for its materialization, and these means are not an ideology but rather reality. This ideological representation—materialization—is relative to the rules of the order established by the dominant ideology. Art, in this sense, is performed by following the ideals of the institution or in a pseudo-consensual way. In a counter position, this art would be provocative to the system. However, it is necessary to situate this analysis amid aesthetic and critical theory from the 1960s and 1970s to the present day to consider the current image's significance by asking the following questions: Would the artistic realization manifest in the contemporaneity an interdependence of the structures and the social relations? What is freedom of expression in the arts? Which personal or collective experiences have a space in the arts within contemporary society? 1968 was a crucial year for students and young Marxists who sought to overthrow the French system. They relied on theories about the state as a repressive apparatus, on exchanges of value, and on work from the points of view of Marcuse and Althusser, among others. They also counted Jean-Paul Sartre, editor-in-chief of *Temps Modernes,* among their number. All these elements favored rebellion, at that time, for the majority who believed in communism. Today, however, we see another reality, for example, given the agreement between Charles de Gaulle, the French Communist Party, and the CGT trade union (Confederation Generale du Travail), that is, a clarification of the value of Marx's *Capital* within the social context in which the intellectuals, students, and artists of that period lived (Campbell 1992, 126). This was even more the case in 1989, with the end of the

Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Considering these elements, among others, we will include a period long enough for new thinkers, those who were children in the 1960s and 1970s, to understand the consequences of that moment and who today represent a new generation. A generation that fits into the technological development of films and literature that have aroused interest in scientific discoveries and high technology but who still also live with a minority that keeps alive the ideas of that time. For example, La Nouvelle Vague (the French New Wave) films were essential in the French political context of the 1960s and 1970s. However, for the new generation influenced by current films, La Nouvelle Vague simply represents an art film movement from a remote time that emerged in the late 1950s.

Outside of this scenario, other outstanding cinematic achievements under the film industry's influence are also evidenced, for example, Hollywood movies. During the Cold War, the world read and saw fiction stories about incredible secret missions being undertaken using high technology; for example, the film *Wargames* (1983), directed by John Bradham. The film is a fictional narrative about a student hacker who unwittingly connects to and launches an American military supercomputer programmed to execute a nuclear war against the Soviet Union. Subsequently, these fiction stories concerning the digital world in all its revolutionary ways have become a reality and represent a change for the better or the worse. The first computers achieved their best market performances after being used by the state for defense strategies. This scenario has influenced many children whose parents represented the counterculture of the 60s and today are part of a generation that has become extremely important to the largest of all the revolutions of the 1980s: the Technological Revolution. In addition, an outstanding commitment to what is called sustainable development emerged during this time. More recently, in 2011, this became the responsibility of a high-tech and deterritorialized youth who, struggling for democracy, used new technologies to achieve the most significant event of recent times through the Internet with a "non-profit organization advancing human rights and freedoms by creating and deploying free and open-source anonymity and privacy technologies" (The Tor Project 1990).

These youth achieved what could not be imagined at that time, a revolution resulting from the search for democracy in the Arab world. However, the question that arises now, in another stage, is how to organize and control these countries, which are living through a period of transition and chaos. From this point, we will situate ourselves in terms of the significance of these revolutions. In this way, we can reflect on new interpretations of *Capital* and Marxism that have proved ineffective in practice. Thus, it is necessary to understand the need for technology,

science, and rational control. Therefore, Jürgen Habermas, in response to the thoughts of Herbert Marcuse, situates us in relation to the consequences of rationality, that is, strategies, the use of technologies, and the appropriate organization of systems, as the conditions imposed in a rational society by focusing on the values of the Enlightenment in terms of Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's concept of "instrumental reason" (*Instrumentelle Vernunft*). Adorno and Horkheimer, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) distinguished two meanings of the faculty of reason, in its relation to absolute truth and to knowledge. For both relations, reason is ambiguous and dialectical. On the one hand, it liberates human beings from subservience, bringing clarification. On the other hand, it conditions human beings to technocratic consciousness in the service of the development of capitalism and the economic interests of the dominant class. Weber's concepts (1922) of value-rational and instrumentally rational actions (*Zweck-Mittel-Rationalität*), which refer to the technical-rational appropriateness of the means to achieve an arbitrarily elected goal, are also relevant. The concept of communicative rationality was also developed in another of Habermas' works, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981), in the first volume *Reason and the Rationalization of Society.*

Therefore, we consider the need for actions that control this system, that of nature or society, or a way to obtain control. However, that does not mean that this control is exercised as a political act but rather that it is contained within politics. We understand, therefore, that the sense of a political existence is intrinsic to the individual in society, in their public sphere, as a citizen. With the technological transformations and the digital era, the whole relationship established between the productive forces, which have increased and become institutionalized by this technological and scientific progress, has exceeded the proportions identified by the theorists who lived under the conditions of a repressive apparatus. This repressive system would produce articulated divisions, whether they were constructive or destructive social work, that conditioned individuals living under the state's repression. This repression or lack of autonomy or freedom of speech would lead to discontent. It would be conducive to revolution even if the individuals lived with a sense of powerlessness under a repressive force. Thus, what are the limits of freedom of speech? Liberal democracy made the Technological Revolution possible; the advent of globalization and the Internet made communication without borders possible. Through Habermas' answers to Herbert Marcuse's analysis in *Technology and Science as Ideology* (1968), we can partially think of appropriate responses to the most important questions concerning the interdependent relations of the current system. For this thinker, we can observe a paradox in the understanding of repression. Marcuse believed that repression would disappear from the people's consciousness because the

legitimization of domination produces a new situation resulting from that domination's natural advantages and products, which always offer greater benefits. Marcuse also expected an equivalent liberation for the individual concerning the necessity and the sacrifice of energy and time regarding technological development. In industrial society, modern and democratic culture has been developed through the dynamics of the mass consumption of cultural goods that renounced the forms that the art of antiquity offered, which were the means of transferring desires and their realization through art. In psychoanalysis, this process is called sublimation. Instead of finding ways to sublimate desires through art, in modern society, pleasure is found through material and concrete resources—a material culture, in opposition to an ideological culture. Thus, it is a less affirmative culture that characterizes modern culture, which has not established mechanisms to transform reality gradually. Still, in this period, without sufficient time for the sociopolitical changes to follow the necessary trajectory required for new ways of interpreting the developing system to emerge, these theories were intensively discussed and valued in Latin America, especially in Brazil. In 1964, following the coup d'état, Brazil began a period of military rule that lasted until 1985. This period ushered in an extremely antidemocratic and repressive scenario, in which the army comprehensively exercised its power.

The theories of Adorno and Marcuse were appropriate to the reality of this period. They supported the first research into sociology, communication, and culture and were exceptionally resistant to the manipulation of the state. On the international scene, Adorno's criticism was scarcely discussed. Thus, before Adorno died in 1969, he understood that his theory of modernity had confronted the decline of modern art; kitsch was assuming more space with the established powers of the cultural industry, who were subject to the market's profits. Hence, today new technologies prevail for production, dissemination, and artistic and cultural practices that do not discredit the theory of Adorno and Horkheimer. They had foreseen the risk of a standardized and globalized technoculture that would be detrimental for the individual in terms of their unique and diverse experiences. In any case, the existing relations of production are presented as the forms of organization necessary to a technically rationalized society. This rationalization, elucidated by Habermas, demonstrates the ambiguity of Max Weber's orientation (1922). On the one hand, to present criticism of the development of the productive forces as a measure of discontent, which was meaningless and part of the historically outdated relations of production, allows for the interruption of repression. On the other hand, they can be regarded as measures to justify the relations of production as an institutional status appropriate to the fundamental objectives. In short, Habermas also showed that Marcuse did not know about the consequences of arbitrary scientific and technological development, which today

have resulted in a configuration in which the productive forces experience new interactions with the relationship of reproduction. Indeed, the writings of Marcuse mainly derive from the 1950s and 1960s. Today, we must think not only in terms of a quest for demystification but for political enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) and legitimacy. Understandably, there was collusion between the state and society concerning the advantages that all this scientific and technological development offered. On the one hand, the power of the state is exercised in search of control. On the other hand, the resistance in search of the rights of freedom is concentrated as a mass power. Therefore, two opposing forces of equal capacity that establish a point at which the differences are neutralized are a balanced system for the conditions of their own survival. Regarding Habermas' analysis of Marcuse, we must also consider certain events that would justify this analysis, which is confirmed when we think, for example, of the purposes stated in the United Nations Charter, which "legitimize" a new globalized politics. For Weber, a rationalized development would be a rationalization of social structures, thereby, also becoming the real reason for the development—that of maintaining the references that respond to the fundamental interests of the state and the community.

The Arts Included in the United Nations Goals

One of the most significant modernist milestones and representative of a new direction for the global democratic orientation following World War II was the essential mission of enforcing fundamental human rights by creating the United Nations organization. To that end, a new relationship between institutions and organizations linked to the nation-states has been verified for the meaning of contemporary art. This sense of art has slowly shed its subversive characteristics to become a more consensual art associated with influential organizations' political and social ideals. A significant reference in this regard is the importance of the image of artists linking their art to the values of fundamental rights aimed at democratic societies. The main headquarters of the United Nations also maintains a rich collection of artworks preserved by the UN Art Committee. Renowned artists from its member states have donated artworks to the United Nations art collection that are representative of United Nations ideals: "embodied in the Charter of the United Nations: the promotion of the idea of the unity of humankind in all its cultural diversity." Among these artworks, the *War and Peace* murals by Candido Portinari are highlighted. Two murals were presented to the United Nations, each measuring 34 by 46 feet, painted in oil on six-sheet cedar plywood, and are mounted on the east and west walls of the delegates' lobby on the ground floor of the General Assembly building. They were Brazil's gift to UN Headquarters, as figures 1 and 2 show.

Figure 1. *War and Peace* Murals, Brazil's Gift to UN Headquarters.
Seen here examining sections of the murals already mounted are (*left to right*)
UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld; Ambassador Cyro de Freitas-Valle,
Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN; and M. Jayme de Barros, Deputy Permanent
Representative of Brazil to the UN, who proposed the subject (*War and Peace*) for the murals.
New York, March 9, 1957. Image reproduced under 'Fair Use' condition.

Figure 2. A view of the mural representing war which is mounted on the east wall of the delegates' lobby on the ground floor of the General Assembly building. New York, January 6, 1968. Image reproduced under 'Fair Use' condition.

Ironically, the presentation of this gift was unforgettable because Portinari could not be present at the inauguration. As a communist, Portinari could not obtain the authorization to enter the country from the American government. Nevertheless, this situation highlighted the meaning of a masterpiece with objectives that overcome differences; that is, art remains a memory and a message for the ideals of the United Nations. Another remarkable artwork is a mural by the Spanish artist Jose Vela Zanetti also located at United Nations Headquarters. The colossal mural depicts *Mankind's Struggle for Lasting Peace*, "beginning with the destruction of a family and ending with resurrection, showing a bright-eyed child looking toward a generation of peace. Concentration camps, bombings, and all the agony of modern war are symbolized in the painting, in the center of which a gigantic four-armed figure implants the emblem of the United Nations as mankind reconstructs a war-torn world (United Nations 1989)," as figures 3 and 4 show.

Figure 3. Mural in United Nations Conference Building. *Mankind's Struggle for Lasting Peace* is the theme of Spanish artist Jose Vela Zanetti's mural at United Nations Headquarters. New York, UN. Photo: John Isaac June 27, 1989. Image reproduced under 'Fair Use' condition.

Figure 4. Mural in United Nations Conference Building. *Mankind's Struggle for Lasting Peace* is the theme of Spanish artist Jose Vela Zanetti's mural at United Nations Headquarters. New York, UN. Photo: John Isaac June 27, 1989. Image reproduced under 'Fair Use' condition.

The artist attentive to citizen's demands in the public space maintains the ideals of democracy in their artistic purposes. Their artwork is situated within the social context, astute to the human condition. This democratic awareness guides the artist to orient themselves toward the search for their rights, in principle, not only for the social ideology but for the reality of the right to freedom based on other rights, such as the triumph of the citizen's personal sovereignty, which is already established and necessary.

These rights are related to maintaining the social order by means of equality of power and choice—a shared space for all—with integrity and managed by society itself. Nonetheless, we must also consider that modern democracy does not possess the same sense of democracy as ancient Greece. In fact, modern democracy differs concerning the diverse system of government. However, in general, citizens in today's democratic societies assume the existence of equality and seek greater freedom in their decisions about what to do concerning their choices, desiring some power and more participation. Independence established within a community represents the orientation of accomplishing actions without restriction. Thus, in social relations, citizens seek more equality and the right to participate in decisions and decentralize power. The images resulting from this relationship between art and politics focused on everyday aesthetics and democratic ideals are perceived when art's authenticity transforms creative production into a social cause. In this way, we understand the importance of visual studies in contemporary societies amid the accelerated development of visual culture and media. Images from different contexts primarily incorporate the possibilities provided by culture's diverse relationships. Particularly noteworthy here is *Tribute 21*, a series of offset lithographs printed at Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), New York, which were donated to 21 museums worldwide, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, University of São Paulo in 1994. These images are related to the contemporary impact of the image associated with cultural value as sociopolitical progress, seeking to improve what could be described as a "democratization of art." Another objective of the work is the aesthetic reflection provoked by the images, which involve cultural diversity and respect for difference. There is perhaps no more significant and symbolic example of the visualization of an abstract idea related to human rights than the tribute to Nelson Mandela, reminding us of the apartheid era, as *figure* 5 shows. Other examples from this same *Tribute 21* (1994) series are *Ethnic Cultures – Dalai Lama*, *Peace – Mikhail Gorbachev*, *Technology – Bill Gates*, and *Environment – Al Gore*, as figures 6 to 9 show.

Figure 5. Robert Rauschenberg, *Human Rights – Nelson Mandela*, 1994.
© Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York. Image reproduced under 'Fair Use' condition.

Figures 6-7. Robert Rauschenberg, *Ethnic Cultures – Dalai Lama* and *Peace – Mikhail Gorbachev*, 1994. © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York.
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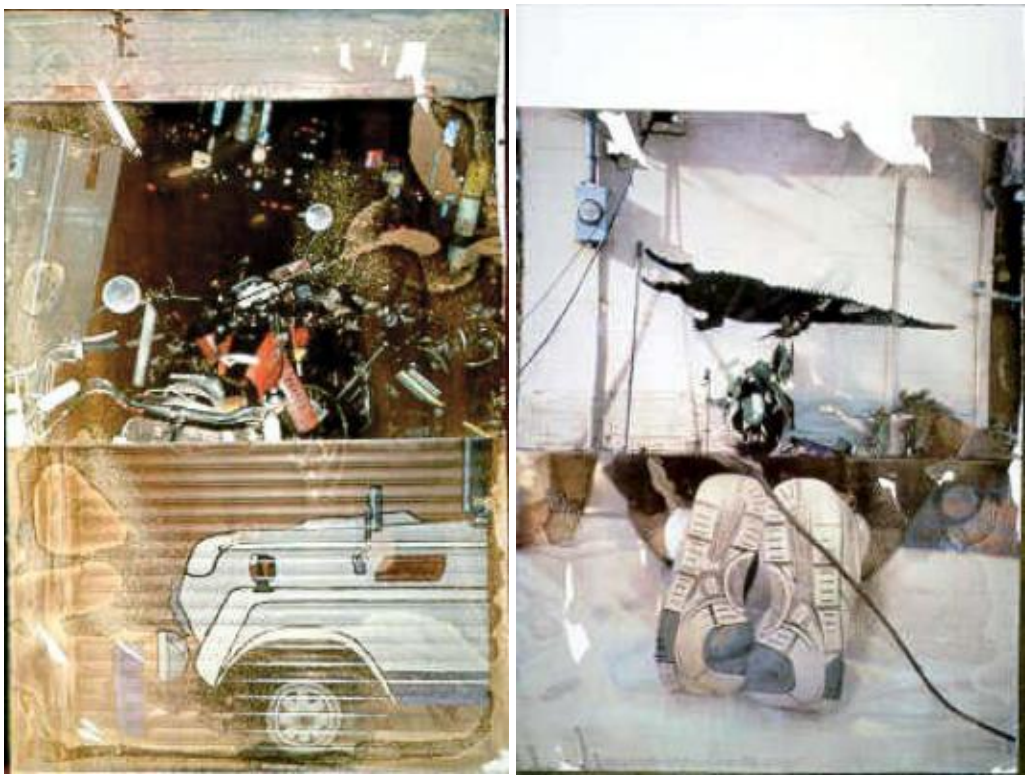

Figures 8-9. Robert Rauschenberg, *Technology – Bill Gates* and *Environment – Al Gore,* 1994.

Overall, the names and themes mentioned in Rauschenberg's *Tribute 21* make the meaning of his art evident, thereby, avoiding any ambiguity or interpretive and aesthetic speculation about the visual composition of his groupings that encompass a global understanding. They represent social facts, and, in addition, the prints celebrate events with humanitarian themes that are interpreted as relevant to this period from modern to contemporary times in their historical, social, political, and cultural significance. In 1995, for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Foundation, an art exhibition was created in its Geneva complex, entitled Dialogues of Peace. This exhibition featured artworks by 60 international contemporary artists with the concept and curatorship assumed by Adelina von Fürstenberg and organized by The French Association for Artistic Action. At that time, an art critic for *The New York Times* highlighted the following in a review:

> For all the natural instinct of artists to want to change the world, it is rare for their works to be displayed in a setting where government officials must take note of them. But an unusual exhibition at the United Nations complex in Geneva does just that: it forces art and politics to coexist. (Riding 1995)

Among these artworks, the series by Robert Rauschenberg was conspicuous. However, the exhibition organizer, Ms. von Fürstenberg, clarified that not all the works were explicitly political, but "in their different ways, they all make statements about the state of the world half a century after the birth of the United Nations." She also emphasized the immense importance of Rauschenberg's series, entitled *Tribute 21,* given that "each of the 21 serigraphs touches one aspect of human existence—from happiness and human rights to health and technology—and, taken together, they cover the range of human experience."

Nevertheless, let us remember the social changes that have occurred since the French Declaration of Human Rights (La Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme) in 1789, as a first step, leading to what is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, and is still in practice. However, the social changes resulting from economic, technical, and industrial development have led to new forms of communication, greater access to information and acquisition of knowledge. These changes represent a process of social transformation that has led to human relationships acquiring new needs, thus, conditioning them to new requirements, which are, in turn, new rights. The diversity and complexity of human rights are predicated on the difficulties inherent to the content of righteousness, which is based on morality and, by extension, common agreement. On the one hand, the consensus of some on a particular subject implies the understanding that these citizens have an "absolute value." On the other hand, the expression "human rights" leads to homogeneity in society before the law; in fact, to give rights to some, others will have had their rights removed (Bobbio 2007, 64). Norberto Bobbio justifies the present situation and the future concerning democracy by presenting the most significant right: the right to freedom of expression. However, to obtain the right to freedom of expression, it is also necessary to remove the citizen's right not to be deceived, persuaded, provoked, scandalized, or mocked. Therefore, we can imagine freedoms and social rights as we can experience them in actual societies, such that, the freer humans are, the less factually correct they are and vice versa. Thus, for Bobbio, "freedom" is the right accorded when the state does not intervene, and "power"

is the right by which the state's intervention is assumed. Consequently, freedom and power will never be complementary but rather incompatible. Thinking about freedom is part of human nature, that is, of life in all its senses. However, understanding the value of freedom is an essential part of the experience in conjunction with the lack of this freedom in various forms. Humans are conditioned as citizens or simple survivors to the natural conditions that determine their paths. Therefore, to think about humankind in its biological, psychological, and social nature; as well as its ethical, aesthetic, and moral aspects; and its cultural, ethnic, and religious differences is to seek an understanding of how humankind, amid determined or arbitrary conditions, can build better relationships. To do so, undoubtedly, communication in its forms and means is the determining factor.

Consequently, Jürgen Habermas presents a discussion of that assumption as mentioned earlier. He states that society can develop its common interests through communication, through the judicial system, and the state under political power. Habermas also discusses the issues of human rights, freedom of expression, the participation of women on equal terms with men; in short, an appropriation of the public sphere (Habermas [1962] 1990) by individuals through the possible participation and realization of all. However, by systematizing public dynamics in their complex magnitude, Habermas demonstrates a relationship that aims to reach agreement through reason. Actions manifest themselves in the public space and seek consensus to differentiate system rationality from action rationality (Habermas 1981). In this sense, Habermas presents a rational form of communication intended for social reality. He shows us the development of the modern state in a relationship in which the private sector becomes public. Space is built for a public opinion that concerns power; however, it concerns publicity as power and the necessity of visibility, as Immanuel Kant stated. The result of this is democratic governance. Norberto Bobbio has also considered this issue of human rights, freedom of expression, and the public sphere, presenting it as a political and moral need. He shows us that freedom is the reason that the public should know. According to Kant, that is what humans can create with the knowledge to generate public freedom, and, for him, our consciousness—the fact of reason—is the moral law. The knowledge of the reality of freedom is the practical reality, that is, the conditions of the purpose of experience. In this sense, in a more complex way, we have a scheme for a relationship dynamic based on the desires and purposes of individuals, conditioning them to actions that achieve goals—the categorical imperative—a paradoxical problem of reciprocity between morality and freedom in Kant's work ([1788] 2008). Therefore, for Kant, we know freedom before any understanding or action—a priori—in ourselves because morality is

also within ourselves. Consequently, we know freedom even before putting it into practice through its relationship to our reason and morality. Hence, in the understanding of Kantian philosophy, the only way to act autonomously is through the moral law in the sense that freedom and practice mutually imply one another. In this way, by considering the forms of power that are not transparent and the threat to liberal democracy, we can approach Marcuse and Althusser's ideas and theories. They present a scenario of the ideological system of the state by articulating the relationships. These are structured on the strength of their power through the means of ideological reproduction. The meaning of these structures is located in the way that governments maintain control and restrict individual freedoms. Therefore, for Bobbio, these theories did not pay enough attention to the importance of democratic polices. The relationship of these rules, whether good or bad, becomes relative when they are evaluated—even more so over time. Here, for example, is the solution proposed by Althusser against the supposed "tactics" of the bourgeoisie to maintain itself in power through reform. Reform as a solution? What does this reform consist of? How do we evaluate all the parts of the structure and reorganize them? Which factors are good, and which are bad? Good for whom? Therefore, when Althusser ([1970]1976) presents his interpretation of Marx's work, he leads us toward a reality that consists of a probable organization of bourgeois power employing strategies that would deceive society in order to maintain itself in power. Louis Althusser structured relationships between the forms of realization, the actions of the ideological tools of the state's power that, represented by the bourgeoisie, are organized and capable of managing the relationships, and their manifestations through strategies—or, to use the word of the author, "tactics." In all his work on reproduction relations, according to Marx's work, clarity is essential to understanding the dynamics of this association with values related to individual rights. However, any attempt to convince those of us situated within the democratic governance of the hypothetical reality of the control by the bourgeoisie through employing the reproduction of the state today seems unreal. Thus, for those in a totalitarian regime, even in a system under a dictatorship that does not recognize individual rights, the reality is different.

Nevertheless, for those who have not lived under repression, it is still possible to imagine such a context, the control of the population by a totalitarian regime through the domination of information and communication technologies, through the fictional novel *1984* by George Orwell, which also exists in film version. Thus, between lived realities and imagined realities, based on sociocritical and aesthetic theories, Bobbio's observation is still relevant. Hence, Norberto Bobbio discusses

democracy as involving the need to contain a hidden power within itself. He argues that the comparison between the ideal model of visible power and the reality of things must consider the tendency of all forms of domination to evade the attention of the dominated by hiding and caching, or in other words, through secrecy and dissimulation (Bobbio 2007).

The Universal Image and the Cinematographic Influence

What is visible in the dynamics of public space in the sense of democracy? The powerful production of the image industry happens in a favorable context, leading to the universality of images. The lives of contemporary metropolises are narrated and represented through their histories, experiences, anxieties, hopes, and, finally, their daily lives through images that propose projections of the social actor, the individual's behavior, and ideals. A projection that transmits, for most people, the collective imagination of some local or global cultures. Moreover, television programs, audiovisuals, film production, and advertising form social imagery behaviors and show images linked to many cultural identities. In this context, the intrinsic values of the nation, that is, the language, tradition, art, and history are exposed in the public sphere, in the national territories, and then worldwide. The latter is a production in a globalized culture that consists of a world exchanging fragments of identities. Thus, it is the character of cultural globalization that prompts image mediations and forms new perceptions among the particularities of cultural difference. Therefore, images play the leading role in cultural production transmitting concepts, ideas, statements, and democratic ideals.

The economic hegemony over the world of the image industry is far from being in the same condition as the cultural hegemony. The national productions are diverse and work to complexify views and perceptions. For example, film has a significant cultural position among image mediums, more than simply an intellectual or economic facet. The United States still has a cultural influence in the mass industry and consequently they exert a creative and commercial force to prove their power regarding film production worldwide. Moreover, the United States originally had their national interests of identities to develop an entertainment industry, where all inhabitants would recognize themselves culturally. Indeed, the cultural hegemony in the world is an advantage for countries that can invest and absorb the production costs of the image industries. Some countries have devised an economic activity that uses capital from different sources for the same enterprise, that of the image industry. Monetary policy always contributes to the stabilization of production, that is, the best adaptation

of employment and production to the market preferences of the state. However, when we talk about globalization, we can see a market policy that exists outside the state's borders, a unifying taste among different cultures. In other words, we are experiencing the expansion of the taste of the world culture, which is heterogeneous. The market has experienced its most significant impact and the most remarkable change after globalization in this area. Thus, in the global dimension where we find differences between cultures, we have the cultural hegemony of American cinema. The United States benefits from the local and international public, mass industry, and economic efficiency in the cinematographic sector.

