NEW THEORIES
MIZEEZO MIPYA
NOVE TEORIJE

Intro–question
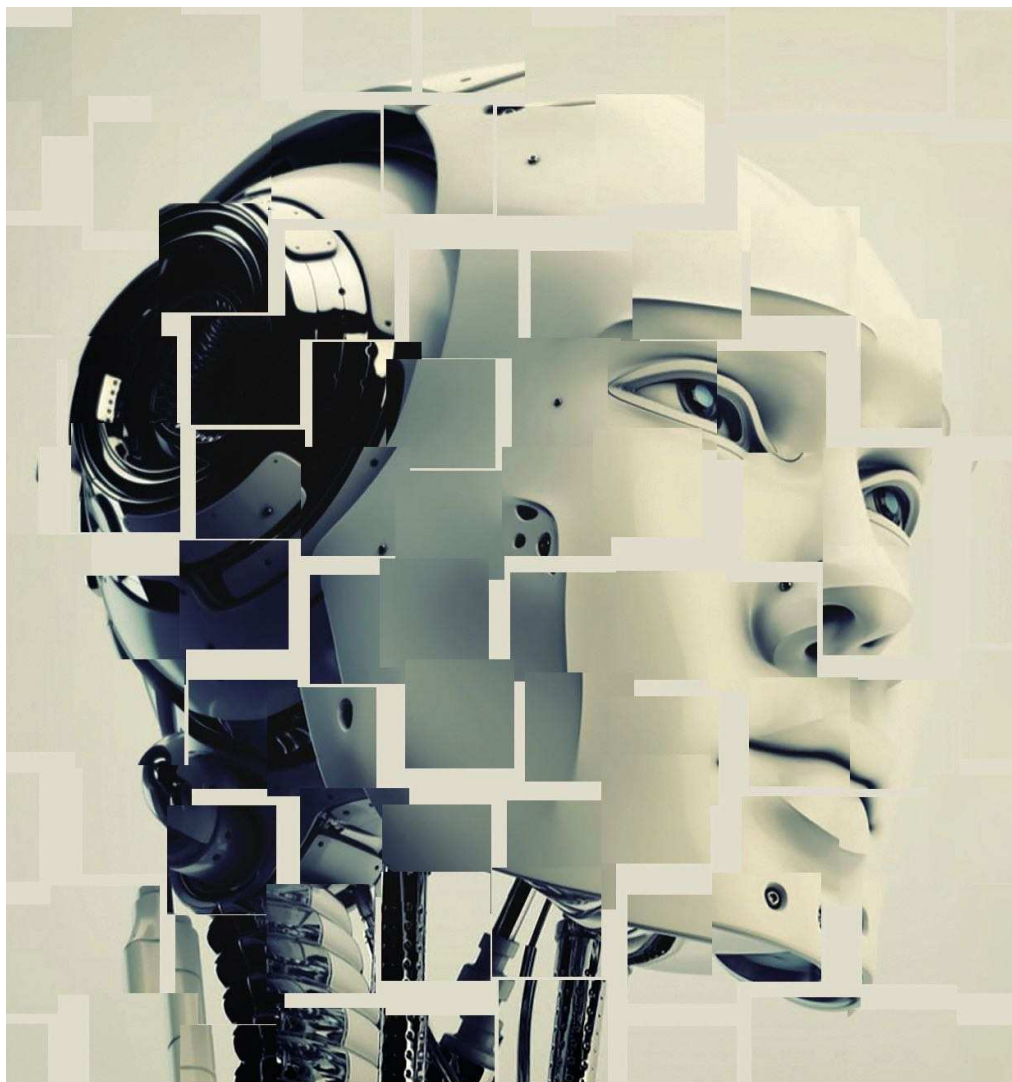
DO WE STILL BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF IMAGES?

Krešimir Purgar

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A thirty years ago, two authors, W.J.T. Mitchell (1994) and Gottfried Boehm (1994) pointedly drew attention to the fact that contemporary society is significantly characterized by visual communication and that a culture dominated by language has increasingly given way to a new paradigm centered on visual media. Mitchell called this radical change in the way of knowing the world the *Pictorial Turn*, and Boehm the *ikonische Wende*. However, what was still not entirely clear in the first half of the nineties of the last century was whether the turn towards the image was part of an irreversible process that fundamentally changes the human paradigm of communication, or whether it was (just another) episode in an unbroken, multi-millennium development line of technically supported visualizations. This dilemma was not only of a rhetorical nature, as it was also emphasized by the insights of the two authors: Micthell asserted that the pictorial turn is not a peculiarity of our time, but that a kind of turn towards the image happened every time in history when some technical invention or cultural change led to a change in the ways we create, interpret or reproduce images. To that extent, the discussions, for example, between iconoclasts and iconophiles during the eighth and ninth centuries can rightly be considered a pictorial turn, because the medieval disputes on the ontological status of pictorial representation put the question of what we really *see* when we *look* at religious icons at the center of interest in the visual culture of that time.

The general history of images recorded that two main currents of thought clashed at the time: the first, which saw in the pictures the intensity of the presence of the depicted deity, and the second, which saw in the pictures a representation, that is, a symbolic reminiscence of the depicted character. The problem posed in this way led the contemporary philosopher Emmanuel Alloa to call the debate between iconoclasts and iconophiles in Byzantium "visual studies", and the insights presented after the Seventh Ecumenical Council of the Christian church, held for the second time in Nicaea in 787, were for him like "A Pictorial Turn *avant la lettre*" (Alloa 2013). Conceptually, contemporary people have a similar dilemma in the encounter with virtual visualizations: if at the beginning of the 21st century we are completely used to not identifying an image with a real event, but know that there is always an ontological gap between intra-pictorial and extra-pictorial reality, then new, increasingly sophisticated virtual experiences bring us back in a paradoxical way to

the medieval problem of the intensity of presence. The only difference is that the level of presence of what we see *in* or *on* the picture today is no longer determined by a dogmatic-theological instructions, but by the degree of technologically produced mirage that places the observer in the space *between* presence and absence, or by what some authors call "immersion" (Grau 2003), "unframing" (Conte 2020), "atmosphere" or "atmospheric spaces" (Böhme 2013; Griffero 2017; Bruno 2022) or "environmental images" (Pinotti 2021).

If we draw another parallel with medieval debates about images, we can therefore note that even in our time there was a debate about the fact that images no longer have to be limited to their traditional, flat media/carriers, but that they can occupy a three-dimensional, real space, creating a special atmosphere as a phenomenon of multidimensional space that allowed for the simultaneous presence of the observer and the observed. The concept of an image is no longer associated with something separable (Nancy 2002), symbolic (Goodman 1976) or fictional (Walton 1993), but the concept of an image now follows a new path of technical possibilities for its transformation into a visual phenomenon of the continuity of space and time (Schmiz 2009).

The second stream of image studies after the "turn" of the nineties, which Gottfried Boehm called the "iconic" turn, can be connected to a much lesser extent with the technical nature of pictorial representations. Although, just like with Mitchell, the term itself remained open and under-theorized even after many years, the directions of research offered by Boehm's proposal clearly pointed to the linguistic nature of the pictorial experience on the one hand and to the traditional art-historical material on the other. An American author also drew attention to the role of the linguistic component in the knowledge of the visual, but for him it was about the amalgamation of the visual and the textual, about the inextricable unity of both components. Boehm, on the other hand, insisted on two things that would later prove to be crucial for contemporary *Bildwissenschatft* as a whole: first, he insisted on the existence of a visible cut between image and reality ("ikonische differenz"). He interpreted this cut not only as a physical frame of the picture as a border between inside and outside, i.e. picture and non-picture, but also as a stylistic figure of metaphor which necessarily consists of something that can only be *conceived* and something that can (also) be *seen*. For this author, it is not possible to understand the ontological status of

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the image without awareness of the border between what is imagined and what is actually seen. Another element that clearly separated Boehm from the American concept of visual studies was his foundation of the *iconic turn* both in the tradition of metaphysical philosophy and in the specific properties of the pictorial surface; both the philosophy and the materiality of the work of art equally contributed to the dialectic of Boehm's concept of "iconic logos". While Mitchell claims that a new iconology would certainly notice that the image today resists the logos – he says: "If traditional iconology suppressed the image, postmodern iconology suppresses language" (Mitchell 1994, 28) – Boehm's theory seeks to establish a *tertium datur,* by connecting the theoretical aspect of "linguistic image as metaphor" with the art-historical concept of "image as fine art" (Boehm 1995, 31)

As much as the turn towards the image by these two authors can be considered in the terminological sense as two parts of a unique paradigm, in the conceptual sense, as it turned out later, it is actually a question of two fundamentally different principles of approach to images that took into account different genealogical lines and therefore open up different research paths. In one of the first articles to outline the contours of visual studies or the Anglo-American paradigm on the one hand, and *Bildwissenschft* as a continental-German paradigm on the other, Keith Moxey clearly separates two lines of development in the Image Science after the pictorial turn: the first, which rests on the tradition of cultural studies and the latter, which builds on the early "version" of Art History in such a way that it takes over from it the interest in the expanded field of images, not only those of art (Moxey 2008). Horst Bredekamp helped him in such a binary division with his seminal text "A Neglected Tradition. Art History as Bildwissenschaft?" in which the German author draws attention to key points, primarily coming out of German tradition, which reveal to us that the early Art History predicted a far more inclusive concept of the study of pictorial representations than could be inferred from today's preferences of that discipline (Bredekamp 2003).

It is very often mentioned in the humanities that the pictorial turn of the nineties followed the linguistic turn (Rorty 1967) that took place during the sixties and seventies of the last century, and that this only sanctioned the obvious fact that contemporary societies have mostly turned to technological possibilities, immediacy and the speed

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offered by visual media. Even Art History showed a belated interest in post-structuralist (linguistic) methods and thus briefly opened a new direction with a new inclination for disciplinary constructions of meaning. However, what Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson talked about in their programatic text "Semiotics and Art History" (Bal and Bryson 1991) was not on the trail of Bredekamp's Art History as a science that, in addition to art in the strict sense, deals with images in general, but with these two authors it was an attempt to disciplinary expansion of the interpretation of art with the help of already existent disciplinary practices. Meanwhile, other disciplines born in the aegis of post-structuralism, such as psychoanalytic and post-colonial theory, Marxist, feminist and queer studies, began to claim the right to describe works of art in accordance with their own disciplinary interests (Bersani 1986; Silverman 1996; T. J. Clark 1999).

What the contributions in this issue of *New Theories* would like to point out is that the contemporary reality of images is much more complex than the tripartite disciplinary parallelism of visual culture/visual studies, *Bildwissenschaft* and post-structuralist Art History can convey to us. Each of these currents of thought was created as a kind of separate research platform, which was formed and re-adjusted depending on the specific goals of the research – ideological, political, artistic, identity, cultural, media, etc. The articles presented here want to show that the contemporary study of images may be regarded as a completely open area in a thematic sense on the one hand and disciplinarily individualized on the other; that old knowledge can be replaced by new one more easily and with more acumen than ever before. However, what distinguishes a more strict way to do that from other more or less radically inclusive practices of inter- and multidisciplinarity (Walker and Chaplin 1997; Sachs-Hombach 2005) is questioning the possibility of the so-called non-universal or decentralized approach to images, which would not reflect the self-sufficiency of any of them, but rather point to the fact that the only essential feature we can attribute to images is their quintessence *precisely* and *only* as pictorial phenomena, and not as a method of interpretation or universal ontological foundations. The study of images today is atomized and de-essentialized to a much greater extent (for the opposite view, see Bal 2003 and Davey 2013), so that through the cultural and academic dominance established in this century by Visual Culture Studies and *Bildwissenschaft*, with Art History

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having taken that position much earlier, can no longer be explained the intertwining of social and media-technological forces, regardless of the increasing porosity of traditional disciplinary boundaries and the thematic diversity of individual choices.

Thirty years after the pictorial/iconic turn, it becomes increasingly clear that the study of images as paradoxically visible and invisible, material and non-material phenomena of reality, can no longer be based on the construction of ideological, technological, identity or artistic concepts, regardless of how much such concepts participate in the subjective experience of images or how much they are objectively determined by them. Here, of course, we are not referring to the philosophical aporia of "subject and object", but to a new sort of relationships that are being established in contemporary culture: those that approach the interaction of human and machine in an epochal new way on the one hand, and the still unexplained relationship between the image-as-difference and image-as-immersions on the other. The goal of future research should be to establish how the diverse and often conflicting approaches to images within the humanities can be related and instrumentalized in a very flexible way for the purpose of studying images as a phenomena that, beyond their optical, aesthetic and communicative components, may reveal new dimensions of their meaning; in other words, to reveal to us new reasons why we have worshiped or hated them, bowed before them or destroyed them, believed in their power or detested them for millennia.

In this volume, we want to examine whether we can approach images as specific phenomena with diverse and often unexpected effects, but such that do not depend on the personal preferences of the observer, but possess a kind of mobile and changing "nomadic essence" that results from their inextricable historical, philosophical and technological adventures. In order to be able to do this, it is necessary to accept and encompass the widest possible appearances of images – the experiences, effects and consequences they create – and at the same time deconstruct and reconceptualize existing disciplinary models that approach images as if they possess an always-pre-existing essence. Therefore, our goal is not to prove the inadequacy or inappropriateness of any research model, but to expand research models by proposing a type of image-specific realignment of existing methods. But, first of all, is our introductory question even asked in the right way or, as Žarko Paić draws our attention, "can we lose faith in something we never believed in?"

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Intro–response

WE CANNOT LOSE FAITH IN WHAT WE NEVER BELIEVED IN

Žarko Paić

Dear Krešimir,

An invitation from your *New Theories* journal to participate with an article on the topic "Do we still believe in the power of images?" of course I can't refuse. After all, together and each in our own way, for more than twenty years we have been trying to solve the question of the ontological status of the image in modern times and perhaps open new perspectives in understanding the relationship between visual arts and philosophy. We have edited several collections in Croatian and English on this topic, especially the publication of the book *Theorizing Images* from 2016 by Cambridge Scholars Publishing was an extremely important step. The book soon became mandatory reading for the course on art history and theory of images at the Humboldt University in Berlin. However, the highlight was in this effort to establish visual studies as a new scientific discipline within the humanities in your collection *The Palgrave Handbook of Image Studies* from 2021. The question you ask about the so-called call for papers seems rhetorical and as if it can only be answered in the affirmative or in the negative. However, there is another small problem in the question itself, and that is – *belief*. As you know, I, as a philosopher and one who, in Weber's words, is not musical by faith, cannot remain intact on this formulation. It is clear, of course, that when you take it pragmatically, you mean that belief here is synonymous with opinion in the sense of judging and taking positions. There is, however, something else especially intriguing about the question of believing or losing faith in the power of images. It is precisely this excess of theological-religious *thinking* in the concept of image that appears from the very beginning in the Greeks, and continues throughout the entire history of Western metaphysics, even in the understanding of the so-called technical or digital images in Flusser, who, like the late Horkheimer, modernized his Jewish eschatology and messianism with the idea of a telematic society for which the transparency of the image means the possibility of merging with the divine.

Your question is formulated without any doubt in extremely challenging and inspiring way, all the more so since you mention how in 1994 the framework was created for the end of the metaphysical "great narrative" about language with the emergence of *Bildwissenschaft* and Visual Studies, the one initiated by Gottfried Boehm and W.J.T. Mitchell

from different theoretical perspectives. As you know, already in my book *Aesthetics and the Iconoclasm of Contemporary Art: Pictures Without a World* from 2006 (eng. edition, Springer 2021), right in the first chapter entitled "The world without a picture" I talk about the end of the image not only as the end of mimesis and representation, but also about the end of the image in the sense of any sublime remnant of the divine in the image , and with the term *immanent transcendence,* which I explain in a footnote dealing with Vanja Sutlić, not Gilles Deleuze, I enter into the analysis of the impossibility of image becoming a new language, because that would only be the continuation of the rule of language as logocentrism by other means. The real problem of my understanding of the image as a technosphere, which you interpretively recognized in your book *Pictorial Appearing – Image Theory After Representation* (Transcript, Bielefeld, 2019, pp. 106-121), refers to the disappearance of the traditionally understood space and time of its form of appearing, and not appearances as such.

Among my first impulses to engage in a radical rethinking of the relationship between image and thought in the horizon of the end of metaphysics after Heidegger and Deleuze was Alain Besançon's book, *L'image interdite* (Gallimard, Paris, 1994). As you well know, this monumental and truly brilliant study on the problem of iconoclasm from Plato and Plotinus to Kandinsky and Malevich, clearly showed that the question of the image is a philosophical-theological question about the origins and the beginning of its referential framework, and that the problem of contemporary art is in fact a secularized problem of the transformation of "faith-in-the-image" into an ideology and politics as a fundamental form of the avant-garde aspiration for a revolutionary end to the difference between art and life. My propositions in the numerous books in which I dealt with these same questions and problems were directed towards finding what medieval theology calls the TERTIUM DATUR. Thus, both language and image enable something synthetically and analytically autonomous, the very "thing" of thought that becomes, from the aesthetic object of Marcel Duchamp to the autopoietic activity of Ken Rinaldo's robot, the same thing as self-producing and self-moving, but so that there is no longer a difference between ideas and phenomena, transcendence and immanence; instead, at the place of the linguistic and iconic turn, it is now a matter of visualizing the concept as a *technosphere*. It is not an image that has

the power any longer, but what directs the image from the technical dispositif of Power to the Power of number, that is, the mathematization and technologization of being and time, to put it in the language of Heidegger from the period of *Sein und Zeit*. *The technosphere is the rule of the absolute triad of calculation-planning-construction and can no longer be understood by traditional metaphysical concepts of either language or image*. Admittedly, the late Wittgenstein foresaw this when he inserted into the philosophical discourse the concept of "language games" or *Sprachspiele* as a form of life. But here we are talking about pure Platonism in a twisted way. The idea that the *technosphere* autopoietically visualizes the world as an image stems from its hyperplasticity exhibited by an artificial brain or artificial intelligence. Hence the image in the so-called "post-digital world" – which presupposes precisely the Power of numbers and the mathematization of the world as a metaverse – requires the abandonment of both philosophy and theology, but also the history of art. Let's go one step further, both *Bildwissenschaft* and Visual Studies too. Why?

The answer presupposes the answer to the question about "do we still believe in the power of images?" Our so-called faith was not a matter of faith in a secular god of information as a condition of the possibility of cybernetics. Therefore, when I titled the book "pictures without a world" with the subtitle "iconoclasm of contemporary art", I primarily wanted to follow the trail of the late Heidegger and his concept of *Kunstlosigkeit* to reach the other shore, the one where there is no longer a difference between art and non-art, nor the difference between living and non-living. You remember that for the first time in that book the concept of the *technosphere* heralded an era that transcends the concept of art from the Greeks to Hegel and beyond. Art, like science, in the age of the *technosphere* is only possible as a research and experiment in the creation of the new from the spirit of *autopoiesis*. That spirit, metaphorically speaking, means the thinking that produces its own reality no longer as a difference between idea and appearance, *noesis* and *noema*, to put it in Kantian-Husserlian way. What such a thinking produces is beyond any knowledge of the image in the sense of philosophy or semiotics, as was necessary for the *Bildwissenschaft* or Image Science, but also of any social-cultural differentiation of gazes and looking the image as a representation, such as those entertained by Visual Studies which are part of the so-called the umbrella of all possible twists

and turns in the referential field of the image as insight, reflection, the gaze and observation. *An image in the tradition of Platonic-Plotinian theology or metaphysics has always been a flash of God's light and a reflection in the eye of the beholder of what is invisible, so the allegory of the cave is the beginning and the end of the aesthetics of simulacrum. We no longer have anything to do with it, because it is synesthetic thinking that creates visualized objects as fragments of a contingent and emergent* mappa mundi *as a new reality without any help from an external creator.*

The end of the so-called belief in the power of images is not the end of philosophy and art in line with the triumphant march of the technoscientific "world picture", which will accelerate as soon quantum computers start operating. After all, the fundamental questions of today are not decided by philosophers, theologians, or artists, but only by the triad of astrophysics, cosmology, and biogenetics. *This means that thinking in speculative or reflexive manner having an image as its object must become transversal and experimental in the face of a radical change in the concepts of Power and Image in general. Because Power is not political power, but what conditions everything and results from the cybernetic turn in which the management of systems and the environment is created as a quartet of information-feedback-control-communication. Homo kybernetes is there-*fore the end of all previous anthropologies, including the one that calls itself cybernetic. The image is no longer an external-internal matter of the relationship between the sublime and the banal in the field of phenomenology and psychoanalysis, as, after all, Deleuze clearly showed in *Film 1* and *2*, when he established an ontology of images, movement and time following Bergson's footsteps, but mostly following Artaud and his *brain-as-screen* ideas. What follows is something extremely monstrous – *Unheimlich*. If the image is an autopoietic model of the creation of new worlds from the logic of number and its infinity, then language and narration have become superfluous to the functioning of the *technosphere*. Instead we have "concerts of machines" and the frenzy of "symbolic mathematics". Everything becomes a visualized world of interaction of what is no longer substantial or corporeal, but is a networked tele-presence matrix in the game of the non-human. There are three examples that can testify to this, and which at the same time speak about the end of the image as the essence of art in the modern world.

The first is Godard's film essay on the history of the 20th century as the history of film, *Histoire(s) du cinéma*, in which the end of the film

marks the end of the "great narrative" about the representation of what we are watching. The effect of the de-realization of the visible and already seen in other films, images, texts, montage of discursive chaos as modeled in Benjamin's *Arcades* becomes pure melancholy of the technical dispositif of the film, which disappears with the arrival of pure visualization. The second is the launch of the "James Webb" telescope into space, with which astrophysics and cosmology get a pictorial insight into the constellations of the universe, the origin and end of stars, the age of galaxies and possibly a "picture of God" as an intelligent designer before the Big Bang. Of course, soon, with the progress in visualization technology itself, it will be completely clear that the sciences can no longer exist without two fundamental concepts, namely measurement and pictoriality, which derives from the essence of the technosphere as calculation-planning-construction. Black holes in the universe will be solved by advances in the quality of visualization and advances in the mathematical calculation of the entropy of the universe itself. The third is the emergence of the new in the sense of the contingent cause of consciousness itself as a simulacrum of human thought. Brain scanning and neurocognitivism therefore belong to the only remaining mystery, which is the question of self-awareness as a mode of existence of all beings in the universe with the potential to distinguish between good and evil. *The image is always TERTIUM DATUR, the connection between the sublime and the appearance in its metamorphic structure of a synesthetic "illusion". The film, the telescope and the simulacrum of the artificial brain show us the end of the metaphysics of art and the end of the image as a sign and meaning.*

Instead of the history of the world as the history of the development of self-awareness starting from language as logos with the referential framework of myth to the Greeks and the Christian religion in the Middle Ages, the image as representation from Velázquez to Cézanne and the image as information from photography to film, our age is determined by the rule of the *technosphere* as the Power of the *number* in an infinite variation of models and simulations of reality. It is an age without a picture, the one that, as in Godard's *Histoir(e) du cinéma*, needs philosophy and art as a speculative-reflexive musealization and historicization of events that go away irrevocably at the speed of light; and precisely for this reason, the necessity of a new thinking presupposes a different consideration of the question of "believing in the power of

images". *We have not lost our belief, because we never had it, except as a kind of saving consolation that all this will not become a trail of pure light, a trail of nothingness with such monstrous speed.*

Well, dear Krešo, that's how I think about it.
Your
Žarko

Dear Žarko,

Thank you for your letter, which, like so many times before, prompted me to think more in depth; this time it is the concept of "believing in the power of the image". As you yourself note, in that syntagm the underlying concept of "faith" is discursive and not theological in nature, although, as you also note, the discursive in the images often had mythical, religious and otherworldly characteristics in different ways. However, no matter how semantically we secularize the concept of belief-as-faith – as a discourse, thinking, hope or expectation – we are left with the other part of the question, which is the "power of the image". In your reasoning, I recognize techno-pessimism, to which I myself am inclined. This, of course, is not about opposing technological progress, and even less about succumbing to eco-paranoia as a new ideological juggernaut, but about how technology changes our perception of the world through images understood as multi-modal "screens", from Paleolithic drawings to AI image generators. I think that right now we are witnessing an epochal change that allows us to understand that images were never related to reality but to other images or to themselves. How to explain this? Did not divine and earthly reality overlap in the spiritual presence of Christ Pantokrator in Byzantine icons? Wasn't Louis-François Lejeune's historicist depiction of *Napoleon's battle at Borodino* from 1822 showing only one possible version of that perticular event? Don't photographs for personal documents, despite ubiquitous software for manipulation, still testify to the strongly rooted conventionalization of representation that we call "imitation" since antiquity? Only with abstract *paintings* – here I deliberately exclude "half abstract" images, like synoptic charts or medical visualizations – we witness pure reality. Paradoxically, what

we see in, for example, Julije Knifer's "meander paintings" is the only thing we *can* see in them: the unadulterated reality of picture-as-diffe-rence. If we manage to solve the "problem with reality" that images have always had, we might get closer to what you are advocating, which is a different reflection on "belief in the power of images" in the age of the technosphere. The advent of artificially generated realities give us the last, although belated, possibility to do this.

Your
Krešimir

**SLAVKO
KAĆUNKO**

Micro-Human
19143 Berlin, Winkler Strasse 4a
https://microhuman.org/de/

Abstract:

The paper discusses some rather well-known, but rarely discussed origins of
the current "immanentism" and "invitationalism" of the images by rooting
them in the discussion that is itself rooted in the very matter of aesthetics – the
matters of *taste*. The introductory remarks justify briefly the chosen histori-
ographical approach, supported by few first-hand insights into the "momen-
tum" of visual studies one decade ago. In the second chapter, a short paper
appeared only in German in 2008, "W.J.T. Mitchell und der iconic turn" von
Norbert Schneider (1945-2019) is recapitulated, in which the impression of
the implied harmony between "like-minded" scholars – W.J.T. Mitchell and
G. Boehm – has been deconstructed in a comparative analysis. Further on,
Schneider´s arguments are followed up in the third chapter, where Boehm´s
Ph.D.-supervisor Max Imdahl and doctorate-supervisor Gadamer (as well as
their predecessors Fiedler, Croce and Vico) are discussed in some depth, with
reference to what we have baptized as image-immanentism and the herme-

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neutic of pictures. In the fourth chapter, we criticize a more recent follower of Gadamer´s position, whose aim was to support Gadamer´s theory of aesthetic value as artistic value with the projected value of the "artistic image". Paul Crowther´s important point was to substantiate the claim of the artwork being a "symbolically significant artifact" and hence the extraordinary character of our experience of art and its value. Although Gadamer's understanding of representation as an ontological event brings with it a metaphysical, Neoplatonist implication, Crowther turned this implication of point to an ontological-existential one. The presented case in point is supposed to provide an argument for deep historiographic connections between the current immanentism of images and their roots in the continental thinking traditions.

Keywords: taste, value theory, axiology, aesthetic value, value judgment, immanentism, invitationalism, foundationalism

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SLAVKO KAĆUNKO IMAGE STUDIES AS TASTE STUDIES?
A HISTORIOGRAPHIC (RE-)VIEW ON IMAGE IMMANENTISM IN BOEHM, GADAMER AND CROWTHER

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1. Introductory remarks

This paper attempts to retrieve the origins of the "immanentism" and "invitationalism" of the "images" by rooting them in the discussion that is itself rooted in the very matter of aesthetics – the matters of Taste. Rather than a theoretical introduction into a weighty subject, this first chapter should loosely justify the chosen historiographical approach. It includes willy-nilly also my own first-hand insights into the contested field of visual studies that seem to have got out of hand some time ago. This insights begun with my first teaching-tenure in Osnabrück, where I overtook the physical office of the extraordinary figure of German art history Jutta Held (1933-2007) back in 2004. As editor of the progressive periodical *Kunst und Politik*, she asked me to write an article about Visual Studies and *Bildwissenschaft* for the 2006-issue, but it never came to realization because of her death. Her husband Norbert Schneider (1945-2019) finally edited and published the delayed tenth issue of *Kunst und Politik* in 2008 together with Andrew Hemingway. Later on, I invited Schneider to participate in a lecture series *Bildwissenschaft and Visual Culture* that took place at the Institute for Art and Cultural Studies in Copenhagen (2013-14). In Copenhagen, right in-between the Anglo-Saxon and continental influences and schools, it appeared then quite clear how contested and politically charged was the field of visual studies: While Schneider presented his brief critical text on Gottfried Boehm from *Kunst und Politik* (2008), I also invited Gottfried Boehm to provide his point of view; he replied positively already on January 29th 2013, but his definite confirmation came too late for our schedule, which forced us to pull back our invitation. However, we knew that Boehm was also scheduled to take a part in a quite alternative draft – a large international conference entitled *What Images Do* that took place in March 2014 at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. The conference was organized by Henrik Oxvig, who also participated in our lecture series. This "momentum" continued at least until December of 2014, as the volume entitled *Bildwissenschaft und Visual Culture* was edited and published by Marius Rimmele, Klaus Sachs-Hombach and Bernd Stiegler.

What I wish to emphasize with these perhaps less known details and parallels is that Norbert Schneider's (and originally Jutta Held's) edited year-book entitled *Bildwissenschaft und Visual Culture Studies in der Disk-*

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ussion. Kunst und Politik (2008) appeared and was prepared long before
the mentioned "momentum" and that it remained rather drawn in the
undercurrents of the then current image disputes. Between ca. 2006
and 2016, the immanentism of image in both continental and analytic
thinking traditions seem to have prevailed. Hence, this contribution is
designed to provide and reiterate an argument for why we no longer
need to believe in the power of "something" that is substantially based
on believe and power – as a tentative answer to the editor's rhetoric
questions of the current *New Theories*-issue. I shall close this "introduc-
tion" with the words of Hans Belting, who explained to me back then
in an E-mail from December 23rd 2012 why he chose not to participate
in our lecture series:

> [...] I was happy to receive your email and am therefore saddened
> not to answer positively. That's for a whole lot of reasons: I would
> just like to mention that I am currently not on good terms [*nicht
> auf gutem Fuß stehe*] with image science [*Bildwissenschaft*], although
> it is in a way in my new book about the almost refute history of the
> face (Belting 2013/2017). I have before retreated to an anthropol-
> ogy, that is today shared only by few. In addition, there is a heavy
> schedule in the spring. And my age. In short, I don't see how we
> can get together, but I wish you for this series great success [...]