However, the main issue is not the mass industry or how the image is disseminated, nor the role of the arts and its audience, but on all its cultural effects. An audience differentiated by its form and tastes watches online movie channels, concerts, and theater and visits historical monuments and art and museum collections virtually, even if partially, without the aesthetic experience of the face-to-face moment with the original work, which brings to mind the Benjaminian concept of "aura." Even so, it is also worth noting that most are interested in immediate experiences just for the information they impart. Nor does the issue concern the history of the image in its technical evolution, reproduction, and the ambiguous role of the media and whether they favor the system or large audiences and celebrities. Today, this question no longer has meaning, just as it had no meaning for Walter Benjamin ([1939] 2002) when he revised his 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," last published in 1939, realizing that the decline of "aura" would not result in the democratization of art and culture. In societies constituted by differences and injustices in their formation, sociopolitical organization, and behaviors, the democratic system itself is placed in doubt. Thus, a priori, the central question is how to make democratic values viable through the arts. Without doing so, nothing can be democratized, especially culture. In this sense, the main objective of this reflection is to bring aesthetics and politics closer, that is, the correspondence of the images of art with public life regarding the ideals of the organization of a city, state, or nation. Therefore, to think about the object of aesthetic reflection—art—is to think about the reception of art forms and their subjects in contemporaneity interacting with daily social life and its democratic ideals. The consequence of this thinking represents social aesthetics, in which reflection on the arts is linked to political-cultural aspects. Thus, among the many ways art manifests itself, the experience and the effect of a global perception are most realized by the cinematographic art and, consequently, the moving image. However, specifically in politics, the focus is on all the arts and the effects through which they enable politicization,

that is, citizen awareness in all its cultural diversity and differences. On this point, the analysis of Morton Schoolman's work *A Democratic Enlightenment: The Reconciliation Image, Aesthetic Education, Possible Politics* (2020) is essential because it brings together politics and aesthetics for democratic enlightenment within the process of politicization mainly, but not exclusively, through the art of cinema. Therefore, discussing democracy's essential values also requires understanding the complexity of its ideal of respect for differences, combating violence. In this regard, Schoolman understands that one of the ways of overcoming this violence is through the ideal of reconciling identity and difference by means of the "image of reconciliation," thus, providing an aesthetic education in relation to democratic enlightenment.

Accordingly, from this approach to Schoolman's work and visual studies of the most diverse media in the face of global polysemy, I first focused on understanding an aesthetic form of reason and then on its relationship with politics. The fact is that in this relationship we find reason in contemporary reality in the objective definitions of the organization of visual elements, by which the meaning of reason is associated with sociocultural, political, and economic aspects and technical and scientific progress. However, the experience and significance attributed to the different means of language and communication are diverse, especially in terms of the visual aspect. Thus, the communication and the arts from the European Enlightenment through modern times to more recent history are considered for this analysis of visual culture to be the political and sociocultural aspects of the past, concerning the current context of a globalized culture with democratic values. In this sense, the work of Morton Schoolman stands out, in which the interest is in the "reconciliation image" as the pedagogical vehicle of aesthetic education in search of democratic enlightenment. Through rereadings of Walt Whitman, Friedrich von Schiller, and Theodor Adorno, Schoolman relates the historical-social context to the period in which these works were inserted. By interpreting Whitman's respective poetry, Schoolman introduces us to the visual aesthetic quality by which he leads us to a "reconciliation image" through the work of this American poet, which refers to a visual configuration in motion. This visualization, through Whitman's poems, is significant regardless of the linguistic context. The visual images take on political forms—inclusion, receptivity, and imitation of differences—which Schoolman considers to be inclusive, receptive, and imitative images. When the object of analysis is the visual image, understanding our society's relationship requires a study that progresses far beyond the cultural aspects of the relationship between art and society. It is precisely from Schoolman's interpretation of Adorno's work

that we see the need for an emphasis on critical and aesthetic theory that includes modern society in its analysis, along with the theoretical results that achieved ample significance when ideological issues concerning capitalist society during the 20th century were discussed. Adornian aesthetics proposed a way to denounce the adverse effects of the technical and scientific rationality of the liberal market's social and economic development. Therefore, this paradoxical condition of reason is crucial to the understanding of Adornian aesthetics. When dealing with the rationality inserted in the universe of art, the goal was that this reason could be used to realize a work of art capable of reversing the system. To this end, Adorno (1970), in his *Aesthetic Theory* (*Aesthetische Theorie*), practically approached the already consecrated works of art in literature, music, and painting to meet an aesthetic of high technical and hermetic standards. However, aesthetic autonomy in Adorno's theory is characterized by the realization of a hermetic work in music, literature, and the arts.

Nonetheless, the autonomy of his theory of aesthetics was aimed at the formation and education through the hermeticism that Adorno's work offered and which he defended in his approach. Adorno's work would attract the attention of a growing audience through education, but only if his work were understood, forming a critical consciousness. But in the general sense, Adorno's work would follow a direction in which art would cease to be art. According to him, when he wrote his *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), art would remain as a "promise of happiness," as he reflected that art would not matter in the society of his time and that its existence would even be threatened. When dealing with rationality inserted into the universe of the arts, the critical factor was that this reason was being used to realize a work of art. This art, for Adorno, was considered a modern "work of art" precisely because it is different from the other products of the culture industry. Thus, a "modern work of art" for Adorno represented the truth content that would condition society to resist the culture industry domination. The meaning would be in the negation of social reality, which is why his theory is known as the aesthetics of negation. It is in this *Aesthetic Theory* of Adorno that Schoolman finds the necessary evidence for the "reconciliation image," which Adorno had confined at that time to the modern art, and that, in the present day, can be found in cinematography—the "reconciliation image" in film. The focus would be on the forms by which art would be produced, considering its mimetic elements—between rationality and mimesis—in dialectical process for a visual and paradoxical dynamic, providing remissions of the moving image, enabling the "reconciliation image." Visual arts and cinematography can be regarded as "aesthetically analogous." Thus, discovering the "reconciliation image" through

cinema, Schoolman (2020) positively develops the concept of aesthetic reason on which he establishes his theory of democratic enlightenment, analyzing, for example, Rodin's *Thought* and Monet's Rouen "by differentiating aesthetic reason's interrelated moments of aesthetic reflexivity" and "how the process of aesthetic reflexivity works through serial images."

> Aesthetic rationality endows the modern artwork with the capacity to initiate the motion that originates a continuously unfolding series of different images. In continuous motion the modern artwork's fixed identity is converted to the ever-changing image. Artwork continuously becomes image. Aesthetic identity continuously becomes different. (Schoolman 2020, 167)

From the artworks and films analyzed by Schoolman in his book (2020), it was possible for me to approach the democratic ideal and its relationship with the world. But it was not enough to understand the author's analyses and be connected to recent events and films. Accordingly, to better understand the theoretical relationship of this "reconciliation image" related to the American context of the "imitative image," I watched and analyzed the film cited by Schoolman, *Forrest Gump*, starring Tom Hanks, based on the book by Winston Groom, with a screenplay by Eric Roth and direction by Robert Zemeckis (1994). The film details the story told by Forrest Gump, a person with little intelligence but who is nonetheless a very well-intentioned, innocent man. There are highly significant moments in the narrative related to the recent history of the United States and, consequently, the world, especially for this generation that lived through the counterculture and social transformations after the Cold War and the Technological Revolution reported previously. In this sense, this film is quite significant when we think about the articulations of social movements, making them believe in the power of the people. However, specifically regarding Schoolman's work, seeking an understanding of the meanings of imitative images, I realized that they are strictly related to the human condition and its forms of expression and the experience of feelings, as these narratives are expressed visually and could hardly be expressed through words. In my view, these imitative images represent all the senses of human existence and can be perceived by means of a visual narrative. Forrest Gump's identity presents a solid connection to Alabama and his soldier friend during the Vietnam War and his conduct without any prejudice regarding race or differences during all his relationships, whether with his friends, hippies, generals, and presidents of the United States. To him, everyone is just a human being!

Nonetheless, he is not like most humans, and he is a person with a disability, which makes us wonder whether this behavior would be the same in someone normal. Forrest could recognize what was good and evil, regardless of ideologies, professions, financial situation, social status; in short, without any preceding judgments. Forrest Gump was the same person with everyone he encountered—this is an essential value incorporated in many democratic ideals, which is also impossible to express well in words. Only the imitative images in the film narrative enable the viewer to obtain such an experience through the appearances that represent human relationships in all their subtleties of expression. In addition, the situations are similar to those we experience during the course of our existence. In general, the imitative image in *Forrest Gump* is, in its narrative, in its visual sequence, an image of reconciliation through the images presented by Gump's daily experiences with his personal and professional relationships, until the moment comes to reproduce all his experiences to educate his son. However, his son already displays a different perception and understanding of the world because Gump's son is a normal person. Thus, we can see that the imitative image presents a transformation as the characteristics of the similarities include the difference in search of something similar in a search for consensus, for agreement, for understanding, for relationship. Ultimately, all those visual meanings have led to the sense of the imitative image used today by cinematography. Therefore, one realizes that the image of reconciliation depends on how all these factors are perceived. According to Schoolman (2020, 213), we can discover the reconciliation image in film by the political narrative and image representation belonging to reconciliation. Consequently, reconciliation image occurs as a result of the continuity offered by the film's narrative.

Final Considerations

In general, what represents the configuration of a contemporary image in its quest for democracy is to understand the dynamics of global metropolises in their transformation processes, always seeking to meet the needs of the *modus vivendi*. The constant changes resulting from globalization and the standardization involved in the configuration of a unit or single image of democracy are very complex. Such an image represents a civilization that is engaged in the struggle for rights and democracy. Thus, art finds itself concerned with technological, scientific, and social evolution in a framework of contemporary universality. This global context is not only that of social transformation but rather of seeking human rights, values, and democracy that relate to the entire world in its diversity. The arts in the 21st century are understood through their universal representativeness in the cinematographic image. In addition, an understanding of the imitative images represented in all the arts that concern mimesis—the imitation of nature—as representing the reality of life is required. Tragedy, as the primary conception of art, prevailed for many centuries and was called mimesis. In short, the theory of mimesis that is associated with the term presents this etymology as arising from ancient Greece and *The Odyssey*, then throughout the Middle Ages with the Bible and then, following the Renaissance, different interpretations of the term were translated from Latin to modern languages and theories with the meaning of representing or imitating reality in art, especially literature (Auerbach 1946). Many images demonstrate identity, difference, receptivity, inclusion, and, finally, imitative images. According to each culture, they function as visual forms of the world's diversity and, in a certain way, as a model for the continuity of the human condition. In general, the visual narrative of the moving image is strictly related to the existential condition and the different conceptions of the world and its transformations, which, even if they do not have a clear political intention, are contained in these political transformations. In any case, to delve deeper into the sense of democratic enlightenment through aesthetic education and to focus on the arts and, specifically, film as a universal contemporary art, I present an exclusive interview with Morton Schoolman concerning his work following this article.

Author Biography

Christiane Wagner has been a visiting research professor at the Contemporary Art Museum, University of São Paulo (MAC USP). She is also the editor-in-chief, founder, and creative director of the *Art Style, Art & Culture International Magazine* and a member of the College Art Association of America in New York, NY. For complete works published, and for more information, see her website: christiane-wagner.online

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Interview

A Democratic Enlightenment: The Reconciliation Image, Aesthetic Education, Possible Politics

(Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020)

Christiane Wagner in discussion with the author Morton Schoolman

Christiane Wagner: I believe it is clear that your work on a democratic enlightenment is rooted, in part, in your critique of one of the most fundamental political commitments belonging to today's western democratic societies. Despite "all-inclusiveness" playing a defining role in your concept of the reconciliation image, you have serious concerns about the limitations of the so-called "inclusive" society. What are the central themes of *A Democratic Enlightenment,* and how are they linked to your critique of inclusiveness? And while some form of political education is needed to teach democratic societies about the failings of inclusion and how reconciliation remedies these failings, why must such an education be "aesthetic"? What political lessons are taught by cinematography and its arts of the moving image you focus on? And how is such an education democratic?

Morton Schoolman: Thanks, Christiane, for the opportunity to discuss my new book. Your first questions go right to the heart of my work and offer me the opportunity to lay out several of its central arguments before taking up other issues you raise.

To begin with, the defining problem of *A Democratic Enlightenment* is the violence inflicted on difference that women, persons of color, gays, Jews and Muslims among other ethnic and religious groups, and the working classes endure in modern democracies. My interest is in misogyny, racism, antisemitism, religious discrimination, homophobia, and classism. Put another way, my theoretical and political interests are in the plight of difference as it is constructed as the Other by identities who establish, maintain, and perpetuate norms ruling the democratic world. No matter what subtle or unsubtle forms of marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination this violence takes, they are as much forms of violence toward difference as its extermination. For marginalization, exclusion, and discrimination undermine the conditions allowing human life to flourish. And such compromise of the conditions of human life is, over time, its extermination.

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Now, in view of the long history of such unbroken violence towards difference, my first concern is the way those who have struggled against violence toward difference in liberal democracies have opposed it. We must ask whether liberal politics and its rule of law have successfully attenuated violence toward differences through political and legal means extending, protecting, and guaranteeing human rights to achieve inclusiveness. To be sure, I am not implying that political and legal reforms have failed to bring an end to much of the violence difference as otherness suffers in modern democracies, which has been the great accomplishment of the civil rights, feminist, and gay rights movements, and to some small extent of the precarious political struggles for the rights of immigrants who suffer so terribly today. Yet, as I argue in *A Democratic Enlightenment*, by narrowly framing debate about the relationship between democracy and difference in ways confining ameliorative policies to inclusiveness, liberal politics and its legal-juridical institutions have become unwitting collaborators in the political and cultural constructions of difference as otherness, hence in the violence toward difference.

CW: Would you explain how?

MS: Writing in America I have been witness to how politics and the rule of law, narrowly confined to the liberal political imaginary of inclusiveness, have failed to remediate the violence of misogyny, racism, homophobia, antisemitism, classism, ethnic and religious discrimination. This is because such violence toward difference festers within the *liberal private sphere*—in the family, the community, the workplace and religious institutions, in civil society as it forms its associations around and through these ensembles of private relations. It is in the private sphere, *beneath* the threshold of liberal politics and the law, where everyday violence toward difference thrives, even if it does not first originate there. The private sphere is home to xenophobic communities of dominant genders, races, sexualities, religions, and ethnicities, home to identities whose self-ascribed truths of their superiority are secured through constructions of difference that perpetuate violence toward difference as the Other.

The problem we must engage is how the limitations of such difference-liberalism can be surmounted? My answer is that the limits of inclusiveness can be overcome through a democratic enlightenment whose pedagogical goal is nothing less than the political transformation of the private sphere. Whereas such a political transformation proceeds from the recognition that liberalism's commitment to inclusiveness, which is based on its principle of tolerance, of the right to be and to become different, fails to shield difference from the violence inflicted on it as the Other, a democratic enlightenment would teach individuals in their private lives to overcome their practices of constructing difference as otherness.

In the past this lesson has been taught by art, most recently by film, whose reconciliation image models how the construction of difference as otherness can be overcome. Recently I acquired a powerful ally in my argument for a democratic enlightenment. As President Biden put it in May 2021 when signing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, "But of *all the good* that the *law* can do, we have to change our hearts." Real political progress, ending violence undermining the conditions of real human progress for those different from the norm, can occur only by going beyond the limits of politics and the rule of law, beyond liberalism's narrow political imaginary of inclusiveness.

CW: From your argument the limits of inclusiveness are thus linked to a deeper problem avoided in discussions about difference. Difference is included, tolerated, but only as the Other, though liberals are loath to concede that no matter what political and legal mechanisms are in place to guarantee the rights of those not identity-normative, most often violence toward difference does not rise to the level of intervention by the state but, remaining out of sight beneath politics and the law, operates with impunity.

MS: Precisely Christiane. The limits of inclusiveness reveal a much deeper problem—that of the pathologies of the private sphere that can be eliminated only through its transformation, which requires an educational project, a project of democratic enlightenment that places emphasis not on inclusiveness only, but on the reconciliation of identity and difference, the highest of all democratic ideals for those who value difference above all. Difference is the most democratic because it is the most human of all values.

CW: By explaining the reasons for a democratic enlightenment, you introduce the political role to be played by education—teaching the ideal of reconciliation a democratic enlightenment would realize. Then, arguing that such an education has been offered historically by art, you theorize "aesthetic education," one whose pedagogical media has become film. If the form of education you propose was not already unfamiliar, its historical development from the artwork to film is even more so.

MS: Your interest in this all-important question invites discussion of what I found to be the most fascinating part of my project. As prologue to taking up in greater depth and detail the historical figures whose theoretical contributions to a democratic enlightenment I anticipate you'll want me to discuss, let me first explain why the ideal of reconciliation was originally the political curriculum of an aesthetic education whose classroom in our own time has become film.

It is not a historical coincidence that the first argument of a theoretical kind for aesthetic education, which assigns art the moral task of teaching the ideal of reconciliation, appears at the very time two other revolutions are also taking place—the violent birth of early modern democracies and the explosive development of new arts and new art forms in the arts of that same time. I am referring, of course, to Friedrich Schiller's 1795 *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Humanity*.

For Schiller, the early modern period's sheer proliferation of new arts and new art forms held promise for aesthetic representations of the human and natural worlds' infinite diversity of differences as they actually appear. Held promise, in other words, for art free of the violence of representing the world as other than it is. With Schiller we have a first theoretical formulation of art performing the work of aesthetic education. Art now could model the reconciliation of identity, or aesthetic form, and difference, the diversity of the sensuous world, through "play," the creative use of a multiplicity of aesthetic forms. Art could model reconciliation through plural representations exemplifying aesthetic forms' openness to the world, a receptivity Schiller thought allowed aesthetic form to produce mimetic images—*imitations*—of appearances representing the world just as it is. By modeling reconciliation art *taught* reconciliation, making art the media of aesthetic education. And by teaching reconciliation, artworks modeled the moral possibility of reconciling warring classes whose endless violence retarded democratic progress. No doubt Schiller theorized aesthetic education in response to the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, for which the moral possibility of a solution was, as he put it, "wanting."

My interpretation of Schiller's *Letters* wants to accord him the justice I believe he has been denied. As I elaborate in *A Democratic Enlightenment*, Schiller should be read as having an advanced understanding of the artwork, one anticipating the reflexive powers later developed by modernist art to call attention to the representational limits of aesthetic forms, thus to art's need to proliferate aesthetic forms to represent artworks' aesthetic objects without the violence of constructing them as other than they are. Multiple aesthetic forms multiply images capturing diverse aspects of artworks' aesthetic objects that artworks leave out.

CW: Your reading of Schiller, then, newly appreciates the significance of his legacy by recognizing his *Letters* for making a decisive contribution to theorizing the possibility of a democratic enlightenment, though you limit the scope of his contribution. You stress the importance of his concept of aesthetic education and its part in teaching the ideal of reconciliation. And you discover him to have a radically precocious sense of the implications of the new arts and art forms created during his time. Here I begin to see you developing his connection to the idea of

a universal art form, which in your final chapter of *A Democratic Enlightenment* you argue the reconciliation image in film may well become. I intend to ask you more about that later. Yet, along with these new theoretical and historical possibilities you locate in Schiller's work, he seems not so forward-looking as to imagine aesthetic education through an art of *moving images* able to teach us how to overcome the construction of difference as otherness.

MS: Your understanding of my argument, Christiane, is entirely on the mark. Schiller, I propose, conceptualizes reconciliation and imagines it being modeled and taught by aesthetic forms, and he privileges the pedagogical role of the visual arts. With Schiller's theory of aesthetic education we are thus delivered to the moment a democratic enlightenment is introduced as a historical possibility. And along with this accomplishment we are startled by his sensitivity to contemporaneous developments of new arts and art forms, which I argue are the forerunners of the idea of a universal art form committed to aesthetic education and the pedagogy of reconciliation. However, he gives us neither the concept nor examples of the reconciliation *image*, and it is the image that is the media for teaching a fledgling democratic people how to overcome its construction of differences as otherness. Not until Whitman's poetry and prose are we introduced to the reconciliation image itself and, moreover, in a way that fully anticipates its appearance in film. And it is not until Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* that we have an evolutionary development of Whitman's first form of the reconciliation image that appears in film. Importantly, both Whitman's and Adorno's reconciliation images presuppose Schiller's achievement.

So to answer your question how the aesthetics of *film* teaches us to overcome the construction of difference as otherness, Christiane, let me turn first to Whitman and then to Adorno. What I will now propose is not only that both consider the reconciliation image to be modeled and taught by the artwork, but that it appears in the artwork as a moving image, hence *already as a kind of film*. For neither Whitman nor Adorno are reconciliation images and their artworks *still* images. All are already in motion. *All are already films*. Thus their reconciliation images can be readily assimilated by cinema.

Turning now to Whitman's reconciliation image brings me to the first of three controversial arguments I develop in *A Democratic Enlightenment*. To start with, I have no doubt your readers, Christiane, will be puzzled by my practice of speaking of Whitman's reconciliation image as a *visual* image! How and why, they may wonder, can I *read* Whitman's poetry as though it transforms the word from something written and read, spoken and heard, into something *seen*? My response is that Whitman writes poetry to create visual images, which is an argument Whitman scholars may well object to. Here's how I defend it.

CW: Before you begin discussing Whitman's contribution to your project of democratic enlightenment, I want to make certain I am clear about his historical relation to Schiller and Adorno. Since Schiller precedes Whitman, who is followed by Adorno, are you arguing that Whitman is a transitional figure in the development of the ideas of democratic enlightenment and its reconciliation image?

MS: That is indeed what I am arguing, though I do not want to be understood as saying that my argument rests on historical evidence of Schiller's influence on Whitman. While Whitman had little knowledge of the German language, he knew enough about German poetry and philosophy for both to influence his own poetry and prose. So readers of Whitman acquainted with Schiller, among other German thinkers, will correctly see their ideas making impressions on his art. I should note that I approach the Schiller-Whitman connection genealogically, but I do not pursue precise genealogical paths taken by a Foucault, rather loose genealogical resemblances of the sort encouraged by Bergson's concept of duration. Accordingly, there are *resemblances* between Schiller and Whitman. For example—both write poetry and prose highlighting the idea of reconciliation; which for both is also modeled and taught by the arts; among which the visual image plays a unique pedagogical role; and both are concerned with the failings of enlightenment, in Schiller's case with the failings of the European Enlightenment, in Whitman's with America's failure to develop an enlightened culture, especially around the idea of reconciliation and the poet's responsibility to enable it to do so. And so on...

Such connections as these draw our attention to Whitman's relation to the visual image, which Schiller likewise privileged. At times in his poetry, and especially in *A Song of the Rolling Earth*, Whitman problematizes the epistemic limits of language. Words cannot deliver knowledge of truth, offer us access to reality, cannot penetrate appearances to ascertain essences thought to lie beneath. With this critique of the limits of language, Whitman intends for poetry to confine our perception to appearances. And what is the natural home for appearances, we must ask, if not visual images! Part of Whitman's genius is his modernist insight into how poetry reflexively calls attention to its own limits. The limits of poetic language valorize appearances, thus valorize vision! And since poetry confines us to visual images of appearances, which deny us knowledge of underlying essences appearances have in common, all appearances appear visually different. Being irreducibly different from one another, appearances to which poetry visually orients us are a diversity of differences, which surround us to form our world. The implications of Whitman writing poetry to create visual images are astonishing. First, because visual images deny us evidence of something true or real or essential underlying appearances, we lack a basis for truth justifying our treating

any difference as Other for its alleged failure to correspond to that truth. Visual images of differences thus resist their construction as the Other, so that no difference can be excluded on the basis of some truth. Such poetry teaches us to be *all-inclusive* of differences. Second, since beneath their appearances differences are essentially unknowable, differences are each unique and mysterious, qualities to which individuals are *receptive*. Finally, individuals *imitate differences* to which they are receptive, becoming different themselves in the images of any of the diversity of differences surrounding them. Whitman's visual images author identity's becoming different in the image of difference as a *democratic becoming*.

So in light of Whitman's poetics on the limits of language, we can identify three dimensions of his ideal of reconciliation—all-inclusiveness, receptivity, and imitation, with the latter two rescuing inclusiveness from the pathologies of the private sphere I discussed earlier. And here we discover Whitman's advance over Schiller. In addition to a concept of reconciliation modeled and taught by poetry's visual images, Whitman gives us the concept and poetry of the reconciliation *image*. Each of the three dimensions of his ideal of reconciliation—all-inclusiveness, receptivity, and imitation—are distinct *images* belonging to his reconciliation image. His reconciliation image appears wherever the all-inclusive, receptivity, and imitative images first appear. In *A Democratic Enlightenment* a chapter documents the appearance of the reconciliation image in Whitman's poetry. At this point, Christiane, I want to recall your question whether Schiller's concept of aesthetic education and its pedagogy of reconciliation help film audiences grasp lessons cinema teaches about overcoming their constructions of difference as otherness. While I answered that Schiller's work did not make progress in that direction, Whitman goes further than him by theorizing an *image* of reconciliation that could circulate through the visual arts, eventually including film. Hence, for Whitman, not only do poetry and prose perform the work of aesthetic education, it is conceivable that his reconciliation image could teach film audiences to overcome their constructions of difference as the Other.

But I must be bolder than this. In order to locate appearances in the pedagogy of the visual image, Whitman not only offers an epistemological argument for emancipating appearances from their indenture to the warn-out Platonic appearance-reality dualism. As Whitman's poem *Eidolons* explains, the *being* of appearances his poetry speaks of are *images* that are *continuously moving*—coming into existence, changing form, and passing on—visual images he intends his verse to imitate, to represent, that is. Here Whitman keeps company with Andre Bazin, who thinks of the being of appearances as images imitated by the moving images of film. By dissolving the ontological distinction between the movement of life and verse, life and film, Whitman and Bazin both think of life and

art as cinema. What this means is that, despite film being years away, through Whitman's shared ontology of the moving image in life and art his ideal of reconciliation *anticipates* film and its image in film. So I want to go further still to say Whitman's shared ontology of being, poetry, and film helps make his verse the moving, cinematic image itself.

Now, once this ontology running through Whitman's verse is brought to light, it is at this point, Christiane, that we are brought to Adorno's image of reconciliation, which I think of as the second evolutionary form of the reconciliation image for the way it incorporates and develops Whitman's.

CW: Before you consider Adorno, I want to ask you a version of the question I put to you about Whitman's work. Your reference to Adorno's *second* evolutionary form of the reconciliation image, which I know you argue is the form found in film, implies that Adorno is the theoretical transition between Whitman and film. But, as is well known, Adorno is not only critical of film for its collusion with mass culture; he is hostile to film for its shameless production and reproduction of sameness—in other words, for its violence toward difference. How do you reconcile your claim that Adorno's reconciliation image is, following Whitman's, the more developed form that appears in film, with Adorno's insistence that film is the enemy of reconciliation?

MS: For precisely the reason you indicate, Christiane, your question challenges the second of the three most controversial claims in my book, the first being that Whitman writes poetry to create visual images. How can Adorno's critique of film be reconciled with my argument that the most advanced form of the reconciliation image, which he discovers in modern art, can later be found in film? If it is also to appear in film, I have to show that the reconciliation image Adorno finds in modern art is visual and in motion, as I hope to have shown is Whitman's reconciliation image.

For Adorno, images of reconciliation become the exclusive province of modernist art, which he thought was the last refuge for the reconciliation image owing to an aesthetic form of reason ultimately confined to modern art alone. Against this claim, I *think with Adorno against Adorno.* By studying how Adorno theorized modernism's aesthetic forms to explain why its artworks create images of reconciliation, I could ask if the aesthetics of those forms were also to be found in film. If we found modern art and film sharing an aesthetic form, then by way of Adorno's aesthetic modernism we might discover film to be as productive of the reconciliation image as modern art. So you see I attempt to *theorize with Adorno* to flesh out what it is about modern art that encourages him to maintain it became the final refuge for images of reconciliation, while I theorize *against Adorno* by embracing that selfsame telltale aesthetic theory to find the reconciliation image in film.

I can now report, Christiane, what is of greatest fascination to me. The motion Whitman attributes to art and in his poetry is productive of a reconciliation image that anticipates cinema, is as central to Adorno's aesthetic theory *despite* his critique of film, which he insists contributes to the culture industry's creation of a society whose rationality is hostile to difference and to reconciliation as he and Whitman theorize it. It is astonishing there has been no attention to speak of to Adorno's proposition that "art can be understood only by its laws of movement," as its importance to his *Aesthetic Theory* cannot be overstated. Elements of modern art's aesthetic forms, he maintains, throw the artwork into motion to create its reconciliation image, the artwork's aesthetic claim to reason and critique. Artworks producing the reconciliation image are *always* in motion. They appear, as do paintings, as still images only because we fail to experience them aesthetically, which requires a unique kind of gaze. By adopting that gaze we perceive the artwork to be in motion. Experienced aesthetically, still images become moving images that revise the artwork's original appearance, its aesthetic identity, which becomes different in the images of the ways its aesthetic object is and could become different from its original image. Artworks teach reconciliation as aesthetic identity's imitation of its aesthetic object, *thus as identity imitating difference*, an aesthetic motion of imitation each of us must perform to be reconciled with differences surrounding us.

In *A Democratic Enlightenment* I clarify this mimetic process of the reconciliation image and thus of reconciliation. In its middle chapters, I flesh out Adorno's theory of how modern artworks produce and model the reconciliation image. By adopting the gaze he recommends to inaugurate my aesthetic experience, I view paintings by Monet of the Rouen Cathedral and a Rodin sculpture entitled *Thought*, after which I document my experience with an analytical account. My aesthetic experience of both artists' artworks was revelatory, and bore testimony to Adorno's theory of how modern artworks produce the reconciliation image to model and teach reconciliation as mimetic movement.

Let me review my aesthetic experience of Rodin's *Thought*. As long as I allowed my gaze to remain immersed in his sculpture, it fastened on a movement by its original image whereby its aesthetic identity began and then continued to change, to become different by including differences belonging to its aesthetic object the artwork's original image had left out. Although his sculpture's original image is of a woman's head atop a large block of stone, by occupying the place where the body ought to be the block of stone invited me to imagine a second image bringing the missing body into "view;" this new image next coaxed me to imagine the image of a mind and body reunited, which was a third image inviting me to imagine multiple images of what the marriage of mind and body could do.

So as I experienced Rodin's sculpture aesthetically, its aesthetic form appeared to forge a mimetic alliance between its aesthetic identity (its original image), and differences belonging to its aesthetic object the original image excluded. New images were serially produced by the imitation of differences, so that the imitation of what had been omitted by the original image of the artwork continually revised its aesthetic identity. Hence the mimetic movement of Rodin's sculpture was the reconciliation of identity and difference. Importantly, differences with which identity can be reconciled are infinite, just as the different images produced by the marriage of a mind and body are potentially infinite. While every new image of a mind-body relation is an *instance* of reconciliation, ever-new images that aesthetic movement *could produce* means there are inexhaustible differences to be reconciled with. Reconciliation is always a time-arrived and a time yet to come.

Through my aesthetic experience of Rodin's *Thought* I was able to distinguish a collection of images the artwork produced and passed through. *Thought's* aesthetic *identity*, its original image, was *receptive* to *difference*, its receptivity first revising the original image to include the image of the body, then revising it again to form the image of the mind-body reunited, which urged us to imagine a series of images of an indefinite number *all-inclusive* of differences—the image of the mind-body engaged in any and all conjugally creative actions their union is capable of. Finally, each of these revisions of the artwork's aesthetic identity entailed mimetic movement, the *imitation* of difference. So—in motion—Rodin's sculpture creates the reconciliation image by passing through the *identity, receptivity, difference, all-inclusive, and imitative images.* Through our aesthetic experience we visualize the motion of the reconciliation image allowing us to reconstruct its five constituent images. After Whitman's first evolutionary form of the reconciliation image, which he limited to the receptivity, all-inclusive, and imitative images, Adorno gives us a second evolutionary form. Adorno's is the reconciliation image that appears, already in motion, in film. Adorno's reconciliation image marks "the birth of the new image," as Deleuze brilliantly theorizes that event in *Cinema I*.

CW: Considering our discussion of the issues I have raised to this point, it seems to me that Hegel may be no less important than Schiller, Whitman, and Adorno, with regard to certain features of the concept of reconciliation you theorize. From a Hegelian vantage point, we might ask, would you include cinema among art forms capable of expressing values affirming that subjectivity's exteriorization, as in its endless struggles with others for recognition when constituting its identity in the most fundamental ways, can be overcome? Certainly, Hegel thought of poetry as such an art form of expression.

MS: You are certainly correct to insist we not limit our conversation about the ideal of reconciliation and its pedagogical image to the artists-philosophers I have foregrounded, and that Hegel could make an important contribution to it. If we allowed ourselves, it would be easy to submit to the temptation to decipher how the reconciliation image in film both illuminates and is illuminated by the experiences of consciousness and the history of reason in Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Perhaps no other work in the history of philosophy could better put such an aesthetic invention as the reconciliation image to the test whose importance you underscore. Not afforded that time, perhaps we can at least begin to answer such questions as yours. Here is one way. One of the *Phenomenology's* penultimate sections of Hegel's reflections on absolute knowledge may be of assistance, where mind uniquely aware of its limitations achieves rational self-understanding, which is a consciousness and self-recognition of mind's role and mind's forms in human history and, eventually, in the universe. Here I am thinking of Hegel's discussion of art.

Though I cannot now adequately defend my argument in Hegel's terms, I would be inclined to argue that the concept of reconciliation in *A Democratic Enlightenment* qualifies as a Hegelian "Idea" that appears in a sensible form—the artwork—as an "Ideal," just as, for an example, the Idea of difference as democracy's highest spiritual value appears as an Ideal in the reconciliation image. As the sensible form of the Idea of reconciliation, the Ideal the reconciliation image in film represents is the emancipation of difference from its construction as the Other through a mimetic transformation of identity becoming different in the image of difference. As the Ideal expressing an Idea of reconciliation, the reconciliation image in film represents the transformation—"subjectivity's overcoming its exteriorization"—of identities belonging to individuals, groups, communities, nations, genders, races, and sexualities, among other differences.

Once further developed, through its preservation of the *ineffable* nature of the spiritualized Idea Hegel would insist upon, this formulation of the reconciliation image in film would allow me to deny its mimetic (copy-like) character, yet at the same time to stress the work of mimesis in the reconciliation image's Ideal representation of the Idea. This is because both Whitman's and Adorno's concept of reconciliation as a time arrived and a time yet to come imbues its image with the capacity to represent *instances* of reconciliation, thus to *envision* reconciliation, yet also to testify to the *absence* of reconciliation, that is, to testify to reconciliation *as an ineffable achievement that can never be completely represented*. Thought of in Hegel's—and Whitman's and Adorno's—terms, art would allow us to think of the reconciliation image in film as able to preserve the spiritual Idea of a democracy of differences, thus as a consciousness of the Absolute, and as the sensible form in which the Absolute can appear as a democratic Ideal.

CW: In light of this argument, it seems to me that for our own time such a capacious art as you describe could not be just any movie. Rather, it would include only such films as are grounded in the necessity of Hegel's Absolute that could move subjectivity toward ever-higher stages of consciousness. And such films as those, in which the reconciliation image, aesthetic education, and democratic enlightenment appear, could only be possible in societies whose understanding of democracy viewed it as an idea never fully realized, but always in the process of realization. Do you agree?

MS: I think your point is both perfectly correct and quite fascinating. It would mean democracy would had to have progressed to a certain level for the Idea of reconciliation to appear as an Ideal in the sensible form of the reconciliation image in film. *And*, it would mean, too, that no matter how democratic, no society could ever be satisfied with its achievements. Its film would always reflexively call attention to the limitations of its achieved level of reconciliation by recognizing differences identities construct as the Other and are always yet to be reconciled with.

CW: Pursuing this Hegelian line of thinking brings me to three final questions that in different ways all have to do with a single issue. Does the reconciliation image represent democratic values benefitting global concerns as well as those of western democratic societies, or only such values as are important to the modern democratic world?

Your reading of Schiller's philosophy of aesthetic education, Whitman's aesthetics of prose and poetry, and Adorno's aesthetic theory of modern art offer us a unique understanding of how a democratic enlightenment can be achieved through cinema in the context of western—especially North American—democracies. Let me ask this, then: As dominant identities defining societal norms are increasingly reconciled with differences, however, wouldn't the goal of aesthetic education, its ideal of reconciliation, prove to be just a type of utopian democratic state? Wouldn't it limit aesthetic education to a critique of current western democratic milieus' need to create the possibility of, say, "democratic good will"? Or would it imagine a project for a qualitatively better society throughout the West but also beyond it, liberating us all from the West's most serious mistakes?

MS: As I have formulated the arguments of *A Democratic Enlightenment*, it may seem that my approach to this question reflects the limitations you stress. The ideal of reconciliation I develop values difference above all, which at present does have parochial overtones. It is a democratic value authored by democratic societies that are almost exclusively western. And such parochialism is not tempered by arguing that difference is not only the most democratic but also the most human of all values. Except for those in western democracies hostile to it, all too often such humanism, by being bound up with difference, appears to be a

western conceit. Moreover, once the parochialism of difference as a democratic-human value is conceded, reconciliation's other values appear parochially democratic, too. For example, the idea of identity in any of its forms becoming different in the image of difference; thus the all-inclusiveness of differences, which models the multiple ways individual and collective identity can imitate differences to become different itself; identity's receptivity to difference, which values difference as identity's potential *doppelganger*; and so on. Each of these and other values assumed by the ideal of reconciliation is democratic through and through. And if the ideal is parochial, then the media of delivering it—film—is no less so, despite its universality.

So you are right, Christiane, this line of questioning returns us to the Hegelian line of thought you began. The Idea of difference, and the Idea of democracy it belongs to, are narrow spiritualizations of the Absolute whose sensible form parades as the reconciliation image to appear as an Ideal. Here, true universality requires a self-reflective reason recognizing art's rational content as prelude to a synthesis of subjective and objective spirit, to identity becoming different as the reconciliation between West and non-West. Yet there is another way to think of the ideal of reconciliation as a global value. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment's* closing essay, "Elements of Anti-Semitism: Limits of Enlightenment," Adorno and Horkheimer declare that with the achievement of reconciliation "the Jewish Question would indeed prove the turning-point of history." It was because Jews represented the most extreme form of difference, the "negative principle as such," as they wrote, that reconciliation ending violence toward Jews likewise signified that *all other forms of difference, too,* would no longer be victims of violence toward difference. With this closing declaration they recall the opening argument of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which traced the practice of constructing difference as the Other to reason itself, as though reason, by its very nature, was pathological. It was reason's formalistic, instrumental side that compelled its violence toward difference. However, as they also argued in that work, though less clearly than Adorno later did in *Aesthetic Theory*, reason's second, aesthetic side was not only capable of opening reason to the possibility of ending such violence. To achieve reconciliation, driven by its aesthetic side reason could subdue its instrumental drives—though only if the long process of enlightenment from Homeric Greece to the present had not first deaestheticized reason.

Now this pathology of reason—and this is decisive—which for Adorno and Horkheimer begins with the birth of thinking itself, takes *nature* as the first form of difference towards which reason displays the violence of constructing difference as otherness. Reason's construction of difference as the Other is expressed in its determination to master nature, to construct nature as the infinitely pliable servant of human needs, precisely the orientation toward nature that in our own time is responsible for global climate change. This entire genealogy of reason, which I believe in many if not most respects to be valid, returns us to why modern art is

so important for Adorno. By modeling reconciliation as the work of aesthetic reason, art also models an aesthetic relation to nature able to subdue the violence of instrumental reason responsible for climate change. Against this background of reason's history of dominating nature and its contribution to our climate crisis, then, as an aesthetic achievement reconciliation expresses the highest of all *global* human values—saving the very life of our planet.

CW: I want to continue to press you on this. It seems to me this question of whether a theory of democratic enlightenment can transcend a critique limited to democratic good will in order to envision a qualitatively better society is tied to a second question. How does movement occur from the theory of democratic enlightenment to the politics of democratic enlightenment, and should a consideration of this issue of praxis begin with a discussion of the political public sphere? After all, we have the historical connection between the European Enlightenment and the republican ideals of the French and American revolutions, their defense of free speech and a free press, and influential arts and literature circulating through a variety of communications media that led to the emergence of public spaces and public spheres. Is not our contemporary condition, with its advanced communications processes, especially well-equipped to originate a diversity of public spaces around distinct images of difference that could develop into a public sphere whose deliberations focus on the reconciliation of identities and differences?

That is the evolution of the communications process that I understand you to be saying arises from the continual appearance of new social differences in a democratic society. That process would interrogate truths that enable dominant identities to construct difference as otherness. If I understand you correctly, the theoretical path you have taken, from Schiller to Whitman through Adorno to cinema, will culminate in a democratic enlightenment whose forum would be public spaces, and perhaps ultimately, a public sphere, whose discourses and politics would be dedicated to rescuing difference from its construction as the Other. Isn't this the practical, political thrust of your work?

MS: As the question our discussion should eventually lead to, the one concerning praxis you now raise is the most important while also uniquely complicated. At present, proliferating social media sites may mark the earliest stages of a democratic enlightenment whose natural political forums would be future public spheres discursively revolving around such aesthetic-political practices as those theorized by the ideal of reconciliation and represented by the reconciliation image; namely, an affirmation of identity that does not avowal its truth; identity's all-inclusiveness of and receptivity to differences; identity's imitation of differences to become different in the images of difference; and, finally, identity's recognition there are always new differences yet to come, so that its every imitation of difference is an instance of reconciliation that is a time arrived and also a prelude to reconciliation at a time yet to come.

In America, however, at present social media's relation to difference is also divided between sites oriented to some idea of reconciliation and sites committed to intensifications of the violence of constructing differences as the Other. This is to say that social media as a whole has made little progress beyond the current political landscape's divisiveness. But although there are no discussions to speak of between the two types of social media sites, within the former there are public spaces devoted to discussions of a range of social differences, including persons of color, gender, class, sexual orientation, Jews, Muslims, immigrants and refugees, among other differences. Here we can find communicative interactions within constellations of public spaces whose members are eager to problematize truth claims enjoyed by differences at each other's expense. Moreover, many of these public spaces are sites of aesthetic discourses on difference and our relations to difference and prominently include cinema, whose images encourage discursive interactions among media sites. Can we not then imagine such public spaces collectively forming an incipient public sphere? Undoubtedly!

To be sure, such an evolution of public spaces into a public sphere is the political precondition for an enlightened democratic society able to achieve the idea of reconciliation envisioned by the reconciliation image in film. The first major step toward such an evolution is for the plurality of public spaces devoted to discourses of difference to develop modes of communicative interaction. And in this regard, it is apparent their shared discursive interest in cinema already qualifies as a proto-public sphere. Film's reconciliation image could facilitate such an evolution of public spaces by refining their shared interest in a *cinema* of difference to cinema's *image* of difference.

CW: For a final, two-part question, in *A Democratic Enlightenment* you devote considerable explanation to how film aesthetically educates viewers to identify the reconciliation image and to understand its meaning as well as social, political, and cultural purposes. In your final chapters you do this through analyses of two films, *The Help* (2011) and *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), that depict violence toward racial and ethnic differences. You show how each film aesthetically educates viewers through the reconciliation image, which teaches how the violence of constructing difference as otherness can be overcome. You also mention other films containing reconciliation images that teach lessons about overcoming various constructions of differences as otherness, notably, *Pride*, *Tootsie*, *Dirty Dancing*, *Forrest Gump*, *My Left Foot*, and *The Soloist*, which were all great international successes. Should we not ask if there might be a problem with aesthetic education offered by such films owing to the significant influence of North American culture on Hollywood cinema? Along these lines, would you also address the matter of "the reconciliation image versus the narrative structure of film," so we can better understand the relationship between image and narrative when we view movies to discover if they are media for the aesthetics and politics of reconciliation?

MS: Christiane, your question correctly recognizes that these two theoretical issues, the second of which is the third most controversial argument in my book, cannot be separated. So I want to answer by showing how these two issues are inseparably connected and why I consider the second to be so controversial.

At the outset, we must distinguish between the aesthetic form and content of film. As I theorize the reconciliation image, its aesthetic form determines our interest in film, for the aesthetic form of the reconciliation image is common to all films teaching the ideal of reconciliation and engaged in the enlightenment process of aesthetic education. If our interest, then, is whether we can discover the reconciliation image in a film, this requires we search for the images of which the reconciliation image consists and the elements associated with each image. Finding its constituent images and aesthetic elements offers the high likelihood films in which they appear produce the reconciliation image.

Now, whereas all films productive of the reconciliation image share its aesthetic form—its constituent images and elements—the aesthetic content of such films varies across a growing collection of genres concerned with particular social differences constructed as Others. Moreover, just as film content regarding genres of difference and otherness vary across films teaching reconciliation, film narratives for each genre vary to a greater extent. How many stories are there and will there be about women, gays, persons of color, Jews, Muslims, immigrants, refugees, and all such differences constructed as societal Others? The horror of this question leads us to how the distinction between aesthetic form and content allows us to understand how the influence of North American culture on Hollywood films where reconciliation images appear is transcended. Let me offer an example of how this distinction between aesthetic form and content functions. Of the five images the reconciliation image consists of, its "imitative image" is the most important for how it registers the transformation of identity into difference; registers the moment an identity responsible for or implicated in the construction of difference as otherness becomes different itself in the image of the difference it had subjected to marginalization, discrimination, exclusion, and even extermination; for how it registers *reconciliation*.

So, in *The Help*, a white couple invites their black maid to dinner and waits upon her as black maids for centuries have waited upon whites. Imitating their maid, the couple achieves with her a shared understanding of racial servitude as white identity becomes black in the image of difference. In *Gentleman's Agreement* a Christian painfully learns of and then overcomes her tacit antisemitism by arranging for a Jewish family to settle in her antisemitic suburb, her individual identity thus becoming different through an imitation of Jews whose struggle for a home she makes her own. In *Pride* heterosexual male union workers hostile to gays later dance with them, by their imitative act of men dancing with men forming a more complex picture of gays and of themselves struggling for recognition. In

Dirty Dancing, dancing is again the imitative means of identity's transformation, in this case of wealthy metropolitan Jews who looked down upon the working-class spa-resort staff Other, whose dance lessons taught their affluent Jewish student patrons their art of becoming open to uninhibited self-expression. In *Tootsie* an actor pretending to be an actress to earn a part in a sitcom reveals that through the female role he imitated he became a better man as a woman than he was as a man. And so on...

I could discuss any of the films your question noted, along with countless other Hollywood and foreign films, to show how the imitative image—moreover all the images forming the reconciliation image—represents a limitless variable content of social differences whose constructions as the Other are overcome to realize the democratic ideal of reconciliation modeled and taught by the reconciliation image. What we should conclude from this is that where the aesthetic content of films about the constructions of difference as Other is influenced by North American or other cultures, the biases of those contexts are transcended by the aesthetic form of the reconciliation image. Whether a film is produced in Hollywood or Bollywood, when the aesthetic form of the reconciliation image appears in a film, the *real* narrative of the film is the ideal of reconciliation, which neutralizes the influence of culture on the democratic lesson taught. By reason of its aesthetic form, the reconciliation image becomes a universal art form! This brings me directly to your question's second issue, which I have referred to as the third most controversial argument in *A Democratic Enlightenment*; namely, the reconciliation image vs. the narrative structure of film. There are two theoretical dimensions to this issue, the why and the how. Why should we be alert to a possible conflict between the appearance of the reconciliation image in a film and a film's narrative structure? And how do we theorize the appearance of an image in a film running contrary to its narrative, whose images unfold to tell a story contrary to a story of reconciliation? I will briefly answer the first query, but I expand on the complicated second question in *A Democratic Enlightenment's* "Second Bridge."

Regarding the why, among those many films investigating the construction of social difference as otherness, there are few whose *narratives* tell stories of reconciliation. Most of these (former) films' narratives are narrowly focused on analyses of conditions under which differences as the Other are forced to live. And, too, many such film narratives are simply hostile to the idea of reconciling identities and differences. However, in many films home to such narratives, such as those I just described, the reconciliation image nevertheless can be discovered. Paradoxically, then, once discovered, in such films the reconciliation *image* contradicts and is opposed to the original *narrative structure* that gave it birth.

CW: May we conclude by hearing a little about your new work?

MS: By all means! Quite ambitiously, some years ago I planned three works that were to explore problems in politics and aesthetics I had long been struggling with. The first to be published, *Reason and Horror: Critical Theory, Democracy, and Aesthetic Individuality*, took up the question of the possibilities available to members of modern democratic societies to create and recreate themselves, essentially to treat their identities as works of art whose aesthetic forms not only allowed, but also encouraged the reconstitution of identities in any and all of their individual and collective, private and public, personal and political dimensions. Its central concern was to ameliorate the violence to self and others inherent in the construction of modern identity. That work marked my first intensive study of the thought of Whitman and Adorno, Tocqueville and Nietzsche, and assembled a theoretical montage whose interconnections and continuities were also fleshed out with the help of Kant and Hegel, J.S. Mill and Habermas, Schubert and Schoenberg, Wagner and Monet, among others.

A Democratic Enlightenment: *The Reconciliation Image, Aesthetic Education, Possible Politics* is the second of my three planned works to appear. It marks the final stage of my work on Whitman and Adorno and I also expand its theoretical montage to include Diderot, Voltaire, and Schiller, Bergson and Deleuze, Lyotard, Roland Barthes, Bazin, Spivak and Massumi, with painting and sculpture, especially Rodin, and of course film providing the pedagogical arts of reconciliation. Its central concern is again, as I have explained, the aesthetics of identity, which now however focus on how art, the aesthetics of the visual image in film, offers an education on how identity in its broadest configurations could be more or less recreated in the very images of those differences it had, with rarely a second thought, constructed as its Other over the long course of its non-violent as well as violent history.