2. Imagining immanentism
Norbert Schneider's criticism of Gottfried Boehm's "iconic"

In a short paper entitled *W.J.T. Mitchell und der iconic turn* (Schneider
2008, 29-38), Norbert Schneider (1945-2019) made an attempt to decon-
struct the stage-managed diplomacy of the Vienna-held conference *Iconic
Turn – Pictorial Turn?* in 2005. Schneider chose to subject W.J.T. Mitchell's
"Pictorial Turn" and Gottfried Boehm's "Iconic Turn" to a comparative
analysis, but the main target remained in fact the depoliticized imma-
nentism of image by Gottfried Boehm. In what follows, I shall first retell
Schneider's German text along general lines and to take it as a point of
departure for some extended observations.
Schneider begins his article with the reference to a photograph surfaced
on the Internet in 2005, showing W.J.T. Mitchell and Gottfried Boehm

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on the occasion of the mentioned conference, bonding with each other harmoniously. The same photograph reappeared in the publication *Bilderfragen. Der Bildwissenschaften im Aufbruch* edited by Hans Belting (Belting 2007, 26) and this book showcased a correspondence between Boehm and Mitchell, in which the former tried to persuade the latter to join his iconic turn program. The unbiased reader got probably the impression that the implied harmony is the one existing between like-minded scholars who've been working on a mutual project. However, Schneider underlined right away that those even slightly familiar with the academic socialization of Mitchell and Boehm could be only skeptic about the suggestive message of such mass-media presentations. Schneider's comparative analysis went as follows: A substantial *tertium comparationis* of both protagonists is that they were supposed to trigger a paradigm shift in the humanities. In the 1992 March issue of the *Artforum* magazine, Mitchell published an article with the programmatic title *Pictoral Turn*, while two years later Boehm's edited publication *Was ist ein Bild?* followed with the proclamation of an *iconic turn.* At first glance a coincidence of interests was suggested, at best just a minimal gradual shift. By choosing an Americanized logo, Boehm could hope – so Schneider's estimation – for an international influence that stretched beyond the central European state borders, not least because of the link with Mitchell's meanwhile successful motto. Schneider tells us that the German formula "Iconic turn" would have probably died away fast because of its other semantic connotations. Especially delicate is that Boehm reverts to a term from Peirce's semiotics ("icon") in his usage of "iconic" that he radically rejects (Pierce 1894, §3; Eco 1972, 197-201). The term, penetrating into the American terminology, turned subtly but promotionally effectively the concept of the "Iconic" of his Bochum habilitation (doctorate) treatise adviser Max Imdahl. The latter led a rather "insular existence" in a model with hegemonial claim to universality in the German art history for a long time (with centers in Bochum and Gießen as well as an epicenter in Constance); at the same time, many of the previously critical art historians in the 80s and 90s retrieved or were depoliticized, while the marginal, now "turned" Iconic could penetrate into a vacuum and hence into the front ranks. In his correspondence with Mitchell, Boehm attempted in fact to obfuscate his actual dependence on Imdahl by stylizing himself and Mitchell as "rangers" who "roam the same, barely known continent of visual phenomena and

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visuality" independently from each other (Boehm 2007, 27). Quite irrespective of his display of a particular arcane knowledge in the area of image perception, all of his references to Rorty, Wittgenstein etc. were to be found already in Mitchell's chapter "What is an Image" (Mitchell 1986, 7f.). This "played ignorance for the sake of the protection of his own alleged originality" seemed to Schneider's opinion barely credible (Schneider 2008, 38, note 3).

In what follows, we will skip Schneider's references on W.J.T. Mitchell, because his leftist or more progressive approach was not the actual target, in contrast to Boehm. The latter, originally a philosopher, was tutored by Gadamer for his Ph.D.-thesis and he managed this according to Schneider by linking Imdahl's immanentistic analysis with intellectual discourses that had never played a role before for its rationale. At best, Imdahl's research method of syntactic structures and form relations, in which the analysis of the composition of religious connotations (the pictorial arrangement was for Imdahl occasionally a sign for the presence of God's "eternity") had a temporary affinity towards individual aspects of the structuralism and Max Bense's information-theoretical foundation for aesthetics (Imdahl 1979, 38; Schneider and Held 2007, 333; Bense 1964, 1-3).

Boehm made this approach compatible with the theories of the late Merleau-Ponty or Lacan, calling Kant (Scheider set a "*sic*!" here with a very good reason regarding Gadamer's and Boehm's own anti-Kantianism), Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein, Husserl and Heidegger as other key witnesses for the "new legitimacy of the picture". Seconded by this impressive series of great thinkers, Boehm advocated a thesis that could slip under the wing of a tendency that was critical of enlightenment or at least skeptical towards it, that has been propagated since the early 80s, namely, the logocentrism verdict. Boehm acted according to Schneider less on emotions and diffuse sensations than on eidetic circumstances taking Konrad Fiedler as his early role model, whose work he published in the beginning of the 70s (Boehm 1971). Fiedler's central category is the clarity [*Anschaulichkeit*] of paintings with the methodical requirements that the observation of an artwork is limited to pure visuality with exclusion of all referential connotations. However, Boehm agreed with Didi-Huberman (Didi-Huberman 1990), that pictures have both a historical and a cognitive priority over language. Boehm's "historical" reasoning was based on obsolete rests of prehistorical cave

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art that offer us, after all, in Schneider's opinion, not imperative evidence for understanding (as there are very contrary hypotheses about it) "that images have their own power and their own meaning" (Boehm 2004, 29). The fact that visuality always precedes the faculty of speech served also as a triumphal argument that the visual culture / visual studies [*Bildwissenschaft*] corresponds ultimately to the status of a leading discipline in the humanities.

When Boehm speaks of *Bildwissenschaft* or even of "return of the pictures", this general term of the picture suggested that all only imaginable visual phenomena can be bundled under it neutrally i.e. indifferently to norm. Boehm expanded indeed somewhat the catalog of potentially addressable pictures ten years after his programmatic essay in 1995 granting concessions to the expansion of picture types, which has occurred meanwhile at other authors', that can range from the so-called imaging techniques over epistemic images in service of the illustration of scientific visualisations to the imaginary pictures or metaphors. As is well-known, this spectrum is almost endless. Yet it strikes one that his interest, in addition to the anthropologic reference to prehistorical "archetypes", was still focused on the paintings of the classic Modernism, starting with Paul Cézanne over Henri Matisse, Josef Albers and Yves Klein to the American Color Field painters. This "laboratory of the Modernism", as he called it, becomes the demonstration field for the method of the "Iconic", whose contra-Iconology credo was that pictures should not be regarded as place holders of a completely different logic, when, in fact, they have their own logic. According to this model, the meaning of pictures would not emerge from certain motives, aesthetic historical and socio-cultural contexts, but it was a completely self-referential process of an oscillating perception of contrasts or the exchange of pictorial grounds. This could be best "demonstrated" on pictures tending to abstraction. They were assigned the potency of self-reflection in a hypostasized manner, in the confusion of author and work, as if they were subjects themselves. Imdahl and Boehm's so-called "iconic difference", can be according to Schneider ultimately traced back to the *Gestalt*-theoretical model of the figure-ground relationship i.e. to Ingarden's phenomenological differentiation of layers of meaning. Their observation raises indubitably the sensibility for immanent structures. However, it was only a methodical aspect in the preliminary phase of the analysis. If it

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becomes independent, as is the case with Imdahl, a spiral circularity of thought arises from it reaching a *cul-de-sac* and hence resembling a glass bead game.

Norbert Schneider regarded Boehm as basically narrowing down the subject of the Visual Studies [*Bildwissenschaft*] to the field of the classic avant-garde and its recent derivatives, while remaining conspicuously in the horizon of an institutionally selected high art, whose leading role was (and still is, quite often) justified retrospectively with the criterion of "iconic [in]difference" (cf. a critical review in Conte 2021). An essentialist determination of images, like they sound in Boehm's ontologically expressed question "what is an image?" showed according to Schneider that Boehm contained his image term to a large extent to his already earlier preferable terrain of the classic Modernism and that he preferred a quietistic method of approach. The latter can be understood in the ascertainment of the "iconic difference" in the self-reflexivity as "processual" (which is solely a cerebral process of the interleaving of the thematization levels) but it finally remained before the "thick silence" and the "innate foreignness" of the images like before something numinous, ineffable (Boehm 2004, p.43). This way, so Schneider, Boehm "predicates qualities of the absolute to the images in compliance with the negative theology and the mysticism too" (Schneider 2008, 37).

3. Picturing Taste
On Gadamer's hermeneutic of pictures

Our brief excursus on "Turning iconic" in the context of recent (image-) immanentism submitted in the previous chapter was conceived to provide us with a couple of historiographical, but also systematic junctions; the letter were inspired by the idea of aesthetic experience that eventually introduced it as a quasi-indispensable agency of aesthetic value. We shall take Gadamer as case in point, because he obviously influenced both the synthetical-continental tradition (cf. Boehm in the previous chapter 2) as well as the analytical- and postanalytical one (cf. Crowther in the subsequent chapter 4).

Although the phenomenon of Taste was in Gadamer's view defined as "an intellectual faculty of differentiation" (Gadamer 1999 [1960], 33) operating in a community, aesthetic and hermeneutic consequences were

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envisioned in what he called the "ontological valence of the pictures" (ibid., 130). The "picture" appeared to Gadamer to "confirm the immediacy of aesthetic consciousness and its claim to universality" (ibid.)., so approaching a stance close to that of immanent values, as derived from Fiedler and Croce, and passing it to disciples like Imdahl or Boehm. Gadamer's "picturing Taste" could be explained, at least in part, as stemming from sources similar to Benedetto Croce's and related to "active seeing", expression and the mental environment of German Romanticism: As Gottfried Boehm expressed, "since Romanticism's critique of reason, the fantasy and imagination, the intuition [*Anschauung*] and image have regained their old rights" (Boehm 2006, 7). Therefore, seeing was also supposed to be reconstructed as an active force that is inherent to the subject both in a historical and aesthetic way. The goal was to liberate seeing "from its passive role within the philosophical insight" (Boehm 2006 [1994], 17) in the tradition of another forerunner of Benedetto Croce, Konrad Fiedler (1841-1895). To reach this goal and hence to avoid the problem of the contingency and relativity of Taste, Fiedler founded the so-called "visibilism", a rather elitist theory relying on an internal and in a way intrinsic value of an artwork, manifested in its "pure visibility" and guaranteed by the "clarity of spirit".[1] On this ground Benedetto Croce, Fiedler's friend and colleague as well as a rediscoverer of Giambattista Vico, selected intuition as a key term of his aesthetics. From this lookout it became quite feasible to bridge the distance to the conception of seeing as consciousness (Kacunko 2010, 449f. and 782f.). After the symbolic language of "pure thinking" from Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein and other logical atomists seemed to have failed (at least on the continent, because actually it become the foundation for the Analytic philosophy), the emerging goal seemed to become the rediscovery of "pure seeing". Konrad Fiedler's answer to the question "how can one overcome the relativity of Taste?" made this art historian the founder of the "science of

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[1] Even Heinrich Wölfflin named the actual Taste, which he also used explicitly, as a "decorative feeling" and a basis or his five concept pairs from his *Principles*: "The last decision always belongs to the decorative principles, to the taste's convictions" – was the last sentence in his book *Classic Art*. – Within the iconographic debate of the ending twentieth century, Lambert Wiesing advocated a resumption of the term of the "pure visibility" and its application to the new production conditions of media images too. This would give the images precisely that subjectivity which should not fall victim to from the perspective of visual studies. Cf. Wiesing 2000.

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art" [*Kunstwissenschaft*], the so-called "visibilism" and the theory of the fine arts. His answer prompted Fiedler to separate aesthetics from art theory, the root of this effort being his understanding of Taste. For this author, Taste was an aesthetic feeling that we refer to when evaluating works of art. Since aesthetic feeling is different among people, and since it is also present as such before viewing a concrete work of art, the role of art, seen from the standpoint of a raw, uneducated Taste, would be reduced to the mere illustration of aesthetic theories. In order to avoid this, Fiedler particularly emphasized the need to shape Taste in contact with the works of art, because this alone apparently led to security in valuation and judgment. According to Fiedler, the following elements cannot be used as yardsticks for the Taste valuation: (1) Beauty, because it corresponds to untrained Taste or the aesthetic feeling; (2) content (concept), because the interest in art begins where the interest in the rational content of the work of art ends; (3) form, because, according to Fiedler, there is also a contradiction between "diving into" the depth of the work of art and understanding its historical context (Fiedler 1965, 11-13); (4) feeling, related to the argumentation for the first point; and (5) the level of imitation, because the artistic activity is a free creation. One part of Konrad Fiedler's argumentation, which may appear self-contained and particularly convincing, shows parallels with Benedetto Croce's aesthetics formulated some fifteen years later. (1) It applies above all to an activist understanding of art: "The spiritual life of an artist consists in the constant production of this artistic consciousness This is the actual artistic activity, the actual artistic creation, of which the production of the works of art is only an external result [...] Technique has no independent right in artistic activity, it serves the spiritual process exclusively" (Fiedler 1913, 55, 60). (2) The second point was Fiedler's interesting explanation of the relationship between perception and feeling, in which the need for a certain "phenomenological *epoh*ē" in Husserl's sense was emphasized (Husserl 1975). It should be applied to feeling, so that one can penetrate to the perception. Although this happens in an unclear way – with the "clarity of the mind" – it remains valid in that it is precisely with this "phenomenological" method (conditionally, because it was not yet "invented" in 1887) that Fiedler succeeded with his "pure visibility" (Fiedler 1913, 316; Zimmermann 2009, 111-116).

Seen in this historiographic perspective, we encounter the position of Hans-Georg Gadamer as one of the prominent proponents of herme-

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neutics understood as a value theory par excellence – and indirectly of Boehm and other contemporary image-immanentists. Gadamer found Taste to be one of the "guiding concepts of humanism" (Gadamer 1999 [1960], 8) and his "critique of aesthetic consciousness" was aimed at defending "the experience of truth that comes to us through the work of art against the aesthetic theory that lets itself be restricted to a scientific conception of truth" (ibid, XXII). Gadamer's focus on "hermeneutic experience" with its departure point in the post-Kantian experience of art and historical tradition showed affinity to the synthetic (continental) tendencies and the concern to overcome the reduction of understanding to the modernist and scientific concept of cognition. Gadamer's concept of "aesthetic non-differentiation" (ibid, XXVIII) came quite close to Croce's intuitionism by exhibiting a kind of "existential preferentialism", as it were, expressed among others in the conviction that "understanding belongs to the being of that which is understood" (ibid). The key systematic role of experience and "phenomenological immanence" (ibid, XXXII) made Gadamer's hermeneutic less of a proper methodology and more akin to Heidegger's interpretation of thinking experience, referring to more than the consciousness of the thinker.

Further cross-referencing regarding "picturing Taste" into the "immanent value" of the picture could continue with Roman Ingarden as an ancestor of the modern reader-response criticism or "reception-aesthetics." Wolfgang Iser (1926 – 2007) and Hans Robert Jauss (1921 – 1997) could be accounted to the cofounders of the "reception-aesthetics" as well. Although being mostly focused on texts, their line of thought could be safely equated to a search for immanent values. In his *Small Apology for the Aesthetic Experience* (1972), Jauss called for "aesthetic experience", relying on Imdahl by distancing from some early art historical appeals to separate Taste and art history:

> I rather consider the classic demand that scientific reflection on art should be completely separated from its mere enjoyment as an argument of guilty conscience [...] I defend the thesis [that] the enjoyable behaviour that art triggers and enables is the primal aesthetic experience; it cannot be excluded, but must again become the object of theoretical reflection if we are concerned today with justifying the social function of art and the science that

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serves it against the educated as well as against the uneducated between their despisers [...] Anyone who uses the word "enjoyment" today in the sense of the well-known quote from Faust: "and what is allocated to all of humanity / I want to enjoy in my inner self" (Jauss 1972, 7-8).

Such a conflux of quasi-social emancipatory claims with implicit, immanent and inherent values was at least in part the result of an early dispute with the formalist and allegedly elitist position of Theodor W. Adorno (1903 – 1969) from his posthumous *Aesthetic Theory* (1970). It was more than ten years before its English translation and its entry into British and American discussions that it induced both "New Aestheticism" and various different (anti-foundationalist, post-modernist) reactions. It is important to emphasize that there was no inherent contradiction between Imdahl's quasi-invitational seminars about the reception of modern art with the factory workers in the Bayer factory in Leverkusen (Imdahl 1982) and his immanentist explanation patterns. Hence Jauss's argumentation shall also be conceived in the same context. For him, "the sharpest criticism of all enjoyable experience of art can be found in the aesthetic theory left behind by Theodor W. Adorno [...] Whoever is unable to throw off the enjoyable taste in art leaves it in the vicinity of kitchen products or pornography" (Jauss 1972, 9). In response to Adorno's rhetoric claim that "the citizen wants art abundantly and life ascetically; it would be better the other way round" (ibid, quote from Adorno 1970, 26-27), Jauss asserted that "in this context, ascetic art and the aesthetics of negativity gain the lonely pathos of their legitimation from the contrast to consumer art of modern mass media" (Jauss 1972, 10).

Some immanentist presumptions around the "picturing Taste" of Max Imdahl can be followed in a direct line to his academic successor Richard Hoppe-Sailer, but also Christian Spies (Spies 2007) and others. Hoppe-Sailer (Hoppe-Sailer 1996; Hoppe-Sailer and Imdahl 1996) wrote about the "double look [sight, gaze]", which we found in Jauss and the related so-called response criticism of the Constance School, which Boehm transferred to his version of "image science" (*Bildwissenschaft*) and which, again, Wolfgang Kemp transferred to his version of art historical reception aesthetics (Kemp 1992, 20; Kemp 2015; Resch and Steinert 2003, 9).

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4. Imagining Taste
On Crowther's "post-analysis"

Gadamer's hermeneutic of pictures also attracted Paul Crowther, whose aim was to support his theory of aesthetic value as artistic value with the projected value of the "artistic image". A point of departure for Crowther was indeed the "projective" one, as expressed in his book on *Philosophy after Postmodernism* (2003), since a picture always "involves the projection of a three-dimensional item or state of affairs within a virtual two-dimensional plane. The means of projection is resemblance in terms of shape, texture and/or color, between the picture and that kind of thing which it is a picture of" (Crowther 2003a, 212). Crowther sought therewith to bridge the infinite number of pictures with a "finite number of logically distinct ways in which pictorial space can be structured" by combining a quasi-Kantian way of developing schematic categories that respected the development of "pictorial media" and other circumstances with a quasi-Hegelian way of diachronically structuring such assumed structures. However, it was not an update of Hegelian *Lectures on Aesthetics* that was the motivation, but rather a defense against the postmodernist (but also analytic-philosophical) denials of the "correspondence" theory or reducing the perspective to the culturally-dependent construct. Instead, the modes of the "picturing" of the "systematic spatiality of the physical world" are to be explored as tools for an objective and indeed normative understanding of art and value.

Four years later, in the book *Defining Art, Creating the Canon* (2007), Crowther presented a more elaborated sketch of what he termed "artistic image"; here we shall only clarify what was termed there as an "analytic appropriation of ideas from Gadamer" (Crowther 2007a, 89). In essence, the "structure of experience" has been connected to Gadamer's views on art and reconnected to the cognitive value of both, as seen through some features of the creative development of the used artistic media. For Crowther, there exists no established alternative to the term "image", when it comes to the clarification of the relations between aesthetic value, art and "what is to be an artifactual image" (ibid, 90). He adopted Gadamer's ontological founding of art on the structure of play and its mimetic and representational character and underlined two merits: (1) Gadamer's account of art as having a genuinely event character having the potential for the further development of Kant's account of the "aes-

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thetic idea" and (2) the potential of Gadamer's account to connect with what Crowther called "world projection". The latter term was described in the third chapter of the same book from 2007, in which Crowther presented his views of how Kant's aesthetics could be further developed by making decisive steps "from Beauty to Art" (Crowther 2007b). At the same time, the reused visual and also psychoanalytic metaphor of "projection" from the above-quoted book from 2003 served to conceptually strengthen the bonds between the "world", "subject" and the creative act as event. With Crowther's words, "whilst the ability to project beyond immediate perception in these terms, can be purely a process of thought, its more fundamental mode is the image [...] The realm of imagery – be it exercised in memory or imagination – is the zone from which rationality emerges" (Crowther 2007a, 101).

Crowther found hence in Gadamer's high appreciation of art an important potential for linking art's essence, structure and origins to the fundaments of self-consciousness and with this anthropological constant, a kind of quasi-iconic difference emerged in order to separate artistic from logical truths. Crowther saw the key point as the assumption that "art stems directly from the experience of shared subjectivity – from a mutual recognition of common forms of relatedness to the world" (ibid, 102). This was again the basis for reciprocity of a kind which we can encounter in Croce's reciprocity between the productive genius and receptive Taste. Although not referring to Croce explicitly, Crowther recognized there Hegel's understanding of the mode of knowledge which art provides as a midway between sensuality and abstract thinking, as well as Gadamer's redirecting of focus to provide the distinctive status of knowledge to art. Crowther then went on to adapt and further concretize these insights.[2] An important point was to substantiate the claim of the artwork being a "symbolically significant artifact" and hence the extraordinary character of our experience of art and its value.

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2 Crowther complained about Gadamer's "schematism" with respect to the "art's relation to self-consciousness and world-projection" similarly like to the schematism of Kant. This complain could, however, be relativized with a speculation about the people who are not "art believers", "art preachers / teachers" and the like. – "A more serious worry concerns his [Gadamer's] claims about the artwork exemplifying the essence of experience. A claim of this sort is necessary; insofar as art transforms play into 'structure' i.e. it is a full realization of tendencies which are only hinted at in play and games. Only in art, in other words, does image mimesis attain the status of knowledge. But why is this so?" Crowther 2007a, 102.

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Although Gadamer's understanding of representation as an ontological event brings with it a metaphysical, Neoplatonist implication – "the subject of the picture is a 'one' from which the picture itself is an emanation of overflow" (Crowther 2007a, 103) – Crowther turned this implication of point to an ontological-existential one with the following result: "By treating the artist's experience of a subject matter (be it real or imaginary) as the original, then we might see the artwork which results from this as a kind of 'increase in being' for the original" (ibid, 103). This move from Taste and aesthetics to art and eventually to the visual (the artwork as "a made image") was then projected again onto the existential foil to interpret Gadamer's artwork as a continuation of a self-conscious artistic "world projection" and its ontological anchoring in an intersubjective world: "It is thus ontologically akin to the world-projection aspect of experience, whilst, at the same time, being physically autonomous from its creator. The significance of this, of course, is that in artifact form, the image endures. Indeed, it embodies an overt symbolic content which (in a way that a mundane artifact does not) invites interpretation from the audience" (ibid, 105). The hermeneutical circle is closed, as it were, while the art experience reemerged as enjoyment in life's intensity and an increase in being. Above all, however, stands the creator, whose style remains paramount. Their experience is an ontological one, bearing ontological, not logical truth.

To Crowther, the very fact of artwork's "being physically discontinuous from the artist gives it an ontological self-sufficiency and completeness which individual personal experiences do not have" (ibid, 109). Apart from this "first normative axis", as Crowther called it, he also presented a "second normative axis", stemming from the distinctions between high art and mass products. The main point here was a focus on the quasi-ultimate fact, on which Crowther's answer to the latter difficult question of emergence of "art in the sense of image per se" (ibid 110, 116, 123) relied. While considering the "general historical relations" of mediation "that the reflective significance of art – its distinctive power of experiential illumination fully emerges" – and hence implying at least some institutionalists' claims – Crowther regarded the key concept to be originality. Supported by two complementary fundaments – refinement and innovation – originality, which Crowther envisioned indeed to exhibit certain important "general" features of Taste, became here confined or quasi-limited to the agency of the artist. With respect to "imagining

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Taste", Crowther had the divisive conviction that such conceived originality "changes our relation to the image. Rather than see it as mere decoration or as an object of functional or escapist significance […] the world of otherness echoes our own being; its foreignness is overcome" (ibid, 116). The important question that remains here is whether this "overcoming" takes place as "resistance", "tolerance", "cohabitation", or some kind of combination of these *modi vivendi*.

Crowther seemed to have already made a step towards answering this question in a chapter from his book from 2003, entitled *The Cohesion of the Self: Moment, Image, and Narrative* (Crowther 2003b). The claim that the unity of the self is aesthetically based was supported by a reading of Kant's interplay of understanding and imagination as two basic and complementary aspects of aesthetic experience that exceed mere faculty psychology. The "narrative of the self" was conceived as a positive moment of what Crowther termed the "experiential sublime" (ibid, 89) to distinguish it from a Kantian focus on the "natural" sublime. It included, as Crowther explained, some moral and political aspects that imply the importance of a claim of intrinsic values: "In moral terms, they are worthy of respect; in political terms, they should be afforded basic human rights. What sustains these ascriptions is the fact that there is something special about free self-conscious beings" (ibid, 98). Crowther's holistic and intersubjective justification of the "experiential sublime" as intrinsically demanding respect, as it were, did however suggest a perhaps more optimistic invitation and promise than an individual or even collective "cohesion" could possibly hold: "Hence my description of the self as an aesthetic structure is not an aestheticization, it is a literal truth about the basis of the self's cohesion" (ibid, 99).

In a paper entitled "What Makes One Work of Art Better Than Another – From Aesthetic Judgment to Canonicity" (Crowther, not dated), Paul Crowther provided a sketch of a theory of intrinsic aesthetic value in art, which maintained a number of relevant points that implied a concept of (aesthetic) experience and which in a way belongs to both analytic and synthetic thinking traditions. As a case in point, the following notes on Crowther's approach should help us to further support our argument about the use of (in-) divisibility of both traditions with respect to the ongoing reflections on matters of Taste in the contemporary (image) discourse. In this paper, Crowther provided what he conceived as "familiar features of the aesthetic judgment in general", followed by "objec-

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tive criteria" serving as evidences for supporting aesthetic judgments (ibid, 1). The idea of aesthetic features refers to the "distinctiveness of the aesthetic as a mode of pleasure (or displeasure) and value" (ibid, 2) and takes the writings of a wide range of authors (Kant, Hegel, Bergson, Dewey, Dufrenne, Beardsley, Adorno and Wollheim) as support for the "foundational sense of the aesthetic" (ibid). (1) The first feature of aesthetic judgment is its foundation on either a perceptual or imaginatively-intended experience of an item – a point defended throughout the paper. (2) The second feature is the non-reducibility of the "sensuous" character of the aesthetic item to the sensory qualities; quasi-sensory and feeling-related inputs are also optional to build together what Crowther names "sensuous meaning" – a constitutive feature of judgment, "that uniquely qualifies and is qualified by its place in the developing whole of personal and historical human experience" (ibid).

The objective valid criteria for supporting aesthetic engagement include several interesting implications: (1) Public accessibility contains "a shared cognitive stock of relevant concepts, norms, and expectations" assumed as necessary for communication between humans (ibid, 3). (2) The "comparative dimension" is another major "source of evidence" for aesthetic judgment, also referred to as "comparative qualification." Through the latter, "our particular experience of something can contribute to and modify the horizon of expectations through which we regard the world" (ibid, 7). Following the premises of the hermeneutical character of all the experience, Crowther concludes on the hermeneutical character of the aesthetic as well: The interpretation of the directly-experienced and -described item hence builds the "evidential basis for objectivity in aesthetic judgement" (ibid). (3) Crowther added, among others, also the criterion of "creative individual difference", an art difference, as it were, to be paralleled by aesthetic quality in aesthetics. This difference provides intrinsically pleasurable items with the required "descriptive evidence" (ibid, 14) to support the objectivity of judgment. An interesting parallel of this specific art difference could be drawn with Heidegger's "ontological difference", Boehm's "iconic difference" and with Crowther's attachment to Gadamer. Each of the three parallels also seems applicable to their persuasive power in the sense of "invitationalism". Crowther's "creative individual difference [...] makes the work pleasurable in its own right and invites us to explore not only the structure of how it appears to the senses or imagination, but also its aesthetic disclosure of how another

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person has seen or experienced the world's possibilities" (ibid). The decisive aspect of this descriptive evidence is the way of refining the artistic medium, which individual engagement achieves in its efforts both to aesthetically disclose the world and to sustain aesthetic disclosure (ibid, 17). Crowther lets this aspect of innovation and individual style converge if not coalesce with each other. This would be then

> the way in which creative individual difference that engages with features central to an artistic medium, opens up not only new ways of aesthetically disclosing the world, but also ones that, in so doing, change the terms of how that medium sustains aesthetic disclosure. This, in turn can assist other artists to achieve individual styles, and can even enable much more extensive refinements that far exceed the scope of the original innovation (ibid, 17-18).

At the same time, "individuality of vision" expands "the aesthetically disclosive possibilities of the medium itself" (ibid). In sum, the artists with the best achievements in all named (and some other) criteria are according to Crowther best qualified to be acknowledged as "meritorious in the most objective terms – namely canonic" (ibid, 18). The very last point probably appears as the most decisive both for creative individual difference and for all the mentioned objective valid criteria – the capacity of the creator to transform the semantic, syntactic and material nature of the used (or invented) medium. This is what Crowther reconnected with the "expressive qualities" discussed in the analytic tradition (Noël Carroll) as an important supplement to the synthetic (i.e. continental tradition's) interest in historicity. The medium mediates between "creative stylistic difference" and "cognitive exploration" to eventually converge in the trinity of *innovatio*, invention and creativity. When an artist "changes the scope of the medium", the opportunities for the other artists widen and "in this way aesthetic value becomes world-changing" (ibid, 20).

We can widen the context of Crowther's (re-) building of the objective canon for an aesthetic-as-artistic valuation. What we have previously referred to as the third criterion of "creative individual difference" (there are actually four in Crowther's account) appears as "authentic canon" and the normative definition of art, closely dependent on widening the "logical scope of art media", innovation and "refinement." In a text with

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the programmatic title *Defining Art, Defending the Canon, Contesting Culture* (Crowther 2004), Crowther presented *in ovo* what he would later elaborate in the book *Defining Art, Creating the Canon: Artistic Value in an Era of Doubt* (2007c). A decisive concept, apart from what we have discussed so far, was the concept of "making". It served not only to justify the move from the more general analytic interest in relations between epistemology and the aesthetic values to the ontology of art and the justification of artistic value; the move was important for defending a particular ecumenical attempt of merging (or stronger: "overcoming") elements from the analytic and synthetic traditions against contemporary anti-foundational attacks. Having Foucault and Stuart Hall's "signifying practices" as implicit targets, Crowther made an important point by taking the example of non-western art to show "the centrality of making" as a quasi-universal common denominator because of its equal importance also for western art. For, as he concluded,

> to develop the logical scope of a medium is – literally – to make new idioms of representation. If a work achieves something in terms of developing this scope – that is to say, if it innovates or refines in relation to it, then (over and above any broader social functions it may serve) the work has an objective value which representations that merely repeat established patterns and formulae of production do not (Crowther 2004, 372).

All the aforementioned canonical evaluation criteria are applied here. The "art" is then justified as a universal category qua distinctive representations qua extending the logical scope of a specific medium qua innovation or refinement. The cognitive elements of "Taste" seem transferred and appropriated by the "art." "Relativism's problems center with its "distorted consumerist mind-set […] on the exclusion or marginalization of making and its profound connections with aesthetic experience" (ibid, 377). The actual post-post-colonial point that Crowther was making was that the anti-foundationalist one-size-fits-all instrument of appropriation becomes a disguised "universal" – and hence tacitly racist (ibid, 367) – tool for degrading one kind of local truths into the relative values of the others (Western ones).
However, an interesting and perhaps decisive break with the postmodernist mainstream seems to have happened along the line of Heidegger's

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anti-technological position: While both Crowther and the postmodern-
ists (or proponents of "supermodernity", connoting a continuity within
modernity) drew a lot from Heidegger's ontology and existentialism,
Crowther seemed unwilling to follow him all the way with postmodern-
ists in their shared dystopian views on the techno-scientific changes in
the early and later twentieth century, respectively. Although he identi-
fied the dangers of "cyber-babble" throughout, Crowther believed in the
advantages of "a specific usage of information technology." He regarded a
clue to this in the "popularity of web sites devoted to genealogy" and the
potentials of efficiency, which would allow to "grow around a retrievable
body of historical fact and imagery [...] The Self achieves, thereby, *progres-
sive articulation*." (Crowther 2003a, 215-16). This is also where Crowther
envisioned a theory of civilization with the correlating theory of value
attempting to "bridge the seemingly ever-widening divide between ana-
lytic philosophy and other traditions of philosophy and social theory"
(ibid, 3). The analytic and synthetic traditions were hence supposed to
converge in a self-conscious civilizing process bearing intrinsic value
in itself. Such a "transhistorical" approach was supposed to counter the
"fetishization of difference." Also "iconic difference" belongs, perhaps
surprisingly and counter-intuitively, to this criticized context. In order
to meet the often undifferentiated reflections upon the varieties of the
latter, Crowther gave a necessary task to a candidate for the future crit-
ically autonomous cultural agent ("artist", "experiencer" etc.): They are
supposed to be able to clarify the nature of their difference from a given
cultural position, which required discerning between the five basic kinds
of difference: (1) neutral, (2), normal, (3) effective, (4) paradigmatic and
(5) pseudo-difference (ibid, 210).