Recently I've begun the third and final act of this long play, about which I will say only a little. As did the first two books of my planned trilogy, the third, entitled *Beyond Identity: From the One to the Many*, continues to pursue the aesthetics of modern identity, although this work departs from my earlier theoretical emphases. Whereas the earlier books focused initially on the aesthetics of identity and then on cinema's pedagogy of teaching reconciliation as identity's mimetic relation to difference, as identity's imitation of differences it constructed as its Other, that is, despite the importance that both works assigned to the figural they also presupposed a rational epicenter, a command center belonging to individual identity responsible for its pluralization in the images of difference. While my third book retains this emphasis on identity's mimetic relation to difference, *Beyond Identity* will go on to argue for the *decentering* of reason in the mimetic work identity performs, will argue for reason's *coequal* relationship with the multiple voices of which identity is newly composed by recreating itself through its imitation of differences. This new work will reflect the influence on my thinking of Homeric scholarship arguing that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* offer a model of identity composed of multiple voices in dialogue with one another, a dialogue that is often

internally agonistic and whose voices or alliances of voices are not subordinate to the voice of reason. This Homeric model of identity is precisely the model Plato opposed in the interest of achieving and preserving the unity of the One, of the soul, of the city, which is the Platonic alternative model to Homer's that dominated the western cultural and political imagination through Descartes' consolidation of its rationalistic structure.

Beyond Identity will argue that the Platonic-Cartesian model of identity is coming undone and becoming increasingly obsolete in the modern world, which is gradually returning to the Homeric model of identity supplanted in classical Greece. We see evidence of this reversal in the development of modern art, in the radical transformations occurring in individual identity, and also in the birth of early modern democracy and the range of national, international, and global democratic institutions that have emerged since. Our planetary future may depend on the flourishing of this Homeric model's decentering of the voice of reason and its multiplication of coequal voices, whose differences find their platforms in the virtual networks and the public spaces and public spheres they create that your own work, Christiane, finds so important.

Christiane, I want to thank you again for this opportunity to discuss my work. I hope your readers find it as interesting as I have found your contributions to my own thinking.

Christiane Wagner, Editor-in-Chief, chris@artstyle.international
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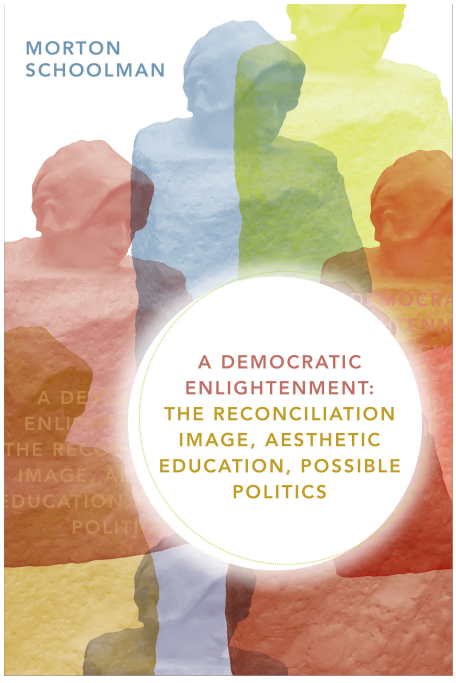

Morton Schoolman's teaching and research fields are modern political and social theory, including American political thought, with a particular interest within these fields in the relation among politics, aesthetics, art and film. He is author of *A Democratic Enlightenment: The Reconciliation Image, Aesthetic Education, Possible Politics*, published by Duke University Press, 2020.

Morton Schoolman, Professor
Department of Political Science
University at Albany
State University of New York
Albany, NY
mschoolman@albany.edu

Upholding Truth and Democracy: "From Friedrich Nietzsche to Elon Musk," Essay on Freedom of Thought and Speech

Presentation[1] of the essay by Marc Jimenez, philosopher, essayist, professor emeritus at the University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne

This essay reflects the meaning of language as one way of representing reality, truth, and, in a certain way, in its opposite sense: illusion and the lack of truth. To this end, the author takes up Nietzsche's paradoxical reflections on language and communication. On the one hand, conditioning language is limited by the word and limited forms of expression of truth. On the other hand, the truth would be accessed through the arts in their aesthetic experience without depending on the limits of the word. Thus, through a retrospective based on the values of language from a Nietzschean perspective, the author takes us to the roots of Western knowledge, reviewing the influence of Greek mythology, the meaning of language and of the word in search of constructions of knowledge about the world and philosophical truth. Moreover, through discussing the importance of language, we are led to the origins of our understanding of the world and its dichotomies by discussing the paradoxes in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), by the conceptual contradictions of language in Greek tragedy, and in the antagonistic relationship between Apollo and Dionysus. The truth would be therefore, without depending on the limits of the word, through the arts in their aesthetic experience of the interaction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian vision. Jimenez leads us to a near future, conditioning us to see the consequences of the impoverishment of the use of language as a threat to the democratic ideal intrinsic to the dynamics of the public space, which results from the technological development of artificial intelligence and the forms of increasing control over individuals exercised by algorithms and the use of words designed to meet the common and superficial understanding of immediate communication for the efficiency of a pragmatic society. In Jimenez's essay "From Friedrich Nietzsche to Elon Musk," the reader will be transported to a near future without return.

Marc Jimenez, "Upholding Truth and Democracy: 'From Friedrich Nietzsche to Elon Musk,' Essay on Freedom of Thought and Speech," translated by Christiane Wagner,
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From Friedrich Nietzsche to Elon Musk[2]

Marc Jimenez

There are at least two ways of conceiving the eradication of language, notably in the relationship it is likely to have with truth, that is to say, with falsehood since one does not exist without its antonym, just as good is indefinable and indeterminable without evil. Nietzsche's famous diatribe against language is well known:

> We hardly value ourselves when we communicate. Our real-life experiences are not at all talkative. Even if they wanted to, they could not communicate themselves. In other words, they lack the word. Whatever our words, we are beyond them. Every speech contains a suspicion of defiance. Language seems to have been invented only for the mediocre, the average, the communicable. With the language, the one who speaks falls in common. (Nietzsche [1889] 1964)[3]

Nietzsche is not in the habit of using empty language. According to him, the common, the vulgar, are the reign of non-truth, of lies, of panurgic and submissive behavior, by which a society can accept, without batting an eyelid, to follow a leader, to submit to his diktats, to his evangelical charm, even if it means following him meekly, like rats, then, alas, we are children, in single file behind the Pied Piper of Hamelin:

> Lying in a gregarious way is what society condemns us to, as it expects individuals to be efficient, pragmatic, indifferent to any truth, to a truth that is in any case inaccessible to them. Because the truth is not of the order of the language but the metaphor and the metonymies. It is of the order of the illusions of which one has forgotten that they are. (Nietzsche [1889] 1964)[4]

We know the Nietzschean formula. Nietzsche must therefore look for a substitute to this denigrated language, to this set of abstract concepts, which are incapable of representing the world. But the alternative modes of expression to the language are not innumerable: song, music, dance. In other words, art or, if one prefers, aesthetic experience. In reality, Nietzsche's distrust of language is paradoxical. On the one hand, he recognizes its importance in the constitution of a world outside of human beings, a parallel world in a way. But, on the other hand, he also knows that "all conscious thinking is only possible with the help of language" and that language is "indispensable to the process of the elaboration of philosophical knowledge."

Nonetheless, at the same time, he goes in search of a new mode of expression that to him would be superior, based not on the artifice of agglutinated words, but on words which are after all only the transposition into sound of nervous excitation. Nietzsche's formula is abrupt. It apparently refers to the truth, or at least a truth of language on the side of instinct, of the biological, an orientation that is far from satisfactory. But, as we know, Nietzsche's thinking is far from univocal. Words constitute language, transpositions of nervous excitations do not mean that language is reduced to them. It does not mean, either, that the world of metaphors and images is excluded, nor all the possible metamorphoses and transfigurations of which art is capable.

One understands better the foolishness of Nietzsche's biologism, which constantly argues for his eugenics, that is to say, for the conceptions on which totalitarian and fascist thoughts are based. The answer to the language's question, the defiance that Nietzsche dedicates to it, is given in the "conceptual opposition" between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The disaffection of the conceptual language towards the truth has hardly any importance since the intoxication, that is to say, the life in all the exuberance of its aesthetic vitality expresses itself in the work of the artists, the painters, the sculptors under the always multiple forms of the Apollonian principle but also in the Dionysian mode, one of the exacerbations of the whole sensibility through incessant metamorphoses and transfigurations. From this point on, Nietzsche's distrust of language and its disconnection from truth appear to be consistent with the whole of Nietzschean philosophy as it has taken shape since the first publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1872 and its re-edition in 1886, in which he explicitly seeks a "new language," a "new lyre" to announce the eternal return of things.[5] It is the poet, nothing but a poet, nothing but a madman who can console the philosopher excluded from the truth: Ah, that exiled from all truth I am nothing but a madman, nothing but a poet, notes Nietzsche bitterly in his *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*.[6]

This exclusion of any truth is felt aesthetically by Nietzsche before being felt philosophically. His greatest dream was to answer through art the problem of the truth by avoiding this fact only to fall into the metaphysical trap that he so often denounced. For the philosopher who claims that beauty exists no less than good and truth, the only way that remains leads to the Olympus of appearance. Nietzsche's aesthetic experience can be interpreted as the attempt to solve the philosopher's feeling of culpability in being avid, despite everything, for truth. Caught in the act of contradiction, he seeks refuge and consolation in art—an attitude which is appropriately that of Nietzsche at the end of his conscious life. Thus, the double role, aesthetic and philosophical, is assigned to appearance since the artist approximates the appearance more than the reality. Therefore, the anti-Platon can declare that appearance in the sense where it is understood is the truth and the only reality of things [...]. Nietzsche does not place "appearance" in opposition to "reality"; on the contrary, he considers that the appearance is the reality.[7]

But, when it was a question of researching, then of establishing the "depth of the appearance"—or the superficiality of depth—the poet-philosopher perhaps did not think that as victorious in truth's metaphysical problem, he could also be a victim of the "poetic lie." The emergence of a total experience, that of the absolute "mastery" of sensibility, capable of aesthetically transfiguring the world and life is certainly a type of experience in opposition to that which prepares the sorcerer's apprentice of new technologies. In the center of this experience is the language or its programmed obsolescence in a particular context where, in all domains, it is about metaphysics, politics, philosophy, economy, or society; the truth is no longer on the agenda.

Today, *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche's whimsical and parodic poem that sketches the utopia of a "dancing star," has become a masterly collection of totally in-actual considerations and lost the prognostic value it had in 1884. However, it negatively prefigures, a century in advance, the sad Orwellian anticipation of 1984. Hence, what is proposed here to the reader of 2021 is a short science-fiction story directly inspired by the rereading of *Zarathustra*. It tells of the moment when this story begins to take the anticipatory form of a dystopia.

You do not have to be a geek, obsessed by the new technologies of the 2.0 era or by the latest AI (artificial intelligence) "prodigies," to know Elon Musk, the megalomaniac billionaire, promoter of the famous Tesla autonomous car, whimsical visionary, promoter of Space X, and also, for what we are interested in here, founder of the startup company Neuralink. This company specializes in the field of neurotechnology. It develops brain implants to create neural interfaces capable of reading and interpreting messages directly from the brain. At the present stage of the development and implantation of brain chips the only matter being considered is that of creating a man-machine interface. The first experiments have revealed that it is possible to detect speech in the brain by decoding neuronal circuits. Medical interest in such a device is obvious with regard to facilitating the lives of disabled people deprived of speech following strokes. But the next stage, which is being seriously considered, aims to proceed without human language thanks to chips with a downloaded program that automatically performs pre-specified tasks. Elon Musk can thus declare without ambiguity that language has become obsolete and that we will soon no longer need to speak, except perhaps for sentimental reasons! Let us anticipate and transport ourselves to 2040. The human-machine interfaces, always beneficial for patients with reduced mobility, are perfectly operational. They perform their functions well, particularly those which are therapeutic and reparative. Better still, technological advances, particularly those in AI, have made it possible to develop a human-human interface that is now also fully functional.

As a result of a neuroprosthesis implanted in the cortex, the identification and decoding of speech are carried out not only when sentences are actually pronounced aloud or in mid-voice but also when they are merely thought. The "language" relationship between the transmitter and the receiver is thus profoundly modified. It is no longer a question, as in the recent past, of detecting the brain wave that forms a few milliseconds after a stimulus or recording the activity of the visual cortex. From now on, the new implants, all programmable, allow two people to communicate without waiting for speech to be formed. Instead, they "hear" each other in real-time, that is to say, at the very moment when thoughts arrive in their brains, somewhat similar to the way in which functional magnetic resonance imaging "follows" live what is happening in the cortex as a sentence is being constructed. We can also compare this with the automatic writing of an SMS when a subtle algorithm seems to guess, to anticipate, sometimes in an impromptu way, and mostly with a low error rate, the word or words to come, that is to say, the idea. Unquestionably, however, in the case of futuristic communication, the algorithm is one thousand times more powerful. Already, some are considering the possible conversion of the sensations and the affects. For example, the last experiment showed that a woman who felt, without telling him, the desire to go to the cinema with her companion received a positive response before she even had to formulate her wish. Fortunately for the couple they were in agreement because a sharp retort was already being prepared if the companion had the regrettable intention of declining. In the past, time has always been lost in decoding, deciphering, and interpreting. Today immediacy prevails. We are close to achieving perfect simultaneity between the intentions formed in the speaker's brain and the receiver's response.

However, the case of multiparty conversations has yet to be solved, but the solution is imminent. Researchers have recently succeeded in avoiding the risk of confusion, interference, and misunderstandings. It is even possible that this problem is already outdated because multi dialog, conversation, and exchanges such as they once existed, for example, in the cross-platform mobile application WhatsApp, are no longer of any use due to the lightning advances of AI.

Thus, it is no longer necessary to use words since an intention is perceived in advance, its meaning is deciphered, and the answer is also already present. Both transmitters and receivers no longer use traditional oral communication, which is already reduced to its simplest expression. Today, they "intuit," capture and "guess" each other's denotations. These terms themselves are certainly inappropriate but are used here deliberately to compel us to understand these new forms of "cerebral empathy," whose undisputed merit is to eliminate linguistic mediations – the causes of time wasted, approximations, and postponements that slow the passage to action. From now on, "saying" or instead "thinking" becomes immediately, directly performative. To think is to do. To begin to think is also to do.

Language is not dead after all. It has simply been frozen, condensed into abbreviated, impoverished formulas, altered in its capacity to signify or articulate nuance, distribution, contradiction, and difference. This form of language dissolution provokes a severe semantic and syntactic crisis in all the systems of signs used to communicate. But the most worrying is the progressive elimination, consciously prepared, of all the techniques of linguistic expression. Thus disappear rhetoric, the famous *rhetorikê tekhnê*, the efficient oratory art, stylistics, eloquence, *dispositio*, that is to say, dialectical argumentation, and indeed dialectic itself. In her great white veil, the graceful Polymnia looks grey, replaced by complex and powerful algorithms. Patients no longer have to check with their doctors because, without their knowledge, their diagnoses were established some time ago after passing through one of the many video surveillance gates—incorporating facial recognition, body temperature measurement, thorax-abdominal and pelvic scans—located on the daily route. This device automatically triggers the delivery of medication and various treatments that are already waiting for them at home. In severe cases, the ambulance comes to collect and transport them, whether they agree or not, *illico* and *manu militari* to one of the many hospitals dedicated to their condition. Health issues are primarily about society as a whole and not about the patient as individuals or their freedom. Freedom? A derisory term that can hardly be addressed since the individual appears and exists socially only as a parameter or statistical variable. In any case, the discussion does not arise, nor does contestation, because there are no longer any places for discussion nor any possible language mediation.

The same applies to insurance companies. They modulate their premiums according to the incidents recorded by the video surveillance radars and immediately transmitted to them, and simultaneously to the police headquarters, without the cognizance of the contravened. Labor relations are simplified to an extreme, for example, when requesting and negotiating a salary increase or staff vacancy with the boss. He obviously already knows your intention since it was sufficient for him to pass his collaborator or employee in the corridor to have provided an "answer" or rather to have said "yes" or "no" in anticipation. The two brains connected and "captured" each other. There is no useless palaver in the boss's office and thus the precious saving of time—"palaver" not being here a pejorative term but simply expressing a nostalgic feeling since no such activity is left. In this regard, let us measure the social, institutional, and political upheavals that have occurred over the last two decades (2020-2040).

The ineluctable dissolution of language has led to the collapse of all the pillars supporting the Athens of 5th century BC, that is, Athenian democracy. Moreover, it is not only this one but also, until a relatively recent time, democratic societies themselves that had escaped dictatorship and totalitarianism because they were founded on the freedom of thought and speech, on free, intersubjective exchanges within a public and critical space, which was a place of deliberation,

controversies, even polemics. What is in the process of being totally annihilated is the critical power of the contradictory, heterogeneous *doxa*, which in a democracy authorizes the clash of different opinions, the controlled manifestation of polemics, of disputes, which relies on the anatreptic of non-dogmatic speeches in search of the various means of accessing the truth but without ever imposing it dogmatically. Let us take one last example, that of justice, the field par excellence of truth, of its research, of its establishment. If Polymnia, the simple muse evoked before, instigator of lawyers, is now a sad figure, the first victim of these super-powerful algorithms is undoubtedly Themis, the daughter of Gaia and Ouranos. The goddess of justice suffers the cruelest fate, and this fatal destiny began to emerge precisely twenty years ago, around 2019-2020. Several legal and judicial measures, seemingly purely "technical," were already evincing a great distrust of speech and language in general, converging towards the suppression of lawyers' roles. For example, when it was decided to automatically extend the duration of detention, which is legal but contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights; when the dematerialization of procedures was set up to accelerate their treatment without the intervention of lawyers; or when a wall of silence was erected isolating certain judges who were not particularly concerned about transgressions of the penal code to the point of reactivating a sort of "law of suspects"—the same one that triggered the revolutionary paranoia that ruled under the French Reign of Terror in 1793. In short, it was the word that was disqualified at all stages of linguistic and intersubjective communication, which, in democracy, allows the constitution of public space in principle. Already, two decades ago, around 2020, this notion of public space, the domain par excellence of language, the privileged place of speech, was a victim of a crisis that did not take long to worsen.

Internet 2.0 and digital media had already inexorably unfolded, with unprecedented speed, the perverse dialectic of privation and privatization to the detriment of the constitution of a truly democratic public space. Everyone could see that the private was becoming public. Users of the social networks of the time had a curious experience since with the publication of their profiles, they had from the first revealed themselves publicly and sometimes betrayed their love predilections, and their artistic, cultural, political, and ideological choices. Taking advantage of this windfall, some foreign administrations required tourists to sign into their social network accounts to obtain a visa to enter the country. These data were coupled with those collected, without the knowledge of the interested parties, by facial recognition, then collected within Big Data, itself connected with all the administrative bodies, with taxes, social security, referring doctors, and insurance companies. The Alicem application in France, an ideal solution for an interconnected digital identity on a smartphone, had been generalized and made compulsory, allowing everyone, and the government, to know everything about everyone.

A hint of disenchantment surfaced when we realized the uselessness and the inherent foolishness of the simple "hello, how are you?" in the morning's friendly encounters. But everyone gradually grew used to it. Why waste your breath uttering words when your cervical implant has already given you the answer? Language had indeed undergone profound changes. It was not the new language created to satisfy the so-called *Angsoc* (English Socialism in French) spoken by George Orwell, a language of submission to centralized, totalitarian power under Big Brother's authority. It was a more playful, pictorial language, already ancient, comprised of small icons, figurines, or somewhat stylized, standardized, rather friendly-looking faces, schematizing a state of mind or a mood. What began as fun quickly became viral, invasive, leading to abbreviations, shortcuts, Manichean and non-dialectical simplifications, masking or even crushing the specificity and idiosyncrasy of the new speakers of the 3.0 era.

Some lucid Internet users noted with concern how the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein has been right when he stated that "the limits of my language mean the limits of my own world" (1921-1922), and the more the limits of the world shrink, the easier it is to govern it or to put it under tutelage. And everyone, little by little, ends up realizing that what is done to words is never innocent. But everyone also ends up accepting it, ultimately resigned. By telling the truth, there were few usable words left. The cause was not only the proliferation of ellipses, syncopations, apheresis, apocopes, or other cuts and mutilations that tended to reduce speech to the utterance of a few phonemes—but a global impoverishment of language, mostly limited to a few elements imposed mainly by the mainstream, by the media gurus who are bloggers, YouTubers, and the celebrity sphere of politicians and women. This linguistic indigence, damaging for the rare surviving writers and poets nostalgic for the previous years, was in no way detrimental to communication.

On the contrary, it favored the decoding of cerebral messages without having to decode whole sentences. But the most characteristic phenomenon of this period was undoubtedly the total disconnection between language, at least what was left of it, and truth. The beginnings of this break appeared more than twenty years earlier, at a time when the relativistic posture had supplanted what could be considered intransigent dogmatism. Numerous fields were concerned: science, religion, morality in the first place, where opinion replaced certainties, even the unquestionable results of scientific theories and experiments. Thus, it was possible, for example, to contradict the scientific truth that the earth is round by simply affirming that it is flat. That it is round would not be the truth but a mere opinion, hence, equally valid. Darwinians and creationists were, and still are, opposed to the theory of evolution: doctrine, belief, opinion against scientific consensus! Those who believe this exaggeration are free to consult the registers of university theses submitted for defense in many universities.

Another form of relativism, apparently more elaborate, was rife during the first years of the 2020s. It was called *en-même-tempisme* (at the same time), which was based, to put it simply, on the simultaneous presentation of two contradictory ideas, opinions, projects, assertions, intentions, desires, wishes, and wills; a posture directly inspired by the work of a French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2015), applied to political governance. On the philosophical level, the *en-même-tempisme* attempted to take the form of a subtle dialectic of the Hegelian type: thesis, antithesis, synthesis. For Hegel, dialectics participates in the development or deployment of truth by suppressing (*Aufhebung*) and/or overcoming antagonisms, thus, generating a synthesis that owes nothing to the thesis nor the antithesis. It is, therefore, essentially dynamic in its resolute march towards truth. The *en-même-tempisme* did not understand, indeed quite the reverse, overcoming nor suppressing antagonisms. It pretended to reconcile them in a unique and united time, borrowing from both one and the other the elements of a possible and problematic synthesis. Therefore, this dialectic was not dynamic but "at a standstill," a kind of dialectic of the "center," which dangerously preserved the contradictions with all their conflictual potentiality. Historical hindsight allows us to better perceive today how much the social troubles of this time were the more or less direct consequence of this *en-même-tempisme*, which was unfortunately favorable, in fact, to incessant procrastination and, therefore, politically dangerous. Nowadays, this problem of truth is no longer valid. The disqualification of language as a communicative mediation, its attested obsolescence, and its de facto renunciation of defining truth do not hinder the running of the business and the world. A new pragmatism is needed, much more radical than in the past. In all fields, especially in science, economics, and politics, truth is what is. Nothing else. Automaticity, which has already been briefly mentioned in connection with the automatic extension of a convicted person's sentence, has become the absolute rule in all relations between individuals and the administration in general, based on the stimulus-response model. Monitored, tracked, detected, identified, discovered, tested, recognized, and oriented by a multitude of interconnected devices; sanctioned or rewarded without any intervention by an intermediary authority, individuals now lead their lives in a remote-controlled way, neither sad, nor excited, nor rebellious, and without questioning the finality of their existence. Fortunately, as always happens, even a tightly woven net is never so tight as to be totally hermetic, and some people, rebelling against this one-dimensional universe, still find the means and the intellectual resources to read and reread ancient texts, those dealing with literature, poetry, and philosophy. Rare texts in which language itself, and not only language, is "at the service" of truth—to use a Nietzschean expression—but in a differentiated, nuanced way, with more or less depth. It is well known that access to truth does not follow the same linguistic meanderings in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and so on.

A German thinker of the last century pushed this differentiation very far, indeed so far as to grant his mother tongue the privilege of having a "particular elective affinity with philosophy, in particular with its speculative moment." In other words, he considered that the German language was capable, better than any other, of reaching the essence of things, their truth in a way. Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) affirmed that language and memory were inextricably linked. He shared with Friedrich Nietzsche the fear that language would deteriorate and become a mere information and communication tool, losing its social and cultural memory. Because he believed that social and historical experiences are sedimented in language and stored in it, he feared that the voluntary or involuntary abandonment of language would result in the "horror of a memoryless humanity." Those readers, rebels against the spirit of the times, against the *Zeitgeist*, nostalgic for a time that is nevertheless recent, know today that any attack on language is an opening to violence. Their nightmare is that one day the question will no longer be why or how this violence might explode, but when.

Author Biography

Marc Jimenez is a professor emeritus of aesthetics at University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, where he taught aesthetics and science of art. With a PhD in literature and a PhD in philosophy, he translated from German into French T.W. Adorno's Aesthetics, August Wilhelm Schlegel's philosophical *Doctrines of Art*, and Peter Bürger's *Prose of the Modern Age*. Since 1986, when he succeeded Mikel Dufrenne, he directed the aesthetics collection Klincksieck Editions Collection d'Esthétique, Les Belles Lettres. Professor Marc Jimenez is a specialist in contemporary German philosophy, and his work contributed, in the early 1970s, to research on Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School – *Adorno, art, idéologie et théorie de l'art* (1973), *Adorno et la modernité. Vers une esthétique negative* (1986), Klincksieck, extracted from the PhD thesis, Sorbonne, 1982, entitled *L'esthétique de l'École de Francfort, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno et Herbert Marcuse*. He is also a member of the International Association of Art Critics, participates in many conferences in France and abroad, and has been a regular contributor to art magazines, including Art Style Magazine. Recent publications: *La critique : crise de l'art ou consensus culturel ?* (Klincksieck, 1995), *Qu'est-ce que l'esthétique* ? (Gallimard, 1997), *La querelle de l'art contemporain* (Gallimard, 2005), *Fragments pour un discours esthétique. Entretiens avec Dominique Berthet* (Klincksieck, 2014), *Art et technosciences. Bioart, neuroesthétique* (Klincksieck, 2016), *Rien qu'un fou, rien qu'un poète. Une lecture des derniers poèmes de Nietzsche* (encre marine, 2016). Email: jimenez@univ-paris1.fr

Notes

1. Presentation by Christiane Wagner.

2. Translated by Christiane Wagner from French into English.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, (Verlag von C. G. Naumann, 1889; repr., Stuttgart: Kröner Taschenausgabe, 1964), 26, 148: "Nous ne nous estimons guère lorsque nous communiquons. Nos véritables expériences vécues ne sont pas du tout bavardes. Même si elles le voulaient, elles ne pourraient se communiquer elles-mêmes. Autrement dit, il leur manque la parole. Quels que soient nos mots, nous sommes au-delà. Tout discours recèle un soupçon de mépris. Le langage n'a semble-t-il été inventé que pour le médiocre, le moyen, le communicable. Avec le langage, celui qui parle, tombe dans le commun" (translated by Marc Jimenez from German into French).

4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Vérité et mensonge au sens extra-moral. Langage et métaphore*, translated by Marc de Launay from German into French (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2019), 33: "Mentir de manière grégaire, c'est ce à quoi nous condamne la société qui attend des individus qu'ils soient efficients, pragmatiques, indifférents à toute vérité, à une vérité qui leur est de toute façon totalement inaccessible. Car la vérité n'est pas de l'ordre du langage mais de la métaphore et des métonymies. Elle est de l'ordre des illusions dont on a oublié qu'elles le sont."

5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, III, *Der Genesende*, § 2 (1884; repr., Stuttgart: Kröner Taschenausgabe, 1969), 239.

6. Marc Jimenez, *Rien qu'un fou, rien qu'un poète. Une lecture des derniers poèmes de Nietzsche,* 1879-1888 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, encre marine, 2016): "C'est bien le poète, rien qu'un poète, rien qu'un fou qui peut consoler le philosophe exclu de la vérité : Ah, qu'exilé de toute vérité. Je ne sois plus rien qu'un fou, Rien qu'un poète !, constate amèrement Nietzsche dans ses Dithyrambes à Dionysos."

7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Fragments posthumes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1982) XI, 40, 391: "L'apparence, au sens où je l'entends, est la véritable et l'unique réalité des choses [...] Je ne pose donc pas l'« apparence » en opposition à la « réalité », au contraire, je considère que l'apparence c'est la réalité."

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On the Contemporary Scenopolitics
Urban Protest in Major Cities

Pamela C. Scorzin

Abstract

Despite extensive technological networking, numerous dynamic protest movements have once again dominated the streets and urban spaces of our major cities worldwide in recent years. Most diverse protest movements, which make use of their freedom of speech and to protest against their governments or to rise against them despite a state ban on demonstrations, make use of creative means and staging strategies that guarantee protest images or image protests respectively in order to generate solidarity in the masses for a particular cause and to mobilize them through the production of events. Scenopolitics and Scenocracy, forms of staging and pathos formulas derived from the discipline of scenography, today carry the excitement and outrage from local venues into the global spheres of the Internet. Last but not least, Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-vous !* provided the theoretical beacon for a new global culture of agitation and outrage, which, however, no longer makes itself heard and visible as democratic participation solely through words and writings but through significant scenographic scenes and creative actions in our major cities worldwide. Through the mediatization of scenographic protest, specific aesthetics and rhetorics emerge that can be ritualized as well as habitualized over time and circulate on the Internet as protest memes nowadays—along with a prominent protest hashtag. The essay on the dynamics of contemporary urban protests takes a closer look at these new forms of arousal and outrage in major cities as representations and demonstrations of resistance using the current example of *Extinction Rebellion*—under its scenographic and branded aspects, which are a guarantor for strong protest images and image protests respectively that communicate and transcend indignation.

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Créer, c'est résister. Résister, c'est créer.
Stéphane Hessel

Through a predominantly scenographic lens, this article reflects upon the visual culture of contemporary urban protests. Modern protest movements can be understood as the emotional and performative expressions of a desire for urgent social, cultural, and political change. Worldwide, such protest is a dynamic public demonstration of dissent and resistance, mainly in major cities' local streets and urban places. Herewith, an assembled democratic public performs its existence and freedom: "it demands recognition, embodies visibility, articulates a political voice, and communicates ideas/demands. In doing so, protest constitutes 'the people,' and through the aesthetics of protest, rupture conventions of doing politics."[1]

These forms of extra-parliamentary representation and demonstration, which have become almost ritualized in modernity, today always proceed with some momentum from the local venues into the global sphere of the Internet. Urban street protests belong to European modernity and have since always been a guarantee for fraught images and media icons (see Michael Diers)[2] because demonstrations in the city streets and urban spaces have always been mediatized through the ages. Various protest movements have always been very good at taking advantage of whatever the latest medium is and creatively responding to media shifts. For example, the 1968 student movement became so prominent that it exploited the opportunities offered by television and photojournalism. The situation is similar to *Extinction Rebellion* or *Fridays for Future* on social media nowadays.

Today, in addition to slogans, paroles, and manifestos, urban protest actions make even more use of visual symbolism, which may also even be 'instagramable.' With the mediation and distribution via social media, however, the sensualistic and dynamic qualities of the street protest must not be lost, but rather translated scenographically for those addressed in that digital realm. "It sounds all too familiar and we might even go so far as to understand protest as something in which we, as academics and observers, necessarily belong as parts in a panopoly of components, which includes the location, protestors, organizational structures (…), police, print media, the historical record and its interpretation. Not to forget the smell, the taste, the noise, the spectacle, the sheer existential experience that once mediatized, is always just out of reach. The sensible and the aesthetic are something in excess of the merely political, social, or economic."[3]

Protest politics, therefore, needs a notable protest aesthetic, just as every aesthetic always includes politics, to which Jacques Rancière[4] has already broadly referred. The modern mass media have also produced a specific visual culture for various protest movements that work with recurring pathos formulas. The fraught images of the visual protest aesthetic seem to be a natural part of the democratic process as well as freedom of the press and freedom of speech. They also have the effect that significant protest aesthetics get habitualized by protest groups over time: For example, the student protests of the 68-generation, the hippie culture, and the civil rights movements, the various environmental and international peace movements or the anti-nuclear power movement, and for a few years now also internationally organized youth protest like *Anonymous, Occupy, Attac, Extinction Rebellion* or *Fridays for Future*. They transfer their outrage and anger from the local to the global via recurring pathos formulas of resistance and uprise. However, the effectiveness of left-wing and liberal forms of protest and their power of fraught imagery has also been recognized by new-right groups and bourgeois 'Wutbürger' for some years now: Identitarians, Pegida, Trump supporters, corona deniers, and lateral thinkers are increasingly using the same staging practices and strategies for their diffuse criticism of the elite and their wild conspiracy theories.

In the following, we, therefore, want to take a closer look at these new forms of arousal and outrage in major cities worldwide using the current example of *Extinction Rebellion*—under its scenographic aspect, which is a guarantor for strong protest images, as like image protests that transmit emotional states. *Extinction Rebellion* is a decentralized, international, and politically non-partisan movement that uses non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency—with a self-proclaimed "moral duty to take action."[5]

It is interesting to see that significant aesthetics are involved in such protest movements. Further, even professional brand design: Branding has become a means of unifying a protest movement and giving global protest a visual identity. Many of the most successful and recognizable protest movements worldwide use branding techniques as part of their urban scenographies.[6]

Time for Outrage

We live in a time of global crises, leading to collective agitation and tremendous outrage, especially among younger generations concerned about their future. Not least through Stéphane Hessel's *Indignez-Vous!*[7] (Fig. 1), this phenomenon has also theoretically received its beacon: Resistance is commonly understood with freedom, indignation with justice as well as commitment and engagement – of whatever kind. Human emotions such as fear, worry, outrage, hate, contempt as well as trust, hope, compassion, empathy, or sympathy are regarded as both drivers of global protest movements and a factor in processes of opinion formation. They seem to guarantee the solidarity of political entities. They are responsible for crowd psychology phenomena like coups and revolutions or the collapse of such movements into terror and horror.

Figure 1. Graffiti stencil in the 10th Arrondissement of Paris.
Stéphane Hessel, Indignez-Vous, 2019.

In the age of technologically networked communication such as social media, it is also good to have a viral hashtag like #indignezvous for your outrage, which carries and channels the transmission of dynamically ignited emotions from the streets and the squares into the global communication sphere. This transfer always requires highly efficient scenes and emotionalizing performances to generate greater attention for emotional identity and interest politics and to advertise solidarity via mass mobilization.

Scenopolitics

Thus, without any value judgment, we can generally use the term 'Scenopolitics' for this phenomenon: In public space, visibility and hearing are to be created and branded for particular concerns and political issues that the prevailing politics do not take into account or carry out. Thus, "democracy is, properly speaking, the symbolic institution of the political in the form of the power of those who are not entitled to exercise power – a rupture in the order of legitimacy and domination. Democracy is the paradoxical power of those who do not count."[8] The actions and scenes of urban protest worldwide are each aimed at a specific common cause and want to affect, politicize and mobilize the masses for its realization. They create a counter-culture. Rachel Hann emphasizes:

> Scenographics irritate the worldings of power and are uniquely suited to score the political ruptures that acts of protest enact. From the use of masks and costumes to the act of occupying a street or room, scenographic activism is arguably a familiar and vital component that shapes how contemporary democratic politics are conducted. (Hann 2019, 113)

With urban protest actions and creative activism, the dissatisfied, excluded, and indignant have wanted to participate in democratic processes since the French Revolution of 1789. In their protest assemblies, however, not only the bodies, the topic, and the place play a significant role, but also precisely what sociologist Armin Nassehi[9] called the affects and poses of protest for heterogeneous groups. Actions and enactments that give physical expression to the rally and lend it a differentiating unity. And it is primarily about the representation and demonstration of dynamics and energies that arise when a community digitally networked wants to co-determine the locally embodied discourses—meanwhile also economic and ecological. To this end, they also make use of designated forms of staging and creative performances, ranging from costuming to masks, attributes, and stage props to impromptu scenic stages.

These creative activities in the streets and urban spaces are fed, among other things, by the traditions of theater, carnival, or contemporary performance art—just as, conversely, the so-called ARTivism[10] makes use of these contemporary protest actions. Here, however, the aestheticized protest movement also becomes symbolic of becoming iconic through its mediation later on: such as, for example, the famous *Tank Man*[11], who has become an imitated gesture, an image icon, a protest image, and a viral meme for further worldwide protest actions since the Tiananmen Square massacre. Jeff Widener of the Associated Press took this iconic photograph (one of four similar versions): It shows a man who temporarily stops the advance of a column of tanks on June 5, 1989, in Beijing (China). In 2016, the Australian-based artist and cartoonist Badiucao turned this protest image into an accurate action statement for a famous contemporary protest pose. (Fig. 2) The *Tank Man* meme exemplifies how protests can be condensed not only to catchy slogans and paroles or hashtags, but precisely into unique visual formulas that can be performed and re-enacted with gestural and mimic actions in both physical public and virtual digital space, and over time, transcend into a globally understandable, theatrical protest pose.

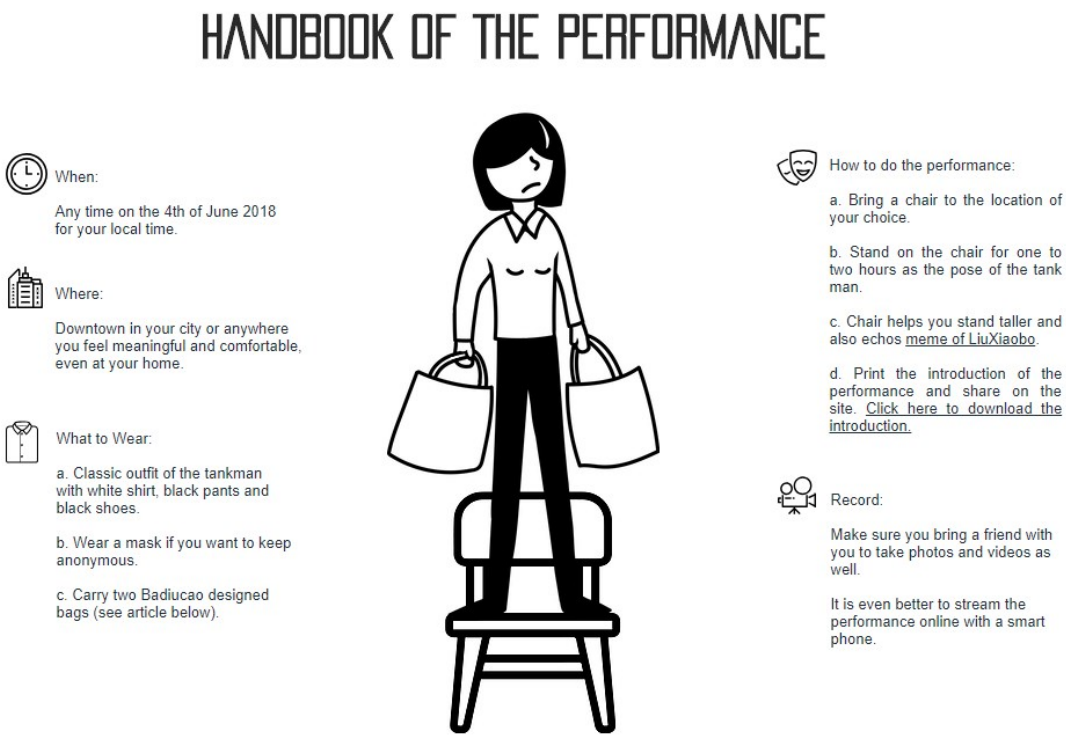

Figure 2. Badiucao, *Tank Man - Handbook of the Performance,* 2016[12]

Such fraught protest performances, however, always require an expressive setting. Striking scenographic performativity is thus inherent to political protest, as the editors (Aidan McGarry, Itir Erhart, Hande Eslen-Ziya, Olu Jenzen, and Umut Korkut) have already pointed out in their introduction to the anthology *The Aesthetics of Global Protest. Visual Culture and Communication*: "We understand the aesthetics of protest to be the slogans, art, symbols, slang, humour, graffiti, gestures, bodies, colour, clothes, and objects that comprise a material and performative culture with a high capacity to be replicated digitally and shared across social media networks, ideological terrain, state borders, and linguistic frontiers. A key concern for this book is how the aesthetics of protest are expressed, what they communicate, and its significance for political voice. In the same vein, the dramatic proliferation of digital technologies and images of protest reveals different possibilities for articulating a political voice. Politics is not produced solely by the vocalized claims or demands of protestors but by their action, and sometimes their inaction, thus the aesthetics of protest reveals how democracy is constituted through 'a complex interplay of performance, images, acoustics and all the various technologies engaged in those productions.'

Performance is a form of agency expressing a political voice. The political voice that emanates from the aesthetics of protest cannot be reduced to verbal utterances or background noise; political voice communicates resistance and solidarity. Performativity enacts the power of individuals and groups united in a common message but does not necessarily carry a specific demand as recent protest movements such as Occupy have demonstrated."[13]

From Local to Global and Back Again

In this strategically calculated combination of natural and virtual spheres for the scenographic performative protest, today from analog scenes into digital images, a dynamic interaction arises: Do protest culture and its fraught protest images today produce each other? However, has urban protest as an expression of emotional outrage and its affective dynamics long since become protest folklore, which everyone can now make use of in equal measure and market as a democratic process? In this creative culture of agitation,[14] moreover, everyone today claims the freedom to protest. Stages of expression are created in the public spaces of major cities for the emotional states of all stripes. Scenography represents, demonstrates, and constitutes the polity here in the urban public space. Urban Protest worldwide has now become a very dynamic operation of democratic power that can be performative as well as scenographic. It is both an action and Scenography: urban activism and Scenopolitics. Since Scenography allows communication, participation, and interaction via its spectacular stagings and striking aesthetics. Thus, Scenopolitics can be interpreted as an agency for social transformation and political change in society.

From Scenopolitics to Scenocracy

The neologism 'Scenocracy' describes a phenomenon of contemporary visual culture that is mirrored in new visual art forms: It means, on the one hand, the sheer expansion of staging today far beyond the actual theater stage, as a new creative form of public protest and as a salient characteristic of a contemporary culture of agitation, and, on the other hand, the repetition and reflection of local scenic protest actions, which are now also instantaneously globally disseminated through the Internet, through artistic strategies and creative means of appropriation, parasitage, and re-enactment, usually accompanied by a recent

'ARTivism.'[15] In the performative setting of themes and issues, current protest culture and the contemporary arts influence each other and, from an aesthetic point of view, interpenetrate each other: spontaneous and eruptive forms of urban protest in particular are inspired by (action) theater and the action arts for a generation that seeks attention and resonance, while contemporary art in general works with the aesthetic vocabulary and scenic dispositifs of the new resistance culture of the insurgents: In addition to symbolic performances, carnivalesque scenes, colorful masquerades, chants, and parodic clowning—for example, in the accompanying program of assemblies and marches, demonstrations and parades, or in improvised scenic street theater as well as in the demonstrative occupation and performance of public space—, there are now spectacular settings for dramas, performances, and symbolic acts of public demonstration, social resistance, and political mass protest in the streets and on the places.

The doctrine here is: There is no longer any real visibility in the international media society without a spectacular scene and sensationally good staging for your protest. In each case, concerns must first be brought onto a stage of perception. Moreover, in the comprehensive connectivity of a technologically networked society, the scenographic scenes and acts delivered from local protest spectacles now spread globally at a viral speed. Scenic effects function as an effective tactical instrument for the trans-cultural visualization and inter-media representation of discontent and outrage.

For this purpose, they playfully address the emotions and affects of all those involved in the common scene – actors/performers as well as viewers/recipients – which are supposed to lead into subsequent acts of revolt and resistance or general political uproar. However, the 'theatrical' effectiveness and sustained efficiency of this regime of 'Scenocracy' also lead, as experienced by the media, to a permanently present culture of excitement and indignation. In it, the overall economy of a steady attention and event culture is now staged in a further act with the eruptive and event-like production of spontaneous affects. However, in the long term, it establishes an entirely new power of effectiveness and sustainability.

These actor-oriented forms of the staging of the 'Scenocracy'—working with notable theatrical appearances and effects—have their formal aesthetic and conceptual roots in the art-avant-garde actionism of the sixties and seventies, e.g., in action art, Fluxus, event, happening, performance, street art, and body art. The avant-garde art forms are in turn adapted or appropriated on a meta-level in the post-modern sense, i.e., in this case, cited entirely in the act of an appropriation

exhibited or brought back onto the stage. Artistic-creative forms of expression, staging means of representation, and powerful scenic images are for this purpose, with their characteristic visual markers, downright recycled or aestheticized, respectively, in a work-signature-oriented and highly commercialized operating system of art, or translated/transposed into pathos formulas. The actual protest spectacle performed for virtual dissemination thereby acts with the recurring tried and tested elements and proven representational means. In particular, the same and long since ritualized actions and usual choreographies are taken up and quoted, restaged, and sometimes overesthetized, for example, the holding up of signs, stickers, flyers, handbills, banners, flags, graphics, and protest posters (Fig. 3-8). Specific archetypal gestures and facial expressions (from violent-aggressive to peaceful-celebratory, as well as characterizing uniforms, costuming, mummery, and masking to anonymize the protesting individual or the group community gathered for the scenic-symbolic protest, the display and performance of functional and representative set-pieces as well as selected attributes for the symbolic performance of excited protest and determined resistance are everywhere recurring.

Figures 3-6. XR in Paris, October 2019. Photos by Pamela C. Scorzin.

Figure 7. XR Sticker in Berlin, Spring 2020.
Photo by Pamela C. Scorzin.

Figure 8. XR graphics[16]

These allover recurring scenographic components create the dramatic stages and constitute the public settings as well as the actions for global protest movements. Rehearsed actions that take place therein, often already long since ritualized between the various actors, form altogether the specific-signifying morphologies and choreographies of the scenic protest demonstrations and performances in cities. Each of which is intended to lead to visible communication with subsequent effect via emotionally charged and symbolically staged images in the end. However, if the Scenocracy/Scenography only generate indignation about its own provocative spectacularity of its re-enactments of current performative protest forms and not about their respective actual social concern, fundamental questions about its effectiveness and sustainability as a current political art form and creative communication practice open up again. The Scenographies of pop-cultural consumer culture and contemporary fashion design (such as with Chanel, Gucci, or Viviane Westwood) then merely transform the rhetorics and aesthetics of modern creative protest culture in radical chic and *dernier cri.*

Scenographic Protest Exploitations

Urban protest exploitation, in turn, has long been part of the tried and tested spectacle in the great global marketplace of capitalist consumer culture. How much activism can Scenography actually take in the end? What form of politics would be appropriate for Scenography as an artistic discipline? So let us talk another time about Scenopolitics in a time of sharply diverging political opinions and right-wing and left-wing protest cultures emerging on the streets of our major cities. The question here is not whether Scenography is political in the streets and urban spaces but instead to what extent it becomes politically effective and influential. What sociopolitical efficacy and sustainability can scenographic protest forms achieve today? As a purpose-bound form of design, it is increasingly struggling for aesthetic autonomy. Moreover, ephemeral design practice is currently being increasingly archived and historicized; like free arts, Scenography wants to be perceived as a symbolic, universal expression that materializes and forms genealogies or traditions. This Scenography wants to be perceived primarily as an acting artifact that does not merely serve as a temporary functional instrument of agitation and alarmism, populism, or even mere set design for propaganda. Especially the so-called 'ARTivism' seems pretty kitschy sometimes in comparison, when it reduces complex political problems to simple slogans and paroles for that addresses merely the emotions and affects. How much power

does Scenography itself need? What does Scenography want in the context of contemporary urban protest culture? Wouldn't it be better to have an enlightening and emancipatory effect instead of moralizing and patronizing its audiences there? Is every decidedly socially and politically defined Scenography in the end merely populist or even deeply propagandistic-embarrassing excitement kitsch in the guise of the re-enacted totalitarian Gesamtkunstwerk?

How ineffective such a politicized, primarily attention-grabbing Scenography is in general, moreover, is already shown by the fact that always only the others are meant as their specific addressees. On the other hand, can't scenographic protest forms also initiate constructive approaches to solutions for urgent socio-political questions and significant crises such as climate change or global migration? Or should Scenography better offer alternative narratives and speculative futures instead of merely manifesting specific predetermined scenarios and just stirring up emotions, i.e., informing multi-perspectively instead of indoctrinating ideologically? Maybe even activate their audiences to become mature, enlightened, and self-thinking recipients? Questions for the next chapter.

Author Biography

Pamela C. Scorzin is an art, design, and media theorist and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture Studies at Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Department of Design (Germany), since 2019, vice-dean. Born 1965 in Vicenza (Italy), she studied European Art History, Philosophy, English and American Literatures, and History in Stuttgart and Heidelberg (Germany), obtaining her M.A. in 1992 and her Ph.D. in 1994. She was an assistant professor in the Department of Architecture at Darmstadt University of Technology from 1995 to 2000. After completing her habilitation in the history and theory of modern art there in 2001, she was a visiting professor in Art History, Media and Visual Culture Studies in Siegen, Stuttgart, and Frankfurt am Main. Since 2008 Professor of Art History in the Department of Design at the Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts; since 2020 Vice-Dean. Since 2005, she is a member of the German section of AICA. She has published (in German, English, French, and Polish) on art-historical and cultural-historical topics from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. She lives and works in Dortmund, Milan, and Los Angeles.