Crowther's attempt certainly bears the positive aspects of a call for proper
differentiation, "refinement" and "progressive articulation" (ibid, 23).
What however remains a desideratum is a full-developed theory that
would unite the Cassirer-Heidegger ideological dispute about Kant's
first *Critique* of 1929 in Davos and hence fully overcome the dynamics
between the analytic and synthetic approaches relying on either ideal-
istic or phenomenological positions. Such an attempt seems more likely
to be achieved qua description and ascription and less qua prescription
("canon"). Applied to the "urgency", "immediacy" and "inventiveness" of
Taste, Crowther's descriptions are certainly that of a value-bearer, per-
haps also of a true-bearer in some parts. He concludes that

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> The decisive factor here is the way in which symbolic transformations historically articulate cognitive categories and other necessary features of embodied subjectivity. This is a reciprocal relationship. The individually necessary elements mediate one other and their historically specific instantiations, and, at the same time are mediated by those instantiations. The means of this mediation is the transformation or invention of appropriate kinds of symbolic code (ibid, 136).

Crowther counted, as we have seen, with originality as being a crucial feature of (the artist's) Taste (their capacity to exhibit a distinctive "style"), a feature supported by the two other features of "refinement" and "innovation". The former feature, being one of the synonyms for "value", complements the latter one, but both of them seem somehow dependent on the permanent development of the "logical scope of the media" involved. This is where the objective – but intrinsic – value criterion in Crowther's account lies, and where perhaps the "extrinsic" innovative aspects may also be imagined. In addition, the question remains open as to whether the dichotomy of the canonic and the anti-canonic reaches so far as to encompass the entire range of the issue – not to mention the far-fetched, allegedly direct or even one-way-causalities from "image" to "artistic image" to "aesthetic value".

5. Concluding remarks

Our review of Crowther's position served as an example of an attempt to defend a particular ecumenical attempt of merging (or stronger: "overcoming") elements from the analytic and synthetic traditions against contemporary anti-foundational attacks. Crowther's specific attempt to justify the move from the more general analytic interest in relations between epistemology and the aesthetic values to the ontology of art and the justification of artistic value based on (artistic) images falls however – in our estimation – into the "immanentist pitfall" that was built-in already in his predecessor's foundationalisms based at least partially in "images" ("image-foundationalism" or even "fundamentalism of image"): Gadamer's, Heidegger's and also Fiedler's as well as Croce's positions remain in our view but the rather unsurprising roots of current continental image-foundationalism shared by Boehm and Crowther, among many others.

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Norbert Schneider's short paper, in contrast, is estimated as a reminder that we still have the self-imposed obligation to give reasons for matters of image(s) – just like we also must remain able to give reasons for matters of Taste and our aesthetic evaluations. Otherwise, there is a good chance that the only foundation for our estimations may rest in believe in the power of "something" that is substantially based on believe and power.

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KASPER LÆGRING

New Carlsberg Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Art History,
Aarhus University, School of Communication and Culture
kl@cc.au.dk

Abstract:

In recent years, neuroaesthetics has made its way into art history. Most notably, art historian David Freedberg and neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese have promoted a theory based on the discovery of so-called mirror neurons. In brief, it has been shown that a mirror neuron fires an electrical signal both when a movement is performed by one's own body and when the same movement is observed in another body, in another individual. Gallese calls this circuit *embodied simulation*, and Freedberg, either alone or in collaboration with Gallese, has taken these results and simply identified this effect with empathy. Building on the theory of embodied simulation, Freedberg has generally contextualized artworks through a range of neuroscientific findings, including Antonio Damasio's *as-if body loop* and Paul Ekman's theory of linking basic emotions with specific facial expressions. Altogether, this paradigm can be called simulation theory.

Freedberg's resulting neuroaesthetic theory has some radical implications for the analysis and interpretation of artworks, even for the practice of art history itself. This article explores and challenges Freedberg's assumptions and arguments, which are sought to be refuted, partly by consulting phenomenology and the history of emotions. In particular, his peculiar concept of empathy is rejected, as it is limited to unconscious, pre-cognitive bodily automatism. The article examines his selection of artworks and finds that the scope of his theory makes it challenging to apply to modern and contemporary art. It also takes issue with Freedberg's atomistic style of analysis, where specific body segments, forms of gestures, and facial expressions, as well as motifs

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of movement, are isolated from their compositional context and identified as the meaning and message of the image itself. Similarly, the article faults Freedberg's dependence on Paul Ekman's tautological attempts to locate a set of basic emotions in the face, not observed but predefined.

The article then moves on to first provide an account of the promising results generated by the intersection of art history and emotional history in recent decades. It subsequently uncovers how Freedberg ignores these recent findings and how the history of emotions challenges the neuroaesthetic perspective on emotions in artworks, at least in the form represented by Freedberg and Gallese.

The article goes on to discuss how Freedberg's theory fails to distinguish between art and reality or between art, kitsch, and propaganda. Avant-garde concepts like estrangement and shock are introduced to demonstrate that the application of Freedberg's approach—his peculiar concept of empathy—would lead to misinterpretations of the aesthetic message of avant-garde art. Finally, the article argues that Freedberg's neuroaesthetics lacks aesthetic explanatory power and fundamentally deprives artworks of meaning. It also returns to his concept of empathy, which is challenged through both emotional-historical and neuroscientific approaches. Overall, the article concludes that while the emergence of emotions as objects of study in art history and aesthetics is a positive and promising correction to traditional ways of studying artworks, Freedberg's theory is of little assistance when explaining the occurrence and function of empathy and emotions in aesthetic phenomena.

Keywords: neuroaesthetics; David Freedberg; Vittorio Gallese; empathy; emotions; picture theory; image theory; simulation theory; embodied simulation; aesthetics

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OF FREEDBERGIAN NEUROAESTHETICS AND THE PROMISE OF EMOTIONAL ART HISTORY

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1. Introduction

From time to time, it happens that an exciting reorientation within a field occurs with the right intentions but the wrong methods. In the worst case, this deviation can lead to the loss of the field's own subject matter and its potentials, and the interest in understanding may imperceptibly shift toward an entirely different object than the one the study originally set out to investigate. This danger is particularly relevant when the boundaries between different disciplines are crossed without a clear mission direction. This article is about such a case, namely the entry of neuroscience into art history. Other aestheticians and art historians have already provided critiques of some aesthetic proclamations coming either from neuroscientists proper (Bundgaard 2015) or from art historians committed to the neuroaesthetic cause, such as John Onians (Rampley 2017 and 2021). My contribution to this critical exposition of neuroaesthetics focuses on a partnership spanning both disciplines – neuroscience and art history – consisting of Vittorio Gallese and David Freedberg. My aim is to formulate a critique and a corrective to the horizon of understanding and the conceptual framework concerning emotions in art introduced and propagated by this partnership over the past few decades. However, since it is Freedberg who asserts that art history needs to be reshaped in the image of neuroscience, and not the other way around, his agency naturally takes center stage in what follows.
So, in response to the welcome challenge issued by this journal, I still believe in the power of images, just not in the form attributed to them by Freedberg and Gallese. Moreover, as I hope to demonstrate in the course of this article, the potential for art history lies elsewhere, namely in the research on emotions in art and the intersection between image theory and the history of emotions.

2. Freedberg's Project: Defining Empathy

In Freedberg's latest account of his neuroaesthetic research on the role of empathy in the experience of art, some considerations about boundary issues and methodology emerge midway. He writes:

> In this part, I want to suggest (1) that empathy is fundamentally a
> matter of bodily engagement; (2) that the use of the term be con-

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fined to empathetic engagement with the movements of others,
or even with the implied movements of others – and not only be
used in reference to their emotional condition or the stories they
tell; (3) that even though empathy is not constitutive of art, the
form of immersion it entails is often a critical preliminary stage
in aesthetic judgment – and always an illustrative one (Freed-
berg 2017, 147).

He anticipates a number of expected objections:

But why restrict the concept of empathy to the movements of
the body or to the feeling of direct imitation of another person's
movements? Not only because this specification provides a bet-
ter sense of the frequent automaticity of responses to images,
but because it also allows us a pragmatic refinement of the use
of what has now become rather too loose a term. I argue for the
constitutive role of movement in empathy both for the sake of
analytic clarity and to distinguish the concept of empathy more
clearly from other forms of deep emotional engagement with
others (Freedberg 2017, 155-56).

By reducing empathy to a bodily interaction, Freedberg's definition devi-
ates radically from mainstream scientific conceptions of empathy that
go beyond neuroscience. For him, empathy is thus 1) always bodily and
2) always automatic.

3. Freedberg's Alignment in Empathy Scholarship

Where does Freedberg position himself within the vast and diverse field
of empathy research? His bibliography provides a clue. It clearly ori-
ents itself toward neuroscience, with only a handful of names pointing
in a different direction. Among them, only William James and Theodor
Lipps belong to a philosophical and psychological tradition. Through-
out the text, other figures like Robert Vischer, Eugène Véron, Friedrich
Nietzsche, Walter Benjamin, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Hans-Ulrich
Gumbrecht are mentioned, while there is no mention of philosophers
such as Max Scheler, Edmund Husserl, Edith Stein, or Jean-Paul Sartre,
for instance. This observation also holds true for Freedberg and Gallese's

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2007 article, where Vischer, Lipps, and Merleau-Ponty appear, but not the intermediate cast of characters. The fact that Freedberg paradoxically selects a philosopher and phenomenologist like Merleau-Ponty, who did not write extensively on the issue of empathy, while bypassing the four philosophers and phenomenologists who wrote the most about empathy – and criticized Lipps – is not a coincidence.

Freedberg's text emphasizes a neuroscientific chain of reasoning but draws on psychology and art history for important complementary arguments. Just as Bernard Berenson and, especially, Aby Warburg are revered by Freedberg for their movement-oriented analytical style, other carefully chosen names appear where they suit the author's agenda. However, it is clear that all these names are selected for their ability to address the body, not for their definitions of empathy.

4. The Mirror Neuron Theory

The foundation of Freedberg's undertaking is the so-called mirror neuron theory, which has led its originator and most ardent proponent, Vittorio Gallese, toward a close collaboration with Freedberg, where they frequently confront questions about emotions and empathy in the borderland between neuroscience and aesthetics. The mirror neuron theory was the holy grail in several fields in the 1990s, but it has lost its novelty, and during the intervening period, it has come under increasing theoretical scrutiny. Criticisms of the theory do not question its reality or its operation but rather its applicability to areas traditionally centered around interpretive practices.

In short, it has been shown that a mirror neuron fires an electrical signal when a movement is performed by one's own body and when the same movement is observed in another body, in another individual. Mirror neurons were first discovered in the brains of macaques and are primarily located in the premotor cortex, the part of the brain used for planning and controlling movements. This mechanism is particularly noticeable in the imitation of grasping movements, but as Freedberg points out, the brain does not only react to the movements of others. Bodily suffering and torment are highlighted in Freedberg's examples, with his primary example being the experience of puncture wounds in reality and in images. Drawing on an article from 2004 by Christiaan Keysers et al. about the brain's reactions to touch, Freedberg claims (2017, 145) that

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"Gallese and Christiaan Keyers clearly set out how the sight of puncture wounds in the bodies of others generates an automatic sense of bodily infraction in observers (Keysers et al., 2004)". However, Freedberg must have been mistaken, as the mentioned article does not address pain or the experience of wounds but rather simple touch. Thus, the article does not support his conclusion about the sight of puncture wounds, and Freedberg has not included it in his bibliography.

In an older article from 2007 by Freedberg and Gallese (2007a, 201), Keysers et al.'s findings are represented more accurately and linked to Antonio Damasio's theory of the "as-if body loop". According to Damasio, this loop activates when we imagine a situation that would normally trigger a specific emotion, such as fear at the sight of a dangerous animal. The same applies to imaginative representations of perilous moments, as found in artworks. The result is that we experience the bodily state that would typically accompany a given emotion in a simulated form that feels genuine. Lately, Damasio, who initially had only indications for his hypothesis, has argued that the mirror neuron theory is indeed the basis for the "as-if body loop" (Damasio and Damasio 2006, 20).

5. The Simulation Paradigm and the Question of Unified Science

When Freedberg supplements his argumentation for the mirror neuron theory and its significance, he does so by referring to theorists like Antonio Damasio, Alvin Goldman, and Paul Ekman, whose perspectives can be grouped under the umbrella of the so-called *simulation theory*. Common to these theorists are, firstly, an insistence that emotions are always tied to the body, secondly, an assertion that emotions are always automatically triggered, thirdly, a belief that emotions are finite and historically unchanging, and fourthly, a rejection of the idea that emotions can also have a cognitive dimension.

Along the way, Freedberg makes a classic error often seen in attempts to import theory from the hard sciences into the soft sciences, namely assuming that the natural sciences have the character of unified science, in contrast to the theoretical pluralism of the humanities. Reading Freedberg, one does not get any impression that the implications, scope, and extent of the mirror neuron theory are a matter of debate, despite notable critiques raised in recent years (Mondloch, 2016, 26n5).

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Gregory Hickok (2008) finds that the mirror neuron theory lacks support for the postulate of inherent understanding of actions in simulation, while Shannon Spaulding (2012) rejects embodied simulation as a source of social cognition and a replacement for mindreading, just to mention two central objections. That Freedberg (2017, 144) indirectly concedes that this is a perspective he has chosen is evident in the phrase "the mirror theorists". Finally, it is not clear from Freedberg's position that, for instance, Damasio's model of the brain is just that – a model. Damasio's model, for example, is not compatible with Karl H. Pribram's equally influential model, and so on.

6. A Bodily Fixation: No Place for Modern Art

In their 2007 article, as mentioned, the author pair takes as a starting point the following works:

- Michelangelo, *Atlas Slave*, c. 1525-1530, marble, Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze
- Caravaggio, *Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, 1601-1602, oil on canvas, Potsdam, Schloss Sanssouci
- Francisco Goya, "Que hay que hacer mas?" (What more is there to do?), plate 33 from *Los Desastres de la Guerra (Disasters of War)*, aquatint print, 1810-1820
- Jackson Pollock, *Number 14: Gray*, 1948, enamel over gesso on paper, Yale University Gallery, The Katharine Ordway Collection
- Lucio Fontana, *Concetto Spaziale, Attese* (Spatial Concept, Waiting), 1960, canvas, Tate Gallery, London

It did not go unnoticed that the selection of works was fixated on violence against the body (Casati and Pignocchi 2007). Nevertheless, Freedberg's choice of works a decade later appears to have the same character, as although the selection has been supplemented with Rogier van der Weyden, Matthias Grünewald, Michelangelo (now paintings), and Franz Kline, whose brushwork is claimed to trigger a sensorimotor response (Sbriscia-Foretti et al. 2013), the focal points remain the same, still leaning toward works that address injuries to the body or an imaginary body – wounds, cuts, lesions, and stigmata.

Freedberg's anthropocentric approach aligns poorly with the primary developmental paths in Western art in the latter half of the twentieth century, where abstract and conceptual art began to assert themselves,

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Fig. 1. A new generation contemplates the mind and work of Jackson Pollock at the Museum of Modern Art in NYC. Image courtesy of David Grossman / Alamy Stock Photo

as argued by Casati and Pignocchi (2007). In order to make everything fit, he must make even abstract and formal works human-like. When Freedberg subscribes to the simulation paradigm, it is, among other things, to bridge the historical gap between us and the artwork, which could be a stumbling block for his project. Thus, entirely ordinary cuts, holes, and the entire spectrum of abstract forms can become a springboard for the lawful triggering of empathy.

It is the irony of fate that Freedberg embarked on his career by, like many of his generation, rejecting not only Panofsky's iconological formal understanding but also his humanism. Hence Freedberg's (2017, 147, 171) ongoing exclusion of Kant and everything he represents. For where José Ortega y Gasset (1968) in 1925 announced humanity's expulsion from art, Freedberg seems to have made it his task to reintegrate man, now as a pure automaton, into art. Like many others before him – Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Adorno – Freedberg turns to art to illustrate or solve a philosophical problem. However, Freedberg's preferred artists are not Van Gogh, Cézanne, or Picasso, but Van der Weyden, Michelangelo, and Caravaggio.

His examples of works such as Pollock (Fig. 1), Fontana, and Kline reveal the assumption that empathy can only find its way into modern ab-

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stract art as bodily imprints: Pollock's drip painting are traces of his gestural circular strokes, Fontana's cuts in the canvas are traces of the knife's guidance by the hand, while Kline's brushstrokes are an expression of the hand's work, pure and simple. Interestingly, he does not mention Yves Klein's series of canvases where the paint is applied by nude women who rolled themselves over the surface. Hence, as Matthew Rampley (2017, 87) objects, by making gesture the touchstone for interaction with artworks across time and place, Freedberg's theory has "little to say about works, such as the paintings of Ingres, where gesture has been reduced to a minimum".

In encountering modern art, Freedberg's reductionist concept of bodily empathy ends up in a predictable dead end. Conversely, the situation is different for James Elkins (2001, 1-14), who has dedicated an entire chapter in his book *Pictures & Tears: A History of People Who Have Cried in Front of Paintings* to the tears shed by viewers when faced with the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. Had Freedberg gone the other way around, taking stock of documented examples of an empathetic – or at least emotional – reaction from the audience, he would be better equipped to locate non-figurative art on the map of empathy. The rejection of Kantianism within art history has by no means been exclusive to Freedberg. But even though the departure from Kantianism and art phenomenology, which Rosalind Krauss and Yves-Alain Bois (1997) took in their book *Formless: A User's Guide*, in many ways delves into the opposite trench, their book is far more compatible with the actual developmental history of modern art than Freedberg's attempt to chart "empathetic" abstraction. Ironically, their confrontation with an anthropocentric analytical interest highlights the pitfalls of an excessive focus on the human body as the solution to everything, which Freedberg represents, now in a positivistic variant.

Freedberg and Gallese's (2007a, 197) consistent focus remains tied to "one aspect of the effects of works of art, namely the felt effect of particular gestures involved in producing them". However, Freedberg actually anticipates the objection that as viewers, we cannot reconstruct Pollock's motives for movement (he does not mention that the mere hanging of the canvas gives a completely different viewing angle in relation to the body and thus an insurmountable distance from the work's conditions of creation). He insists that "one still feels compelled to move in the general direction of the perceived motion of the work" (Freedberg 2017, 157). Once

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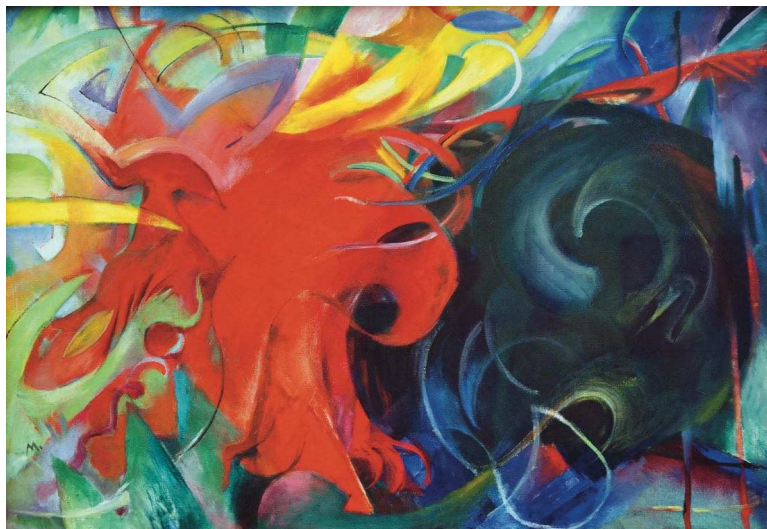
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Fig. 2. Franz Marc, *Kämpfenden Formen* (*Fighting Forms*), 1914, oil on canvas,
91 × 131.5 cm, Pinakothek der Moderne, 076. Source: Flickr.
Photo courtesy of Allie Caulfield

again, he is led astray by his reductionism because, on the one hand, it is
the case that viewers generally move a lot when perceiving artworks, and,
on the other hand, a brand-new study (Kühnapfel et al. 2023) shows that
viewers can be categorized into at least four different patterns of move-
ment when encountering a painting, in this case by Franz Marc (Fig. 2).
There is, therefore, *no prototypical viewer*, even in terms of movement.

7. An Atomistic Analytics

Since Freedberg never clearly positions himself within a specific metho-
dological framework in art history, except for his dedication to Warburg
(and anything with a hint of *Lebensphilosophie*) and a corresponding
skepticism towards Panofsky and Gombrich, one must elicit his method
by mapping his analytical style. As evident from all his contributions
to reshaping art history in the image of neuroaesthetics, he is not con-
cerned with the pictorial whole. In fact, he frequently equates isolated
motifs of movement with the very content, message, rationale, or what-
ever we may call it, of the image. This can partly be a consequence of
his theory being a corrective to what he views as the hegemonic cogni-

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Fig. 3. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, 1601–2, oil on canvas, 107 × 146 cm, Potsdam, Schloss Sanssouci, GK I 5438. Source: Wikimedia Commons

tive mainstream within art history. Freedberg's practice of an atomizing analytical style is less problematic when it is directed toward modern works. Here, technique and materiality – the dripping of paint on canvas, the cut in the canvas – are to a great extent the defining features of the works, and indeed, an iconological approach would fall short in these cases. However, in the encounter with naturalistic, figurative art, the analytical approach proves to be extremely narrow, even misleading. In his latest article, Freedberg emphasizes Van der Weyden's *The Descent from the Cross*. He notes that the work is about compassion and locates the effect in a series of body postures, facial expressions, and gestures. But along with Grünewald's *Crucifixion* and Caravaggio's *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas*, Van der Weyden's work is simply characterized as "a wide range of insults to the bodies of others" (Freedberg 2017, 146). In both his considerations, in 2007 and 2017, of Caravaggio's famous work (Fig. 3), Freedberg completely overlooks the point of the work (and the biblical passage). In the resurrected Christ, the wound has been reduced to a sign of past trials, and when the doubting Thomas puts his finger in the wound, it is to assure himself that it is indeed the dead Christ who

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stands alive before him. Christ's suffering history here is only a marker for identification. Christ's wound is a sign, but because Freedberg (1989, 325, 338) has always, and most explicitly in *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response,* rejected the relevance of representation, temporality – that something has preceded – is also amputated. The summary analyses, where individual motifs of movement are plucked from the whole, and where the rest of the image is not even mentioned, continue with Rubens' *The Fall of the Damned* and Michelangelo's *Expulsion from Paradise* in the Sistine Chapel (Freedberg 2017, 145, 149). Freedberg's (2017, 165-66) analysis of Pontormo's work in the Capponi Chapel fares better, as he at least comments on the color palette. His discussion of the shift "from absorption to inhibition, self-aware detachment, contemplation, and reflection" is interesting:

> When we see the *way* the picture is depicted, we become aware of ourselves as judging, assessing selves, as well, perhaps, of the fact that even our simulatory or imitative sense of their actions is an effect of the picture. At that moment we consider the other dimensions of this picture as well: formal, emotional, and compositional (Freedberg 2017, 166).

Where the early theorists of *Einfühlung,* especially Robert Vischer (1994, 102-4), described the affective-aesthetic engagement with an artwork (or other phenomenon) as a state of equal parts self-forgetfulness and meaning enrichment, Freedberg's proposal is quite different. The process indeed begins with absorption, but this spontaneous state is soon subdued by the frontal lobes to make room for the detached aesthetic judgment: "Freud, as so often, is fleshed out by neuroscience" (Freedberg 2017, 167).

The most ambitious aestheticians and art historians have always presented analysis and interpretation strategies that encompass both parts and the whole, moving from the simple to the complex, from isolated phenomena to a larger context. Whether Freedberg has similar ambitions cannot be definitively stated, but the image analyses he has so far presented within the framework of neuroaesthetics (interpretations seem to be left out of consideration) point in the opposite direction. Here, isolated observations of facial expressions, gestures, and posture are left helpless without contextual follow-up.

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Aby Warburg's concept of the *Pathosformel* cannot be endorsed for this strategy, even though Freedberg (2017, 150-51) often traces the lineage of neuroaesthetics back to Warburg. First, Warburg did not launch the concept as an exhaustive interpretive model; second, it was always related to an ancient reception. As Rampley notes, Warburg's claim about images entailed that they would

> reawaken in the viewer the original emotional state that underlay their creation. ... Yet Warburg never managed to resolve the fact that his own historical research contradicted his theoretical position, for he carefully documented the numerous instances in which such originary qualities were either missed or deliberately subverted or sublimated (Rampley 2017, 85).

Therefore, the *Pathosformel* concept was not detached from cultural conditioning, which Freedberg (2017, 151) feels compelled to acknowledge in the end ("The pathos-formula... is embedded in a long historical tradition").

8. How to Ignore the History of Emotions

The atomizing consciousness serves both Freedberg and art poorly, as seen in the following passage:

> These are gestures that occur across history and cultures, almost always with the same intent. One of the most frequent outward gestures of grief is throwing the arms up in the air, as can be seen in countless lamentations over the dead body of Christ. It finds expression in ancient and modern art. It is used so often to express extreme grief that it raises the question of a possible correlation between the particular gesture and the expression of that emotion (Freedberg 2017, 149).

The intention to link gesture, emotion, and meaning in one circuit characterized by regularity and repeatability through neuroaesthetics shines through here. Not only would emotions thereby take on the character of stable, unambiguous quantities embedded in a bodily grammar, but one could also eliminate any notion of representation and thus make

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them immanent: feeling and imagination would become one. Again and
again in his work, Freedberg makes it clear that his actual endeavor is
not only to bridge the historical gap between the present and the past
in specific cases but to completely neutralize historical contingency.
But the project is bound to fail, and it already does so when Freedberg
finds that a correlation might obtain between a particular gesture and a
particular emotion. It is true that raised arms above the head are a well-
known sign of grief, yet historical depictions and sources show that the
same type of movement has had vastly different connotations depending
on the time, place, and, most importantly, culture. Regarding the interpre-
tation of this gesture in ancient art, Viktoria Räuchle writes the following:

> While it seems justified to interpret sudden gestures and agitated
> postures as visual codes for acute emotions, it is in most cases
> impossible to discern the exact emotion without taking into acco-
> unt the context. The notorious ambiguity of bodily *schêmata* can
> be demonstrated by the gesture of raised arms. ... There is no
> clear-cut formula to link a certain way of raising the arms with
> a certain emotion. If it were not for composition and context, it
> would be difficult to differentiate between the excitement of the
> chariot race enthusiasts [Fig. 4], the ritualized grief of the mour-
> ners, or the desperate plea of Iphigenia [Fig. 5]. As Évelyne Prioux
> notes, one and the same *schêma* "can be used to render different
> emotions and its interpretation will depend on the context in
> which it appears" (Räuchle 2019, 86).

That Freedberg, in a roundabout way, uses the word "correlation" instead
of, say, codification or convention, is telling. In one of his earliest con-
tributions to a neuroaesthetic course correction, based on two lectures
from 2004, Freedberg laments the division of roles between the histor-
ical disciplines and the natural sciences in the research of emotions:

> Given the vast amount of recent research dedicated to understan-
> ding the neural substrate of corporeal and emotional responses, it
> ought no longer to be possible to speak of the social construction
> of behavior in terms that are uninflected by attention to the ana-
> tomy, biology and chemistry of the human brain, or to its mec-
> hanisms, routes and deficits (Freedberg 2007, 17).

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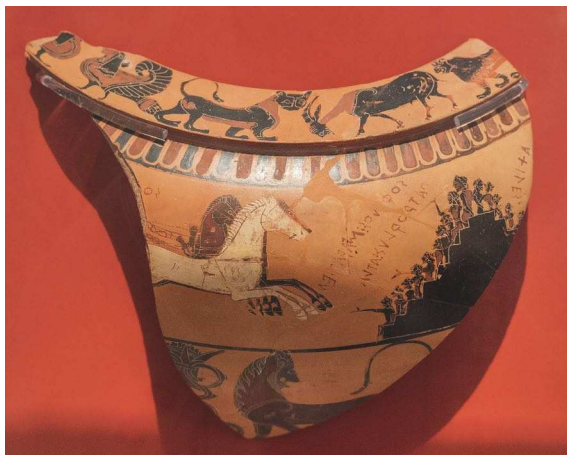
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Fig. 4. Sophilos, *Funeral games for Patroclus: Attic bf. dinos*, 570–560 BCE.
Athens, National Museum, 15499. Source: Flickr. Photo courtesy of Dan Diffendale

Fig. 5. Fresco from the "House of the Tragic Poet" in Pompeii of Iphigeneia being led
to sacrifice, 62–79 CE. Naples, National Archaeological Museum, 9112.
Source: Flickr. Photo courtesy of Darren Puttock

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However, Freedberg's repeated exhortations to art historians to take neuroaesthetics seriously fall on deaf ears when one realizes how little interest Freedberg himself has shown in findings from the history of emotions. He sees a commonality in the understanding of emotions between the Italian polymath and architect Leon Battista Alberti and the Flemish painter Rogier van der Weyden, based solely on the fact that they lived in the same century:

> The point is that they were in the air for very good reasons indeed (and not just because they were fashionable). In empathy, history and context merge with biology and neurology. The reasons that such ideas were in the air in the 1430s were basically the same as they always are: they have to do with the inextricable relationship between vision, the body, and movement that lies at the roots of all forms of empathetic engagement with images (Freedberg 2017, 148).

The basis for this congeniality is supposed to be a famous quote from Alberti, which Freedberg likes to take under the wing of neuroaesthetics:

> The painting will move the soul of the beholder when the people painted there each clearly shows the movement of his own soul … we weep with the weeping, laugh with the laughing, and grieve with the grieving. These movements of the soul are known from the movements of the body (Alberti 1972, 80).

But even if one were to take this alleged transfer of ideas across the Alps at face value, and even if one were to accept that Van der Weyden might have been on a pilgrimage to Italy around 1449-50 (1450 was a Jubilee year), about which we know nothing, the fact remains that Van der Weyden's painting style did not change one bit after the alleged return. If Van der Weyden had found the key to a new, more affective and realistic visual language, he would have had it from the beginning and would not have needed guidance from Alberti (who practiced many arts but not painting). Ironically, Freedberg thereby deprives Van der Weyden of his originality, which was otherwise noted by contemporary artists and intellectuals. Freedberg's nomadic use of Alberti's quote is symptomatic and not isolated. Socrates is also inscribed, as is Robert Vischer, whose

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Fig. 6. Rogier van der Weyden, *The Descent from the Cross*, c. 1435, oil on oak panel,
220 × 262 cm, Museo del Prado, Madrid, P002825. Source: Wikimedia Commons

project in all parameters is alien to Freedberg's, is seen as a precursor
to neuroaesthetics (Freedberg 2007, 27; Freedberg 2017, 141, 160). And
as mentioned initially, Freedberg frames a series of hand-picked theo-
rists as evidence that the automatic bodily triggering of an empathic re-
sponse has long been "in the air" as a potential idea.

Freedberg obviously needs the testimony of history more than he seems
to be aware, for along the way, it is a recurring ambition for him to de-
monstrate that people in the past felt the same when encountering works
of art as we do in the present. When the audience gathers in front of
Van der Weyden's altarpiece at the Prado (Fig. 6), Freedberg (2017, 148)
takes it as proof that "viewers continue to understand this work just as
it was intended to be understood at his time". Along the way, Freedberg
has made one of his typical, imperceptible conceptual shifts, as while
he used to discuss certain localized motifs of movement, he now speaks
about the understanding of the work as a holistic statement. In a way,
Freedberg's undertaking should be seen as an attempt to ward off pre-
cisely the musealization and intellectualization of art, for he places his

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trust in the transcendence of art on one and only one board, namely the direct somatic channel, which he sees neuroaesthetics as a guarantee for.

9. Emotional History and Art History: A Success Story

Fortunately, there is more promise in art history than Freedberg's theory suggests, and while Freedberg (2007, 21) has placed his trust in neuro-aesthetics, which he claims to have cultivated since 1987, other art historians have successfully drawn inspiration from emotional history. In fact, it is within Freedberg's own field, the Renaissance, that this fruitful intersection between studies of emotions and studies of artworks has occurred. The late Walter S. Gibson (2006) focused on laughter in Pieter Bruegel's works, Nils Büttner (2015) has delved into the emotional life of Hieronymus Bosch based on available sources, Michael Schwartz (2016) has grappled with the masterpieces of Giotto and Piero della Francesca, while Dalia Judovitz (2016) has provided eye-opening reinterpretations of Georges de La Tour's visual orchestration of emotions, and Herman Roodenburg (2010) has focused on the concept of *beweeglijkheid* in Rembrandt and his circle. Moving forward in time, Michael Fried (2002) has, with a theoretical double movement, both situated Adolph Menzel in the era influenced by *Einfühlung* and granted *Einfühlung* a place in the history of emotions.

Finally, several groundbreaking special exhibitions in recent years have focused on either specific emotions, such as love, or on the expression of emotions, especially within genre painting. They largely constitute the vibrant corrective that Freedberg has called for, yet he does not mention them. This would not be the first time – not a single genre painting appears within the impressive 534 pages of *The Power of Images*. Even in Freedberg (1989, 338), everyday life is thus subjected to the torture of being written out of art history once again, probably because he (1996, 68, 77-78) considers all images to be fundamentally religious.

Michael Schwartz not only presents a new hypothesis about how emotions were conveyed in Medieval and Renaissance art – a topic I will return to shortly – but also launches an attack on the very idea that emotions are always localizable and can be attributed to specific bodies:

> Our ways of thinking about *affetti* in European painting may not
> do justice to the picturing of human emotions in late-medieval

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Fig. 7. Giambattista della Porta, *De humana physiognomonia libri IIII* (1586), page 59.
Image courtesy of The Picture Art Collection / Alamy Stock Photo

and early-Renaissance art on two counts: first, by our assumption
that emotions are restricted to the individual; and second, that
the depiction of emotions must be limited and confined to the
signs of the body and to inferences about this body's interiority
(Schwartz 2016, 69).

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Fig. 8. Charles Le Brun, *La Colère (Choler)*, c. 1670, black chalk on paper, 200 × 250 mm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 28328. Source: Wikimedia Commons

The addressee is not Freedberg, who had not yet identified as a neuroaes-thete at the time, but it might as well be. Schwartz's criticism is directed against a tradition of schematizing emotions and bringing them into lock-step with physiognomy – an endeavor that began with Giambattista della Porta (Fig. 7) and gained momentum with René Descartes and Charles Le Brun (Fig. 8):

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The second of the aforementioned assumptions, that emotions are "in" the subject, and at best find expression through the outward signs of the body, hence to the subject's objective status and limits, is by no means wrong but is too confining. It descends from the Cartesian ontology of mental/physical dualism and, with regard to pictorial *affetti*, received its defining *imprimatur* in Charles Le Brun's atomistic codification of the facial expression of the passions, a late-seventeenth-century rationalization of *affetti* that decontextualizes the situation in which emotions take place (Schwartz 2016, 70).

10. Losing Face when Taking Grimaces at Face Value

It comes as no surprise that Freedberg (2007, 18) not only includes Le Brun in his pantheon of inspirers but also Paul Ekman, who has taken up the thread from Le Brun with new means. In an influential study, Ekman claimed not only that there were only six (later seven) universal basic emotions for all humans across ethnicity and culture (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, surprise + contempt), but he also believed that they could be unequivocally linked to specific facial expressions. Over time, Ekman has either mimicked these facial expressions himself or had actors imitate them. The fascination of finally clearing all doubt about the status, number, and definition of emotions has given Ekman's theory great appeal, and one of Freedberg's few disciples in the field of neuroaesthetics, Gary Schwartz, has his eyes on this potential. Where Freedberg links Alberti to Van der Weyden, Schwartz does the same with Houbraken and Ekman:

[Arnold] Houbraken (1660-1719), comes up, off the cuff, with six of the seven basic emotions (only disgust is missing) discovered 250 years later by Ekman. One could cite this as evidence for the justice of Ekman's categories, as a native truth just as apparent to an eighteenth-century Dutch painter as a twentieth-century psychologist. One can also, however, wonder to what extent Ekman's definitions were guided by commonsensical and conventional ideas that were so much in the air that he breathed them in unawares, and then externalized them in scientific publications" (Schwartz 2019, 305)-

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Thus, ironically, Ekman's own denial of human cultural transformative ability is turned against him with full force, thereby robbing him of any originality. There was something in the air once again, apparently, just like in the 1430s, and Schwartz's choice of words emphasizes that Ekman merely "discovered" emotions, as if they were a purely physiological phenomenon. To be fair, it should be noted that both Freedberg (in a note) and Schwartz do not omit to mention the criticism that has been raised against Ekman. Nevertheless, Schwartz (2019, 311) cannot help but try to tailor historical testimonies to Ekman's model, and in his concluding remarks, he hopes that "neuroscience may someday be able to produce an account of emotion that takes all these factors into consideration".

Presumably, Gary Schwartz will be sorely disappointed because the insights from the history of emotions, which have finally come into their own after standing in the shadow of neuroscientific attempts to schematize and universalize emotions as unchanging bodily expressions, point in a different direction. As the historian of emotions, Rob Boddice (2018, 120-21) points out the explanatory power of Ekman's experiments falls apart for two reasons: first, emotional expressions are performed by actors, thereby breaking the allegedly unchanging and unbreakable bond between emotion and expression, and the authenticity of emotions is lost. Second, the project is tautological at its core: a finite number of emotions is defined a priori, which the mimetic performance, using the face as a medium, must prove the existence of. Finally, Ekman treats the camera as if it were a truth-teller, while anyone with insight into visual culture will know that it is the opposite: photography is a representational medium on par with similar media with all that it entails. It is astonishing that Freedberg (2017, 152, 166) can, with one hand, refer to Jonathan Crary, one of the foremost theorists of visual culture, while, with the other, he consistently strives to break down the meaning of forms of representation by naturalizing perception.

Freedberg (2007, 21, 33) subscribes to both parts of Ekman's theory, namely, "that the emotions might indeed be classifiable", and "the correlations between particular emotions and their facial expression". But as Boddice (2018, 121) objects, the undertaking is stillborn, for a form of communication, which facial expressions can be said to constitute, cannot be experienced or studied as if it were a context-less, isolated laboratory phenomenon subjected to artificially ideal observation conditions. This insensitivity to how meaning is situationally ascribed to

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Fig. 9. Giotto di Bondone, *Lamentation* (*The Mourning of Christ*), c. 1304–6, fresco,
200 × 185 cm, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua. Source: Wikimedia Commons

gestures, facial expressions, and other bodily movements turns out to
be a general problem in neuroaesthetics. When gainsaying the tenets of
the mirror neuron theory, Rampley (2016, n.p.) references Gilbert Ryle
(2009), from whose criticism of behaviorism it can be derived that "an
observable behaviour may have one of many meanings and we might
assume that each of the different *intended* meanings of the gesture is the
expression of a distinct neuronal pathway".

As Michael Schwartz notes, the breakthroughs in Giotto's and Piero's
respective artistic projects are linked to a collectivization of emotions,
which are no longer distributed among stereotypical personifications.
Instead, individualization (the expressions of Giotto's angels) (Fig. 9)
and spatial extension (Piero's use of space as a focal point for different
temporalities) play key roles in the distribution of emotions:

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Intensive individuation is not at stake here. Although these figures can be said to depict "persons", they are not so differentiated and individuated as to constitute well-contoured "personalities" – that is, they do not represent modern psychological subjects possessing singular interior depths. Instead, the generalized faces, stock poses and gestures create a common humanity amongst the figures, binding them into an additive-collective response of mourning" (Schwartz 2016, 76).

11. Art, Kitsch, or Propaganda? The Problem with "Response"

When Freedberg leaves his theory with no other defense than "aesthetic response", it ends up in a surprising place. As pointed out by Casati and Pignocchi (2007), Freedberg and Gallese themselves provide ammunition for undermining their theory. They focus on the following discussion:

Several studies show that motor simulation can be induced in the brain when what is observed is the static graphic artifact that is produced by the action, such as a letter or a stroke. Knoblich et al. showed that the observation of a static graphic sign evokes a motor simulation of the gesture that is required to produce it (Freedberg and Gallese 2007, 202).

Not only does this explanatory model make it impossible to distinguish between banal and aesthetically significant examples of writing or signs, thereby rendering, for instance, Barbara Kruger's artistic use of text (often in a context of empathic communication) indistinguishable from an average email; it will generally not be possible to differentiate between real and imagined phenomena, as also pointed out by Casati and Pignocchi. Watching a wrestling match in a sports arena will activate motor simulation in the same way as if one were face to face with Michelangelo's *Atlas Slave* (Fig. 10). Reality and fiction become indistinguishable. Moreover, as Rampley protests, the neuroaesthetic position violates Arthur Danto's (1981) "argument that visibly indiscernible artworks may still have vastly different meanings, each of which would, according to the neurological argument, stimulate a distinct set of neurons" and Kendall L. Walton's (1970) claim that "one is never simply look-

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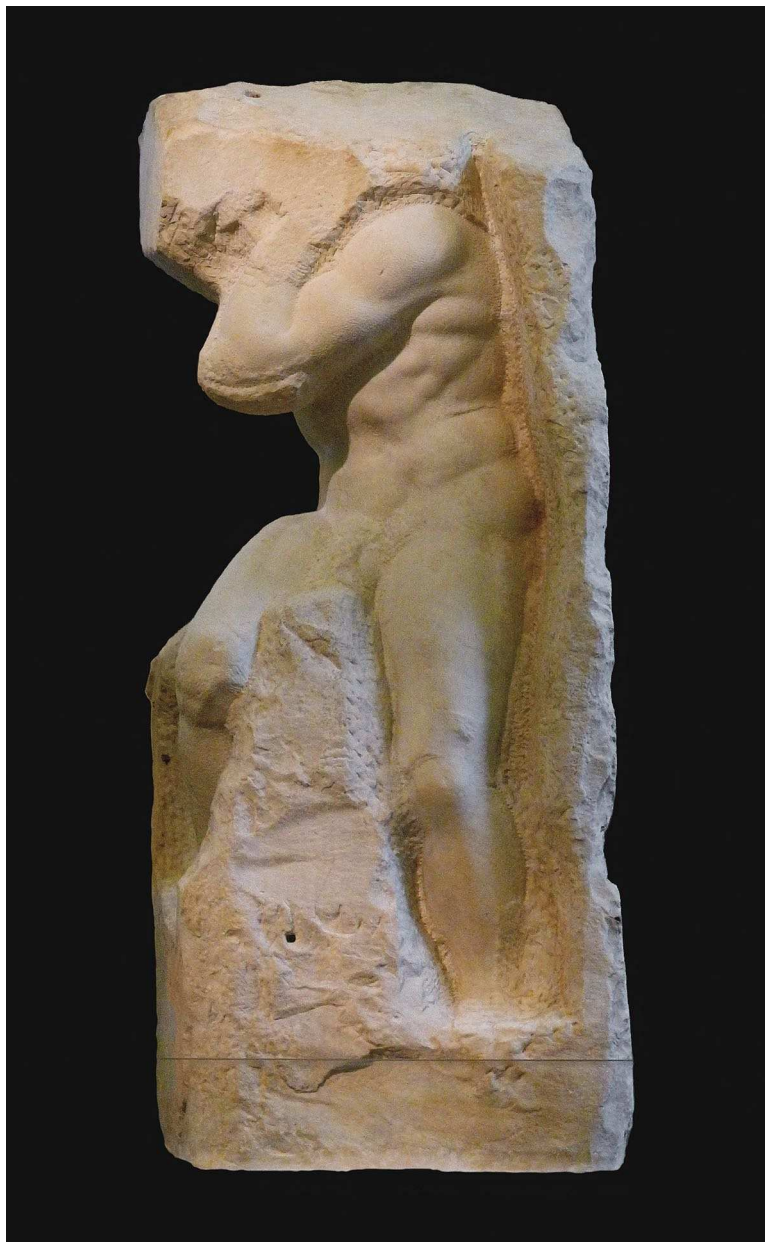
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Fig. 10. Michelangelo Buonarotti, *Atlas Slave*, c. 1525–30, marble, height: 277 cm, Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze, Inv. Scult. n. 1080. Source: Wikimedia Commons

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ing at an aesthetic artefact, but also making a decision about the *kind* of artefact it is, which involves reference to non-visible concepts" (Rampley 2016, n.p.). Despite a range of ambiguities in their theory, it is clear from Freedberg and Gallese's phrasings that the pre-conscious, pre-cognitive, and automatic simulation mechanism teleologically dictates the entire subsequent chain of perception, cognition, and aesthetic experience:

> some such sequence of processes (from absorption to inhibition, self-aware detachment, contemplation and reflection) is likely to occur, and that these processes are most clearly understandable, possibly entirely explicable, in neural terms (Freedberg 2017, 166).

Freedberg (2017, 151) mentions "the neural links between movement, the body, and the effective expression of emotion" and finds that "[t]hese links, annoyingly for many contemporary pundits, may well be predicated on precognitive factors that have nothing to do with the pressures of context and experience".

The only space left for aesthetics, according to Freedberg, rests with the artist, who is merely a medium for the supple imitation: "whether weaker or stronger will presumably have to do with the skill of the artist". "It is the achievement of a good painter or sculptor to have the measure of this, consciously or unconsciously" (Freedberg 2017, 145 – 46, 155). And:

> we suggested that artistic skill lies in the ways that artists more or less successfully make conscious and unconscious use of body knowledge to elicit the kinds of emotional and felt motoric responses we described in our paper (Freedberg and Gallese 2007b, 411).

The artist's latitude, therefore, lies in the effective – naturalistic? – representation of affective motifs of movement. There is a considerable amount of exaggeration of facial expressions and gestures in Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Pop Art (as well as in caricature) that Freedberg and Gallese could have aligned with this highly limited function of art. However, avant-garde art does not seem to interest them in the least. The same applies to contemporary art, which, despite its novel, excessive exploration of affect and its challenge to its representation (Bennett 2005, 22-25), does not seem to capture their attention.

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But let us return to the problem of "response", which is a term that
Freedberg does not consistently use – there is an imperceptible linguis-
tic shift from "response" to "engagement" in several places. Whether
consciously or not, this conceptual shift is not coincidental and reflects
a crisis in meaning within his undertaking. "Response" can only be
understood as an automatic, spontaneous, and unconscious reaction,
which aligns with Freedberg and Gallese's view. Furthermore, as we
have seen, all subsequent aesthetic experiences can be derived from
this response, even when we do not physically mimic the observed
movement, our brain simulates it. You can interpret as much as you
want, but what Freedberg and Gallese term "aesthetic response" comes
first and always forms itself automatically according to neural simu-
lation mechanisms. If this sounds like both a model that poorly aligns
with the actual development of art in the last century and a direct attack
on the notion of the active and critical viewer, which has emerged in
dialogue with modern art, it is not an unintended side effect of the the-
ory but is explicitly intended. It is evident that Freedberg sees the role
of the viewer as a source of error that must be eliminated to arrive at
an art history in the image of scientific naturalism.

When Bertolt Brecht introduced his avant-garde concept of *Verfrem-
dung* in 1936, it came with a rejection of what he called empathy theater,
namely *Einfühlung*. Even though his presentation of the concept of *Ein-
fühlung* occurred without due consideration of its actual definitions
by nineteenth-century aestheticians, his intention – aesthetic aliena-
tion – was clearly different from Vischer's (Koss 2006, 152). Other well-
known avant-garde concepts like Viktor Shklovsky's *ostranenie* and
Walter Benjamin's *shock* went in the same direction and were equally
observational and technical (Ezcurra 2012). However, even within less
radical modernist currents that shared a more direct lineage with the
aesthetic tradition, the ambition to promote a reflective and critical
viewer was always present.

Bodily and motor responses can certainly be of interest in mapping
the art experience, but when Freedberg elevates them to the origin
and cause of the aesthetic experience itself, he legitimizes kitsch and
propaganda (and other types of programmatic art) as rewarding aes-
thetic expressions. In such cases, responses and emotional contagion
precisely overpower all other considerations, whether in the type of
painting that forces the viewer to adopt a contrived sentimentality,

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Fig. 11. Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Une Jeune fille qui pleure son oiseau mort* (*Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird*), 1765, oil on canvas, 53.3 × 46 cm (oval),
National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, NG 435.
Image courtesy of photosublime / Alamy Stock Photo

as in Jean-Baptiste Greuze's prototypical *Young Girl Weeping over Her Dead Bird* (1765, National Galleries of Scotland) (Fig. 11), or in well-executed propaganda stunts such as Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* (1935). None of these examples can be said to lack technical prowess. If one follows Lyons' classification, these types of artworks emerge when an artist deliberately aims "to generate a particular emotion or emotions in a viewer" (Lyons 1997, 143). The gradual rise of emotional impact as an end in itself, often at the expense of conventional narrative

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or symbolic content, highlights an increasing awareness of emotions as a tool for the modern artist. However, such developments would go unnoticed if one were to rely solely on the Freedbergian hypothesis. The same can be said for the forms of address (or lack thereof) toward the beholder, as famously explored by Michael Fried (1980) in the context of French painting of *l'ancien règime*, where Greuze is credited with contributing considerably to an absorptive (yet expressive) transformation of painting.

Even if one adopts a more sympathetic stance toward sentimentalism, kitsch, and propaganda in art – all of which have undeniably shaped visual culture – Freedberg's model still fails to account for the distinct emotional impact and persuasiveness these art forms have on the beholder. It is easy to mock Kantian aesthetics, but Freedberg forgets that it has also made the modern, critical viewer possible. As mentioned earlier, when he conceptually oscillates imprecisely between "response" and "engagement" in the discussion of the same phenomenon, the aesthetic experience, the viewer sneaks into his theory as a stowaway.

12. A Theory without Meaning

Despite severe criticism from colleagues regarding the use of "response" in *The Power of Images* (Gombrich 1990), where Freedberg, among other things, trivializes famous history paintings and mythological statues in the name of desire and pornography, the concept has continued to accompany Freedberg like a deadweight. Stepping up one level of abstraction, the stumbling blocks for Freedberg and Gallese already begin with a fundamental, hubristic mistake that is unfortunately typical of much neuroaesthetics: they assume that their observations of the brain inherently hold meaning that extends into the humanistic field, including philosophical aesthetics. An observation of a mirror neuron or a motor imitation thus becomes a statement about aesthetic matters. However, as Sartre (2014, 13) rightly said, "emotion *does not exist*, considered as a physical phenomenon, for a body cannot be emotional, not being able to attribute a meaning to its own manifestations".

That Freedberg (2017, 172) speaks of understanding (and not just perception) in connection with unconscious simulation is clear:

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> The possibility that gestures and emotions might be understood
> through embodied simulation suggests a form of translation not
> necessarily constrained by cultural bounds. You understand the
> emotions such movements entail because you have a body, not
> because you know the story (Freedberg 2017, 155).

The first casualty in neuroaesthetics is usually the imagination. It is
sacrificed on the altar of automatism, and with the loss of imagination,
the viewer's role in the reception of the artwork disappears as well. In
Vischer's (1994, 114) work, imagination has a dedicated section, and he
even talks about two different forms (*Vorstellungswille* and *Phantasiewille*). Imagination not only amalgamates the findings of perception into a
unity, but also ensures that deviations from reality can still be accepted
when they serve the purpose of art. Not only does Freedberg (2017, 172)
exclude imagination from his investigation, but he also seems to believe
that it is purely discursive and intellectual – something found in books
and traditions. Imagination, one must understand, is not sensory – an
idea that may come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the fantastical worlds of Bosch and Arcimboldo, the surrealism of Dalí and Oppenheim, the visionary seascapes and landscapes of Turner and O'Keeffe,
or the immersive installations of Kusama and Kapoor, to name just a few
notable counterexamples among countless others.
Whether a theory progresses from the general to the specific or vice
versa, or positions itself at various points along the spectrum from ideographic to nomothetic, its conceptual framework usually becomes
increasingly refined, and its explanatory power strengthens. With Freedberg's neuroaesthetics, it is the opposite, as simple arguments and
interpretations, such as those with Freudian connotations in *The Power
of Images* ("fear of the body", "fear of the lifelike", "fear of the possibility of arousal by image"), have merely received an updated theoretical
packaging, rather than an expanded conceptual framework ("the fear
that to embrace the findings of science might entail the surrender of
context", "high rationalists, fearful of superstition and emotion", "the
fear of evoking the body in the very processes of sight itself"). In comparison, William Lyons (1997, 143), using examples from the history of
painting, identified seven ways in which emotions can be expressed in
the chain from artist to artwork to viewer. Each of these points opens up
inviting theoretical horizons, which art history is currently exploring.

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13. Empathy?

What Freedberg (2017, 164) describes and designates as empathy is only empathy in a very narrow and peculiar definition, deviating from both the common understanding of empathy and that of philosophy. His reliance on Theodor Lipps explains the matter, as Dan Zahavi (2014, 131) has stressed that there is a direct line from Lipps to participants in today's simulation paradigm, including Gallese. In a nutshell, Lipps' theory gave rise to the notion of empathy as imitation (*Nachahmung*). In Lipps' framework, empathy is limited to experiences one has had in the past and involves a form of projection, which he calls *self-objectification*. The experience of empathy is the experience of one's own feelings in an objective form transferred to another person. The limitations of this definition quickly became apparent to Husserl, Scheler, and Stein, each of whom rejected aspects of Lipps' theory. As Stein pointed out, Lipps had described phenomena like motor imitation or emotional contagion, not empathy – for example, when laughter spreads from person to person. Empathy had a more complex psychological nature. According to Lipps' standards, we do not have access to another person's emotional life; instead, we simply reflect our own feelings onto the other.

Conversely, Lipps' critics view empathy as a form of experiencing others that lies between perception and imagination. The imitation model turns out to be neither sufficient nor necessary for the activation of empathy, and there are numerous shortcomings: Scheler argues that Lipps' model cannot distinguish between correct and incorrect readings of another person's mental state because it involves projection. Husserl points out that if we could only read feelings that we have experienced ourselves, it would place absurd limitations on empathic engagement. Scheler notes that we can read a dog's joy without being able to wag a tail ourselves, and bodily differences and impairments do not hinder the occurrence of empathy. Both Husserl and Stein acknowledge that givenness plays a role in empathy, meaning that we experience recognizable feelings, just not from a first-person perspective, but within the other person (Moran 2004, 130-33).

Freedberg (2017, 161-62) writes at one point that, in his definition, empathy is always only bodily, never discursive. However, in the example he provides, he goes further: In a meeting with a stranger, perhaps on a plane or a train, we hear a sad story, such as the loss of close family members:

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> This is not empathy. This is not a matter of spontaneously feeling
> the pain of others, except in an entirely metaphorical sense. This is
> rooted in your past. It is based on anecdotes that involve appraisal,
> but not on automatic responses of the body (Freedberg 2017, 162).

Interestingly, Stein already discussed a similar situation back in 1917. She
recounts that in interacting with another person who tells of the loss of
loved ones, you can see the pain on their face. She claims that this is still
a form of perception. Dan Zahavi (2014, 134) explains: "Why? Because
although I certainly do lack a first-person experience of the distress – it
is not given as my distress – it is nevertheless the case that I experience
rather than imagine or infer my friend's distress". This stands in contrast
to purely cognitive conveyances of emotions, such as if the same story
were communicated in a letter.

Empathy, of course, requires a form of perception of another party,
whether that party is a human or an animal. But, as Stein asserted long
ago, empathy can arise from the combination of bodily and discursive
input. Freedberg's adamant rejection of any form of two-way communi-
cation and perceptual complexity in the emergence of empathy indicates
that he argues in bad faith to forcefully drive home a notion of empathy
as a robotic response, not an equitable engagement.

Even without consulting the phenomenological tradition, it should have
dawned on him that his concept of empathy was off the mark, for even
results from his own field, neuroscience, point in a different direction.
An experiment from 2012 showed that the degree of empathy varied with
the subjects' current emotional state and level of attention. Additionally,
psychopaths naturally possess mirror neurons, and the type of neuro-
logical empathy mechanisms that Freedberg and Gallese champion are
even activated when subjects enjoy the experience of the pain of others
(Boddice 2018, 129, 130). As a concept of empathy, Freedberg's proposal
is not only inadequate (as Lipps' was), but also misleading.

Returning to the art historical context, we can also observe that any
attempt to reactivate Lipps' explanatory model would be a dead end.
When encountering an artwork that carries emotional content, we hardly
ever experience the depicted emotions themselves but rather different
ones. We can be surprised, feel uncomfortable, and experience sympa-
thy when facing Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893) (Fig. 12), but we do
not take on the painter's anxious and desperate state of mind (Robin-

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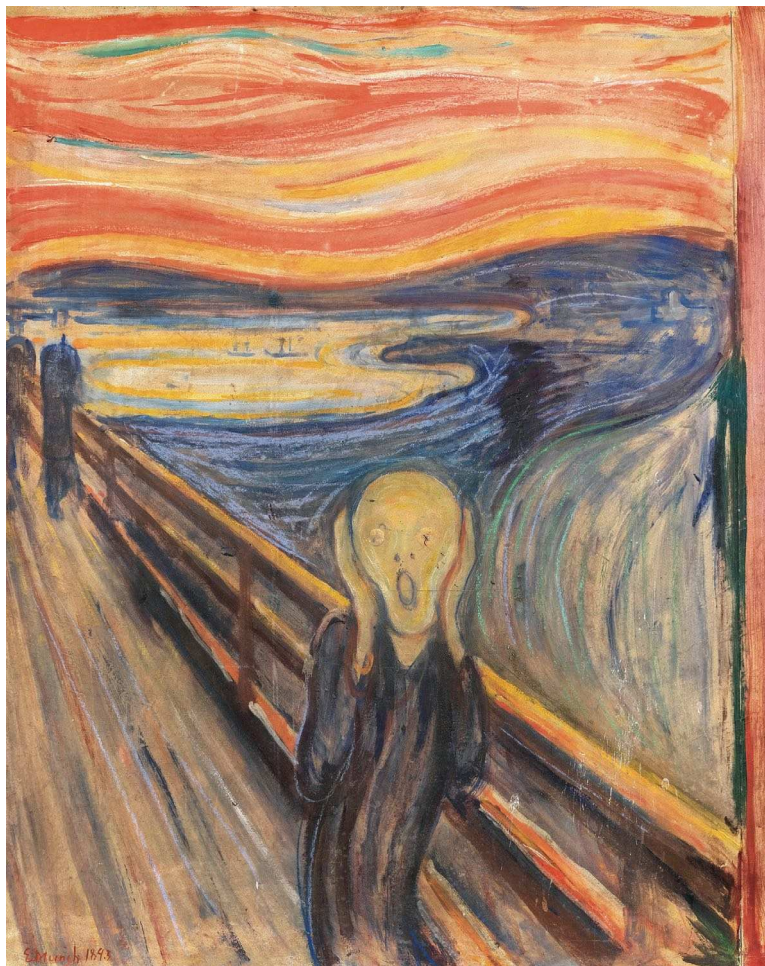
Fig. 12. Edvard Munch, *Skrik (The Scream),* 1893, oil, tempera, pastel, and crayon on
cardboard, 73.5 × 91 cm, Nasjonalmuseum, Oslo, NG.M.00939.
Image courtesy of IanDagnall Computing / Alamy Stock Photo

son 2004, 180, 187). Upon seeing Jan Miense Molenaer's *The Five Senses:
Touch* (1637), where a woman is giving a man a whack on the neck with a
shoe (Fig. 13), we do not feel pain but rather laughter. The examples are
numerous. The reason for this is twofold: we always understand that we
are dealing with fiction (Walton 1990), and empathy is not an emotional
duplicator but far more complex.

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Fig. 13. Jan Miense Molenaer, *The Five Senses: Touch*, 1637, oil on panel, 19.6 × 24.4 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague, 572. Source: Wikimedia Commons

14. Conclusion

While Freedberg's earliest forays into neuroaesthetics still came with certain reservations, his latest contributions take a more confident direction, declaring that, in encountering Rogier van der Weyden's work, we feel the same as a viewer in the fifteenth century (Freedberg 2007, 19; 2017, 148). In his article, he seeks to use neuroaesthetics as a magic potion that can dissolve historical distance, confirm the constancy of perception and emotion, and make the meaning of the artwork synonymous with its uniform creation and reception, so that the act of interpretation can be entirely dispensed with. In this endeavor, he finds himself aligned – consciously or not – with the 20th-century formalists who "sought to bypass all notions of cultural mediation in order to ground aesthetic response in raw perception" (Rampley 2017, 87). Yet Freedberg's insistence on gesture (or traces thereof) as the prerequisite for the transmission of what he terms "empathy" between artwork and beholder ends

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up being an exclusionary mechanism that robs large parts of modern and contemporary artworks of their empathetic or affective appeal. This outcome does not exactly align with Freedberg's stated ambition of an art history transcending time and place, encompassing every thinkable artistic statement from cave paintings to the present day.

The path to this goal does not pass through a thorough delineation of the various stages of the perceptual and cognitive processes and their respective contributions to aesthetic experience, as in the aforementioned case of Robert Vischer. Instead, it takes an atomistic, myopic approach to image analysis, where motifs of bodily movement are isolated, and they are then paired with similarly isolated observations of brain activity. In his obsession with isolating motifs of bodily movement on the canvas or in the stone, Freedberg does violence to both the lifeworld of the artwork and its perception.

In the case of Van der Weyden's altarpiece, Freedberg (2017, 144) goes to great lengths to downplay the religious message of the ensemble so that empathy in a generic sense can emerge victorious as the main theme and function of the work. This seems to mark a revision of his hypothesis in *The Power of Images*, but that is beside the point. By all accounts, Freedberg seeks to achieve at least three things with this move: first, to relieve the beholder from the temptation to seek out background information on the artwork, thereby rendering both connoisseurship and scholarship irrelevant; second, to nullify Hegel's alleged "death of art" by stripping the religious component of an artwork of any significance; and, third, to undermine the importance of reception aesthetics for art appreciation. Naturally, the role left for art history in this scenario is greatly diminished compared to its current status. Moreover, Freedberg's framework overlooks any consideration of style – a factor that, despite its controversial reputation following the rise of New Art History, remains integral to aesthetic experience. For instance, how could one distinguish a Postmodern pastiche from its Baroque predecessor if not for the defining stylistic traits of each?

In light of the powerful title with which Freedberg made a name for himself in 1989, *The Power of Images,* he has ended up with a remarkably powerless proposition about what images can do. He has so little confidence in their power that they can only be understood as absolutely minimal and primitive signals that unconsciously impact the body. Not only are masterpieces in Freedberg's narrative explained as if they were

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advertising or propaganda, but it also becomes inexplicable why people
flock to art and its imagined reality when, according to neuroaesthet-
ics, the world of reality and its movements can have the same effect on
the brain. At the same time, a proper history of art, with all its distinc-
tions and discrete concepts, becomes impossible – and this applies to
both the old and the new contributions of art history. Freedberg's uni-
versalism is a Pyrrhic victory for art history, and above all, it offers no
explanatory power:

> When scholars in the humanities bow down before certain
> influences from neurobiology but do not have the requisite
> experience or knowledge to challenge them, we end up with
> throwaway analyses that beg more questions than they provide
> answers (Boddice 2018, 117).

In comparison, the wide-ranging analyses inspired by W. J. T. Mitchell's
(2005) famous question, "What do pictures want?" exhibit much more
vigor and strength. Both Mitchell's faith in the power of images and the
recent surge of emotional history in art history, as demonstrated by
numerous studies – including my own – affirm that image theory is far
from being poorly positioned in the present.

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**MIRELA
RAMLJAK PURGAR**

The Academy of Arts and Culture,
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University, Osijek

Abstract:

THE POWER OF FILMIC IMAGINATION IN ALBRECHT DÜRER

The article explores the fundamental qualities of imagination in the works of Albrecht Dürer, with a focus on a specific sheet from his cycle of illustrations in the biblical *Apocalypse* series – the woodcut titled *The Strong Angel*. Our analysis builds on the insights of media historian Jörg Jochen Berns, who identified the presence of a "film before the film" in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This concept refers to an "inner film" that responds to external stimuli – from the "outer film" – allowing the observers to immerse themselves in holy images, particularly during prayer, through the stimulation of their imagination.