Notes

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3. Jim Aulich, "Conclusion: Reflections on Protest and Political Transformation since 1789," in *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication, edited by* Aidan McGarry, et al. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 270.
4. Cf. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2006).
5. See https://rebellion.global.
6. Cf. Ingeborg Bloem and Klaus Kempenaars, *Branded Protest: Branding as a Tool to Give Prostest an Iconic Face* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2020).
7. Stéphane Hessel, *Indignez-vous!* (Montpellier: Indigène éditions, 2010).
8. Jacques Rancière and Davide Panagia, "Dissenting Words: A Conversation with Jacques Rancière," in *Diacritics* 30 (2), 2000, 113-126, 124.
9. See Armin Nassehi, *Das große Nein: Eigendynamik und Tragik des gesellschaftlichen Protests* (kursbuch.edition; 2020).
10. See Peter Weibel, ed., *Global Activism. Art and Conflict in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).
11. See Kerstin Schankweiler, *Bildproteste. Digitale Bildkulturen* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2019), 43.
12. Badiucao. "Tank Man - Handbook of the Performance," 2016, https://hongkongfp.com/2018/05/25/chinese-artist-calls-people-around-world-pose-tank-man-29th-anniversary-tiananmen-massacre/.
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14. Cf. Pamela C. Scorzin, "Szenokratie der Erregungskultur. Zur Re-Inszenierung und Appropriation der gegenwärtigen globalen Protestkultur in den zeitgenössischen Künsten," in *Inszenierung und Politik*. Szenografie im sozialen Feld, Szenografie & Szenologie, no. 12, edited by Ralf Bohn, and Heiner Wilharm (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), 121–144; and Pamela C. Scorzin, "Scenopolitics!" in *Politics. Points of View. Ein interaktives Magazin für Szenografie und Perspektivwechsel,* edited by Gregor Isenbort (Dortmund: DASA, 2020), 88-91.
15. Cf. Peter Weibel, ed., *Global Activism. Art and Conflict in the 21st Century (*Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015).
16. XR graphics for download, https://extinctionrebellion.de/mitmachen/ressourcen/grafik/.

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Music and Democracy

The Binomial Aesthetics and Politics[1]

Waldenyr Caldas

Abstract

This article discusses the importance of popular-music movements, such as Bossa Nova and Tropicalism. I seek to analyze the significance and the political context of Brazilian popular music. The road ahead is somewhat desolate, not because of popular music but because of the country's politics, which only recently—from 1985 on—managed to bring to Brazilian society what we can finally interpret as democracy. First, I look at the political history of Brazil. We will see the opportunistic presence of coups d'état and authoritarian governments that weakened the country's democracy just for power and ambition. Bossa Nova lived through the crepuscule of a weakened democracy, which would soon be overthrown by the tyranny of the military, anxious for power. This moment in the country's history registered with some Bossa Nova composers, who opted for the protest song, as it was known at the time, and passed into the history of our popular music with this name. The use of violence by military forces would act to silence the protesters, who did not align themselves with that authoritarian policy. The result of these confrontations is analyzed in this article. Tropicalism did not have the same luck. This movement was born in 1967—perhaps the most violent moment of military repression. However, Tropicalism had much more of an aesthetic concern with poetic discourse, and because of this, the censors understood very little of their writings. Even so, they arrested the two leaders of the movement, Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, and sent them into exile abroad in July of 1969. Brazil was experiencing the horrors of the AI-5 (Institutional Act 5), promulgated on December 13, 1968, when people no longer felt safe—the state itself had taken away this right. The rule of law existed only in the country's constitution; in Brazilian daily life, the constant threat of the military and the forced silence of society prevailed.

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Introduction

Let us look back at the trajectory of Brazilian Popular Music, since the recording of the first samba entitled "Pelo Telefone," (By telephone) a composition made in the candomblé grounds of Tia Ciata, written by Donga and Mauro, up to our days. We must necessarily highlight two great movements that would sensitively change the course of Brazil's popular music. They are Bossa Nova, which emerged in the second half of the 1950s in Rio de Janeiro, and Tropicalism ten years later, in 1967, on the III Festival of Brazilian Popular Music of the TV Record in São Paulo. These dates represent two very different historical and political moments in Brazil. The Bossa Nova Movement would emerge precisely in the crepuscule of a rapid period of democracy, which began with free elections in 1950, electing Getúlio Vargas. However, soon after, it ended with the brute force of a military coup that deposed João Goulart in 1964, who had assumed the presidency after the resignation of president Jânio Quadros. Brazilian political history is full of authoritarianism since the proclamation of the Republic in 1889. From the so-called Old Republic until the end of the New State in 1945. What existed in this period was a very poorly realized sketch of a democracy. Perhaps this word is not even the most appropriate to define the political climate of that time. A genuinely democratic state presupposes a respectful coexistence among political institutions, the constituted power, and society. Brazil did not have such a state in this period. Only since 1985 have we been learning to live in a democracy. Even so, with some mishaps that are not natural in a constitutional state.

Bossa Nova Movement

Nevertheless, the Bossa Nova movement emerged in a happy interregnum for Brazilian democracy and, by extension, among other things, for its playful culture. Juscelino Kubitscheck had been elected by universal suffrage and was running a good government. Everything indicated that we were finally building a solid, definitive democratic regime with the active participation of all segments of society. Moreover, the country was modernizing and moving well toward economic development, with the industrialization process as its highest priority. In this environment of good economic perspectives, optimism, and tranquility in the political scenario, what would later become internationally known as the Bossa Nova movement emerged in the southern zone of Rio de Janeiro at the end of the 1950s. The beach, the sun inviting a perfect tan, the colorful clothes of the bathers, the dazzling urban landscape by the sea, the beautiful girls parading on the sidewalks, the seduction game, the flirting, the fleeting love and an entirely new beat, different and revolutionary on the guitar, formed the essential elements for the radical transformation with the new dissonant chords of Brazilian popular music. To all of this was added the undeniable talent of young people with an excellent musical background.

They would experiment with sound by changing and perfecting the formal components of the song with their instruments and, at the same time, composing well-harmonized songs with original and aesthetically innovative beats on the guitar. The introduction of these new aesthetic resources gave a new and revolutionary tone to Brazilian popular music. The sonority and the personal interpretation style were completely different from what had ever been done in popular music. At that time, young Antônio Carlos Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes wrote the music and lyrics for the song "Chega de Saudade," recorded by João Gilberto in 1958. This interpretation by the singer from Bahia is considered a starting point of the Bossa Nova movement. From this recording, scholars understand that a new musical aesthetic was inaugurated in Brazilian popular music, based precisely on the elements mentioned earlier and on the virtuosity of its young composers. But the Bossa Nova movement members explored an aspect that was also quite innovative for the time in a very balanced and pertinent way. I am referring to the imagery in the poetic text of the songs. For example, the composition by Tom Jobim and Vinicius de Moraes, "Garota de Ipanema" (The girl from Ipanema). Perhaps the most famous Brazilian song on the international level, next to "Aquarela do Brasil" (Watercolor of Brazil) by Ary Barroso. In it, "The Girl from Ipanema" (1964), we can see at every moment the force of the poetic visual narrative. Let us see:

Olha que coisa mais linda, mais cheia de graça

(Look what a beautiful thing how full of grace)

É ela menina que vem que passa

(It's a girl who comes and goes)

Num doce balanço caminho do mar

(With sweet swaying hips on the way to the beach)

Moça do corpo dourado do sol de Ipanema

(A girl with her body golden from the sun of Ipanema)

O seu balançado é mais que um poema

(And the sway of her hips is more than a poem)

É a coisa mais linda que eu já vi passar

(It's the most beautiful thing I've seen pass by)

While listening to this song, the more attentive reader will notice that little by little, and in each verse, the poet imagistically builds the "girl from Ipanema" figure. A beautiful print, full of charm, walking through the streets near the seashore. Not only that, but the song also presents a happy and perfect harmonious synchrony between the beautiful young woman's walk and the very rocking of the ocean waves. Very clearly, this is a cinematographic image. The poet, however, goes further. For him, the "golden body" of the girl from Ipanema and her respective sensuality when walking (he prefers the word swinging) is better than a poem, in which the poet is undoubtedly unanimous in his statement. Indeed, he considers walking towards the beach to be the most beautiful thing he has ever seen. The verses analyzed here are no exceptions. The use of metaphors and other figures of speech allows the poet a kind of plastic elaboration of the cinematographic image in their poetry, accompanied by chromatic resources of the beauty of the sea, the Ipanema shore, and the thousands of bathers circulating on the sidewalks with their colorful clothes, which reminds us of the twelve colors of the chromatic circle. These features characterize very well the first phase of the Bossa Nova movement. To keep to a single example, I would like to remind you of other Bossa Nova songs whose imagery effects are very similar. Such are the cases, among others, of "O Barquinho" (Small Boat) by Roberto Menescal and Ronaldo Bôscoli and "Samba do Avião" (Airplane Samba) by Tom Jobim.

With its popularization, of course, the expression "bossa nova" would not be limited only to popular music. The country's economy was doing very well, and the industry was introducing new products, so it was natural that the demand for consumption would increase. Thus, advertising in all its segments (radio, television, magazines, newspapers, etc.) and sales and marketing strategies specialists would begin to use the words "bossa nova" for the most diverse products. Household appliances, furniture, beauty products, textiles, and a little later, at the end of the 1950s, even the automobile industry used the "bossa nova brand" to sell the big news: Volkswagen, which was starting to be manufactured in Brazil. The largest Brazilian metropolises adhered to the "fever" of the Bossa Nova event. The fact is that here we were already living the beginning of the so-called mass culture society, a term that Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, two of the most important theoreticians of the Frankfurt School, preferred to replace with the expression "cultural industry." It makes perfect sense. It is better not to confuse the reader. The colorful billboards posted on buildings, billboards on the highways, product advertisements in the streets, magazines, newspapers, radio, and television had in the expression "bossa nova," a kind of guarantee of commercial success. It is as if the undisputed success of the Bossa Nova song lent its prestige to the colorful world of mass consumption emerging at that moment in Brazil. At the same time, this phenomenon registers the opportunistic way the capitalist society commodifies and transforms, for example, a cultural event into a mere fad aiming at profit maximization.

But, all this context of euphoria, the joy of the Brazilian population, had to do with the political moment of being able to live the experience of a regime of freedom, of space to talk about their ideas, in short, to live the happiness of democratic political governance. That was something entirely new for that generation. Perhaps what best characterizes this moment is the song by singer and songwriter Juca Chaves entitled "Presidente Bossa Nova" (not even the president of the Republic escaped the bossa nova "stamp"), recorded at the end of the 1950s. It is, evidently, a Bossa Nova style samba, which includes harmony, rhythm, singing, and all the formal components of the Bossa Nova song. From beginning to end, the poetic text refers to President Juscelino Kubitscheck as a "nice, smiling, original" politician, words that I take from the author's song. However, because it is political satire, the whole text is permeated with a lot of irony, mockery, and jokes. That is a literary technique very characteristic of those who, in one way or another, want to make their political intervention and, among other things, denounce some situations with which they disagree. There was no reprisal by the government, and nothing happened to the singer and songwriter. Something did, however, happen. Juca Chaves became one of the most renowned artists among *bossa-novists*. "Presidente Bossa Nova" was one of the most requested songs in radio and television programs, and so was its author. Perhaps because of this success, the singer and songwriter also wrote several other satirical songs during and after Juscelino Kubitscheck's government. I want to highlight here among them, "Mudança de destino, Brasil já vai à guerra" (Brazil is already going to war), "Take me back to Piauí," "Dona Maria Teresa," among others. The latter was during the João Goulart government.

However, the Bossa Nova movement did not limit itself to revolutionizing the aesthetics and poetic language of Brazilian popular music. The grandiloquent interpretation style of the *samba-canção* period gave way to a less formal, more intimate poetic language, as seen, for example, in songs such as "Desafinado" (Untuned), "Chega de saudade" (No More Nostalgia), "Ela é carioca" (She is from Rio de Janeiro), among others. But, for a cultural event to have the status of a cultural movement, it is necessary that something innovative, revolutionary, paradigm-breaking, introduces new and consistent changes in the sociocultural context where this transformation happens. That almost always implies the introduction of a new aesthetic conception. Be it in the musical, performing arts, plastic arts, literature, or any other kind. By the way, this also includes society's political praxis in parallel to the State. Be it in solidarity condition with the State, participative, or exercising a role of contestation to the establishment, precisely because it doesn't agree with the situation in place. The Bossa Nova movement went through these stages, with significant political participation in its songs' poetic discourse, which we will see next. The 1960s and 1970s in Latin America were years of tremendous and heated political and ideological debates. The continent's condition of underdevelopment, and its economic and political dependence on the so-called hegemonic countries, especially but not only on the

United States, were intensely discussed. Only Venezuela was the exception. At that time, this country had a stable economy based precisely on the exportation of oil. So much so that it was called "Saudi Venezuela," in allusion to Saudi Arabia, the largest oil exporter in the world. On the political level, the political-ideological struggles reached a stage of radicalization, where guerrilla wars set the tone of gravity on the continent. In Brazil, Juscelino Kubitscheck had finished his mandate as president. In his place, Jânio Quadros was elected, who remained in power for only seven months and resigned, claiming that "terrible forces" prevented him from governing the country. It was nothing of the sort.

He disagreed with the National Congress, lost the support of most members of Congress, and, from that moment on, his autonomy as president was severely compromised. To solve the problem, the alternative he chose was the worst for the country: resignation. The vice-president was João Goulart, but he almost didn't take office. The military tried to prevent this because they considered him a leftist politician. After a complicated agreement with the National Congress, Goulart finally took office and governed the country from 1961 to 1964, when the military deposed him. At that time, on the cultural level, artists from the most diverse areas were demonstrating not only against the aggressiveness of the Armed Forces. They were also contesting the intrusive presence of the American government, directly interfering in Brazil's internal politics, whose autonomy to decide its destiny was being systematically undermined in the face of its political and economic dependence on foreign powers.

In popular music, especially in the Bossa Nova Movement, several songs emerged whose discourse brought to light the country's submission to foreign capital. From this period (1963) comes the composition "Canção do Subdesenvolvimento" (Underdevelopment Song), by Carlos Lyra, a legendary representative of Bossa Nova, and Chico de Assis. From this moment on, we can speak of a segment of the Bossa Nova movement that focuses on political-ideological issues. And here, I must make a critical register. All arts and culture segments began to politicize their discourse in defense of national sovereignty and against the political intervention of the hegemonic countries, with strong emphasis against the United States. "Canção do Subdesenvolvimento" (Underdevelopment Song) is undoubtedly one of the songs that best represent the presence of Bossa Nova in these protests, besides bringing to the surface the evils of Brazilian and Latin American underdevelopment. The expression "protest music" (which included Bossa Nova), so fashionable after the deposition of João Goulart, was of great importance because it served as a herald of the ongoing contestation. The radio stations programmed to play them and, by extension, intentionally or not, were publicizing the protest movement. To conclude this quick analysis of the Bossa Nova movement and its respective segment of politicized discourse, it is necessary to remember the invaluable participation of young artists such as Geraldo Vandré, Carlos Lyra, Cesar Roldão Vieira, Sérgio Ricardo, Edu Lobo, among others. Strictly speaking, what was happening in the popular culture

centers and in the National Students Union's political guidelines served as stimulus and inspiration for the emergence of "protest music," a politicized segment of Bossa Nova. These young artists did not only make a correct reading of the Brazilian political moment at the time, but they also went beyond. They left a vast amount of material available to think about a work of empirical sociology better to interpret the country's situation at that time. They brought to the surface the socioeconomic problems that obliterated the nation's development. Their legacy was of substantial importance for researchers and scholars to analyze the reasons for our structural underdevelopment, as the Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch well emphasized and, by extension, for our dependence on hegemonic countries. A little later, professors Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto published a book entitled *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (first published in Portuguese in 1969, translated into English in 1979). They show the relationship between the hegemonic countries and the development of peripheral economies. This publication is no less than fifty-two years old, but it is a work that has crossed time and continues to be a reference whenever one thinks about the political and economic context of the Latin American continent.

The Originality of Tropicalism

In the second half of the 1960s in Brazil, the repression initiated by the military after the deposition of João Goulart in 1964 would intensify considerably. Censorship became even stricter, and the state censor apparatus closely controlled all media. All creations of art and cultural production always went through prior censorship. They might or might not be cleared for public presentation. That was the country's political and cultural climate, like everything else, that involved the relations between state and society. At that time, a political struggle was installed in the country that was essentially marked by foolishness, by brutality, by something entirely out of control among political adversaries themselves. Strictly speaking, the word adversaries should be replaced by the term enemies, precisely because of the climate of hatred on both sides. The Brazilian left decidedly turned to armed struggle, organizing the so-called guerrillas in urban and rural areas. The best known was installed along the Araguaia River and went down in the country's political history as the "Araguaia guerrillas." On the other hand, the State would use its repressive war resources to practice torture against its enemies and physically eliminate them, justifying this attitude as a practice of "legitimate defense." The result of this absurdity could not be other than a tragedy with hundreds of deaths on both sides and some dozens of missing people who have not been found until now, according to the results of the National Truth Commission created in 2012.

In this tense environment of extreme concern for Brazilian society, in 1967, São Paulo's Record Television held the III Festival of Brazilian Popular Music. Just as well because it was also the moment when the singer and composer Caetano Veloso presented his song "Alegria, Alegria" (Joy, Joy) at the beginning of his career, accompanied by the Argentinean *Beat Boys* band (fig. 1). The Bahian composer did not win the festival but did much more than that. With an original poetic text, libertarian and at the same time revolutionary, he presented us his contribution to Brazilian popular music: an innovative aesthetic experience, where the consolidation of the so-called mass society in our country appears obviously. Magazine stands, singing on television, drinking coca-cola, Brigitte Bardot, spaceships, are names and objects that take us back to the products of mass culture (and not of popular culture) or, as Adorno and Horkheimer preferred, products of the cultural industry. But with this song, which among other things, incorporated a musical syncretism mixing old rhythms such as the *marchinha*, sounds, and noises of international pop-rock, the foundations were laid for what we would later know as the Tropicalist movement or, simply, Tropicália. This last name originated from the Anthropophagic movement, an avant-garde current recognized as the initial phase of the 1922 Modernist movement led by Oswald Andrade. In April 1967, the artist Hélio Oiticica exhibited his painting entitled Tropicália at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro. It was an interpretation of Oswald Andrade's Anthropophagic movement. At the same time, it is necessary to understand that Tropicalism was not restricted to the popular song, nor was it a fleeting fad as hastily propagated by some press.

Figure 1. Caetano Veloso at the III Popular Music Festival.
Photo: Arquivo Nacional, 21 October 1967. Public domain.

So much so that theater directors such as José Celso Martinez, Glauber Rocha in cinema, Rubens Gerchman in visual arts with his paintings *João e Maria conheceram-se* (*João and Maria met each other*) and *Carteira de identidade* (*Identity Card*), both from 1967, among others, such as Cláudio Tozzi with his series of parrots, patchwork quilts, astronauts, among other artistic manifestations, incorporated Tropicalism in their respective productions. And here, I want to register the brutality and the senselessness of the political-ideological struggle that permeated all cultural manifestations of resistance to the authoritarianism of the military governments of that time. As a form of protest artists from all over the country participated in the so-called Passeata dos Cem Mil (One-Hundred Thousand March) in 1968 (fig. 2). Still in this year, on the IV Modern Art Salon of Brasília, Claudio Tozzi's work *Guevara Vivo ou Morto* (*Guevara Alive or Dead*) was graffitied and partially destroyed by an extreme right-wing political group and later violated by DOPS (Department of Political and Social Order) agents with the official consent of the authoritarian state. We were very close to the promulgation of the AI-5 (Institutional Act 5) on December 13, 1968, and the state was already controlling the content of all cultural manifestations. Nothing escaped censorship.

Figure 2. Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil and Nana Caymmi at the One-Hundred Thousand March in 1968. Image reproduced under 'Fair Use' condition.

Even so, and with all the repression, the visual work of the Tropicalist movement combined the revolutionary song, its poetic text and innovative rhythmic harmony with a kind of "explosion" of colors that spontaneously led the viewer to a chromatic universe very typical of the 1960s. Strong and bright colors contrasted with each other, without any objective of establishing this contrast or of aligning chromatic convergences that could please through the combination of colors. In other words, there was no intention to create what we could call a "chromatic visual aesthetic" or something spectacular that would please or displease the "aesthetes of good taste" or the "colorists." The latter term was very much fashionable at the time to label something distasteful, simplistic, vulgar, and is still widely used in our everyday vocabulary. This true festival of colors, this colorful joy, is very well reflected in the record covers of all the singers and composers of Tropicalism. As an example (and a general rule), I want to mention Caetano Veloso's second long-play album, recorded in 1967 and released in 1968 by Phillips Records. The record is called *Caetano Veloso*.

It should also be registered that Tropicalism coexisted with the culture of psychedelic and hippies, two forms and lifestyles of young people at that time. This youthful behavior was born in California as an international movement in the West known as the Counterculture. However, the goal of psychedelics and hippies was straightforward and unremarkable. It was a kind of diluted extension of the well-known Beatnik movement, or simply the Beat Generation, formed by a group of young American poets and writers in the late 1950s and early 1960s who sought to challenge the establishment. The best known are Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Neal Cassady, and Jack Kerouac. We can consider that the Tropicalist movement was in perfect accordance with the youth of the Counterculture at that time, but with a small and essential difference. Tropicalist discourse had a more subtle irony and much more refined debauchery in dealing with the political questions of authoritarianism. The poetic work in "Alegria, Alegria" (Joy, Joy), for example, besides presenting an aesthetic innovation in the text and the narrative, also creates very colorful imagery and offers a well-constructed social critique when it mixes Coca-Cola with marriage, Brigitte Bardot, crimes, guerrillas, among other nouns. In short, it is an unpretentious and meaningless poetic text, but it is nothing of the sort. Without prejudice to social criticism, Caetano Veloso had left aside that hard, radical, Manichean and almost always aggressive speech to treat with lightness and fecundity the problems of underdevelopment that were not only ours but of all Latin American countries.

Conclusion

Well, dear reader, if according to the historiography of Brazilian popular music, the song "Pelo Telephone" (By Telephone) recorded in 1916 represents the kickoff of our entire songbook, then we are facing a cultural product with no less than 105 years of age. Since then, and even before, Brazilian popular music received the most diverse influences from foreign rhythms such as the bolero, the polka, the fox-trot, the rumba, and the cumbia. But Lundu, the African rhythm that originated samba, has remained since the slave trade to Brazil. A little later, and more stylized, with rhythmic and melodic variations, received the name *maxixe*. Just as well, for this rich musical syncretism, the samba of Noel Rosa, Geraldo Pereira, Wilson Baptista, Ismael Silva, Cartola, and many others would emerge. Over time, however, samba went on changing its poetic and rhythmic aesthetics until it reached the end of the 1950s when Bossa Nova appeared. At least for the scholars, that was the greatest moment and the most significant musical movement in Brazil. Samba would go through a revolution in style that started at its base and changed the entire aesthetic and the technique for interpreting the melody. Musicians and instrumentalists had to recycle themselves on their respective instruments, giving a new dimension to the samba that, from that moment on, would gain prestige and excellent international projection. The Bossa Nova style remains active, worshiped internationally without, of course, the great glamour of the 1960s and 1970s.

Tropicalism followed in the footsteps of Bossa Nova and was of great importance for the poetic innovation of Brazilian popular music, as we have seen in this article. As if this were not enough, it should be noted that, unlike Bossa Nova, it was a broader cultural movement, greatly influencing various segments of Brazilian culture. And more: with the discourse of Tropicalism (in part, of Bossa Nova as well), some segments of Brazilian youth of that time, but also of today, acquired a level of information and critical thinking that would not have been possible if these movements had not existed. The media cannot tell us everything we need to know. We must not forget that. They inform, and we must analyze this information thoroughly, discuss it whenever possible. To achieve this, we have to make use of all the segments of art. Music is one of them, and perhaps also one of the closest to the great masses. Let us be attentive to the poetic discourse of songs. We have a lot to know and learn about politics and social criticism. Art can give us this learning and knowledge.

Author Biography

Waldenyr Caldas is a full professor in Sociology of Communication and Culture at the University São Paulo. He was a visiting professor at University La Sapienza di Roma and the Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble, France. Caldas has been a professor since 1996 as well as the vice-director (1997-2001) and Director (2001-2005) of School of Communications and Arts (ECA), University of São Paulo (USP). In his academic career, he obtained all academic titles until the highest level as a full professor at the University of São Paulo. Currently, he is a representative of the University of São Paulo, together with the Franco-Brazilian Committee of the Agreement "Lévi-Strauss Chairs," and a member of the International Relations Committee of the University of São Paulo. Its scientific production records many books published, and several essays published in magazines and national and international collections. Email: waldenyr@usp.br

[1] Translated by Marjorie Lambert

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The Intersection Between Art, Music, and Society
Musical Iconography's Social Dynamics Impact[1]

Edson Leite

Abstract

This research focuses on musical iconography as a valuable source of information that refers to understanding themes and concepts supported by knowledge of history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, traditions, popular wisdom, etc., to perform an interpretation of the intrinsic meaning of civilization's documents historically. It is related to the works and from the whole context involving different temporal conditions to enable testimony and imagination in a vivid way that characterizes a fundamental means of expression and communication within the universe of art, referring to symbolic devices that conform to the social memory of a recent past. The images hold information linked to the history of art and the time they were produced and constitute tools for understanding the world. Music carries traits characteristic of the society that makes it and processes information decoded by musical iconography. Integrating the senses and the presence of rhythm as a form in all the arts allows the appreciation of musical iconography in a broad sense, as something that reaches the various manifestations of art and human communication, intertwining artistic proposals. From modernity on, Baudelaire, Kandinsky, and, later, Messiaen reported the correspondences between the senses and sensory experiences with constant references to music and musical metaphor. Such experiences enabled a new meaning and application to the term musical iconography, which we understand to be extended to non-figurative works. The artistic practices involving the universe of music will be analyzed. They will include artworks from the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP), one of the most significant art collections of contemporary art in Brazil and Latin America. The reflection on the music represented in modern and contemporary images will reveal aspects of the social context and current artistic production, enabling the historical review and interpretation, thinking the dimension of musical iconography.