In the context of the biblical *Apocalypse*, the Strong Angel is a metaphor for vision; at the same time, it requires considerable imaginative power from the artist (Dürer) to depict such a scene. An angel appears to St John, giving him a book of visions that St John must "devour" to keep them hidden. For our research, which involves interpreting this work through the medium of film,

DIE MACHT DER FILMISCHEN IMAGINATION BEI ALBRECHT DÜRER

it was essential to highlight a key discovery in this illustration: the montage process that interconnects the elements of *The Strong Angel*. This connection is crucial for interpreting the Angel as a messenger from heaven, linking the divine to the earthly, the sacred to the profane, and the corporeal (human head) to the material (pillars).

We examined the imaginative potential in Dürer's work through the perspective of image theorist Ludwig Schwarte and interpreted Dürer's art as imagination-stimulated and produced by intuition, in which the observer actively participates in the scene. Assuming that the inner film existed in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as a prayerful and visionary imagination manifest in the given examples, we juxtaposed it with the measurement of sensory stimuli, and thus with the physiognomic discovery of the early 19th century as interpreted by Jonathan Crary.

Keywords: Albrecht Dürer, imagination, inner film, outer film, *Apocalypse*, perception, movement

1. Einleitung

Um über Dürers Imagination zu schreiben, haben wir einige Quellen recherchiert[1]. Das von uns zusammengestellte Material ist als Versuch gedacht, die innere und äußere Bewegung als Auftakt für Überlegungen zur Imagination und damit zum Filmischen zu erfassen. Wir sind vom Medientheoretiker Jörg Jochen Berns ausgegangen: "innerer" und "äußerer" Film als Bewegung betrachtet, gesteuert durch das Beten, hat sich als ein bedeutendes Fundament erwiesen. Dem Bewegten beim Beten haben wir als Analogie das Physiognomische bei Jonathan Crary gegenübergestellt. Außerdem haben wir Ludger Schwartes Theorie der Imagination auf das Rhythmische und Bewegliche angewandt (wie Panofsky diese Begriffe konzipierte). Es hat sich gezeigt, so dürfen wir behaupten, dass sich das Filmische als Imaginatives bereits vor der Erfindung des Films in verschiedenen Medien erkennen ließ. Aus heutiger Perspektive können wir auch das Alte mit neuen Augen betrachten (Eisenstein, Arnheim). Dabei wird jedoch auch einiges über die *Apokalypse* von Albrecht Dürer aufgezeigt. Dürer hat dem Bildlichen Vorrang gegeben und ist gleichzeitig dem biblischen Text treu geblieben. Wenn Jörg Jochen Berns also von den äußeren Bildern als "Evokation des Inneren" schrieb, bezog er sich auch auf die Darstellung, die dieser Evokation zugrunde liegt, in einer Sequenz von "Bewegungspositionen". Diese Bilder dienen nicht bloß als Illustrationen, sondern "ersetzen die reale Anschauung", wie Berns es in Bezug auf die Fechtbilder aus dem 15. und 16. Jahrhundert sowie auf Dürer beschrieben hat. Diese Denkweise könnte auch auf die "Illustrationen" der *Apokalypse* von Dürer angewendet werden. Denn wenn es um das Ausfüllen leerer Stellen in der Darstellung des Künstlers geht, betrifft dies auch den analogen Prozess beim Betrachter. Die Imagination wird somit nicht nur gezeigt, sondern auch gesteuert.

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1 Dies ist ein Fragment eines längeren, noch unveröffentlichten Textes – einer Recherche zur Beziehung zwischen Albrecht Dürer und Ernst Ludwig Kirchner in Bezug auf den filmischen Aspekt. In diesem Fragment erforschen wir das "Imaginäre" bei Dürer. Das Korrekturlesen des deutschen Manuskripts übernahm Marina Schumann.

2. Jörg Jochen Berns: Suggerierte Bewegung und die Potenz der innerlichen Bilder

Die Geschichte des Sehens als Präcinema-Sehens

Der Autor stellt am Anfang seines Buches eine Frage: Ob das hier gestellte Problem, nämlich, dass zwei durch suggerierte Bewegung und Imaginationssteuerung verbundene Schichten menschlicher sichtlicher Aufmerksamkeit, ein "Problem von Präcinema-Forschung" darstellt (Berns, 2000, S. 8). Dabei geht es wesentlich um das Bildreihungsverfahren, nicht nur im religiösen (*Arma Christi*), sondern auch im militärischen Sinne (*Arma hominis*) (ebd., S. 9). Es existiert ein innerer Film (ein "innerer Bildfluss"), der "bedacht" werden sollte "wann immer durch äußere Bilder manipuliert werden sollte" (ebd., S. 7-8). Das würde heißen: "Ohne inneren Film kein äußerer", denn der innere Film muss vorhanden sein, um den äußeren erst "erkennen" und "lesen" zu können. Dabei möchte Jörg Jochen Berns eine "alte Strategie der Imaginationslenkung" in Betracht ziehen, die sich in "graphischen Serien seit dem 14. Jahrhundert bis ins 19. Jahrhundert" entwickelte (ebd., S. 7). Mit anderen Worten, es genügt nicht nur die physiologische Voraussetzung des trägen Auges, um die Illusion von Bewegung zu erzeugen, sondern es müssen auch "mentale" "Beweglichkeit und Bewegtheit" vorhanden sein. Diese beiden Ebenen sind durch eine gemeinsame "Elementarstruktur" miteinander verbunden.

Die Grundlage für die "filmische Wahrnehmung" sollte daher in der "Psychologie, genauer – in Seelengeschichte" gelegt werden. Diese umfasst die "erbauungstechnologischen und psychodidaktischen Vorstellungen" (ebd., S. 8), um die eigene Imagination durch "Serien äußerer Bilder" in den "inneren Bildern" zu wecken. Frömmigkeit und Rationalität teilen ein gemeinsames "Erziehungsideal": "Das *exertitium* von Leib und Seele" (ebd., S. 9); dabei geht es um "ikonographische Modelle", bei denen durch die "Komplexitätsreduktion von szenischen Bewegungsverläufen durch Segmentierung" zur "Seelenbewegung" (in geistlichen Meditationsübungen) bzw. zur Körperbewegung (in "soldatischen Drills") kommt. Es entstehen somit zwei "Regulationstechniken in Bildzeilen und Bildrädern."

Was uns hier als wichtig erscheint, sind nicht nur bewegte Bilder an der Grenze zwischen dem Inneren und dem Äußeren, sondern auch

die Produktion der Imagination und der Prozess ihrer "Projektion". Man schaut imaginativ und wird seelisch bewegt (ebd., S. 10). Dabei geht es nicht nur darum, die "reale Bewegung zu sehen", sondern auch die sichtbare Wirklichkeit zu wiederholen (ebd.). Doch laut Berns geht es nicht um die Geschichte des Fernsehens oder der Fotografie, sondern vielmehr um den Versuch, eine Rekonstruktion des "Versehens", das "Verhaftetsein-des-Blicks-an-äußere-Bilder" zu entdecken; man müsste die "innere Bildbewegung und Reflexion" wieder heraussuchen, um der so entstehenden "Verfremdung" "in den modernen Medien der laufenden Bilder" entgegenzukommen (ebd.).

Berns leitet die Medien- und Wahrnehmungskritik aus der Art der Medien ab, die nicht aus dem Bereich der Kunstgeschichte, sondern aus Gebrauchsgrafik stammen. Es ergeben sich zwei Hauptprobleme in Bezug auf die Art der Vorstellungen im Zeitraum zwischen dem 14. und 17. Jahrhundert: 1. Um welche Art der Projektion es überhaupt geht, und damit auch um welche Beziehung zwischen Sehen und Imagination; und 2. Es wird erforscht, zu welchem Dispositiv das Bildreihungsverfahren führt (ebd., S. 12).

Nach der Geschichte des "inneren Auges" von Platon (428-348 v. Chr.) und des Neuen Testaments ("Auge der Seele"), Aristoteles (384-322 v. Chr.) und Philon von Alexandria (ca. 15/10-45/50 n. Chr.) schreibt auch Augustin (354-430 n. Chr.) über "den Imaginationsfluss in unserem Kopf" (ebd., S. 12). Er identifiziert intellektuelles Erkennen mit dem Sehen des inneren Auges, das als "Empfängnisorgan der göttlichen Wahrheit" fungiert; bei Philon von Alexandria geht es darum, dass nicht das Auge sieht, sondern "die Seele durch das Auge" (ebd., S. 12-13). Berns erklärt: "Durch die Verschmelzung des platonischen Idealismus mit christlichem Realismus wurde das Auge der Seele zum 'Auge des Herzens'. Es ist Voraussetzung allen Sehens der äußeren Dinge wie auch Organ der inneren Vorstellung, der rationalen Erkenntnis wie der Imagination" (ebd., S. 13).

Aristoteles beschreibt in *De anima* die Imagination (Die Einbildung/*phantasia*/Imagination) als eine Form der Bewegung: Sie entsteht nach der Wahrnehmung äußerer Gegenstände und ähnelt ihnen notwendigerweise. Die Imagination ist jedoch nicht nur die Wahrnehmung der Äußerlichkeit, sondern bereits "eine Art Urteil", bei dem auch die Möglichkeit des Irrtums besteht. Die Imagination steht zwischen der Wahrnehmung und dem Denken und besteht in der Fähigkeit, klare Vorstellungen zu entwickeln, vom direkten Wahrnehmen befreit (ebd.,

S. 13). Christliche Aristoteliker interpretieren auch *Imaginatio* als eine erkenntnisbildende Funktion, da sie die aus der äußeren Wahrnehmung herausgenommenen Vorstellungen (*Phantasmata*) dem Intellekt als Gegenstand ohne jegliche Materialität zeigen. Bei Thomas von Aquin (1224-1274) stellt die *imaginatio* eine Herausforderung dar – nämlich, den abwesenden Gegenstand als anwesend zu deuten. Die *Phantasmata* bilden das Material für den produktiven Teil des Intellekts, der die äußeren Gegenstände, wie die Sonne, auf diese Weise "für den rezipierenden Verstand sichtbar macht" (ebd., S. 13).

Ähnlich wie die Imagination funktioniert auch die "Projektion", durch die das Filmische gesteuert wird (Berns, ebd., S. 14). Es gibt also das innere Auge, das sich durch die "Maschinisierung" den äußeren Bildern annähert. Den Platz der Fantasie würde man folglich nach der Fähigkeit finden, äußere Bilder von den inneren aus zu entschlüsseln. Historisch gesehen begann dieser Prozess mit der *Camera Obscura* im 16. Jahrhundert, setzte sich mit der *Laterna Magica* im 17. Jahrhundert fort und entwickelte sich weiter bis zur Fotokamera im 19. Jahrhundert und schließlich zu den digitalen Apparaten.

Das Erste, was nach Berns zutrifft, ist unser Sich-Sehen durch den Spiegel. Es beinhaltet das doppelte Sehen: "Das unsichtbare Ich blickt mit unsichtbarem Auge durch das sichtbare Auge. Das äußere Auge sieht nur, sofern das innere sieht" (ebd., S. 14). Diese Vorstellung vom inneren Auge reproduzierte sich in Grafiken. Das große innere Auge auf einer anonymen Zeichnung aus dem späten 14. Jahrhundert ähnelt Leonardo da Vincis Darstellung des Auges als einer "kugelförmigen Kamera", und laut Berns repräsentiert die "blickende Instanz" hinter dem Auge – das Ich – sich als ein "nackter *Camera*-Mann" (S. 17). Der Höhepunkt der Repräsentation des Camera-Mannes zeigt sich in einem Bild vom Betrachten des Auges und des Gegenstandes durch die Augenkugel. Ein Mensch in der dunklen Kammer blickt auf die Augenkugel, die auf seiner Seite offen ist (wobei der "Augengrund" durch eine Projektionsscheibe – ein Stück Papier oder eine Eierschale – ersetzt wird); auf der anderen Seite stehen drei Punkte, deren Strahlen zurück in die Kugel eindringen und wieder in drei Punkten enden. Berns beschreibt diesen Prozess als "die Darstellung der Rezeption eines Bildes (…), das auf die eine Seite der milchig-diaphanen Scheibe oder Schale im hinteren Teil der Augenkugel projiziert und auf der anderen Seite beschaut wird" (ebd., S. 19).

Seit dem Beginn des 17. Jahrhunderts ging es "immer wieder um die Lösung des Problems, die Projektionsbilder der visuellen Wirklichkeit, eben *Camera obscura*-Bilder, festzuhalten und transportabel zu machen..." (ebd., S. 19-20). Die tragbare *Camera obscura* wird durch einen anonymen Holzschnitt aus dem Jahr 1680 illustriert: Er zeigt einen Mann mit einer tragbaren *Camera obscura*, die mit einer diaphanen Zeichenfolie ausgestattet ist. Zur gleichen Zeit experimentierte auch Robert Hooke mit der "Perspective Box". Was diese vier Reproduktionen gemeinsam haben, ist "die Allegorisierung der Sehkraft" als einer "inventionsleistenden und schließlich gar realitätsgreifenden Macht" (ebd., S. 22). "Der Kameramann ist, wie die Folge der vier Graphiken lehrt, eine Kopfgeburt, die der Destruktion der Allegorie entsprang" (ebd.). Im Laufe der Zeit jedoch schritt die "technische Entäußerlichung" voran, und Étienne Jules Marey entwickelte die erste tragbare Mehrbildkamera in Form der *Kameraflinte*.

Aufregung der Imagination und die Vision

Das Abwesende, das als Anwesendes erscheint, geschieht durch verschiedene Projektionen (Berns betont, dass dies von Thomas von Aquin beeinflusst wurde). Dabei geht es um die "Verlebendigung von Heiligenbildern" (z. B. beim Gebet) einer Kranken vor einem einfach gekleideten Bild der Jungfrau Maria. Täglich wird ein Avemaria gebetet, um die Kleidung und Verzierung der Muttergottes zum Sprechen zu bringen. Durch das Gebet wird die Heilige Maria in einer Vision reich angezogen und geschmückt. (Dieses Beispiel stammt aus der Kompilation *Spiegel hochloblicher Bruderschaft des Rosenkrantz Marie* von Marcus von Weid, Anfang des 16. Jahrhundert, und Berns wollte damit zeigen, "dass eine Vision sowohl durch innerliche Anschauung eines realen Artefaktes als auch durch Gebet imaginativ ausgelöst werden kann) (Berns, op. cit., S. 26-27). Berns zitiert zu diesem Thema Hans Belting aus *Bild und Kult*: "Die Heiligen empfangen die Visionen oft vor den Bildern selbst, und sie versichern ausdrücklich, dass sie von den Bildern her all das wiedererkennen, was ihnen in der Vision erschienen ist. (...) Die Vision war gleichsam die Fortsetzung der natürlichen Bilderführung im Wunder. (...) Ihre Bilder wurden, wie man zu sagen pflegte, mit den Augen der Seele, die gemalten Bilder dagegen mit den Augen des Leibes geschaut" (Belting in Berns, op. cit., S. 25-26).

Auch Berns erklärt diesen Prozess vor dem Bild: "Schon im Mittelalter werden sakrale Bilder, namentlich Heiligenbilder, dafür verwendet, die Imagination von Betenden anzuregen und zu stützen. Der Imaginationsfluss kann dabei so stark bewegt werden, dass Visionen provoziert werden" (ebd., 25). Dabei stößt man jedoch auf das Problem der entstehenden "Bildbewegung, bei der der Betrachtende zwischen Imagination und Wahrnehmung", zwischen dem Inneren und dem Äußeren, keine klare Grenze mehr ziehen kann. Das Gemälde wird zu "einer Art Projektionsvorgabe für eine Bildbewegung" (ebd., S. 27). Diese "gezielte Bildbewegung" eines Betenden aus dem späten Mittelalter vor einem Bild sollte durch die "Beeinflussung des inneren Films" entstehen. Berns stellt eine Verbindung zwischen diesem Problem und dem, das sich mit dem Druck entwickelte, dar: Es besteht eine "elementare Beweglichkeit des Sprachkörpers", die seit Gutenberg auch am "Bildkörper" zu erkennen ist. Dabei kommt es zur "Zerlegbarkeit des Wortes durch Zerlegung von Bildern"; diese werden in schematischen einfachen Elementen nachgeahmt, die "addierbar und austauschbar sein sollten" (ebd., S. 29). Ähnlich wie bei der "Renaissancehieroglyphik, Rebuskunst, Groteskornamentik, Neo-Heraldik, Steganographie, alchymischer und astrologischer Signetkünsten, Signaturlehre und Impresssenkünsten", sowie bei Emblematik, ging es auch bei gedruckten Kombinationen von Text und Bild darum, die Bildkompositionen von ihrer "inneren Starre zu befreien", "indem man sie in Elemente zerlegte" (ebd.). Wo steht in diesem Zusammenhang die *Apokalypse* von Dürer? Darüber hinaus werden wir auch weitere Fragen stellen, wenn wir über die Definition von Bewegung und Rhythmus bei Panofsky (1926) nachdenken.[2]

Arma Christi-Darstellungen als ein Typus von Bildsequenzierung

Ein Typus solcher Darstellung wird als das "Arma Christi Bild" bezeichnet und zeigt die Insignien Christi. Diese Praxis begann im 14. Jahrhundert mit dem Ziel, den inneren Film "durch Phasenbilder und Signets", also durch eine Art grafischer "Sequenzierung" und Mnemotechnik zu stimulieren. Die resultierende Komposition wird als "Graph" bezeichnet, dessen Definition lautet:

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2 Dieses theoretische Problem wird im dritten Kapitel analysiert, zusammen mit den Analysen der einzelnen Blätter der *Apokalypse*.

Als Graph sei hier das logistische Skelett eines bestimmten Diagrammtyps, nämlich des Merkbildes, bezeichnet, dessen Gelenke und Bewegungsmöglichkeiten durch die sogen. "Knoten", dessen Knochen und Verbindungsmöglichkeiten durch die sogen. "Kanten" gebildet werden (Berns, op. cit., 143).

Es werden mehrere Beispiele aus dem 15. und 16. Jahrhundert erwähnt. Wir greifen hier das erste Beispiel heraus, einen *Schmerzensmann mit Arma Christi* aus England, aus dem 15. Jahrhundert (Abb. 1, S. 31). In diesem Werk wurden kontinuierliche Rahmen aus 18 quadratischen kleinen Signets um Christus herum angeordnet. Der Text unterhalb der Darstellung von Christus wurde überkreuzt. Diese Signets, zusammen mit dem Hauptbild, sollten den Betrachter, als *Superimago*, und die Signets als *Subimagines*, an bestimmte "Stationen und Situationen der Passion Christi" erinnern (S. 35-36) und einen "inneren Film" erwecken, der auch eigenständig existieren kann, jedoch erst als solcher mit dem "äußeren" Film identifiziert werden kann. Die Voraussetzung für den inneren Film sind die "äußeren Sinne" (S. 36). Berns identifiziert vier Grundrichtlinien der Art, wie die Bildsignets, die aus den *Arma Christi*-Kompositionen zu entziffern sind, in den inneren Film eindringen: 1. Einfachheit der Anordnung, die übersichtlich sein soll; 2. Simultanität der Symbole, da "das simultane vielfache Geschehen" bei der Assoziation hilfreich ist; 3. Zentripetale Simultanität, da jedes Signet auf die zentrale Figur Christi verweist; 4. Es gibt kein Proportionssystem; alle Signets sind gleich groß und haben daher gleiche Bedeutung (ebd., S. 37). Es ist dabei wichtig, die Beziehung zwischen dem Text und der visuellen Illustration des Lebens eines Heiligen zu beachten, was Berns als "multidimensionalen Graphismus" bezeichnet, der über das bloße Lesen der Schrift hinausgeht und einen "Sprachvorgang, etwa die Erzählung eines Mythos oder der Passionsgeschichte" erfordert (39):

Die *Subimagines* als Erinnerungszeichen sind Produkte der elaborierten Zerlegung einer *scena* oder einer *historia*. Mit ihrer Hilfe sollen die Bewegung oder die Spannung, aus der sie genommen sind, imaginativ zurückgewonnen, reanimiert und dann für die Dauer einer meditativen Exertitiumsphase erhalten werden. (…) Denn die eigentliche Bildbewegung findet nicht auf der Bildfläche vor dem Auge des Betrachters, sondern in dessen Kopf vor
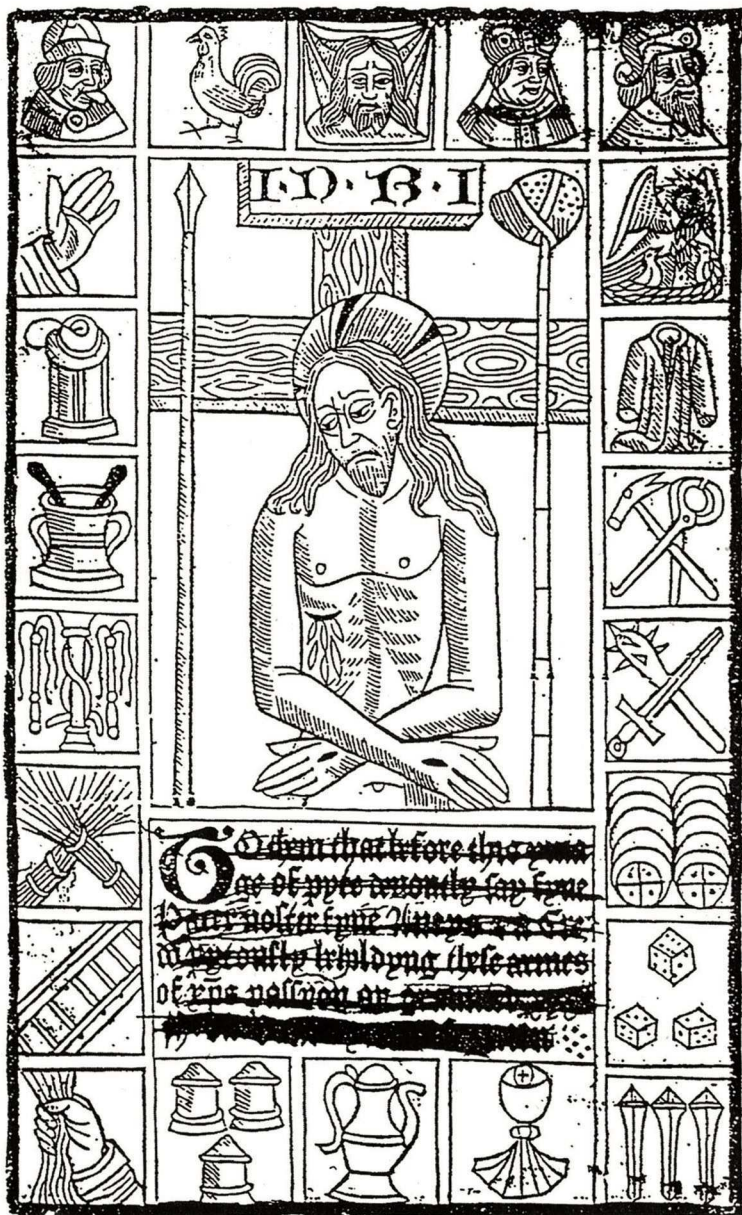
Abb. 1. "Schmerzensmann mit Arma Christi" – Anonymer Holzschnitt, England, 15. Jahrhundert; im Buch *Film vor dem Film* veröffentlicht auf der S. 31, als Abb. 6. Foto: gemeinfrei

dem inneren Auge statt. Das System von Superimago und Subimagines befeuert den inneren Film des Betrachters (ebd., S. 56).

Diese eigentümliche Linearität und "elastische Vieldimensionalität" werden jedoch "aus Versehen" in ihrem spezifischen Grafismus zerstört, da sich in der zweiten Hälfte des 15. Jahrhunderts ein mechanisches Verfahren entwickelte: die Verwendung eines "Gebetszählgerät", das die Rosenkranzandacht regulierte (ebd., S. 56).

Der Bildraum: Zur Evokation der inneren Bilder durch das Ave-Maria-Gebet

Ein solches Gebetszählgerät ist der Rosenkranz: eine Perlenkette, die beim Gebet des *Ave-Maria* durch *Paternoster*-Einschübe und Geheimnisse (*clausula* – Szenen aus der *Vita Christi*) helfen soll (ebd., S. 57). Die Verbindung zwischen dem Rosenkranz und der *Arma Christi*-Andacht besteht darin, dass beide Medien des Glaubens sind; es handelt sich um "eine *devotio*, die sich in der *compassio* auflädt und bestätigt" (ebd.). Die Rosenkranz-Andacht stammt aus dem Rosenkult der Marienvita und wurde im 15. Jahrhundert "durch Visionsberichte und propagandistische Marien- und Rosenkranzlegenden ausgebaut" (ebd.).
Anhand eines Beispiels aus Burgund um 1460 – einer Gebetskette mit emaillierten Herzplättchen, die Szenen aus dem Marienleben in Farbe und Tiefschnitt-Emaille darstellt – erläutert Berns, wie diese gleichzeitig "den Gesicht- wie den Tastsinn" anspricht und den "Fluss der inneren Bilder" steuert, da sie "mit dem inneren Auge gelesen und mit dem 'einenden Blick des Herzens' (Courth in Berns, 2000, S. 61) beschaut" werden möchte. Der Unterschied zu den Darstellungen der *Arma Christi* besteht in einem höheren Grad der Abstraktion; warum? "Denn hier werden keine äußeren Bilder zur Evokation von inneren mehr benötigt" (ebd., S. 61). Die Metaphorik der Perlenkette, die beim Ave-Maria-Gebet verwendet wird, besagt: "Die Perlen stehen für Rosen, die Rosen für schmerzliche oder fröhliche Szenen aus Marienvita und Evangelien…" (ebd.). Wie soll gebetet werden und was genau geschieht dabei? Es wird der innere Film der *compassio* aufgerufen und eine Art "Nötigung Gottes"; die "Serialität" und Gleichheit der Gebete erzeugen beim Betenden "eine eigentümliche *tranquillitas*, ein Leerwerden vor Gott, ein Freiräumen der *Imaginatio*-Kammer im Kopf von allen profanen, womöglich gar sündhaften Phantasmen (…)" (ebd., S. 64). Berns spricht dabei von dem "Bildraum",

der durch das wiederholte Beten der gleichen Texte "angezielt" wird. Der theologische Kontext bezieht sich auf ein Zitat von Gregor dem Großen (ca. 540-604), in dem es heißt: Wir "werfen" uns "wahrlich nicht vor jenem (d.h. dem Bildnis Christi) wie vor einem göttlichen Wesen nieder, sondern wir beten denjenigen an, den wir mittels des Bildes als Geborenen oder Leidenden oder Thronenden uns vergegenwärtigen" (ebd., S. 66). Die Bilder sind nicht dazu da, um sich selbst zu evozieren, sondern den "angestrebten Vorstellungsraum" (ebd.) hinter diesen Bildern. Der "multidimensionale Graphismus" wird durch einen "geschienten und gerichteten Graphismus" ersetzt (ebd.).[3]

Die Arma-hominis-Ikonographie: Sequenz und Bewegung – eine Bewegung in Einzelpositionen

Am Anfang dieses Kapitels stellt Berns eine Frage über die möglichen Folgen der Geometrisierung und Maschinisierung für den "Bildhaushalt des Menschen" (Berns, 2000, S. 79). Damit stellt sich auch die Frage nach der "Maschinisierung des menschlichen Körpers". Berns möchte hier vor allem die "Maschinisierung des Waffenhandwerkes, des soldatischen Kämpfens und endlich gar des gesamten Militärwesens" hervorheben (ebd.), weil dabei auch "eine Bildsteuerung vonnöten war" (ebd.). Der Vergleich mit den "ikonographischen Strategien der *Arma Christi*" sei möglich, weil "hier gleichfalls Techniken der Zerlegung zu graphischer Sequenzbildung im Interesse des Memorierens genutzt

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3 Berns argumentiert, dass aufgrund von "Mechanisierung, Maschinisierung und Rotation" in den untersuchten Beispielen andersartige Zwecke und Prozesse im Spiel sind als in den zuvor analysierten Fällen. Dieser "Drang zu Einkästelung und Einkreisung, zu geometrisch serieller Quantifizierung, Sequenzierung und Verkettung" habe seit der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts zugenommen. Die ersten Apparate (kreisförmige Scheibenapparate) wurden gebaut und blieben bis ins 19. Jahrhundert Teil des Experimentierens, um die Bewegungsillusion zu erzeugen (Berns, 2000, S. 69-71). Anhand eines Beispiels aus der Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts, einem Holzschnitt von Hans Glaser (S. 70), zeigt der Autor, wie maschinelle Mechanismen verwendet wurden, um das Irdische und das Himmlische als "sechs schwarze und weiße Felder", als die *Arma Christi* um einen Totenschädel herum darzustellen. Der Mechanismus erlaubte es, die perforierte Scheibe, bestehend aus zwei Ebenen, zu drehen, sodass "das jetzt sichtbare schwarzgrundige 'himmlische' Programm durch ein 'irdisches' Programm mit Laster-Signets abgelöst werden konnte" (ebd., S. 71). Hierbei handelte es sich nicht mehr um ein Bild-Gebetsgerät, sondern um "ein Erbauungs- und Schreck-Gerät". Anstelle eines Superimago von Christus war nun ein Totenschädel zu sehen, "das Bildnis des toten Menschen, das die "Meditations- und Schock-Appellen in mechanischer Komplementbindung" bildete (ebd., S. 71).

wurden" (ebd., S. 80). Es ist wichtig zu betonen, dass es dabei nicht um eine "Gegenüberstellung von Bild als Kultobjekt und Bild als Kunstobjekt" geht, wie sie selbst noch für Hans Beltings grundlegenden Ansatz von "Bild und Kult" maßgeblich war, da er die "Visualisierungsaufgaben in den profanen (außersakralen und außerästhetischen) Bereichen des Dokumentierens, Wissens und Lehrens (...) unberücksichtigt lässt" (ebd.). Als Ergebnis dieser Bemühungen wurden Kriegsbücher entwickelt, die nicht nur verbal, sondern auch visuell eine Art von "Bildstreifen" bildeten: Sie demonstrierten die "Handhabung einer bestimmten Waffe" und "das effiziente Verhalten eines Soldaten durch serielle Reihung von Bewegungspositionen" (ebd., S. 80-81).

In zwei deutschen Beispielen aus dem 15. Jahrhundert (deutschsprachige Fechtbücher existierten seit dem 14. Jahrhundert, und seit der Mitte des 15. Jahrhunderts wurden sie neben dem Text auch mit "Instruktionen in Form von Bildsequenzen" versehen) geht es um Grafiken, die nicht einfach eine Illustration der verbalen Information sind, "sondern sie ersetzen reale Anschauung". Die Texte treten dabei "in den Dienst der Bildinformation" und werden "zunehmend von ihr abhängig" (ebd., S. 83). Die Zerlegung selbst basiert auf der "Zerlegung einer Bewegungsphase in immer mehr Einzelpositionen". Berns zeigt anhand von zwei deutschen Exemplaren den Unterschied zwischen einer Serie aus dem Jahr 1467 (Anonyme Federzeichnungen auf Pergament im Fechtbuch von Hans Thalhofer) (ebd., S. 84-85) und der späteren Variante aus dem Jahr 1510 von Albrecht Dürer (Abb. 2: *Sechs Positionen eines Fechtkampfes* auf zwei Blättern, lavierte Federzeichnungen) (ebd., 86). Dabei geht es um den "Differenzierungsprozess der Bewegungszerlegung" und um Unterschiede in den Strategien zur Verteilung der sechs Kampfpositionen auf (auch) sechs, bzw. (nur) drei Blätter. Dürer "bietet schon zeitlich enge Sequenzen, die er durch Bildreihung auf je einem Blatt in Dreiergruppen, die optisch sich schon fast überblenden, sinnfällig macht" (ebd., S. 86). Dies hat zur Folge, dass mit der Reduktion der Kombinationsfreiheit auch "der Imaginationsfluss kanalisiert" wird (ebd., S. 86-87).

Vergleicht man diese Bemerkungen mit der Theorie der Bewegung, des Rhythmischen und des Kinematographischen, geht es bei Dürers Zeichnungen um eine in verschiedene Phasen zerlegte Bewegung. Nach Panofsky handelt es sich z.B. bei Dürers Blatt der *Apokalypse* (der "Engelkampf") nicht um Phasen einer gleichen Bewegung, sondern um ein gleiches Stadium verschiedener Bewegungen (Panofsky, 1926, S. 146). Und

doch wird eine Bewegung in verschiedene Phasen zerlegt, die Berns als Sequenzen bezeichnet. Es sind also nicht alle möglichen Bewegungen in Dürers Zeichnungen wahrzunehmen, sondern nur ausgewählte, die gezeichnet wurden, um eine "Gesamtbewegung" darzustellen. Diese *Gesamtbewegung* müsste, nach Panofsky, drei Voraussetzungen erfüllen, um als Rhythmus betrachtet zu werden: die "Sukzession gleichförmiger Elemente, dynamische Verbundenheit und Wechsel von Hebung und Senkung" (Panofsky, op. cit., S. 147). All diese Elemente sind in Dürers Zeichnungen vorhanden, und deshalb kann bei ihm die Bewegung als Rhythmus verstanden werden. Dennoch handelt es sich um "erstarrte" Momentaufnahmen, die Panofsky in seinem Aufsatz von 1926 kritisiert hat (Panofsky, 1926, 142).

Noch interessanter ist, dass Berns diese Serien von drei Bewegungsmomenten als Sequenzen bezeichnet.[4] Die Sequenzen im Holzschnittzyklus *Große Passion* von Dürer werden von Anke Fröhlich erwähnt[5] und auf das Komponieren von Gruppen in den einzelnen Darstellungen angewendet. Dabei wird jedoch keine mögliche Verbindung mit dem Filmischen erwähnt. Könnte man aus dieser Perspektive auch die Gruppen und ihre innere Kommunikation in Dürers *Apokalypse* mit dem Begriff der Sequenz[6] in Verbindung bringen? Könnte man sagen, dass es sich bei Dürers Zeichnungen um eine Art Montage handelt, bei der die einzelnen Bewegungsmomente als Teile einer "Gesamtbewegung" dargestellt wurden?

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4 Im vierten Kapitel wird auch von der Sequenz die Rede sein, im Kontext der technischen Aspekte in Dürers Werk.

5 Das Besondere an diesen Zyklen liegt in ihrer Komposition aus aufeinanderfolgenden Blättern, die "nach rechts" führen, wie Fröhlich betont, wobei "jedes einzelne Blatt (…) vom vorangehenden zum nachfolgenden" leitet, was mit den Schriftkundigen zu tun hat. Fröhlich behauptet, es handle sich dabei immer wieder um eine "Sequenz in der Ereignisfolge" (Fröhlich, 2002, S. 179). Wie die Beschreibung der einzelnen Bewegungslinien, Bewegungssequenzen und Bewegungsräume zeigen wird, betrachtet die Autorin jedes Blatt als "Teil eines übergeordneten Prinzips", das "seinen umfassenden Sinn erst durch die Stellung in der gesamten Folge" gewinnt (ebd.).

6 Eine *Sequenz* beschreibt eine Gruppe aufeinanderfolgender Filmeinstellungen, die in grafischer, räumlicher, zeitlicher, thematischer oder szenischer Hinsicht, oder unter Aspekten der Personenkonstellation, einander zugehörig sind und durch einen in sich abgeschlossenen filmischen Abschnitt eine Phase in der Entwicklung der Erzählung dokumentieren. Sequenzen werden üblicherweise durch Auf- und Abblenden, *establishing shots* oder musikalische Markierungen von den benachbarten *Sequenzen* abgegrenzt und sind eng mit Szenen verwandt. Siehe file:///Users/mirela/Dropbox/My%20Mac%20(Mirela's%20MacBook%20Pro)/Desktop/Duerer%20i%20Kirchner/Sequenz%20(Film)%20–%20Wikipedia.webarchive (Zugriff am 8. Mai 2023). Eine weitere Definition folgt im vierten Kapitel, wo der technische Aspekt von Dürers Werk analysiert wird.
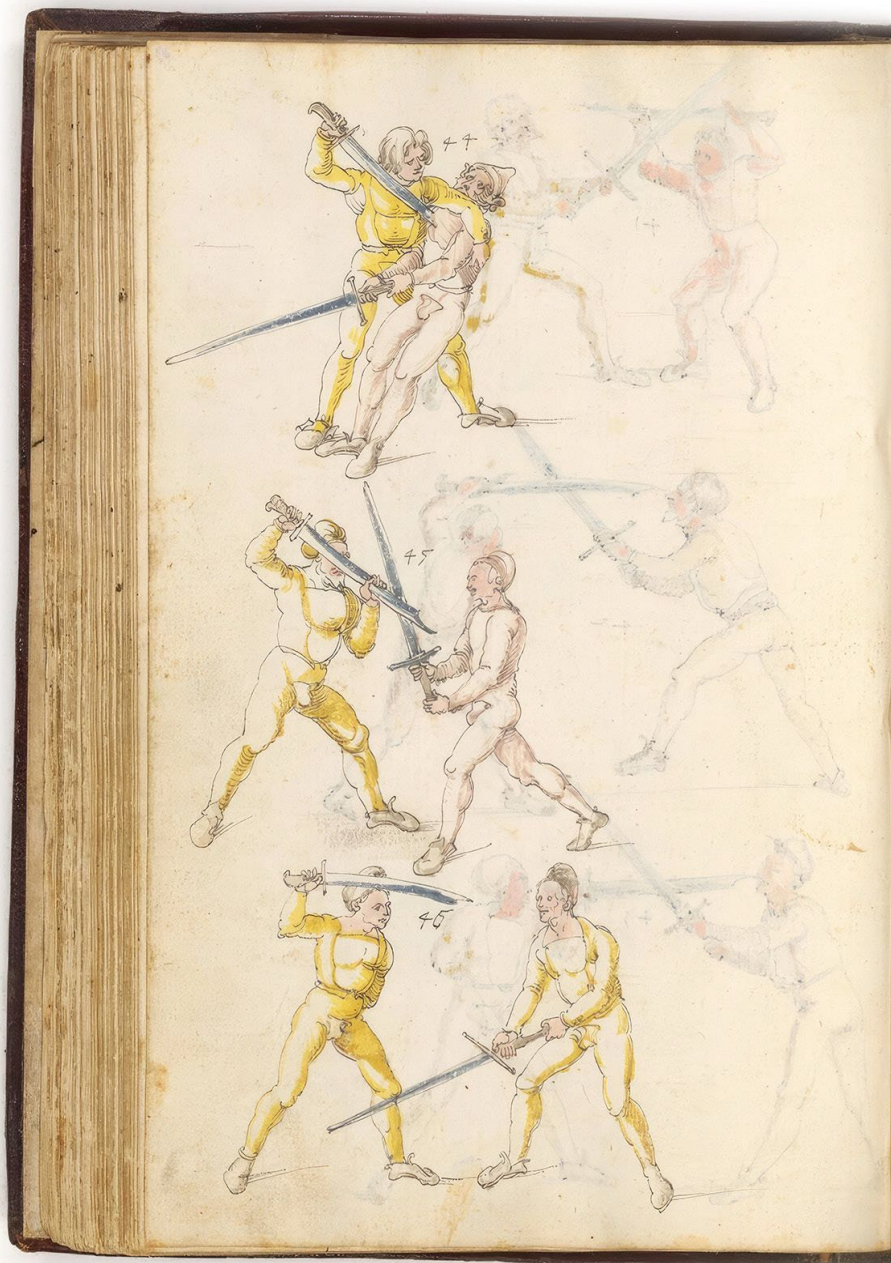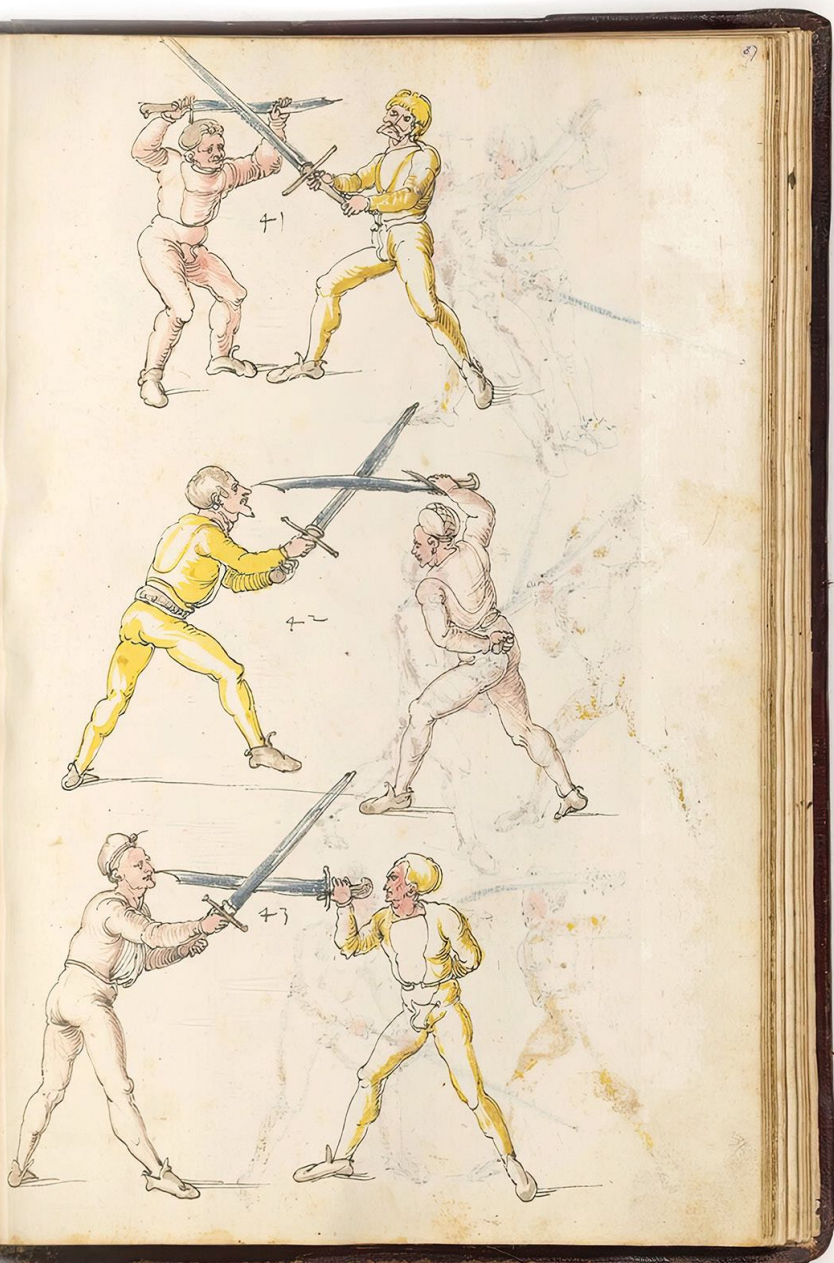
Abb. 2. Albrecht Dürer, "Fechtkampf", Zeichenstift, leicht-aquarelliert, 31 x 22 cm, 1512.
Foto: Alamy.com

3. Jonathan Crary: Körperliche Verbindung mit dem Sehen

Im Vergleich zu Jörg Jochen Berns, der sich mit dem Prozess vor dem Bild befasst hat, insbesondere aus der Sicht, dass Heiligenbilder dazu verwendet wurden, die Imagination der Betenden zu steuern und Visionen zu erzeugen, hat Jonathan Crary in seinem Text über das Experimentieren mit dem Sehvermögen aus physiologischer Sicht etwas Ähnliches unternommen. Er entwirft Modelle des Beobachters, ohne dabei die Kunst zu untersuchen, sondern vielmehr, um die Auswirkungen wissenschaftlicher Forschungen an der Schnittstelle zwischen Wissenschaft und Unterhaltungsindustrie zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts herauszufinden. Diese Untersuchungen, die auf Experimenten basieren, haben zur Entstehung einer neuen Autonomie des Sehens beigetragen. Die Interpretation geht davon aus, dass diese Experimente, die in der Industrie weiterentwickelt wurden, sich von der herkömmlichen Geschichte der Photographie und des Films abheben. (Crary, 1992, S. 3-9)

Worum geht es hier?

Mit Goethe begann zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts die Messung von Nachbildern. Die "letzte Phase" dieses Prozesses bestand aus Experimenten zur Messung von Reizen in Verbindung mit dem Sehen, die von Gustav Fechner durchgeführt wurden. Dies geschah zu einer Zeit, in der herkömmliche Mittel nicht mehr ausreichten, um die "halluzinatorische Abstraktion von intensiven optischen Erfahrungen" darzustellen (Crary, op. cit., S. 143). Dabei ging es um die Verbindung zwischen innerer sinnlicher Erfahrung und Ereignissen "in der Welt", da sich zeigte, dass die "Formalisation der perzeptiven Erfahrung" aus einer "Krise der Repräsentation" resultierte (ebd., 141).

Was der Wissenschaftler getan hat, war die Bewertung der Reize und ihre Korrelation mit den Empfindungen zu messen; Crary betont, dass auf diese Weise "die Subjektivität erstmals quantitativ bestimmbar" wurde. Daher schreibt Fechner zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts über die Engel und die Augen, die "autonom" geworden sind, als "Augen der höchsten innerlichen Entwicklung" (ebd., S. 142). Es geht nicht mehr nur um die Autonomie des Sehens, das innerliche Sehen und die Umwandlung in Abstraktion (da es für intensives Sehen, ein Sehen ohne Vermittler, keine herkömmlichen Ausdrucksformen gibt), sondern um die direkte körperliche Verbindung mit dem Sehen: "Durch das Nachbild wird die Sonne

zum Körper gehörig gemacht, und der Körper übernimmt faktisch die Rolle der Quelle ihrer Wirkungen" (ebd., S. 141). Diese Wahrnehmung ist notwendigerweise, nach Fechner, zeitlich: Die Empfindungen des Betrachters hängen immer vom Reiz ab (ebd., S. 146). Auf diese Weise ist der Betrachter nicht mehr vom Objekt des Betrachtens abhängig. Crary illustriert dies anhand von Turner, der *Die Sonne* abbildete und behauptete, es seien Selbstporträts. Der Prozess des Sehens (der Perzeption) wird zum Objekt des Sehens, indem der Körper zum Ort und zum erzeugenden Subjekt des Geschehens wird (ebd., S. 141).

Hier wird das Innere messbar, während bei Berns es zum Ausgangspunkt der Vision wird, durch den "inneren" Film eines Betenden vor dem Bild. Auch er schreibt über den Körper (den Sprachkörper), der "elementar" "beweglich wird" (Berns, op. cit., S. 29). Die Bilder werden zerlegt und nachgeahmt. Während bei Crary gemessen, und dem Sehen eine neue Rolle zugewiesen wurde, liegt für Berns die Funktion des Betrachtens in der Verbindung zwischen dem Inneren und dem Gegenständlichen in der Inspiration zur Vision (und dies ist seit Gutenberg, seit der Erfindung des Drucks, zu beobachten). Dies wird als "Bildbewegung" bezeichnet (Berns, op. cit., S. 27).

4. Zur Imagination: ein Prozess als Relation mit Intuition

Der Rhythmus, über den wir bei der Anwendung von Panofskys Theorie auf Dürers Zeichnungen geschrieben haben, wird auch in einem zeitgenössischen Text von Ludger Schwarte erwähnt, der sich mit der Frage beschäftigt, wie wir sehen können, was es nicht gibt (Schwarte, 2006, S. 95). In diesem Zusammenhang wird auch der Begriff des Bildes diskutiert:

> … nur, weil die kleinsten Farbnuancen, die Profile und Übergänge unsere Sicht in einen Rhythmus, in eine Wiederholung, in eine Bewegung eingliedern, die das Gemälde unterstützt, präsentiert sich unseren Sinnen ein Bild. Sobald der Blick des Betrachters auf das gestaltete Material trifft, das die Oberfläche des Gemäldes ausmacht, und der Spur der Bewegungen folgt, die diese Oberfläche ausstellt, so übernimmt er die darin programmierte Sicht und sieht ein Bild. Das Bild wird sodann als ein Körper gesehen (ebd.).

Die Imagination ist demnach ein sozial bedingtes Phänomen: "Die Imagination strukturiert das Handeln und ist doch selbst keineswegs bloß ein Vermögen oder eine vorgegebene Ordnung, sondern wird in jedem Moment eingesetzt, wo ein Tun als Handeln relevant werden soll. Weil das Handeln immer einen Aspekt des Unerwartbaren hat, des Ereignishaften, wird die imaginative Rahmung, in der es stattfindet und von der sie sich abhebt, mit jedem Handlungsvollzug modifiziert" (ebd., S. 93). Die Imagination ist demnach nicht allein auf die "Kognition bei der Bildwerdung" und schon gar nicht auf die "Aktivierung bestimmter Hirnareale im Prozess des Sehens oder die Reizung der Netzhaut" zu beschränken. "Bilder sind, ebenso wie sprachliche Äußerungen, als Produkte der Imagination Grundbausteine der gemeinsamen Welt"[7] (ebd., S. 92-93).

Schwarte betont, dass die sozialen Bedingungen eine "spezifische Körperlichkeit" darstellen, da die "imaginative Interaktion" nicht nur "humane Akteure", sondern auch "Dinge" einschließt. Beide bilden die Grundlage für das Sichtbarmachen von dem, was "erscheint": Die Dinge "strahlen die Imagination aus" und dabei entsteht ein Prozess, der sowohl das Intersubjektive als auch das Subjektive, "Körperliche" darstellt (ebd., S. 94). In solchen "Inszenierungen" wird das zuvor Unsichtbare sichtbar gemacht, und der Autor meint, es handele sich hier um eine "Inszenierung der Präsenz".[8] Die imaginären Dinge sind mit Eigenschaften wie unsichtbar, unwissbar und unvorhersehbar in Verbindung zu bringen, die nur dort ihre Grenzen finden, wo eine "Bühne" existiert (ebd.). Der Betrachter spielt eine wesentliche Rolle: Wenn ein Bild "erblickt wird", impliziert dies die "körperliche Investition des Betrachters", was einen "Kontrast" erzeugt (ebd., S. 95). Daraus ergibt sich eine mögliche Definition des Bildes nicht als Medium, sondern als "Erzeugnis eines imaginativen Prozesses, der verschiedene Akteure in einer spezifischen

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7 Schwarte präzisiert dies folgendermaßen: "Das Vermögen, Bilder zu sehen, ist kulturell und historisch variabel, und zwar nicht nur, weil es von Artefakten und Visualisierungstechniken abhängt, sondern weil es, wie das Sprachvermögen auch erlernt werden muss und weil alle Standards von richtig und falsch auf einer kreativen Praxis beruhen." (Schwarte, 2006, S. 92-93)

8 Schwarte verwendet ein Beispiel von Kant zur "Inszenierung von Präsenz": Es ist der Esstisch. Er "lädt Menschen dazu ein, sich zu treffen, Platz zu nehmen und eine Tischgesellschaft zu bilden. Der Tisch gestaltet eine spezifische Körperlichkeit, er suggeriert eine Konversationsordnung und eine substanzielle Gemeinsamkeit" (ebd., S. 93-94). Da können wir hinzufügen, dass Schwarte Dingen in der Welt, beispielsweise "einem fremdartigen Objekt", "dieselbe rekonfigurierende und ordnende Kapazität" zuschreibt "wie, im Falle des epistemischen Subjekts, unserem Gehirn" (ebd., S. 94).

Architektur involviert" (ebd.).⁹ Dies führt zu einer instabilen Situation, da das Imaginative nur dann zum Vorschein kommt, wenn es einem "Fehlen" oder einer "Leere" ähnelt. Schließlich handelt es sich um die "Grenze dessen, was nicht ist und nur möglich wird, wenn der Betrachter darauf zugeht" (ebd., S. 96). Die Inszenierung einer Präsenz steht für eine "Präsentation" (ebd.) und diese führt weiter zur "Absenz", denn jeder Weg der Wahrnehmung "führt durch eine Leerstelle"; solche Erfahrung "entspricht einer situativen Kontingenz, die die Integrität der imaginativen Bewegung zwischen den verschiedenen involvierten Akteuren gestaltet".

Man könnte diese Ansichten mit denen von Panofsky in Verbindung bringen, da es hier offensichtlich um das Funktionieren eines Rhythmus geht, um die Intensität der Handlung, das Auf und Ab, um die entgegengesetzten Grenzpositionen, wie sie in den Illustrationen von Dürers *Apokalypse* zu sehen sind. Die fantastischen Welten bei Dürer resultieren nicht nur aus einer neuen Interpretation bereits existierender Bibeln und ihrer Illustrationen, sondern aus einer völlig neuen Welt. Schwarte nennt diesen Prozess "Erfüllung": Ein Kunstwerk ist nur dann Teil eines Prozesses, wenn "sich zwischen Betrachter und imaginativem Ding" (ebd., S. 97) eine neue Situation entwickelt, in der der Betrachter seine Spuren auf einem Kunstwerk hinterlässt. Dieser Prozess verläuft folgendermaßen: "Ein Betrachter wird erfüllt von einer fragmentarischen, verstörenden Konstellation, in die er sich einfügt und in der er die Wahrnehmung dessen, was fehlt, mit etwas ausfüllt, das grundsätzlich nicht passt, nämlich mit etwas Imaginärem, mit etwas rein Potenziellem" (ebd., S. 97). Mit anderen Worten, das, was als Prozess zwischen dem Betrachter und dem Gegenstand geschieht, ist nicht das, was "sich unseren Sinnen darbietet und letztlich selbst zu einem Bild" wird, sondern wir verlassen uns "auf eine Szenerie, die die Dinge entwirft und die uns eine Sicht suggeriert oder sogar aufdrängt" (ebd., S. 101). Es scheint uns verwunderlich in diesem Text, dass der Autor schließlich auch Begriffe wie Bewegung und Raum einführt.¹⁰

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9 Dabei ist unser Imaginationsvermögen wiederum sozial bedingt und hängt mit dem Erlernen des Sehens zusammen: "Dass ich einen perfekt perspektivischen Ausblick in einem Gemälde entdecken kann, hängt auch davon ab, dass ich gelernt habe, dies zu sehen. Was ich sehe, hängt von einem sozialen Spiel ab, in dem die Fähigkeit, etwas *als* etwas zu sehen, eine Rolle spielt" (ebd., S. 96).
10 "Die Tiefendimension der Sicht kommt nur dadurch ins Spiel, dass wir den Körper in die Welt einfügen. Keine geistige Konstruktion, sondern die Räumlichkeit und die Bewegung unseres Körpers in der Welt bilden die Grundlage der gesehenen Dimensionen" (ebd., S. 102).

Diese "Vorgänge" sind als Entwicklung "symbolischer Muster" durch Imagination zu sehen, die unsere "Erfahrung strukturiert". Sie werden erst dann verstanden, wenn sie auf der Basis von Intuition erfolgen (ebd., S. 102). Denn hier kommen das Leere und das Unerwartete ins Spiel, das Füllen, Inszenieren und die Präsenz:

"Die Intuition negiert ein gegebenes symbolisches Muster, sie ist ein negatives Erspüren. Sie öffnet den Vorhang für Wahrnehmungen, für die wir noch kein Schema besitzen und von denen wir nicht wissen, wie wir sie klassifizieren sollen. Die Intuition ist die Toleranz für Dinge, die nicht schon Objekte sind" (ebd.). So wird, paradoxal, die Intuition als Gegensatz zur Imagination gesehen, denn wenn die Imagination "die Parameter der Wirklichkeit" fabriziert, situiert die Intuition "überhaupt erst die Bandbreite des Möglichen" (ebd.). Obwohl die beiden als komplementär zu sehen sind, geht es bei der Intuition um eine "architektonische Organisation eines Wahrnehmungsprozesses" und diese Organisation "impliziert die Emergenz imaginativer Dinge als Dauer, Bewegung und Intensität" (ebd.). Wir sehen diese Komplementarität als einen Rhythmus der Wahrnehmung, der Beziehung zwischen dem inneren und dem äußeren Film, zwischen den Reizen und der Reaktion.

5. *Der Starke Engel* und die Montage

Das "Schreiben" mit dem Bild, und dabei der Schrei (des Löwen, als Stimme anwesend), bilden die Grundlage eines Textes aus dem Jahr 1972. Wir möchten jedoch nicht nur von dieser anfänglichen Voraussetzung ausgehen, wonach Dürer sich in der "Darstellung des Engels auf den Feuersäulen und in der unverhüllten Wiedergabe der Buchverschlingung" (Abb. 3) "stärker als in den anderen Blättern des Zyklus (*Apokalypse*) von der ungeheuerlichen Bildhaftigkeit des Stoffes herausfordern ließ" (Arndt, 1972, S. 48). Vielmehr möchten wir auch den Titel des Artikels ("Dürer als Erzähler")[11]

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11 Arndt erzählt das biblische Geschehen im 10. Kapitel der *Apokalypse* folgendermaßen: "In der Apokalypse (Kap. 10) ist eine in mehreren Phasen sich gliedernde Bewegung geschildert. 1. Ein Engel steigt aus dem Himmel herab (…) Er hält ein geöffnetes Buch in Händen und schriet *als der leo*. Sieben Donner ertönen daraufhin, und Johannes will niederschreiben, was sie vermelden. Das aber verbietet *ein stimm von dem hymel*. 2. *Der starke Engel* leistet einen Schwur, welcher besagt, dass nun keine Zeit, keine Frist der Verzögerung mehr sein wird bis zum Ende der Welt.... 3. Noch einmal ertönt eine Stimme. Johannes wird befohlen, das Buch aus der Hand des starken Engels entgegenzunehmen und zu verschlingen, um auf die Weise neue Offenbarungen zu empfangen." (Arndt, 1972, S. 50)

genauer untersuchen: Wie operierte der Künstler mit der Imagination und wie tat er dies in Bezug zur Bibel? Arndt behauptet insbesondere, dass Dürers Interpretation "nicht Wort für Wort und Szene für Szene" dem Text folgt: "Der von ihm komponierte Zyklus erscheint als ein in sich sinnvolles Ganzes und reflektiert den Text in seiner Grundstruktur, stellt jedoch im Einzelnen eine Auswahl dar" (ebd., S. 50). Dabei fehlen in dieser Interpretation des 10. Kapitels nicht nur "manche Ereignisse", sondern manche wurden auch "zusammengedrängt".

Um Dürers Interpretation näher zu verstehen, vergleicht Arndt die Ausgaben der *Apokalypse* aus dem 15. und 16. Jahrhundert. Dabei geht es vor allem um eine "Bildtradition", die bis ins 16. Jahrhundert den Versuch widerspiegelt, "die verschiedenen Phasen anschaulich zu machen" (ebd.). Einige Darstellungen verbinden den Schwur und die Buchübergabe in einem Bild (wie *Der Starke Engel*, Niederlande um 1400, heute in Paris, Bibl. Nat., S. 51). Das Gleiche findet auch bei Dürer statt: "Sein Holzschnitt ist auf die eigentlich entscheidenden Ereignisse, auf den Schwur und die Buchübergabe bzw. -verschlingung, konzentriert. Ja, man darf wohl sagen, dass er alles tat, um in diesem Punkt ein Gleichgewicht zu erzielen" (ebd., S. 52). Der Autor sieht das Dramatische in der Darstellung der "Buchverschlingung". Zusätzlich betont Arndt die Bedeutung des Altars, der in mehreren Blättern wiederholt vorkommt, mal mit und mal ohne Gott selbst. Mit der Behauptung, Dürer habe sich mit der Darstellung zweier Momente aus dem 10. Kapitel auseinandergesetzt, untersucht der Autor auch andere Beispiele: *Der Starke Engel* aus Frankreich, aus dem frühen 13. Jahrhundert, zeigt die zwei Ereignisse überhaupt nicht. Dennoch gibt es auch Exemplare, die Gemeinsamkeiten mit Dürers Darstellung aufweisen: Diese sieht der Autor in der Tatsache, dass diese "Formulierungen" "weder den starken Engel noch den Seher mehr als einmal zeigen" (ebd., S. 53). Die wichtigste Quelle für Dürer war laut Arndt die Kölner Bibel. Für Dürers "Fantasie" wurden diese Illustrationen "in mehr als einem Falle zum Vorbild" (ebd., S. 54). Arndt erwähnt jedoch nicht, dass dieses Exemplar, sowie die Straßburger Bibel, neben dieser Szene auch diejenige aus Kapitel 9 darstellt, in der die Engel am Euphrat (*Der Engelkampf*, Nr. 119 in Krüger, 2002, S. 89) in einer Schlacht mit der Menschheit (mit Schwertern) zu sehen sind. Für Dürers Innovation war jedoch noch wichtiger, dass sein Engel "mächtig aufgerichtet" erscheint und "nicht eingebunden in eine einzige Handlung" (ebd., S. 55). Dies ermöglichte die gleichwertige Darstellung des

Abb. 3. Albrecht Dürer, "Der Starke Engel", aus der Holzschnittzykle *Apokalypse*, 1498, 45,9 x 31,2 cm. Foto: National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. (*Saint John Devouring the Book*), gemeinfrei

Schwurs und der Buchübergabe (ebd.). Das Formale hat gewonnen, mit anderen Worten: Der Engel erstreckt sich stark über die Fläche hinaus. Zusätzlich stellt Arndt fest, dass diese Ausstreckung "aus jeglichen Handlungszusammenhang" herauszusehen ist und im Kontext der "gleichrangigen Behandlung von Schwur und Buchübergabe" steht (ebd.).

Die geheimnisvolle Darstellung des Buches, das im Mund des Heiligen Johannes, in der Vollstreckung des schweren Auftrags des Sehers, fast eingesaugt wird, vermittelt nach Arndt eine "immaterielle Auffassung und Darstellung des Buches" (ebd., 59). Das Wunder des Engels, der mit menschlichem Antlitz dargestellt wurde, von Wolken umgeben und durch Strahlen mit den feurigen Säulen verbunden, wird wörtlich dargestellt. Daher geht es, unserer Ansicht nach, nicht um das Erzählen, sondern um die Präsenz der Figuren: des Heiligen Johannes, der nicht aufschreiben darf, was er hört, sondern die Visionen geheim in sich aufnehmen soll, die ihm von einer (menschlichen) Hand gereicht werden. Dies geschieht vor dem Hintergrund des Altars, eines Zeichens für Gott, und in Anwesenheit eines kleineren Engels, der szenisch das Ereignis auf die rechte Seite verschiebt (dem Hauptgeschehen folgend). Das Wunder wird als solches auch bildlich dargestellt. Normalerweise kann man kein Buch verschlingen, aber hier ist es möglich. Versteht das Auge des Betrachters diese Darstellung? Ja, jedoch muss der Betrachter auch verstehen, warum hinter dem Heiligen Johannes ein weiteres Buch auf dem Boden liegt, und dass der Heilige nicht aufschreiben darf worum es geht, denn die Visionen müssen von Gott aufgeklärt werden. Auf dem Blatt sieht man etwas, das der Montage im Film ähnelt: Der Engel hat Füße, die jedoch vom restlichen Körper getrennt und durch zwei Säulen mit den Wolken verbunden sind. Der Körper des Engels setzt sich aus verschiedenen Elementen zusammen: Die Hand zeigt auf den Tempel, der Kopf trägt den Regenbogen, und die Strahlen, die Wolken und die Säulen sind ebenfalls vorhanden, ebenso wie die linke Hand, die dem Heiligen Johannes das Buch reicht. All diese "Objekte" sind in der Darstellung zusammengestellt, bleiben jedoch auseinandergesetzt; einzig das Buch wird direkt mit dem offenen Mund von Heiligen Johannes in Verbindung gebracht. So wird durch den Engel Gott selbst mit dem Seher verbunden.

Wir halten es für wichtig, eine Verbindung zu Béla Balázs und Sergej M. Eisenstein herzustellen. Der Filmkritiker Balázs definierte in seinem Text "Die Bilderführung" von 1924 die "Reihenfolge der Bilder" als etwas, das dem Film "seinen rhythmischen Charakter" verleiht (Balázs

in Diederichs, 2004, S. 249). Er spricht auch vom Begriff des Lebendigen im Zusammenhang mit dieser Bilderführung und betont, dass alles von ihr abhängt, dabei an die Stimmung in einem Film denkend. Er fügt hinzu, dass "Momentaufnahmen einer Bewegung" ebenfalls berücksichtigt werden sollten, um die ungewöhnlichen Körperpositionen zu verstehen. Genau diese "unbekannten Einzelpositionen" bilden "die Bewegung des Lebens" (ebd., S. 250).