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Introduction

The artistic experience goes through memory, symbolic expression, and perception. It allows the perspective of a dialogue to reach new meanings. According to Heidegger, the work of art publicly makes something else known, reveals something else to us, and is also an allegory. In the artwork, something other is joined to the manufactured thing—the artwork becomes a symbol (Heidegger 2012). Images always present multiple aspects and different perspectives, constituting a terrain of uncertainties. In this sense, Victor Hugo called the wall boxes of French Gothic cathedrals' vast symphonies of stone' or 'bibles of stone' (Hugo 2003).

Iconography (from the Greek *eikon*, image, graphe, description, writing) is the study of artistic images, representations in painting, sculpture, and other branches of the visual arts related to their sources and meanings. It studies the images' configuration, identification, description, and their respective symbolic and allegorical relationships. The French historian Émile Mâle coined, at the end of the 19th century, the term 'iconography' as a descriptive method of visual representations (Mâle 1908). Therefore, the evolutionary variants of the iconography term are related to 'iconography/allegory' by Cesare Ripa (1593), 'iconography' by Émile Mâle (1908), and 'iconography' and 'iconology' by Erwin Panofsky (1939).

There is a complex intellectual exercise in image analysis. Musical iconography approaches disciplines such as musicology, organology, history, art history but now incorporates anthropology, ethnomusicology, sociology, semiotics, and music psychology. Musical iconography relates to music and image; it is the narrative between the two elements. Images contain codified information that is linked to the history of art and the history of its time. Works of art are human construction and can help us understand the world around us. They are history's reflections and contain the symbols of their time. Music carries traits characteristic of each society, and iconography is an information processor. Observation of musical instruments in action is not possible in music archaeology studies. However, iconography provides an indirect statement of playing techniques and the treatment of musical instruments when they were not being played, providing information about past cultures' sound and ceremonial production. Studying the past of musical culture is much more than learning musical practices and their agents. It is thinking about music and past societies through music (Cerqueira 2016) to think about humanity's past. The iconographic repertoire creates an imaginative and pictorial universe related to events and signs, a historical memory of a particular past (Castro 2015).

The entire cultural complex of musical iconography constitutes a valuable source of information and points to the importance and complexity of working with a broad and multiple set of data, a complex and dynamic system, with multi, trans, and interdisciplinary perspectives. Visual representations of music nourish organology, archaeology, and musical iconography. The repeated presence of certain instrumental combinations in the images of a given period indicates such ensembles in that culture. The main problem of iconographic analysis is determining the functional, aesthetic, or ideological transformations that link the representations with their supposed originals, demonstrating the epistemological and interdisciplinary complexity and integrating this theme to heritage, mainly traditional communities (Cerqueira 2016).

In *Musical Poetics* (*Poétique musicale,* 1942), Stravinsky explains that music refers to a creative force that aspires to sound materialization in the strict sense of art. Thus, the musical sound and the artistic image are embedded with symbols and traditions. Many of them are ancestral. Art is a significant expression of collectivity and influences and impacts changes in society, but it also suffers the influence of time and where it is inserted. Poses, adornments, or the artist's mere freedom of creation can hardly be understood outside their time due to the codifications of the period they were created. The musical sound and the artistic image are expressions of human culture. Since antiquity, artists have used codes to explore symbolic aspects and to understand them. The theological, rhetorical, pedagogical, historical, and aesthetic knowledge is necessary to that understanding. Without which it becomes almost impossible to encompass all its signal meaning: one should bear in mind that many poets and theoreticians—and artists—of the seventeenth century were polymaths—with a multifaceted knowledge—and after all, there was not yet the idea of specialization (Brandão 2009). Bennet (2005) understands that the museum and the exhibitions are a privileged territory to analyze the devices that instrumentalize the possibilities of vision in each historical moment. The Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP), since its creation in 1963, has been consolidating itself as a pioneer and protagonist space regarding avant-garde artistic languages and their use in the creative and musicological sphere. Also, the MAC USP has been preserving, studying, and exhibiting a collection that contains many artworks linked to the music representation. Artworks that this study intends to analyze and understand the musical sensibilities, symbolic conceptions, and transformations in its historical dimension. In this way, mapping the artistic context and understanding this intermediary place between creation, research, and teaching can use this privileged documentary source for the constitution of another account in modern and contemporary art history.

The Tradition of Images

Iconography plays a facilitating role in human communication with the gods, referring to mythological and supernatural origins. For example, a cave painting in the Caves of El Cogul in Spain shows a group of women dancing around a naked man who appreciates the dance and, consequently, the music. Greek mythology indicates Euterpe, one of the nine Muses, as the one responsible for creating music. The word music means "Art of the Muses." Thus, it was up to the Greeks to systematize musical theory, influencing human beings and the state.

Engravings found in the Egyptian pyramids show the importance of music to the Assyrian and Egyptian peoples, with musicians playing flute, lute, and harp. Ancient peoples believed that music had a divine origin. In ancient times, the Hebrew people were the only ones to consider music a human creation, attributed to Jubal, a descendant of Cain. In ancient times, music imposed itself as a fundamental force of the ritual act. The art of the Greeks and Romans, in the painting on vases, sculptures, coins, frescoes, and sarcophagi, demonstrates the role of instruments in mythological themes and plays and bacchanals, showing how musical practice is inseparable from life events, worship, education, and military art (Bosseur 1999). Orpheus and the Muses transformed the harp into a symbol of poetic inspiration that, by prolonging natural sounds, imitates the sound of the waters and the winds. With the mermaids, represented in funerary monuments, as angels of death, the harp accompanies the songs of seduction and induces illusion. Orfeo's lyre was represented with thirteen strings, corresponding to the ancient alphabet of thirteen consonants (Bosseur 1999). The percussion instruments were generally linked to the feeling of joy and vivacity and used in the bacchanals. The tambourines rhythmed the bacchanals with effects that referred to frenzy and hypnosis.

Musical instruments, inseparable from their visual incarnation, manifest secret faculties of the human soul and contribute to the induction and interpretation of mood swings since the beginning of human history. Music contains harmonic principles established by a higher order, the model for all human creation, and therefore asserted itself in the Middle Ages in contemplation and glorification of divine messages. Instruments were seen as an extension of the human body organs, and, in this sense, they amplified the bestial or celestial aspects of individuals. They could be "Satan's sacristans" or "angelic" (Bosseur 1999). The materials used in the construction of the instruments influenced the symbolism attached to each of them.

Based on elementary numerical proportions, both visual and sound phenomena should produce an impression of order and balance in the spirit, capable of provoking a feeling of fullness and agreement with the laws of the universe. Until the 16th century, iconography was used only for the study of religious symbols and images. In a society where most of the population could not read, the painting was fundamental in the symbolic construction of the social imaginary. Although linked primarily to allegorically transmitting divine truths to the faithful, medieval art did not lose creativity and aesthetic value. Music was an effective medium for propagating social ideas, behavior, and conduct in the Middle Ages, including those relating to love and marital fidelity. In the *Symposium* (c. 385–370 BC), Plato explains that music is the science of love between rhythm and harmony, celestial and ordered love, which unites opposites and is efficient for education and moderation (fig. 1). According to the Platonic concept, music is the reflection of mathematics and celestial order. In the Platonic conception, conjugal love is understood as the perfect way to achieve supreme beauty. Love should always be expressed in verse and song since it is eminently communicative. It was understood that music could be learned through the experience of passion and love controlled and governed by harmony. Thus, music acted as a fundamental guideline for education and human relations and already began its association with images and texts, exercising a didactic and propaganda function.

The relationship between art and its context of production should fall on the meaning of artistic forms and the content of images, constituting historical sources to investigate the culture of a period. The study of images and symbols indicates numerous changes in art historiography and the traditions of the past. According to Panofsky, iconographic analysis refers to understanding how, under different historical conditions, themes or concepts were expressed by objects and events (Panofsky 2009). For Argan, Erwin Panofsky's great merit consists of having understood that, despite its confusing appearance, the world of images is ordered. Therefore, it is possible to make art history the history of images (Argan 1992). In the artworks where episodes of sacred history are represented, it is common to observe open fragments of heaven. Considering the musician angels as Neoplatonic images, through which the harmony of paradise is alluded to, or understanding heavenly music as an unmistakable sign of the divine presence, an indication of the supernatural. The union of the human soul with God is analogously expressed as the intimate delight produced by music. The intangible harmony takes visible forms through musical instruments, especially in the representation of stringed instruments. From a material point of view, the sonority

of the instruments depends on the details of their construction. Their symbolic meaning is inspired by their timbre qualities or their ability to produce one or more sounds at a time. Information can be supported from sources relatively close to the pictorial works in temporality. Since the 16th century, music was understood as an art capable of directly communicating heaven and earth. The paintings figured musical instruments played by angels, functioning as a visual metaphor for spiritual music, contributing to the artwork's didactic purpose and suggesting to the faithful a way to understand mystical union through sound evocation. By its polyphonic nature, the harp became a symbol of harmony, of the interaction between consonance and dissonance, which should serve as an example of the internal moderation of the human being (Borja 1680). A very similar meaning to the harp was attributed to the lute, considered adequate to express the appeasement of the human soul as if it were a musical instrument, capable of producing music inside the body. The human voice was also considered a musical instrument, the instrument of praise to the most significant degree.

Sometimes evoked by musical instruments, the number seven is linked to the number of the planets (not all of them are planets in the astronomical sense of the term) to the seven angels that rule them or the seven scale notes. Cotte, relying on Mersenne, reports that the symbolism of the four elements (fire, air, water, and earth) pervades works of art and corresponds to the four temperaments, the four seasons, the four cardinal points, the four human voices, and even the four Gospels. The Reformation expressed great suspicion, sometimes hostility, to instruments that visibly showed signs of their pagan origin and were consequently revealed to favor debauchery and imbalance of the senses. According to the terms of the Council of Trent, the Counter-Reformation disapproved and prohibited instruments associated with worldly music, except the organ. From the 16th century on, angels were preferentially singers, under the rigor and censorship of the period. Exports to musical art became more individualized as the Baroque era was affirmed, which shows music in its close relationship with the general laws of the cosmos, shown obedient to monarchical and religious power (Bosseur 1999).

The sound phenomenon, ephemeral by essence, refers to the flow of time and implies the illusion of pleasures of the senses. It translates the growing variety of approaches to music in society, in gallant gatherings and popular festivals, particularly numerous in the 17th and 18th centuries, in official ceremonies, military parades, theater, and amateur practices (Bosseur 1999). From the moment the will to treat color as energy is more clearly affirmed, giving relative autonomy to what is represented, composers explore the harmonic language and timbre games, artistic intentions are modified and incorporate sensitively different

implications. Music contributes to relief the inner and outer space, and whether in the fine arts, literature, or music, symbolism constitutes the basis and essence of the artist's language (Cotte 1995). The symbolism of musical instruments is linked to their timbre, social use, external appearance, or legendary traditions.

From modernity on, firstly, the poet Charles Baudelaire, then the painter Wassily Kandinsky and, later, the composer Olivier Messiaen, reported the correspondences between the sensory experiences and the body in the city. Further, the constant references to music and musical metaphor occurred, making possible a new meaning and application to the term musical iconography, which we understand to be extended to non-figurative works. Therefore, as an example, many of the artworks of the MAC USP collection present relation with musical iconography, among them (figs. 1-3), the paintings by Di Cavalcanti (*Cena de café concerto*, 1934 and *Homens tocando violão*, 1949), Massimo Campigli (*Mulheres ao piano*, 1946), Fulvio Pennacchi (*Figuras carnavalescas*, 1973), Alex Flemming (*Santa Cecília tocando harpa num pátio pós-moderno*, 1985), Regina Vater (*Flauta tíbia III*, 1988), Robert Rauschenberg (*Music – John Cage*, 1994), and also, sound sculptures and tridimensional artworks such as those by Nelson Leirner, Paulo Nenflidio, and Carlos Bevilacqua, among many other artists. Many sculptures, installations, objects, instruments and drawings, electronics, movement, construction, invention, randomness, physics, interaction, and other creations linking music and visual arts are highlighted. In the art of these artists, visual representation of auditory sensations is common, even using, in some cases, musical structures transformed into visual images. Kandinsky, for example, expounds his theories on the use of color, establishing a strict link between music and spiritual dimensions. Paulo Nenflídio builds sound structures that produce unusual sounds and that, in many cases, refer to instruments known to the public.

Figure 1. Emiliano Di Cavalcanti, *Roda de Samba*, 1928.
Photo by Jonas de Carvalho, April 9, 2013.

Figure 2. Massimo Campigli. *Mulheres ao violão*, 1946
Photo by Jean Louis Mazieres, September 17, 2014.

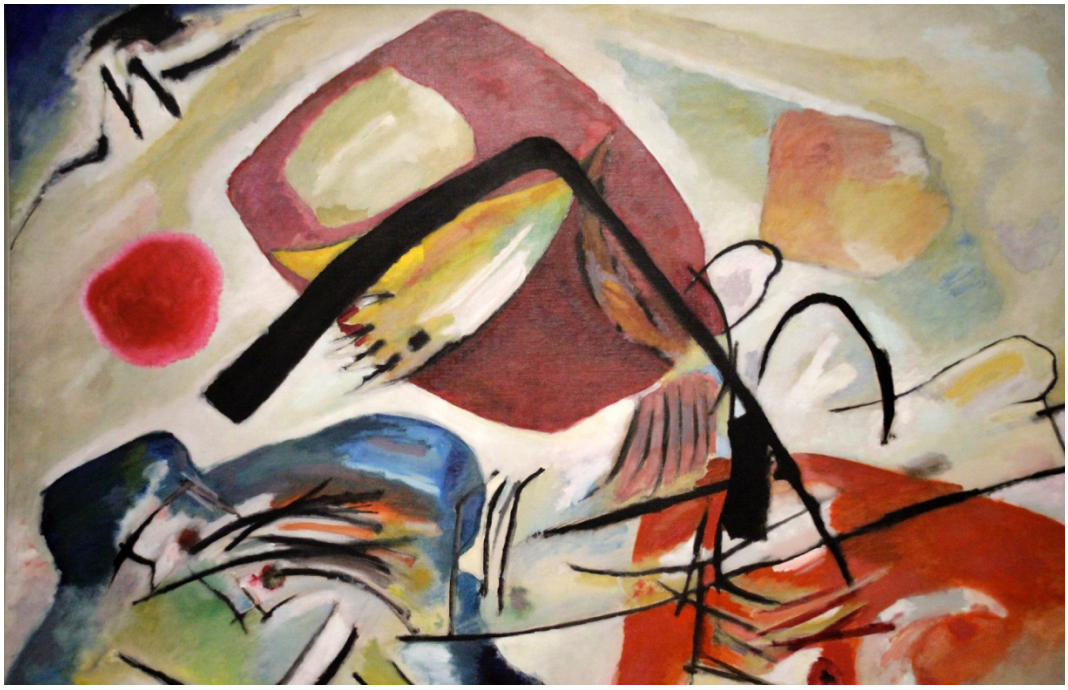

Figure 3. Wassily Kandinsky, *Mit dem schwarzen Boden*, 1912.
Centre national d'Art et de Culture Georges-Pompidou, Paris.
Photo by Renaud Camus, December 6, 2013. Licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Final Considerations

The iconographic musical documentary heritage constitutes a powerful tool that allows establishing a new relationship between musicology, information, and the various aspects in the relations between globalization, regionalization, and local culture. Musical information emanates from the phenomenological dimension of music (materialized in sound and audiovisual records) and its linguistic and semiotic dimension (materialized in iconographic and graphical music records). Art is a source of reflections, impacts collectivities, and produces changes in the societies' mentality in which it operates. The art-society relationship is present in musical iconography through the desire to deepen the analysis of a concrete episode in the history of music and art that allows us to resolve several unknowns that arise due to the influence of the visual arts in the unchaining of social situations. Music generates substantial social impact through iconographic reference, which has highly significant transformative power. Iconography translates a broad panorama of music-making and how society interprets its presence. Music presents strong cultural traditions of our society, and on it have been produced images and icons that have transformed society, or part of it, in powerful ways. The intersection between art, music, and sociology is the source of musical iconography's social dynamics impact. According to a long tradition, musical iconography can allow the subject beyond established determinations towards its conditions and possibilities, revealing itself as an identity vector through which the art universe is expressed, constituting an ideal, a possible form of self-understanding.

In an anthropological sense, culture is objectified in socially transmitted discourses, practices, rites, products, and institutions, and their products summon us into dialogue with the past and otherness. Discourses about music are symbolic forms, conceptions of ideas and values, concepts explicitly stated, and others only inferred. The integrated theoretical reflection on music in modern and contemporary images should reveal social context and artistic production aspects. As Adorno stated (1984), to tear the mute eternity out of musical images is the true intention of progress in music. Modern and contemporary artworks, especially the non-figurative ones—as the artworks at MAC USP—have a relationship with music. Also, these artworks seek a symbolic reconstruction allowing a transcendental listening and understanding to think about and interpret the historicity and the dimension of musical iconography. The integration of the senses and the presence of rhythm as an existing form in all the arts allow us to think, nowadays, of musical iconography, which reaches various art and human communication manifestations, intertwining artistic proposals.

Author Biography

Edson Leite is a full professor at the Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of São Paulo (MAC USP). He is former Vice-Director of the School of Arts, Sciences and Humanities at the University of São Paulo (2010-2013), Director of the USP Symphony Orchestra (2010-2016). He was also the coordinator of the Inter-Graduate Program in Aesthetics and Art History of the University of São Paulo (2017-2020). Since 2021, Professor Leite has been the President of the Research Commission of MAC USP and develops his arts, music, cultural heritage, and communication research, working mainly on Brasilien and Latin American cultures. E-mail: edsonleite@usp.br

[1] Translated by Marjorie Lambert.

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Singular-Plurals in Contemporary Choreography: From Aesthetics to Social Aesthetics

Iris Julian

Abstract

Staging processes and choreographies of contemporary dance and performance: do they have to be perceived as a mere passing of choreographic notations from a single choreographer to dancers who have to repeat them "mindlessly" (Laermans 2015, 196)? Or should these rather be discussed as a reciprocal situation providing aesthetic experiences for participants in a singular-plural mode? To put it differently: Might choreography have the capacity to create an environment for the refinement of a democratic grass-roots consciousness? In order to discuss these questions, I have adapted various scientific perspectives in my research (Julian, forthcoming, autumn 2021). The starting point of my studies lies in theatre studies based on comparative methods. Artistic practices are juxtaposed in order to highlight their specificity. In a second step—inspired by the discourse as developed in theatre studies (Tatari 2017; Ruhsam 2011) —I discussed staging processes in conjunction with an ontological principle as conceptualised by the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (2000): the specificity of *being-with* makes it possible to theorise a range of infinite possibilities and differences that evolve by the mere execution of movement patterns. The third perspective is based on sociological methods that were adapted in order to embed the staging process in real-life conditions. My consideration here is that only by knowing imbalances that may exist in social life we understand the dynamics unfolding throughout a group that gathers in order to create a piece. The fourth perspective I apply in this article is based on a method called the *aesthetic field* as conceived by the philosopher Arnold Berleant (1970): having similarities to *being-with* makes it possible to cover not merely human interactions and social conditions but also interactions and permeations with a thing world, such as architectures, a stage design, costumes. Thus, the thing world can be seen as co-choreographing the work.

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Innumerable Social Exchanges

In the contemporary dance and performance scene (based on the projects scrutinised so far, my focus is put on the U.S. and European sphere, which is partly connected to approaches from South America), we find innumerable inherited artistic practices that are based on reciprocal exchanges, let alone the practice of contact improvisation as developed by the U.S. choreographer Steve Paxton in the early 1970s. Their shared characteristic focuses on relationality, providing frames of perception that can be thought of as "singular plural".

The search for a starting point for these developments turned out to be futile. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that already during the flourishing days of the Black Mountain College (1933–1957) near Asheville, North Carolina, there was ongoing experimentation with models of unconventional social interchanges in the field (Bourdieu, 1987) of art. These also included the relationship between teacher and student: a mechanical binary relation based on the dominant role of an active teacher and a subordinate, passive student (Berleant 2017, 13), which was to be overcome. Instead, interactions were meant to involve all participants, no matter what their position in this institution. Approaches like these gave rise to what was later called "environmental art" realised by artists such as Merce Cunningham, John Cage, and Yoko Ono, who were also associated with *Fluxus.* Their artistic approaches also inspired choreographers and dancers such as Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer. In the early 1960s, they started to gather around the Judson Church in New York. Resulting from cooperation with visual artists and musicians, they went on to form the Judson Dance Movement, an artistic direction active until the mid-1970s.

One example out of the creative experiences in these years was the Continuous Project Altered Daily. This was conceptualised by Rainer as a series of rehearsals starting at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1970 (Siegmund 2006, 401–402). Unconventionally, it was not the final product, but the rehearsal process itself that was to be shown in front of an audience, thus creating a hybrid performative format. For my line of argument, it is important to note that this project still knows an initiator, namely Rainer, but—as the events progressed—a single will should be dispensed with, creating space for a multiplicity of voices. Among others through real life encounters in the context of festivals, this concept was passed from Rainer to a young generation of European choreographers who were just about to merge into a direction that would be called *conceptual dance* (Laermans 2015, 192). Its central characteristic consists of searching for a new way of creating a dance or performance piece by questioning conventions, such as music, light and the audience's attention spans as previously applied in theatre. Experimental

formats emerged from this approach, combining the execution of a movement pattern in front of an audience while talking about what was being executed. For my line of argument, it was *conceptual dance's* focus on the working or staging process that proved relevant. Artists associated with this direction started to analyse the working structures applied throughout the group. It was hoped that a democratisation of the dance field could be fostered via a singular-plural mode of creative collaboration (Laermans 2015, 20–21). This also motivated a reorientation and re-enactment of practices developed in the context of the Black Mountain College or the Judson Dance Movement. For instance, it was Rainer's Continuous Project Altered Daily (starting 1970) that became one of the models that were literally continued, i.e., re-enacted by the young artists of a French group called Le Quatuor Albrecht Knust. Affected by these creative circles, Kattrin Deufert and Thomas Plischke, a couple who in early 2000 fused to an artistic label Deufert + Plischke, developed a method called *Reformulieren*: this would become the central working mode for a piece called *Reportable Portraits* (2007, Figure 1), which they realised and rehearsed together with the co-choreographers Helena Golab, Hanna Sybille Müller and Benjamin Schoppmann.

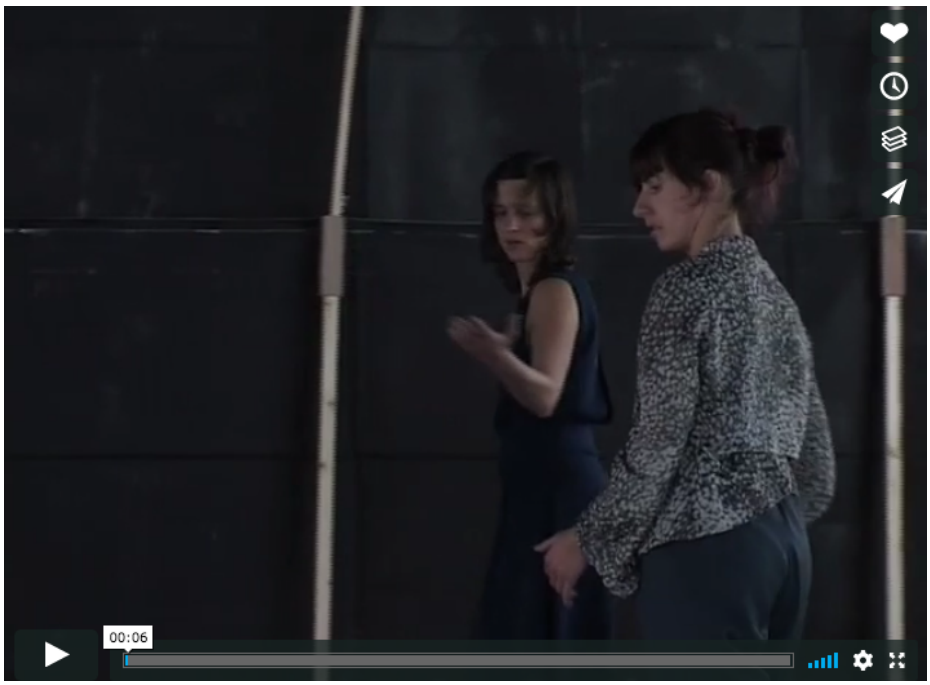

Figure 1. Deufert + Plischke together with Helena Golab, Hanna Sybille Müller, Benjamin Schoppmann, *Reportable Portraits*, 2007, short version on Vimeo, screenshot by Iris Julian.

Its basic rules consist in one of the performers starting to invent a short movement or sequence of dance, then writing down the basic patterns and passing the notation to the next performer, who repeats it with their body before adding their own movement. Resulting from this, an exchange of physical and mental ideas develops throughout the group. Here we find a realisation of what Schoolman would call a "reconciliation image" (Schoolman 2020, 1): The identity and difference of each movement idea as conceptualised by each participant develop endless forms in an in-between. Thus, the handwriting and signature of one choreographer merge into a polyphony that enables all the voices to be heard. In doing so, a democratic texture is formed: instead of one person's taste and imagination, each participant's taste circulates freely throughout the group.