Könnten wir diese ungewöhnlichen Körperpositionen bei Dürer mit solchen filmischen Begriffen in Verbindung bringen? Und dürfen wir die Körper in diesen Holzschnitten als Bilder betrachten (wobei Schwarte zuvor vorgeschlagen hat, die bewegten Bilder als Körper zu betrachten; Schwarte, 2006, S. 95)? Oder könnten wir die gesamten Blätter als "Momentaufnahmen" interpretieren?

Im Jahr 1934 schrieb der russische Regisseur Sergej M. Eisenstein über die Montage als das wichtigste Verfahren in der Filmproduktion (Eisenstein in Diederichs, 2004, S. 288). Er gab eine Definition, die sich auf die Komposition bezog, wobei er die Begriffe Syntax, Aufbau und sogar Einzelfragmente unterschied. Diese Komposition, Syntax oder Aufbau der Einzelfragmente im Film hat er aber nicht nur auf die Gesamtheit des Films als Einheit angewendet, sondern auch auf einzelne Einstellungen. "Einstellungen ohne Verbindung mit einem Montagegedanken und der Komposition werden zu ästhetischen Spielereien und Selbstzweck" (ebd.). Könnten wir die Kompositionen dieses Holzschnitts auch so betrachten, als Kompositionen von einzelnen Einstellungen? Ist das, was als Einheit erscheint, etwas, das aus zusammenmontierten Teilen besteht?

In seinem Buch aus den 1930er Jahren schrieb Rudolf Arnheim über *Film als Kunst* (Arnheim, 2002). Er argumentierte, dass es im Film auch um die Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten der bildenden Kunst geht. Arnheim betonte, dass es im Film nicht (nur) um die Handlung ging, sondern auch um die formalen Bildausführungen. Damit war er ein Vorläufer der sogenannten "ikonischen Wende", die auf die *Linguistic Turn* folgte. Nach Arnheim geht es darum, "dass es nicht erst des Wortes bedarf um tiefe, geistvolle Inhalte zu geben, sondern, dass Bilder und Geräusche dasselbe vermögen. Und sie sollen sehen, dass es vorläufig wenig auf die (kitschige oder vernünftige) 'Handlung' ankommt, sondern dass es zu beachten gilt, wie das einzelne Bild, die einzelne Szene gestellt, fotografiert, gespielt, geschnitten ist (...)" (Arnheim, 2002, S. 16-17). Mit anderen Worten, die junge Kunst des Films sollte sich nicht mit der Menge

der Produktion vergnügen, sondern durch die Filmapparatur dessen bewusst werden, was in ihr als kreative Möglichkeiten besteht. Denn so werden wir auch der Analogie bewusst, die das Dürersche Blatt des Starken Engels mit den filmischen Ausdrucksmitteln verbindet.

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**NADJA
GNAMUŠ**

The Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana,
Guest Lecturer
nadjagnamus@gmail.com

Abstract:

In the territory of post-isms also visuality has been debated in terms of its post condition, where it was essentially associated with the digital era in which images have proliferated to the stage at which everything must be made into an image and is consumed as an image. Such image and information overload and constant alertness have produced a certain "visual extinction" and invisibility, not only as a form of resistance to prevailing visual politics but also as a perceptual and cognitive response to excessive exploitation of (mediated) visuality. In contemporary visual culture the superficiality of the visible superseds the concerns of pictorial and reduces imaginary and metaphoric power underlying visual form.

Digital media culture has made a fundamental shift in our relation to the external world, sensory perception and, most importantly, in our visual awareness and understanding of images. The new phenomenology of the image decisively altered looking practices, the relationship between the observer and the observed and also cognitive and affective dimensions of images. The image has transformed from representation into a fleeting and instant visual event which is in the ongoing convergence of media no longer ocular-centric. Automated processes of production marked by various image customization tools, accelerated speed and immediacy by which images are produced and distributed changed the concept of creativity and introduced »cut and paste« as a paramount model of image-making.

Tech-aesthetics and cyber visuality not only change cultural and anthropological role of images but also rearticulate the ontology of the image itself, its

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materiality and the way we experience images. Flusser claimed that whoever is programmed by technical images lives and knows reality as a programmed context. I examine how the algorithmic logic of the programmable (screen) image affects other types of images, particularly focusing on aesthetic, phenomenal and representational properties and distinctions between contingent screen images and other, mainly art image-objects. I argue that egalitarian approach towards images and accessible image-making technologies impede our cognitive abilities to control and process images. This raises further question of our capacity for critical reflection on visual systems and image agency, specifically regarding complex connections between formal, material and technical components and the construction of meaning. A range of issues arising in this framework are to be tackled. Do rapid changes in image technologies (assembling human and nonhuman elements) along with AI make images self-contained and human intervention eventually dispensable? What methods should we use in deciding which images should be archived, interpreted and historicized? And last but not the least, how and if do images in the era of visual commodification relate to imaginary and make possible, as Deleuze woud say, "thinking in images" beyond the legible signs and normative technologies?

In the territory of various "post-isms" the concept of visuality has been debated in terms of its post-condition too, where it was essentially associated with the digital era in which images have proliferated to the stage at which everything must be made into an image and is consumed as an image.[1] The concept of image has been addressed across a range of disciplines including media studies, art history, sociology, semiotics, critical theory, neuroscience, cognitive science and others and framed from different philosophical, anthropological and ontological perspectives.[2] From the perspective of intertextual inquiry, the image analysis was no longer identified with art historical debate but was instead relocated to a far more expanded cultural arena of image-making incorporating images of all kinds and origins, mainstream and fine art, still and moving, analog and digital.

One of the most believable claims regarding the role of images is that "the power of images rises in proportion to their capacity to serve us. The more assistance the images offer – by helping with communication, cognition, persuasion – the more powerful they become".[3] So far visual culture, as W. J. T. Mitchell observed, is not just the social construction of vision but visual construction of the social (2005b), and vision as such is a matter of interpretation even more than of perception. By means of incredible potency of image production, manipulation and distribution in global media events and phenomena around us are shaped by social multiplication of images. Computerized image has made a fundamental shift in our relation to the external world, sensory perception and, most importantly, in our visual awareness and understanding of images.

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1 'Visual' here addresses the study of images, vision, and visuality, since the term covers both the visual as picture/image and the visual as sensory modality.
2 Looking across a range of domains, disciplines and image practices the question of what is an image cannot provide unambiguous answer nor a general theory (cf. Elkins, Naef 2011). Image is considered an intertextual construction, presented either as a thing or a concept, as an object or a picture, and, in contemporary visual culture, most of all, as a fleeting and ghostly spatio-temporal event. In his essay "What is not an Image (Anymore)?", Krešimir Purgar discusses a possibility to establish a new concept for image that would encompass both a traditional notion of image (image as representation and *tableau*) and image as a mediated visual event (as is the case with virtual images). However, my discussion here tends to focus more on the effect digitalization exerts on visual enunciation and creation of images and on aesthetic cognition, leaving conceptual notions of the image aside.
3 Quoted from the introductory text to the symposium *The Roles of Pictures in society* at the Center for art and media Karlsruhe in 2006. Acquired at https://zkm.de/en/event/2006/01/the-role-of-pictures-in-society.

Tech-aesthetics and cyber visuality not only change cultural and anthro-pological role of images but also rearticulate the ontology of the image itself, its materiality and the way we experience images.

A great deal of contemporary discussions on image focus on the socio-cul-tural context of the digital imaging technologies, on the *ontological sta-tus* of the *image, on* the apparatus, defining the content and the mode of production which is not put to view, on phenomenological and phil-osophical issues that are raised. However, in these extensive and fruit-ful debates understanding the image is more or less abstracted from its visual enunciation. Everyday visual experience is permeated with screen images, which are constantly on the move, variable and exchangeable, and act more as events than representations. The nature of image itself has changed and moved from representation in the direction of "a space for multisensory experience with a temporal dimension" (Grau 2011, 350) which is in the ongoing convergence of media no longer ocular-centric but actively engages other senses.

The new phenomenology of the image decisively altered looking prac-tices, the relationship between the observer and the observed and also cognitive and affective dimensions of images. Digital "image-vehicles" (Warburg) profoundly impact the construction of images and their aesthetic considerations. Having in mind seeing as a trained compe-tence, a skill and ability to detect interesting qualities and observations through visual inspection, I am interested in how hybrid-media expe-rience affect our ability of seeing and making of images. Transmission of images and other information, marked by the shift from physical signs to digital trajectories of information, alters patterns of our per-ception as well as *visuality* of images. Algorithmic logic of the screen image affects other types of images, particularly their aesthetic, phe-nomenal and representational properties. In this framework I discuss the changing role of the medium and its relation with images, which is in digital context no longer indexical. New technologies and digital-ization have, furthermore, altered the concept of creativity itself and accelerated image-making processes by advancing the exchange of hand-work and material labour for immaterial labour and machinic processes. Consequently has the "promptness" of creation by means of accessible image-making technologies impeded our cognitive abil-ities to control and process images and intensified a general seculari-zation of the image through visual media.

1. From medium-specificity to "mediumless" images

Understanding the media, both in the sense of a system, and as a mode of expressing and communicating a content, is of central importance in image culture. In modernism artistic medium became a central issue for artists and theorists alike. For the former it was foremost a signifying process including materials, techniques and tools to be explored in new ways in order to generate new artistic possibilities, while the latter understood it as the ontological basis for art, focusing on the ways in which different media function and defining t*he specific characteristics of a particular medium.* Russian formalism exerted a great influence on modern criticism by analyzing an aesthetic value of work and its potential in conveying the meaning. According to Viktor Shklovsky the medium (having literary devices in mind) was crucial for a process of defamiliarization which enabled transformation of experience by differentiating between ordinary usage and poetic usage of language and habitual and poetic "seeing" of the world. The medium in the sense of novel expression and innovative usage of formal devices had the power to affect our perception and endorse defamiliarizing process in which everyday perception could be changed and rendered as "fresh sensation". Formalist concern with the structure of the work and the devices used by the author obscured the external influence and social and cultural meaning of a sign, which were to become a primary focus of its theoretical descendants, Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. Regardless of their differences, both schools of thought shared the focus on the importance of language, be it textual or pictorial, on aesthetic strategies, on semiotic peculiarity and on materiality of a sign. These theoretical inputs foregrounded a major part of modern art aesthetics, focusing on signifying processes and material properties of artwork in the function of expressive semantic tools. It is not surprising that the modernist notion of medium in the sphere of high art coincided with its theoretical discourse in mass media culture. Only a few years apart two canonical texts defining medium were published. In Clement Greenberg's influential essay *Modernist Painting* from 1961 a medium of painting was defined as a self-critical enterprise, addressing only its inherent properties and focusing on the intrinsic qualities of the media of its creation. Marshall McLuhan, on the other hand, in his 1964 book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man,* declared that "medium is the message", implying that

the form of a message, be it printed, visual, musical, or else, impacts the specific content and determines the ways in which that message will be perceived. In both cases the form-content interference is revisited, stating that what is *said* cannot be separated from *how* it is said suggesting that the *nature* of the medium was more important than the content of the messages being shared.

The dominance of modernist problematic of medium was challenged in the 1960s with the criticism of pure art form ideology. Revival of hybrid and trans-media artistic possibilities emerged within Conceptual practices, Installation art and video – the shift which was later acknowledged by Rosalind Krauss's introduction of post-medium condition, by which any divisions based on media-specificity and on the intrinsic characteristics of a certain medium are dissolved. From this perspective, the problem of image was no longer primarily its unique and specific materiality within particular material conditions and historical lineage but its cultural and anthropological function and the social use. W. J. T. Mitchell suggests that there are no visual media at all and that all media are mixed media and so far any idea of a pure visual art or a pure medium, should be abandoned (2005a, 258- 260).

Mixing different types of media has had a long history, with the aim of either expanding the limitations of individual medium and its representational conventions, allowing more intensified human interaction with images or merely simplifying the process of creating, but always, in the end, by means of affecting imaginative, sensuous and sematic power of a (materialized) image. Transmediality and mixed media, targeting various senses and incorporating different techniques and formats, have indeed become a basic feature of contemporary visual culture. Digitisation and digitalization have accelerated convergence of media forms and made the notion of the medium-specificity meaningless and obsolete. This loss of media specificity was already anticipated by German theorist Friedrich Kittler (1987) when he observed that the general digitalization of information and channels erases the difference between individual media. Furthermore, digital technology can simulate appearances of other media and emulate the existent media forms. Modernist attentiveness to medium-specificity as the ontological denominator for individual uniqueness of image worlds (particularly in art), has been replaced by the notion of mediumlessness, which denotes integration of media in a total effect by erasing clear distinctions among them.

According to Nicholas Negroponte, medium is no longer the message in a digital world since the message can be rendered in many ways and can have "several embodiments automatically derivable from the same data" (1995, 71) without significantly affecting or changing the content. In abstract embodiments of digitalized content the source medium seems to be of no importance. It is the content that is privileged while the procedures of display are obscure. Digits, codes and programs operate in a non-optical and invisible realm and their object is dematerialized from the perspective of physical body labour. Thereby meaning does not so much lie within material objects and representations but more in the production and distribution of information.

McLuhan anticipated the role of computational machines before the digital age by noting that automated systems make information the crucial commodity while "the solid products are merely incidental to information movement" (*1964 [2001], 207*). In congruence with that, Les Levine wrote in his artist's statement for *Software* show: "The experience of seeing something first hand is no longer of value in a software controlled society, as anything seen through the media carries just as much energy as first hand experience [...] In the same way, most of the art that is produced today ends up as information about art" (Burnham 1970, 61). It has become naturalized that things are effectively *experienced* from their *images.* Levine's insight is here prognostic for the nature of contemporary mediated culture and points to the importance of transmission of events, images and other information, which are by means of mediation no less real than experiencing things in a real physical space or state. Furthermore, art as digital information along with other non-art images have been literally realized in the form of non-fungible tokens (NFT) which can be created, distributed and sold as intangible work, existing beyond the physical world.

Technology has always been closely intertwined with the changes in image production, perception and distribution. Innovative usage of tools and techniques, from human's skilled handling of brushstroke to robotic hand with a paint pen and a software program instructing it to follow a certain pattern (for example, a wall-climbing robot called *Vertwalker* created by artists Julian Adenauer and Michael Haas), expanded creative possibilities for image production. As Stanley Cavell argued for film, medium lies not within its physical material, but by the way in which it represents reality through an (art)form's ongoing re-invention

(Sinnerbrink 2011, 28). From this perspective, the process of remediation was a creative strategy of reinvigorating and refashioning image production, but also a way of problematizing and reassessing "distinctive power" of (an artistic) medium. Through the concept of *remediation*, Bolter and Grusin (2000), argued that all media constantly borrow from other media and thus refashion one another.[4] Photography and painting, for instance, have had a centuries long and close relationship informing each other, which can be traced back to light-borne images of *camera obscura* even before the invention of photography. Photographers attempted to imitate painting by reproducing the subject matter, by staging scenes, making use of soft focus, manipulation of lightning etc. In the 1960s and 70s, at the time when photography was massively used every day, Gerhard Richter began making his celeb photo paintings. He stated that he did not use "photography as a means to painting" but instead used "painting as a means to photography",[5] meaning that he was literally making photography with pictorial means.

We have recently reached the point when creative possibilities of AI generators (such as DALL-E 2) create results that can look either like a drawing, a painting or a photograph by use of text prompts and editing tools to modify images.[6] It has become almost impossible to tell the difference between a photo and a rendering as was recently shown *at a* prestigious Sony World Photography Award *competition 2023, where the prize was given to a* DALL-E generated black-and-white image, entitled *PSEUDOMNESIA: The Electrician.* The very title *etymologically implies a fake, something not genuine, as the idea behind the work was* to find out whether the art system is prepared for AI to enter. *Its author, a* Berlin-based Boris Eldagsen,

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4 Bolter's and Grusin's idea of remediation as "representation of one medium in another" (2000, 55) originates in McLuhan, who claimed that "the content of any medium is always another medium" (McLuhan 1964 [2001], 8). For Bolter and Grusin, "What is new about new media comes from the particular way in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenge of new media". (2000, 15)

5 Gerhard Richter in an interview with Rolf Schön (1972). Available at https://gerhard-richter.com/en/quotes/mediums-3/photography-16.

6 DALL·E is AI image generator which was introduced in 2021 by OpenAI. DALL·E 2, developed a year later, presents itself as an AI system that can create realistic images and art from a description in natural language. Its edit features enable changes within a generated or uploaded image, including creating large-scale images in any aspect ratio and, taking into account the image's existing visual elements, add new visual elements in the same style and transforming subject matter and content in new directions. Available at https://openai.com/dall-e-2.

rejected the award on the grounds that the awarded image was not a photography at all, but rather a promptography.[7] He stated that "AI images and photography should not compete with each other in an award like this. They are different entities"[8] (2023). Eldagsen's gesture did not only stir a hectic debate on AI and its ability to fake reality, events and even memory, on its ethics and aesthetics but also on the nature of creativity, on the way images are made and on how AI created content affects authorship.

2. "Cut and paste": Reshaping Imaginary Spaces

We use the Internet today not only as a place of communication but also as an endless archive with a free access to collections of digitized material, in which images, sounds, words and other information temporally and spatially overlap, spread across different platforms and are read one through another, thus producing transitory and changeable layers of meaning that are dependent on personal choices and search commands. On the web fragments of different visual backgrounds, eras and cultures are taken out of primary context and juxtaposed in a single space of display. Such decontextualizations and recombinations, by which objects are detached from the conditions of their authentic meaning so they can enter into new relations and produce new allusions, have become a paramount model of image-making. Our experience of the world is to a great extent prefigured by image-synthesized reality, what reciprocally conditions the way we handle the creation of images. Images are not so much created out of scratch and from internal visual worlds as they are generated from disparate fragments of amalgamated and coded visual tissue of culture. "Cut and paste" digital operations are, as far as the nature of creation is concerned, not new, but are rather technological advancements of much earliear creative processes. In order to better understand the implications of this model of creation, we might briefly look at its historical precursors at the core of modernist avantgarde. Collage and readymade turned out to be particularly inspiring not only for the future developments of art but also broadly, for imaginative and methodological approaches in the construction of image worlds. Both collage and

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7 The new term was introduced by Peruvian photographer Christian Vinces, and is being suggested for AI-generated photography.
8 Available at https://nancyfriedman.typepad.com/away_with_words/2023/04/word-of-the-week-promptography.html.

readymade transgressed artistic conventions and exceeded medium sin-
gularity by informing art with a wider range of aesthetic, intellectual and
technological possibilities and, along the way, changed the idea of what
art can be. Following from this, interpretation of art was reconstituted
by erasing the differences beetwen fine art and popular, mass media
images, between the specific and the quotidian (in the case of collage)
and by equating art and a common thing, the elevated and the profane
(in the case of readymade). Traditional artistic skill and the concept of
the creative act changed with the shift from pictorial expressivness of the
artist's hand to a gesture of selection, choice and reinterpretation. Specif-
ically, in the form of the readymade, as John Roberts observed, the link
between handcraft and skill was irreconcilably displaced, what further
led to linking artistic technique with general social technique, for which
increasing incorporation of technology and science into production is
characteristic (2007, 2-3). Regardless of the differences between collage
and readymade, they both operated on the same logic, by which elements
were extracted from the primary context and relocated, thus allowing
materials and meanings to gain new purpose. This hybridization of sign
systems opened up a strategy of recasting visual codes, which resulted
in previously unprecedented iconic and semantic confrontations, cre-
ating new tensions between reality and its representation.

Creative models of appropriation, decontextualization and recombina-
tion of accumulated visual material, by which images are permanently
tranformed into different ones, became aligned with the new postmod-
ernist visual experience. Craig Owens recognized in this experience the
"allegorical impulse", for which re-reading and synthesizing fragments
rather than creating anew were the core principles of creation. He writes:

> The allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them. He
> lays claim to the culturally significant, poses as its interpreter.
> And in his hands the image becomes something other. He does not
> restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured;
> allegory is not hermeneutics. Rather, he adds another meaning
> to the image (Owens, 1980, 69).

Postmodernist artists no loger regarded medium as embodiment of the
essence of an art form, but introduced the logic of pastiche and juxta-
posed disparate visual styles, motives and historical forms in order to

rediscover new possibilities. Leo Steinberg (1972) theorized this change in contemporary world with the concept of "the flatbed picture plane" which he compared to any receptor surface (from tabletops, studio floors to charts), on which objects are scattered and information may be received, printed, impressed, whether coherently or in confusion. For Steinberg this new orientation, "in which the painted surface is no longer the analogue of a visual experience of nature but of operational processes [...] is expressive of the most radical shift in the subject matter of art, the shift from nature to culture".

Operational processes embodied in a flatbed picture plane as a data-based space have been further conceptually employed in Deleuze's writings about (electronic) screen. For Deleuze screen is an opaque surface on which characters, objects and words are inscribed as data. He compares the *screen to instrument panel, printing* or *computing table,* on which

> the image is constantly being cut into another image, being printed through a visible mesh, sliding over other images in an "incessant stream of messages", the shot itself is less like an eye than an overloaded brain endlessly absorbing information: it is the brain-information, brain-city couple which replaces that of eye-Nature (Deleuze 1989, 266-7).

Deleuze in this passage envisions present computerized society, where images are always prefigured by existent representations and cultural paradigms inscribed in our imaginative space.[9] Postmodernist "allegorical procedures" are equally productive in contemporary digitized images, only that they have become accomplished by electronic technologies and smoother.[10]

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9 This image shift in postmodern cultural production, in which the model of representation is not so much reality as another image, was described by Fredric Jameson with Plato's allegory of the cave (1988, 20), which has proved to be even more pertinent in the context of the digital age and social media, when our experience is incessantly chained to the surfaces of the screens and framed by the black box.

10 Manovich observed that compositing in the 1990s differed from the logic of the postmodernist aesthetics of the 1980s especially in the aesthetics of smoothness and continuity. As he wrote; "Elements are now blended together, and boundaries erased rather than emphasized. Smooth composites, morphing, uninterrupted navigation in games – all these examples have in common one thing: where old media relied on montage, new media substitutes the aesthetics of continuity" (2001, 142-43).

A computer (here identified with artificial intelligence) is technological embodiment of immensive database brain, in which assembled recordings of reality are stored, while the eye is replaced with a mechanized vision – both, in the sense of a "cultural approach to seeing and thinking" (Burnett 1995, 8) and as a physiological mechanism. This represents a fundamental shift within visual sphere, as imagery can now be produced routinely by means of rendering algorithms and the use of various digital image processing tools.

3. Aesthetics of Algorithms and Analog-Digital Relations

The automated processes of creating images have become aligned with the way our screen-mediated vision is constructed. Ephemeral and fragmented aspects of looking that is adapting to incessant image flow are built into representational order of images. Flusser claimed that whoever is programmed by technical images lives and knows reality as a programmed context. Technical images have impacted different aspects of image-making. My interest here turns on technical, phenomenological and structural implications that represent a fundamental conceptual change for image-making, specifically on the conversion from a picture as material object to digital "immaterial" image coded by a finite amount of binary data. As Manovich observed, in the new logic of computer culture, authentic creation has been replaced by selection from a menu and a library of predefined elements, where the designer in the process of creating a new media object can choose among 3-D models and texture maps, contrasts and colours, sounds, background images, filters and transitions and so on (2001, 124).

The basic difference from physical rendering of images and material traces of analog media is that digital processes are imperceptible and unrepresentational. They cannot be seen nor their singular elements have representational properties in the sense of a value or quality that makes one element of a system different from other elements. Alex Galloway described digital visualisation as data, reduced to their purest form of mathematical values, that exist as number, and, as such, "data's primary mode of existence is not a visual one" (1998, 54), but operates according to instructions expressed in abstract concept of a binary code. In this case, it is filter direction that changes the *pixel* values of an image, a pixel now being a picture element and the basic unit of programma-

ble colour in a computer image.[11] In contrast to physical articulation of material signs in analog formulations, picture elements are here edited, remixed and manipulated by algorithms that on the basis of an input information generate new images. Algorithmic structures are defined as a set of instructions that manipulate information and are executed in a certain order. This process is infinitely mutable, yet nevertheless has a limited range due to a finite number of instruction sequences. Digital creations expand possibilities of recreating physical world experiences in virtual software environment, but at the other end of the spectrum, cultural norms and aesthetic decisions are already encoded in the software itself.[12]

Its infrastructure is essentially mathematical and computational, hence its creativity principle is foremost organizational, based on selection, modification and alteration of information. I will refer here to Deleuze, who, otherwise in the context of abstract painting, wrote about the code: "The code is inevitably cerebral and lacks sensation, the essential reality of the fall, that is, the direct action upon the nervous system". In digital context, constituents of an image are not material units of meaning which give sense to an image. This is contrary to analog images, where sensible qualities of materiality itself have a certain aspect of reality which is conveyed to us by our senses.

As Mark B. Hansen observed, contemporary digital media are incompatible with human sense perception since their computational operational processes are unfathomable and inaccessible for human sensory capacities (2015, 4). Mass data processing of artificial neuronal networks of AI is incomprehensible to human mind and ungraspable by human brain capacity. So, digital media have reopened the question of dichotomy between mind and matter. On the one hand, they distribute qualitative information to our senses through virtual code on screen, which separates our physical space from an uncapturable space that we inhabit virtually. There is no indexical trace. In this regard, perceiving the screen is

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11 The phenomenon of this atomization was observed by Gilles Deleuze already in the case of analog electronics when he wrote that "in television there is no space or image either, but only electronic lines" (2013, 331).
12 There is a number of web sites and web-based tutorials, which provide design tips about creating compelling images, set visual trends and offer design resources and graphical tools, by means of which more or less standardized aesthetic idiom of present day popular visual culture is introduced.

an experience of being *at a distance.* Screen images are always intangible and *behind* the screen, we do not approach them by corporeal interaction with another body/object but by embodied mind that encompasses our experience. Mind is the one that arouses the body while the body is catatonic and untouched by its environment nor can it touch and feel another matter. On the other hand, the emotional meaning of touch and physical connection was taken into account when designing electronic devices. Screen experience is now designed to enable a strange coexistence of proximity and distance with the use of haptic interfaces or touchscreens that bridge the gap between flatness of the opaque surface and perceptual depth of on-screen images as well as between sight and touch – only that tactile experience is now invariably uniform when we slide with our fingertips across a cool, smooth surfaces.

Another important aspect of change in the analog-digital relation concerns temporal and spatial dimensions of screen images and our phenomenal responses to them. In the case of static representations (artisanally concieved or technically produced) the image acts as a fixed cut-out that is grasped simultaneously. Here multiple perspectives and elements are presented at once, they are continuous and not divided (like in the case of digital images), while its temporal dimension is virtual, congruent with observational time and evolving concurrently with the movements of our eye across the image and among its separate parts. Conversely, decoding of electronic moving images is different. There are several still images constituting a moving image that we take in sequentially, what simulates the feeling of the image is appearing and disappearing in front of our eyes, just like life. As Jean Mitry noted for cinematic experience: "Whereas the classical arts propose to signify movement with the immobile, life with the inanimate, the cinema must express life with life itself" (1965, 453-454, in Sobchack 1992, 5). Digital technologies further enhance this "alive and real" feature of image experience. They allow for connection of different visual states, still and moving images can suddenly converge and transform one into another. Incorporation of time and movement expands and intensifies the reality effect by the sense of presence and brings a *living* dimension to the image itself. The multimedia approach of digitisation attempts to adapt the representation to all the perceptual and cognitive capabilities of mind. These images are not static representations but take on form of events and environments, which do not refer *to* reality but are perceived *as* reality. Com-

puter graphics has evolved to the stage at which we can no longer distinguish between synthesized 3D objects and scenes and the real world.[13] An interactive software application Photosynth, for example, allows us to "walk" through the depicted space, move around it and even explore off-screen space, as the frame is rendered arbitrary and the image-space changes, without privileging any particular point of view (Uricchio 2011, 29-30). According to Oliver Grau, the media strategy aims at producing "a feeling of immersion and presence (an impression suggestive of 'being there'), which can be enhanced further through interaction with apparently 'living' environments in 'real time'" (2003, 7). The screen image is capable of changing in real time, through sequential scanning that reflects changes in referent. As Manovich continues:

> What this means is that the image, in a traditional sense, no longer exists! And it is only by habit that we still refer to what we see on the real-time screen as "images". It is only because the scanning is fast enough and because, sometimes, referent remains static, that we see what looks like a static image. Yet, such an image is no longer the norm, but the exception of a more general, new kind of representation for which we do not yet have a term (Manovich 2001, 100).

Lisa Cartwright writes about researches in medical imaging, the goal of which is reproducing physiology in the virtual image, in which organs in the body must not only look realistic, but must behave realistically. She observes that the objective of post-visual era is reproducing behaviors and functions, not appearances, but through images nonetheless. This ontological rupture in the concept of the image crucially addresses the problem of the iconic difference, since it subverts the perceptual distance between an archetype/a referent and its representation/image. As Cartwright continues about behavioral simulation in medical imaging:

> This concept also entails integrating the user's senses, the apparatus, and the simulated body, into a system that allows for the

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13 The book *Digital Representation of the Real World: How to Capture, Model, and Render Visual Reality* provides a comprehensive insight in the most recent techniques that enable us to technologically recreate the world with a high degree of realism.

user to experience the sensations he or she generates in the vir-
tual body-object: the user must feel that he or she has pressed,
cut through, impacted the virtual body-object as if it were real
(Cartwright 1998, 428-9).

When image becomes a "living thing" and a representation is no longer
divorced from "a physical reality" – that can be even further surpassed
in such a way that "a body is the replica of a body of flesh and bone"
(as is the case with clones) – "the reign of the image comes to an end"
(Rancière 2010).
Drawing out implications of these observations, image, in a traditional
sense, is still associated with a material signifying practice within a
frame, which encloses and organizes our visual space. Within this frame-
work, image is used in the sense of a visible thing, a picture that refers
to pictorial content depicted, as well as to its imaginary space, and is
as such inseparable from the surface. However, digital media in this
respect break this rule because the digital format is dematerialized, in
a conventional sense of the word. For Edmond Couchot digital images,
created and stored as numerical data, are immaterial because there is
no longer a medium properly speaking (Deleuze 2013, 321). Intermin-
gling of media and multisensorial experience in excessively visual world
prevent us from "seeing" images in the light of their specific attributes.
The particularity of pictorial experience is cut loose and arbitrary when
the sight is no longer the superior sense in taking in the image but is
conflated with non-visual stimuli. The fact of media convergence does
not give us the tools to analyze structural and semantic constellations
produced by and within images. The analysis of material qualities of
the image, of pictorial relations and modalities that generate sensation
and meaning are more a matter of art-historical concern and suited to
traditional modes of representation.
Due to complex multisensorial impact, *image cannot be divided into* a set
of semantically meaningful units nor analysed from the perspective of
its semiological specificities. In this respect, multisensorial experience
empowers visuality, but also disintegrates it, since it disregards the lan-
guage of its "specific" field and its signifying practice as a distinct region
of visual enunciation. The new image practices are rather tackled in
the phenomenological framework of sensation and affect than from
the standpoint of analyzing their aesthetic and material aspects, which

open up to poetic and imagistic interpretations on their own autonomous basis.[14]

4. Changing Senses: Immagination Reconsidered

Digital imaging technologies do not only impact the conception of image worlds but also our reception of them by accomodating our visual sensibilities to mediated pictures. In his seminal study *What do Pictures Want,* W.J.T. Mitchell poses the question addressing the nature of vision: "To what extent is vision *not* a learned activity, but a genetically determined capacity, and a programmed set of automatisms that has to be activated at the right time, but that are not learned in anything like the way that human languages are learned?" (2005, 345.). Our daily relations with the bidimensional, flat screen-mediated reality influence our perception of the physical one and the ways we interact with it. Our adaption to rapid delivery and exchange of information in digital media affects our cognitive abilities and among other, significantly diminishes capacity of deep, complex thinking, our capacity to sustain focus and attention span as well as transforms how and to what we pay attention: "Technology tends to produce its own context, indeed its own environment. This environment has become the theater that both attracts our attention and structures it" (Doyle, Roda 2019, 3). Within this multifaceted arena, in which we can inhabit different digital environments simultaneously, the idea of attention itself has reshaped.[15] Once the environment itself becomes an agent of attention, attention is not so much created by that what makes the thing (visually) particular and distinct from its environment, but rather as something with the capacity to keep us alert, affect us and shape our sense of immersion (*Ibid.*). Attention significantly affects our visual thinking in the way how we detect, process and connect visual information with previous experiences and locate

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14 It should be noted, however, that the impact of digital aesthetics is present in other representational practices, namely in painting and photography. A particular "digital look" that emerges with the new skills in mastering of digital design techniques is apparent in glossy surfaces, slicky textures, pixelated surfaces, salt and pepper effects, luminous backgrounds with strong contrasts, in artificiality of highly descriptive depictions, curved and viscous forms in which opposites between human and inhuman, natural and artificial conflate.
15 Doyle and Roda summed up attention as the set of phenomena that control our experience of the world and considered it a selective process, that can be directed by selecting relevant information (2019, 9).

them within our existent "visual knowledge".