Research Becoming an Epistemological Question

At this point, I want to return to questions raised at the beginning of this article: How to perceive these alternative modes of working together? What would be excluded when read according to a binary model? Since projects such as Reportable Portraits (2007) were not conceptualised by a whole group but by initiators, a dual mode dividing those who conceptualise creatively and those who just repeat mindlessly is still applied when discussed in the discourse of theatre and dance studies. As theatre scholar Kai van Eikels notes, we can trace a dividing line back through the centuries to Ancient Greek philosophy in this respect. From there, we have inherited the following two categories: the creative, inventive *archein* (ἄρχειν) was differentiated from what was called *prattein* (πράττειν), which was understood rather in the sense of mindless execution of pre-ordained forms (van Eikels 2015, 31–47). Alternatively—in the context of my research—interactions unfolding between all the participants were taken into account. When doing this, what emerges is a vast range of questions that points to the field of epistemology. Indeed, the analysis of work processes in my recent study (Julian, forthcoming, autumn 2021) started by questioning research methods.

The Ontology of *Being-With*

Choreographic formats that enabled creative processes based on a singular plural, such as *Reformulieren*, have recently been discussed by theatre scholars against the background of a *being-with* as conceptualised by the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (Tatari 2017; Ruhsam 2011). Although this

ontological principle is relatively complex, its success in the dance field may be ascribed to two facts: firstly, it can be squeezed into a few phrases (making it vulnerable for misinterpretation, however), and secondly, it makes it possible to analyse permeations between humans and non-humans on various levels.

Nancy's critique points to the fact that a singular still underlies most ontological conceptions (Nancy 2000). Against and in opposition to this philosophical tradition, he conceptualises a singular as a plural in a radical way: not only is the preposition "with" to be foregrounded, but it is to be perceived in the same breath as "being", resulting in a *being-with*. As Nancy states, we are spoken by a certain language before we even speak a language. We receive a name before we can utter our first sound: a "we" is present before an "I" can actively enter into the field of signifiers of a specific culture.

If we analyse the choreographic method of *Reformulieren* in direct conjunction with this ontological principle, let us stay by the example of language. First, every movement is a proposal that is perceived, repeated, and given a physical response. This makes a "before" important, a before that could be traced throughout the group until the first person of the chain – can they be perceived as being the "original"? Then, against the backdrop of *being-with*, it becomes evident that they do not create from an *origo ex nihilo* but come from a specific education, which in itself points to infinity.

Thus, what comes to the fore is its specific unfolding of infinity, an infinity of possible movements becoming concrete (or not) in the moment of realisation throughout the group. Here we begin to touch on the notion of an in-between of identity and difference, as discussed by Schoolman. In the context of the *Reformulieren*, these two aspects do not fuse or merge into one, nor do they form an identitarian whole. Still, a scale of differences of movement, ideas, and responses is realised side by side.

A Close-Up on Real Life

The *being-with*, an ontological figure of thought, highlights the infinite variations inherent in every action and sensory experience. At the same time, it tends to create an illusion of a merely harmonious whole within a group when seen as disinterested subjects co-working on an equal footing. But what about social reality? Although *Reformulieren* is undoubtedly an outstanding format that succeeds in flattening hierarchies, two initiators invented it, namely Deufert + Plischke.

What real-life structures and possibilities did the choreographers and dancers who took part in the *Reformulieren* find? Considering questions like these, we reach a point where the ontological approach had to be combined with further perspectives. In the context of my study, I, therefore, adapted scientific methods as applied in sociology. Especially the theory of practice as conceptualised by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1982) proved to be adaptable to structures and working conditions of the dance and performance field.

In the context of this article, I would like to mention just a few results of the sociological perspective. First, it became evident that dancers and choreographers in the projects that I scrutinised had an equal social background. They mainly studied dance at U.S., South American, and European universities, such as P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels, Movement Research at the former Judson Church in New York, and the Universidad de Chile in Santiago de Chile, just a few. This insight proved to be relevant: since the positions of all the choreographers, dancers, and co-choreographers were based on a homogeneous field, dancers participating in these experimental formats could take the role of the initiators in a subsequent project. This means that there were no fixed power structures, but the field proved to be open and transparent.

A further result made clear that a change of positions does not happen overnight. Still, initiators already have a perennial carrier, and thus, working experiences before theatre houses gave them funds and contracts. Therefore, with Bourdieu's terminology, we could say that the *symbolic capital,* enabling confidence from festival programmers and curators, was achieved by contracted work over the years.

Seen against the backdrop of *being-with* as conceived by Nancy, at a certain point, the sociological perspective came up against its limits: the focus is on human interactions: non-human interactions, for example, a stage design, do not fit into the grid of investigation – components that proved to be relevant, since co-choreographing a staging process. As Eve-Marie Morin, a Canadian-based philosopher discusses, Nancy's philosophy even goes as far as not necessarily putting humans at the centre of a *being-with*. Instead, singular-plural human and non-human entities are to be perceived as non-hierarchically when developing at a certain moment in time (Morin 2012, 45–46). The principle of *being-with* thus motivated my search for a further perspective that also makes it possible to consider our potential to fuse with a thing-world.

Non-human or Human Interactions? That is the Question

The methods I applied to analyse the staging processes were each developed in close connection with the analysis of the working structures and artistic methods themselves: when publications accompanying the projects were analysed together with the interviews I conducted with the participants, it became clear that the artistic formats put the emphasis on human interactions. At this point in the research, the concept of the *aesthetic field*, as developed by Arnold Berleant (1970), proved to provide a theory that, although keeping human interactions at the centre, it opens possibilities to analyse a permeation with the surrounding world. Interestingly, envisioning a direct sensible reaction and field that occurs when people and things come together, Berleant comes significantly close to Nancy's ontology, which analyses our *being-with* as permeated by an ongoing sense-making world (Morin 2012, 5).

Following the etymological perspective presented by Berleant, activation of our senses can already be discussed as a phenomenon that points to an aesthetic perspective. As he states, Ancient Greek language knew the term *aisthēsis* (αἴσθησις) meaning "perception by the senses" (Berleant 2017, 9). What is important here is that "aesthetics" has a double meaning, indicating both the mere senses (hearing, feeling, seeing) and a sensual experience. In his discussion, he reflects a refinement of our sensibility as it happens exactly through a sensual experience. My own point here is that a staging process—not "only" serves a certain goal, namely, to create a piece of art moreover, it provides a sensual experience. The here and now of a group of people interacting enables participants to refine their senses. As *Reformulieren* proves: The better the sensitivity of one person, the more he or she will be receptible for the fine tones of the colleagues' proposals or movement patterns. When seen under the question of how we can create an environment enabling refinement of our senses interacting with each other as humans but also with animals, and nature as such to my mind, we arrive at a point where art merges into the field of politics.

The Aesthetic Field

In principle, Berleant's concept of the *aesthetic field* can be perceived as expansion of what the 18th- century philosopher Immanuel Kant (1790) had envisioned with his concept of disinterestedness (*interesseloses Wohlgefallen*): a situation based on a cognitive model that knows an appreciator (the subject of a situation) and an object of appreciation (for example an artwork, but also in nature, such as a sunset). Thus, Kant develops his concept of disinterest and purity between a beholder with a certain mind-set and an object beheld.

With and against this background, Berleant's concept of the *aesthetic field* underlines that Kant's model is too narrow: as Berleant writes, social psychologists such as Kurt Lewin and J. J. Gibson have proved that the social world consists of vectors of forces between participants and things. These vectors invite participants' behaviours, an invitation quality called "affordance" (Berleant 2017, 11–12). Thus, the aesthetic situation has to be perceived as integrative, consisting of various components that form a whole (Berleant 2017, 11). I would now like to describe Berleant's model based on four main components and then analyse two staging processes.

He puts the appreciator, the person experiencing an aesthetic value, in the first place (here, Berleant seems to be an heir to Kant). The main difference is that Berleant's appreciator is also conceptualised as being in a group of people experiencing a somatic sensation with others.

The second component is dedicated to the focus of this appreciation, such as an artwork or a building. Thus—central to the analysis of a staging process—the role of a costume, a stage design, or urban spaces as co-choreographing the work can be included in the analysis. Furthermore, as Berleant writes, the object may also be immaterial, a mental imagination. In my field of study, this is the level of the choreographic notation.

As the third component, there is the event that brings the object of focus into existence. When referring to the field of dance and performance, it has to be kept in mind that the mere notation—read by a performer—is already an aesthetic situation, but at this stage, it can hardly be grasped from the outside. Here Berleant's concept again comes to life, making it possible to establish that it needs an invitation, e. g. by a theatre house, in order to provide a frame so that even situations on the border of visibility become perceivable.

Finally, the fourth component is a situation that activates the field. In the context of this article, I would propose that this is the level of the theorist discussing a work of art and the sphere where the writer meets the reader, namely you as you read this article (Berleant 2017, 11–12).

Bringing the *Aesthetic Field* into Artistic Practices

The method of the *aesthetic field* will now be applied in order to analyse two different forms of collaboration. The first project has already been a read thread in this article: the staging process for the theatre piece *Reportable Portraits* (2007) based on *Reformulieren* initiated by Deufert + Plischke. This took place in a rehearsal room and included the continuous meeting of a small number of people.

The first factor in the *aesthetic field* as conceived by Berleant would be the appreciator, in this case not a single person but a group of dancers who were invited to work together as co-choreographers. Aesthetic methods such as *Reformulieren* formed a singular-plural so that all the participants could share their taste and aesthetic sensibility. One of the rules consisted of working in absolute silence, resulting in careful observation of their anticipators to repeat their proposal before weaving the texture with their own ideas. Their awareness was constantly trained through this, leading to an increase in their sensibilities. This was consciously analysed by Kattrin Deufert in her dissertation on John Cage, where she wrote that artistic methods unfolding in silence might help to raise the ability to listen to one another (Deufert 2002, 29).

The second component of the *aesthetic field*, the object they all experienced, was the singular-plural of the jointly written notation. The third component was four theatre houses interested in this experiment, thus enabling this outstanding staging process to become perceivable when finished. Finally, the fourth component is formed by you and me as you read my article analysing the question of the kind of relevance this process might have for developing sensing of an "I" in the plural of a "we". Before I answer this question, I will discuss a second project.

Called *Radioballett* (2002) by its initiators, a group of artists called LIGNA., this project was realised at the Hamburger main railway station (*Hauptbahnhof*). Thus, this performative situation was directly located in public space, addressing every passer-by to join in: via a radio broadcast by the Freie Radiosender FSK, choreographic notations could be received by mobile phones. Thus, the medium chosen was understood as the message, namely as an invitation to all passers-by (see Figure 2).

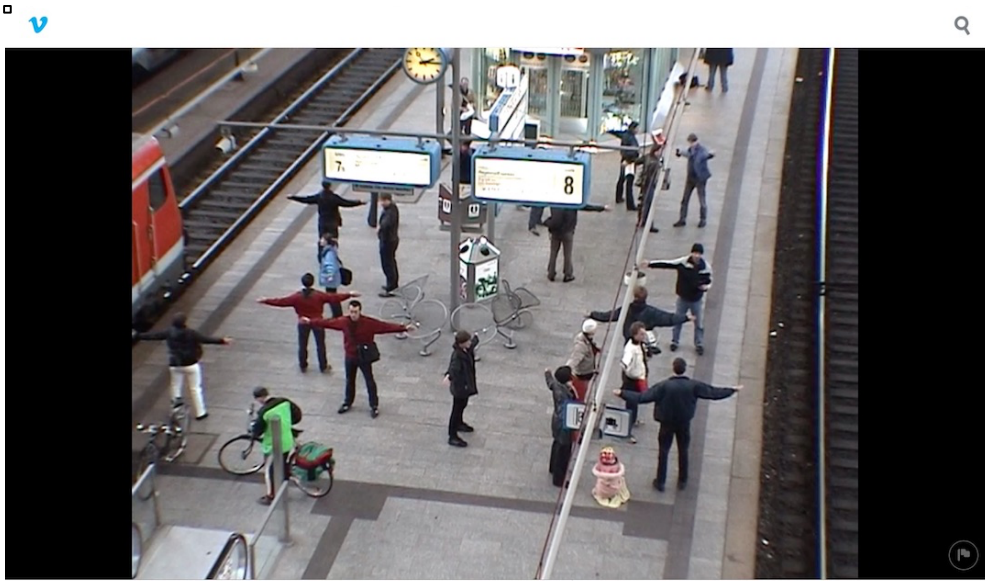

Figure 2. Ligna, *Radioballett*, documentary 2003, by Maren Grimm, Olaf Sobczak, Christina Witz, the version on Vimeo, screenshot by Iris Julian.

Analysing the first level of analysis, the main difference from *Reportable Portraits* becomes clear: the group of people experiencing an aesthetic value was open to an infinite human *being-with*. People from all social contexts joined in, no matter their education, knowledge, or social status. Even deaf people or people who did not understand the language could connect by coping movements as performed by the surrounding people.

Another major difference appears when seen through the lense of the second aspect, namely the focus of appreciation: there we find—by imagining ourselves from the performer's perspective—a shifting of attention from the radio voice to urban space, namely the Hamburg railway station, and back again to one's own body. I find it interesting here that the *aesthetic field* emphasises the relevant aspects, namely the place of realisation and its implicit meanings as a public site. Indeed, this project was intended to criticise the privatisations of commonwealth affecting and transforming public spaces. The focus was on changing rules that occur as privatisations evolve, e. g., the exclusion of socially marginalised groups, such as poor and unemployed people, who were forbidden to use the benches in Hamburg's main railway station (van Eikels 2013, 198–207).

Regarding the third factor, in comparison to *Reportable Portraits,* it becomes clear that instead of money funding or the invitation by theatre houses, the people themselves who joined in this formation brought the object of focus into existence —the critique and the choreographic notation resulting from it. They all met just once: the piece itself "survived" in form of a video recording still available on

platforms such as Youtube. Although its synchronicity excludes the possibility of training a refinement of the senses over a certain period of time, nevertheless the here and now that unfolds in an environment of a public urban space provides an experience of sensing oneself in a plural of the group and in connection with an architecture conveying meaning. Thus my proposal here is that the project can be seen as forming a grass-roots-choreography. In the fourth component, we are again thinking about how these singular-plural artistic practices can be perceived.

Conclusion

The analysis based on the method of an *aesthetic field* revealed that singular plurals in choreography could develop on various levels. The participants' senses may be affected differently: as the discussion has shown, *Reportable Portraits* consists of a small group of five people. They were working together for a while in the context of a funded project enabling ongoing rehearsals where infinite ideas could flow freely. Resulting from this working structure, their senses are developed in another way compared to the second project. *Radioballett* involved a huge amount of people, a group infinite in itself, that seems to have, at least at the very first sight, nothing in common, but the mere ontological ability to act- interact, exchange. This sensible experience may, as Berleant proposes, be perceived as an aesthetic phenomenon.

However, what both artistic projects have in common is their potential to build an aesthetic refinement, making it possible to foster the ability for grass-roots democracies. The point I want to make here is that neither project aims at a fusion to an all-in-one, a singular and identitarian form (what comes to my mind are the "Tiller Girls" as discussed by sociologist Siegfried Kracauer), but instead form a sphere where identity and difference are constantly present, transmitted and exchanged: the difference in taste resulting in a different style and form of movements as in *Reformulieren*, the differences of passers-by as in *Radioballett*. Although combined by a method or a choreography, the aim was not to erase differences. Instead, a context was built where they could flourish side by side. Following Schoolman, through its proliferation of aesthetic forms, art becomes the precondition of morality by teaching reason the possibility of reconciling identity and difference (Schoolman 2020, 25). And indeed, in the field of choreography, mere imitation could already be the starting point for practising democracy.

Author Biography

Iris Julian (Gütler) works as a theoretician and an artist at the interface of cultural studies, performance arts, and choreography (both in practice and theory). In 2019 she became an associate scientific member of the research group Mediale Teilhabe with its headquarters at the University of Konstanz, in cooperation with the Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Zurich University of the Arts, and University of Hamburg. For her PhD, supervised by Prof. Dr. Sabeth Buchmann and Prof. Dr. Ruth Sonderegger and to be published in autumn 2021, she received grants from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (2020) and the Wissenschaftsförderung der Stadt Wien Kultur, MA7 (in 2019 and 2020). She has worked as an assistant to the artistic direction and dramaturge of the Tanzquartier Wien. As an artist, she received grants from the Impulstanz: Vienna International Dance Festival and the Federal Ministry of the Republic of Austria: Arts and Culture. Her performative works have been shown, e.g., at MuMoK: Museum of Modern Art, Vienna" (2010) and at the Austrian Cultural Forum London (2017). In addition, she has developed performances for the KUBUS VALIE EXPORT and the BarRectum designed by the Atelier Van Lieshout, during recent years she has collaborated with the visual artist Esther Stocker.

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The Art Style Magazine's Scientific Committee

Dominique Berthet is a University Professor. He teaches aesthetics and art criticism at the University of the French Antilles (UA). Founder and head of CEREAP (Center for Studies and Research in Aesthetic and Plastic Arts). Founder and director of the magazine *Recherches en Esthétique*. Member of CRILLASH (Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Literature, Languages, Arts, and Humanities, EA 4095). Associate Researcher at ACTE Institute (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne). Art critic, member of AICA-France (International Association of Art Critics). Exhibition curator. His research focuses on contemporary and comparative aesthetics, contemporary art, Caribbean art, and Surrealism. He has directed more than 50 volumes, published more than 110 articles and ten books among which: Hélénon, "Lieux de peinture" (Monograph), (preface Édouard Glissant), HC Éditions, 2006; André Breton, l'éloge de la rencontre. Antilles, Amérique, Océanie, HC Éditions, 2008; Ernest Breleur (Monograph), HC Éditions, 2008; Pour une critique d'art engagée, L'Harmattan, 2013.

Gary Bratchford runs photography projects, writes, and teaches photography at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), where he is a Senior Lecturer. He is also the President of the International Sociological Associations' Visual Sociology Research Group and co-editor of the Journal Visual Studies. Gary's teaching and research focus around notions of power, politics, visibility and space. Gary's photographic practice centres on collaborative and participatory visual practices, including socially engaged, process-based community projects. He participated in many international conferences and forums, published in conference proceedings, and several international academic journals. Among his publications in these fields are the recent articles Socially Engaged Photography and Wellbeing: Reflections on a Case Study in the Northwest of England. (2019) Visualising the invisible: a guided walk around the Pendleton Housing Estate, Salford, UK.

Hans-Dieter Huber, artist, filmmaker, scientist. 1997 to 1999 professor HGB Leipzig; 1999-2019 Professor of Contemporary Art History, Aesthetics and Art Theory at the State Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart. 2006-2011 Head of the International Master Program "Conservation of New Media and Digital Information" at the State Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart. 2007 Senior Fellow at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna. 2006-2009 Professor at the Post Graduate Program "Image, Body, Medium" at HfG Karlsruhe. Since 2013 Member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the International Institute for Subjective Experience and Research (ISER) at the MSH Medical School Hamburg. Since 2015 member of the scientific board of Society for Interdisciplinary Image Science (GIB). Since 2016 Deputy Chairman of the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart. From 2017-2020 Member of the Board of Trustees of the Adolf Hölzel Foundation, Stuttgart.

Lars C. Grabbe, Dr. phil., is Professor for Theory of Perception, Communication and Media at the MSD – Münster School of Design at the University of Applied Sciences Münster. He is managing editor of the Yearbook of Moving Image Studies (YoMIS) and the book series Bewegtbilder/Moving Images of the publishing house Büchner-Verlag, founder member of the Image Science Colloquium at the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel (Germany) as well as the Research Group Moving Image Science Kiel | Münster (Germany). He is working as scientific advisor and extended board member for the German Society for Interdisciplinary Image Science (GiB). Furthermore, he is a member of the International Society for Intermedial Studies, the German Society for Semiotics (DGS) and the German Society for Media Studies (GfM). His research focus lies in phenosemiotics, media theory, and media philosophy, image science, perception studies and psychology of perception, communication theory, aesthetics, semiotics, film studies and history of media as well as theory of embodiment and cognition.

Marc Jimenez is a professor emeritus of aesthetics at University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, where he taught aesthetics and sciences of art. With a PhD in literature and a PhD in philosophy, he translated from German into French T.W. Adorno's Aesthetics, August Wilhelm Schlegel's philosophical Doctrines of Art, and Peter Bürger's Prose of the Modern Age. Since 1986, when he succeeded Mikel Dufrenne, he directed the aesthetics collection Klincksieck Editions Collection d'Esthétique, Les Belles Lettres. Professor Marc Jimenez is a specialist in contemporary German philosophy, and his work contributed, in the early 1970s, to research on Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School. He is also a member of the International Association of Art Critics, participates in many conferences in France and abroad, and has been a regular contributor to art magazines. Recent publications: *La critique : crise de l'art ou consensus culturel ?* (Klincksieck, 1995), *Qu'est-ce que l'esthétique ?* (Gallimard, 1997), *La querelle de l'art contemporain* (Gallimard, 2005), *Fragments pour un discours esthétique. Entretiens avec Dominique Berthet* (Klincksieck, 2014), *Art et technosciences. Bioart, neuroesthétique* (Klincksieck, 2016), *Rien qu'un fou, rien qu'un poète. Une lecture des derniers poèmes de Nietzsche* (encre marine, 2016).

Omar Cerrillo Garnica is a Mexican researcher (SNI-1) and professor in Cultural Sociology. He got a PhD in Social and Political Sciences and a Master's Degree in Sociology at Iberoamerican University in Mexico City, graduated with honors. Since 2007 is professor at Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, in 2019 becomes Director of Humanities School at Campus Cuernavaca. He is specialized in social analysis of art, music and culture. He also developed a successful community engagement social service program through arts and sports. As a researcher, he has worked in politics in music –rock, Mexican folk genres–, cultural policies, digital culture, and cyberactivism. He has participated in many academic events in Mexico and other countries, with articles and book chapters published in Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and France.

Pamela C. Scorzin is an art, design, and media theorist and Professor of Art History and Visual Culture Studies at Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Department of Design (Germany), since 2019, vice-dean. Born 1965 in Vicenza (Italy), she studied European Art History, Philosophy, English and American Literatures, and History in Stuttgart and Heidelberg (Germany), obtaining her M.A. in 1992 and her Ph.D. in 1994. She was an assistant professor in the Department of Architecture at Darmstadt University of Technology from 1995 to 2000. After completing her habilitation in the history and theory of modern art there in 2001, she was a visiting professor in Art History, Media and Visual Culture Studies in Siegen, Stuttgart, and Frankfurt am Main. Since 2008 Professor of Art History in the Department of Design at the Dortmund University of Applied Sciences and Arts; since 2020 Vice-Dean. Since 2005, she is a member of the German section of AICA. She has published (in German, English, French, and Polish) on art-historical and cultural-historical topics from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. She lives and works in Dortmund, Milan, and Los Angeles.

Waldenyr Caldas is a full professor in Sociology of Communication and Culture at the University São Paulo. He was a visiting professor at University La Sapienza di Roma and the Joseph Fourier University in Grenoble, France. Professor Caldas has been a professor since 1996 as well as the vice-director (1997-2001) and Director (2001-2005) of ECA - School of Communications and Arts, University of São Paulo. In his academic career, he obtained all academic titles until the highest level as a full professor at the University of São Paulo. Currently, he is a representative of the University of São Paulo, together with the Franco-Brazilian Committee of the Agreement "Lévi-Strauss Chairs," and a member of the International Relations Committee of the University of São Paulo. Its scientific production records many books published and several essays published in magazines and national and international collections.

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Christiane Wagner is the editor-in-chief, founder, and creative director of the *Art Style, Art & Culture International Magazine*, and a member of the College Art Association of America in New York. She has been a visiting research professor at the University of São Paulo. She was a research visiting professor of aesthetics and science of communication, UNICAMP (Fellowship CAPES 2014–2018, qualification for a professorship, Habilitation, Venia Legendi). Both universities (USP and UNICAMP) are ranked as the best universities in Latin America. She was awarded a doctoral degree (Promotion 2014) in Germany in the science of art and aesthetics, recognized by the Hessian Ministry of Science and Art. She has a Ph.D. in science of art and aesthetics from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne with highest honors (mention très honorable/summa cum laude). Also, she holds a Ph.D. in design and architecture (with highest honors) and a master's degree in science of communication (with highest honors) from the University of São Paulo. She gave lectures and participated in panel discussions at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design, Germany; L'École des Arts de la Sorbonne – Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne; Universität Wien; Contemporary Art Museum of the University of São Paulo (MAC USP); Institut für Kunstgeschichte, FAU – Friedrich Alexander Universität, Erlangen Nürnberg; The City University of New York (CUNY), New York City College of Technology (City Tech); University of Hertfordshire, London, and in many international conferences. Prof. Dr. Christiane Wagner is a scientific advisor of the São Paulo Research Foundation FAPESP in cooperation agreements with national and international research funding agencies including the UK Research Councils, the Agence Nationale de Recherche (ANR) in France, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) in Germany, and the European Commission. She has several publications, including peer-reviewed articles, books, and essays in German, English, French, and Portuguese, some of the many languages, including Spanish, in which she is fluent.

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