In the era of image overload and constant information alertness we have reached the point of a certain *visual extinction*, at which images are becoming invisible in their own overpresentness. This is not only a form of resistance to prevailing visual politics but also a perceptual and cognitive response to visual culture as excessive exploitation of visuality. In *L'Image ouverte*, Georges Didi-Huberman (2007) develops an important distinction between the concepts of the visible and the visual. If the first is that what is apparent, obvious, and seen on the surface of an image, the latter refers to something that is seen and responded to but not apparent. Huberman here observes that the superficiality of the visible occludes the visual, and in this way deprives the viewers of the imaginary and their own personal projection into the image.

Technological imaging devices have considerably democratized the spaces of image production, distribution and consumption. By manipulating input data and computer tools anyone can now be the author and not just consumer of images. In an interview after he won the prize for AI created photograph, Eldagsen commented: "For me, as an artist, AI generators are absolute freedom. It's like the tool I have always wanted. I was always working from my imagination as a photographer, and now the material I work with is knowledge".[16] Technologized vision of the world has indeed become synonymous with knowledge, what has reinforced assumptions, as Lisa Parks' notices, "that the world that is 'screened' is the one that is 'known'" (1998, 286). On the other side, high-tech services in image production in everyday use lead to their extreme secularization and commodification. Visual exchange platforms embody mainstream aesthetics of visual representations, which is based on conformity with social norms and offers experiences which are represented as a shared and common meaning.

Automated visual creativity poses a set of questions. For instance, what methods should be used when we perform image analysis, what is the historical lineage against which images should be measured and what are the parameters of visual assessment when the medium is no longer the question of relevance and the grounding of aesthetic perception? In the mesh of imagery (in digital and physical environments alike)

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16 Available at https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-my-ai-image-won-a-major-photography-competition/.

and from the viewpoint of antrophological and cultural terrain, where images are equalized, doubts are raised about what to choose and interpret. What is worth of our particular attention due to its transformative impulse and impact on our perceptual sensibilities and cognitive horizons, and what images should be archived and historicisized? And last but not the least, should digitally produced images, from the perspective of art history, establish its own distinct discipline (Bentkowska-Kafel 2015, 59; Vaughan 2005)?

Despite the fact that human creativity has long been divorced from handcraft and skill, our perception is still grounded in the body that has not yet adapted to the pace of digital revolution. According to Merleau-Ponty, the world is perceived within the lived-body and his phenomenological understanding of image (namely in the context of painting) stemmed from the manner in which this imprint of the world was expressed through the actions of the body, from a hand tracing the line, a brush stroke, colour patch on the surface, from all the presentational immediacy and material foundation, in the sense of physicality of process and matter itself. Materiality has its own imaginative spaces, and the meaning of images resides in poetics of matter and emerges from its diverse and indeterminate potentialities. The divorce of the ghost image from substance was, according to Baudrillard, signalled with the advent of hologram, which was, as he stated, a realization of "a perfect image and the end of imaginary" (1994, 106).

In the phenomenological framework of thought James Elkins wrote: "Seeing alters the thing that is seen and transforms the seer. Seeing is metamorphism, not mechanism" (1996, 11-12). In contemporary visual culture "thinking in images" (to employ Deleuzian phrase) and imagining in images is networked, and connected to an abstract entity of the digital code, to invariable operations of a huge, learning brain machine with incredible computational capacity but with the lack of human intuition. Digital context moves us away from anthropocentric framework and from centering the creativity process in the subject, and reorients to the creative knowledge of the machine, which evolves to think and make decisions. With new modes of image creation the input is human while the processing is largely done by a machine and its authoring algorithms, together with its statistical model of choice. To what extent do aesthetic implications of digital imagery and digital transformation of materiality affect human sensory experience and cognition is still

to be thoroughly elaborated. And above all, with abandoning the lived experience, imagination – a creative power that was tightly knit with the notion of being human – is to be reconsidered.

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Reviews / prikazi

IKONIČKI ANARHIZAM I ESTETIKA RUŽNOG

Vladimir Rismondo

Dubravko Mataković, umjetnička monografija
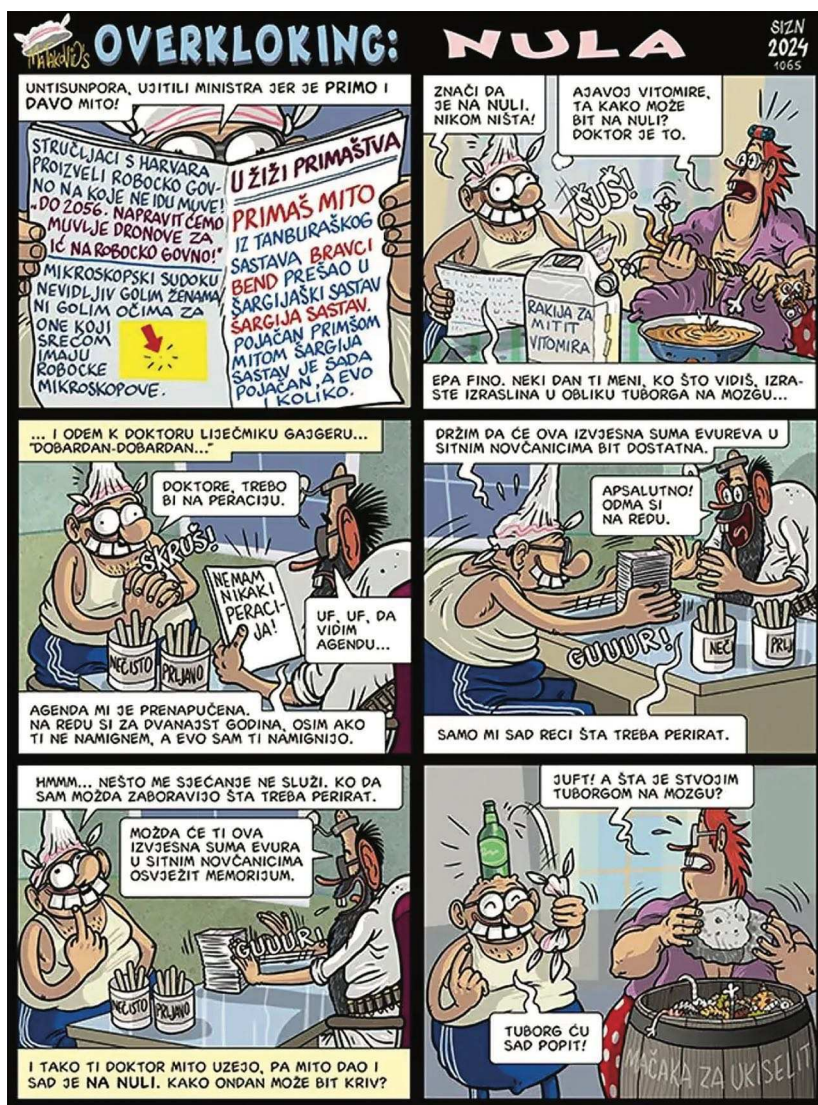Autori tekstova: Dubravko Mataković, Marta Banić, Goran Rem, Paula Rem, Boris Beck
i Leo Rafolt.
Urednici: Hrvoje Duvnjak i Leo Rafolt
Izdavač: Gradska knjižnica i čitaonica, Đakovo, 2023.

Pisanje umjetničke monografije (hrv. "jednopisa") ima obilježja sumarnog osvrta na nečiji umjetnički opus, ili sumiranja nekog umjetničkog fenomena, a, čini se, slično je portretnom fotografiranju. Pišemo li, dakle, o trenutačnom stanju ili kakvom pojedinačnom ciklusu ovog ili onog umjetnika, to je poput fotografiranja čovjeka kakav je sada pred našim fotografskim aparatom. Treba li, pak, monografski govoriti o svemu što je taj netko stvorio tijekom, recimo, četiri do pet desetljeća ustrajnog rada, stvari se donekle mijenjaju. Tada bi, naime, naše portretiranje moglo biti sličnije nizu fotografija napravljenih tijekom vremena. Vidjeli smo takve prikaze – umjetnici ih ponekad vole raditi – i svi bez razlike sadrže jednu zanimljivost: lice koje se u kraćim ili duljim nizovima ponavlja pred promatračevim očima napogled se mijenja, stari, ali i cijelo vrijeme sadrži jednu sebi istovjetnu crtu. Nazovimo je karakterom, a, ako je doista posrijedi karakter, mogli bismo ga imenovati, te na taj način reći kako se u tom slučaju radi o našoj spoznaji ili znanju o tom karakteru. Sve ovo vrijedi samo u slučaju da pretpostavljamo kako je karakter – a posebno onaj umjetnički – konstanta koja ima svoju bit i nit vo-

dilju. Zato su tekstovi u umjetničkim monografijama nerijetko potpisani od samo jedne osobe (autora monografije koji u naše ime pokušava detektirati bit umjetnikovog karaktera), a i jednako se često služe kronološkim ispitivanjem pojedinih faza umjetnikovog stvaralaštva, računajući valjda na činjenicu da se on razvija od ranih prema zrelijim fazama umjetnikove samospoznaje. Obje bismo postavke tradicionalno zamišljene monografije lako mogli preispitati, baš poput Igora Zidića koji je – pišući još 1984. godine opsežan predgovor zagrebačkoj izložbi Vjekoslava Paraća – ustvrdio kako se upravo u ranim radovima dugovječnih umjetnika razvide interesi njihove zrelosti. Drugi, ne manje značajan prigovor gore izrečenim tvrdnjama našli bismo u zapažanju kako se rijetko koji karakter – a umjetnički pogotovo – može svesti na samo jedno ključno obilježje ili bit, pa samim tim i na samo jedan pristup, čak i kronološki intoniranom monografskom tekstu.

I jedno i drugo netom spomenuto zapažanje mogu se shvatiti u vidu ključnih obilježja umjetničke monografije pod nazivom *Dubravko Mataković* u izdanju Gradske knjižnice i čitaonice Đakovo, a koja je 2023. godine brzo doži-

vjela već drugo izdanje. Doista, ovo golemo monografsko izdanje na 635 stranica – i sasvim u duhu Zidićevih tvrdnji – za početak pokazuje kako su temeljna ikonografska motivika i težnja apsurdu u naraciji, skupa s nekim osnovnim stilskim obilježjima, prisutni u Matakovićevom strip-opusu od samih početaka koje datiramo u sredinu 80-ih godina 20. st. Drugi, ne manje važan prigovor tradicionalno shvaćenim umjetničkim monografijama i ovdje, pak, otpada: tekstove u ovom izdanju potpisuje nekoliko autora,

osvjetljavajući autorovo djelovanje iz više perspektiva, što uključuje i samog Matakovića koji u prvom licu progovara o sebi samom.

Monografija je, dakako, posvećena cijenjenom vinkovačkom strip-crtaču i ilustratoru Dubravku Matakoviću (rođ. 1959.) koji je jedan od najistaknutijih predstavnika onoga što – uvjetno rečeno – nazivamo "trećom generacijom ili prijelazom iz treće u četvrtu generaciju hrvatskog stripa". Naime, poslužimo li se neformalnom, ali i jedinom dosad ustanovljenom kronologijom razvoja ovog medija, koju je priličo davno potpisao još Ljubomir Kljakić, jugoslavenski, a time većim dijelom i hrvatski strip grubo se mogu podijeliti na tri dosad evidentirane i bar približno valorizirane generacije. Prvu, koja traje od posljednje četvrtine 19. st. do II. Svjetskog rata obilježio je neponovljivi Andrija Maurović, mada se on pojavio kasno, te nastavio stvarati i nakon kronoloških granica prve generacije. Druga generacija nastala je, pak, nakon rata i trajala sve do 70-ih godina 20. st., te je – bar u hrvatskom kontekstu listova "Kerempuh" i "Plavi Vjesnik" – iznjedrila autore poput Borivoja Dovnikovića, Vladimira Delača, te posebno Julesa Radilovića ili Ivice Bednjanca.

Treću generaciju hrvatskog stripa datiramo pojavom skupine tada, recimo tako, alternativnih strip-crtača okupljenih oko grupe "Novi kvadrat"; Igor Kordej, Mirko Ilić, Krešimir Zimonić, Radovan Devlić i dr. okupili su se oko omladinskog lista "Polet" koji je od 1976. godine ponovo počeo izlaziti, te je u uredničkom razdoblju Pere Kvesića postao vjesnikom korijenitih društvenih promjena koje će u narednom desetljeću zahvatiti hrvatsko i jugoslavensko društvo. Tu treću generaciju mogli bismo – još jednom uvjetno i sasvim arbitrarno – ograničiti sredinom ili čak krajem 90-ih godina 20. st., a u njezine dosege svakako spada *underground* grupa strip-stvaralaca ZZOT (osn. 1984.). Četvrtu, hipotetičku i zasad još uvijek neistraženu generaciju hrvatskog stripa začeli su autori uglavnom rođeni u drugoj polovini 60-ih godina 20. st., a, osim internacionalno etabliranog Danijela Žeželja (rođ. 1966.), sačinjavali bi je i autori formata Edvina Biukovića (1969-1999.) koji je nažalost umro tragično i prerano, Gorana Parlova (rođ. 1967.), Gorana Sudžuke (rođ. 1969.), odnosno, uz nekoliko drugih autora, skupine okupljene oko alternativne platforme i strip-kolektiva „Komikaze".

Dubravko Mataković javlja se, dakle, kao strip-crtač sredinom 80-ih godina 20. st, a prilično je aktivan i danas, te njegove uvijek nove strip-table pod nazivom "Overkloking" zainteresirani čitatelj može pronaći na web-domeni net.hr. Ta dugovječnost – koja početke Matakovićevog strip-opusa smješta prije ravno četiri desetljeća – autora načelno kronološki, stilski, ali i narativno ipak pretežno pozicionira u treću generaciju hrvatskog stripa koja je obilježena pobunom protiv medijskih i političkih autoriteta, te alternativnošću izraza. Nemoguće je, naime, ne primijetiti dva ključna konteksta u koja smještamo to stvaralaštvo. Prvo, Mataković se početno javlja u omladinskim listovima – prije svih "Studentskom listu" i "Poletu" – koji su (iako su bili visokotiražna službena glasila omladinskih organizacija) u okolnostima tada već vidljive dezintegracije jugoslavenskog političkog organizma imali u najmanju ruku subverzivnu reputaciju. Drugo, što i sam Dubravko Mataković nerijetko spominje (a u jed-

nom od osobnih iskaza u monografiji izrijekom ističe), prvi crtački uzor u smislu stripa bio mu je Jean-Marc Reiser (1941-1983.). Reiser je, opet, bio francuski strip-autor izrazito anti-zapadnjački, anarhistički, anti-autoritarnih i općenito krajnje ljevičarskih stavova, koji je još od 1960. godine sudjelovao u radu *underground* mjesečnika "Hara-kiri", preteče kasnije mnogo poznatijeg časopisa "Charlie Hebdo". Hrvatska je publika već od kasnih 70-ih godina upravo na stranicama "Poleta" mogla uživati u Reiserovim geg-stripovima. Oni su u pravilu bili neopterećeni tekstom, ali su uz pomoć skicoznog i vrlo dopadljivog crteža razorno djelovali spram svih konvencionalnih vrijednosti tzv. zapadne civilizacije.

Reiserovski ikonični anarhizam bez teksta, njegova "estetika ružnog" i potreba da se naruga baš svakoj etabliranoj vrijednosti, kod Matakovića su pali na plodno tlo, odnosno dotaknuli su njegov očito urođeni smisao za naraciju utemeljenu na groteski, apsurdu, zaraznom humoru i pukoj potrebi za igrom. Dodamo li tome kako autorova višedesetljetna stilska evolucija na ovaj ili onaj način sve više podsjeća na utjecaj jednog drugog, u ondašnjim jugoslavenskim i hrvatskim okvirima neobično popularnog autora – Talijana Benita Jacovittija (1923-1997.) – što je posebno vidljivo u Matakovićevom karakterističnom *horror vacui* odnosu prema ispunjenosti kadra, te relaciji teksta i slike, zaokružit ćemo ne samo polazišta autorove strip-estetike već i, čini nam se, njezina ishodišta.

O toj estetici će u monografiji *Dubravko Mataković* progovoriti sam autor kojem je knjiga posvećena, ali i još pet potpisnika tekstova: Marta Banić, Goran Rem, Paula Rem, Boris Beck, i Leo Rafolt. S izuzetkom Lea Rafolta koji

pogovorno prilaže nešto duži i sintetički tekst, svi ostali autori namjerno se ograničavaju na više kraćih esejističkih iskaza o pojedinim aspektima Matakovićevog opusa. Marta Banić će tako preispitati što je to "underground – stvaralaštvo", ali i, recimo, značenje (više ili manje nepostojeće) praznine u Matakovićevom radu. Boris Beck će se, opet, poduhvatiti jezičnih i ikoničnih repera u prostoru Matakovićevog stripa – kao što su onomatopeja ili sveprisutni motivi gaća i čudovišnosti – dok će Goran i Paula Rem propitivati što Matakoviću znače tranzicija, nacionalizam, Mickey Mouse, rat, politika, obitelj, stereotipi, itd., te kako se sve to reflektira u njegovom stripu. Na ovome mjestu nemoguće nam je čak i popisati sve teme kojih su se dotaknuli autori tekstova, ali vrijedi zabilježiti kako njihovi esejistički i nimalo slučajno poredani prilozi razbijaju opsežno redanje Matakovićevih stripova prema kriteriju pojavljivanja glavnih likova u pojedinim etapama stvaralaštva, gdje su stripovi uglavnom doneseni onoliko cjelovito koliko je to uopće bilo moguće.

Pa ipak, uza sve poštovanje prema spomenutim potpisnicima tekstova, čini nam se kako najvrednijim prilogom monografski otisnutim Matakovićevim stripovima možemo smatrati upravo njegove vlastite iskaze koji pojedine probleme osvjetljavaju u prvom licu jednine. Zato vjerojatno nećemo pogriješiti naglasimo li kako je u tom smislu besmrtan već prvi Matakovićev prilog koji kazuje kako i zašto se uopće počeo baviti stripom. Naime, njegov iskaz podsjetio nas je na poznati dokumentarni film posvećen rodonačelniku američkog "underground – stripa" Robertu Crumbu ("Crumb", red. Terry Zwigoff, Superior Pict., 1994.); u tom filmu tadašnji eminentni likovni kriti-

čar magazina "Time" i estetičar Robert Hughes govori o Crumbu kao ni manje ni više nego Brueghelu našeg vremena, da bi se nekoliko kadrova nakon toga sam Crumb popeo na leđa svojoj supruzi i, luđački se smijući, dao nositi prostorom eminentne galerije u kojoj je upravo otvarao izložbu. Crumb se i inače volio ženama doslovno i metaforički penjati na leđa, a imao je i sasvim specifične kriterije ženske ljepote (ne bez svake sličnosti s onima Dubravka Matakovića), što ga nije učinilo omiljenim među feminističkim kritičarkama. No, kao da mu ni to nije bilo dovoljno, dodatno je objavio autokarikaturu u kojoj autobiografski kaže: "Broigul I ain't... Let's face it... machine-...age artist... no good..." ("Broigul" je stvarno napisao tako!)

Na isti način bismo mogli beskrajno teoretizirati o ontološkim, fenomenološkim ili egzistencijalističkim razlozima nastanka Matakovićevog strip-opusa – te njegovoj utemeljenosti u kontekstu političkog i općenito društvenog prostora "Novog vala" ili, ako baš hoćemo, dezintegracije Jugoslavije – ali sam autor nas je već u startu demantirao. Napisao je, naime, posve u Crumbovom stilu, kako se njegova sklonost stripu inicijalno razvijala na predavanjima iz kolegija Povijest umjetnosti koja je na zagrebačkoj Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti držao legendarni, te danas pokojni teoretičar i slikar Matko Peić. Taj vrhunski intelektualac i nepatvoreni hedonist nije uvijek najbolje odgovarao budućim umjetnicima kakvi su bili Dubravko Mataković i njegov kolega Ozren Feller; Mataković i Feller su zato jedan drugom za vrijeme predavanja crtali strip-pošalice, te, kako Mataković zapisuje, na taj način konačno izazvali Peićev bijes. Tko god je imao sreću biti Peićev student zna

što je to moglo značiti. Na isti su način neprocjenjivo važna Matakovićeva sjećanja na prve stripove s Akademije (neformalno nacrtane masnim pastelama na velikim B1 formatima hammer-papira), a koje je kao vrijednost prepoznao danas također pokojni velikan naše grafike Miroslav Šutej, inzistirajući da ih mladi crtač izloži uz ostale dijelove diplomskog rada.

Takvih Matakovićevih izvornih sjećanja ima doista mnogo, te će svakako poslužiti nekim budućim kroničarima hrvatskog stripa. Jedna od takvih kroničarki svakako bi mogla biti i Marta Banić, autorica nekoliko izvanredno napisanih eseja u monografiji *Dubravko Mataković*, a koja je prije točno deset godina na Filozofskom fakultetu u Zagrebu sastavila diplomsku radnju na temu ovog strip-autora (Banić, M.: "Strip opus Dubravka Matakovića", diplomski rad, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, Zagreb, 2014.). Njezin tadašnji tekst do danas je – ili bar do pojave Matakovićeve monografije – ostao najiscrpniji, te, koliko nam je poznato, zapravo jedina sinteza dotad poznatog Matakovićevog stvaralaštva. Zašto je tome tako? Zašto je ovaj nedvojbeno plodan, iznimno duhovit i kreativan autor na neki način ostao zarobljen u trokutu između Vinkovaca (gdje živi), osječke Akademije za umjetnost i kulturu (gdje u zvanju izvanrednog profesora još uvijek predaje kolegije vezane uz strip) i nikako prevelike skupine lokalno pozicioniranih obožavatelja? Jedan od odgovora bez sumnje leži u činjenici da je – zbog opsežne i specifične upotrebe jezika, a posebno lokalizama – Matakovićeve stripove (za razliku od, recimo, onih Jean-Marca Reisera) nemoguće prevesti na bilo koji jezik osim onog kojim su pisani. Doduše, kako je sam autor svojedobno izjavio,

navodno je jedna jedina njegova strip-tabla prevedena na poljski jezik, ali to je zapravo na mnogo načina gore nego da nije prevedena nijedna. Drugi odgovor možda leži i u činjenici da je Dubravko Mataković diplomirao 1983. godine na zagrebačkoj Akademiji likovnih umjetnosti, i to u klasi Ante Kuduza. Ovo, opet, u prijevodu znači da je imao privilegiju crtati vlastite proto-stripove na Pejićevim predavanjima povijesti umjetnosti, ali su ga u ono doba tijekom školovanja i isključivo podučavali kako postati umjetnikom, a ne promotorom koji će od vlastitih ostvarenja i živjeti. Imajući na uvid što je sve Mataković ipak uspio publicirati (opsežan popis objavljenih radova nalazi se na kraju monografije), te poznavajući situaciju s generacijama ondašnjih diplomanata iste ustanove, koji su potonuli u anonimnost restauratorskih zavoda ili bespuća zbiljnosti hrvatskog školstva, valja zaključiti kako je Mataković nekako uspio pokazati zavidnu dozu poslovnog duha, koja je nespojiva s mjestom i vremenom vlastitog diplomiranja.

S treće strane valja, pak, priznati da – za razliku od nekih članova "Novog kvadrata", a pogotovo Joška Marušića – Mataković svoje strip-junake nikada nije uspio filmski pokrenuti (osim jednog relativno neuspješnog pokušaja), te ih tako pretočiti u medij animacije koji bi ga putem festivalskih projekcija učinio internacionalno prepoznatljivijim. Konačno, naglašavajući specifičnosti svojeg autorskog izričaja, Mataković, čini se, nikada nije došao u priliku raditi za velike svjetske izdavačke kuće, pa se, primjerice, poput Mirka Ilića kao ilustrator otisnuti u Sjedinjene Američke Države, te ondje izrađivati naslovnice za utjecajni "Time Magazine". Ili, nije mu uspjelo – slično

Igoru Kordeju – za francuskog izdavača publicirati strip-album poput Kordejevog "Les cinq saisons – Automne" (izd. Dargaud, 1990.); konkretni Kordejev album je uredbom Ministarstva kulture proglašen djelom od iznimnog kulturnog značaja za francusku naciju, ali razlog za to ležao je koliko u specifičnostima Kordejevog crteža i fantastičkom scenariju Nenada Mikalačkog Djanga, toliko i u moći najstarijeg, te gotovo najvećeg francuskog strip-izdavača Dargaud. Umjesto takvih iskoraka Dubravko Mataković bio je frekventno prisutan u "Studentskom listu", "Poletu", "Nedjeljnoj Dalmaciji", "Smibu", ili u posljednje vrijeme na portalu net.hr, a to su sve bili ili jesu potrošni i kratkotrajni, te prije svega lokalno ograničeni listovi, odnosno medijski formati od kojih su – bez obzira na povremeno visok tiraž i čitanost – mnogi u međuvremenu nestali.

Zaključno nam valja kazati kako monografija *Dubravko Mataković* predstavlja važan doprinos očuvanju kulture stripa u Hrvatskoj. Ta se kultura, naime, od vremena Matakovićevog stasavanja u strip-autora dramatično promijenila, a sam medij – u Jugoslaviji i Hrvatskoj originalno uglavljen u tjedna tiskana, a ne digitalna ili albumska izdanja, što je podrazumijevalo i stanovitu ritualnost njegove konzumacije – izgubio je svoj nekadašnji značaj kao važno obilježje masovne kulture na ovim prostorima. O toj promjeni klime progovorit će i sam Mataković dajući još 2010. godine intervju Saši Lukiću: "Bio sam klinac u vrijeme kada je strip bio važan medij, bio je bolji izbor stripova i uopće, bilo ga je puno više. Svi su brijali na stripove. Sve je to zajedno utjecalo na mene, sva ta čarolija stripa. Uvijek sam isticao Jacovittija kao autora koji je utjecao na mene, njega sam prvog

primijetio, poslije se pojavio Alan Ford, ali tada sam već imao izgrađen ukus. Prvi je bio taj Koko Bill, pa Umpah Pah, Asterix… Danas ne možete na kioscima naći takve stripove, tog kvaliteta, a da su suvremeni, većinom vidim smeće. Godinama sam ovdje usamljen, nisam u doticaju s kolegama, apsolutno nemam pojma što tko radi. Osim Zimonića, s njim sam u kontaktu, dolazi u Vinkovce, surađujemo. Mislim da je Hrvatska, što se tiče stripa, dala što je imala. Strip nije više tako zanimljiv i teško se netko opredjeljuje za takav posao. Ne mislim pri tome na gastarbajtere već na originalni, autorski strip.” (http://www.sbperiskop.net/objave/strip-intervju-dubravko-matakovic-autor-kultnog-overklokinga, 19.10.2024, 20:00).

Upravo zato je bilo važno publicirati monografiju koja je u cijelosti posvećena stripu, mada bismo iz sasvim profesionalnih razloga voljeli vidjeti i jedno drugo slično izdanje koje sumira Matakovićev rad kao grafičara (makar u akademskim i neposrednim postakademskim počecima), ilustratora, i scenografa, pa čak i kao frontmana vinkovačke rock-grupe Septica koja, i to u najmanju ruku zbog specifičnih tekstova na slavonskim (i donekle hrvatskim) prostorima također ima kultni status. No, kako god postavili stvari, na kraju nam valja odgovoriti na pitanje koje smo postavili pri početku ovog teksta, te hipotetički zamisliti monografski portret karaktera Dubravka Matakovića. Kako taj portret mora biti zbir svih pojedinačnih Matakovićevih portreta nastalih tijekom četiri stvaralačka desetljeća, predlažemo da ga sačinimo kao amalgam ikoničkih autorovih strip junaka – Malog Ivice i njegove majke

nerotkinje Veresije, Protmana, Gliština Gmižića, obitelji Škakljivdžija (a posebno oca Vitomira u trenucima religiozne adoracije slavonske rakije, s pripadajućim posljedicama), i mnogih drugih – te promotrimo što svi oni imaju zajedničko. Naime, čini nam se kako se iza tog zaraznog humora protkanog apsurdima, i iza društvene ili političke kritike, pa i iza jacovittijevske popunjenosti kadra koja ponekad jako otežava čitanje Matakovićevih stripova (ali ih i čini dodatno izazovnima), dakle iza svega toga, vjerujemo, skriva se jedan zajednički, beskrajno dobroćudan karakter i vjeran prijatelj svih svojih čitatelja. A ako netko smatra da je Matakovićev strip ponegdje pretjeran, politički nekorektan (recimo kad onaj isti Vitomir Škakljivdžija vodi malog sina Ikana na dječju “Paradu ponosa”, a dječica u povorci pjevaju “Išle majke s kolodvora, dija – dija – gej!!!”) pa čak i degutantan, valja ga podsjetiti na relativno nedavnu izjavu poznatog britanskog komičara Rickyja Gervaisa, datu u vidu komentara danas sveprožimajuće političke korektnosti: “Pa što ako mi u podzemnoj željeznici padne na pamet gurnuti nekoga pod vlak? To je samo prolazna misao, čak protkana sumanutošću situacije i zato mi je smiješna… Ali, važnije od toga, uz pomoć te maštarije, i humora vezanog uz nju, ja se oslobađam mogućnosti da nekoga stvarno gurnem pod vlak. Treba se čuvati onih uvijek ozbiljnih, ideološki ispravnih ljudi koji nas pod krinkom političke korektnosti žele lišiti humora, kakav god on bio… oni su u stanju ne zamišljati, već učiniti stvarno svašta”.

Guidelines for Authors

1. Paper Authenticity

The journal *New Theories* will only publish original papers. By sending a paper, the author/s of the paper guarantee/s to the Academy of Arts and Culture: 1) the right to first publishing of the sent manuscript in printed or electronic (*online*) form; 2) the right to unlimited and unrestricted reprinting and re-issuing according to the needs of the Academy of Arts and Culture as long as new releases are in the open access; 3) originality and authenticity of the paper the author takes responsibility for, that is, guarantees that the whole manuscript or some of its parts are not plagiarised, and that in the case of using special elements of the third party, such as photographic images and schematics, they acquired all necessary rights to use them in the published version of their research paper; 4) that during the review process the paper was not sent to other journals and/or books of proceedings with the intention of being published. However, reprints of papers that were previously published elsewhere, with a clear reference to the place where it was first published, can be published in the journal. The Editorial Board will gladly accept and consider all received papers and send them into the review process. Still, it retains the right to return the paper to its authors for a revision, to alter the paper's category and to refuse to publish the received paper. Since the Editorial Board of the journal *New Theories* promotes academic honesty, the Editorial Board actively participates in the prevention of falsified content and authorship and repeated publishing. All received papers are to be thoroughly examined and analysed by the available software tools such as *CrossCheck* and *PlagScan*. If the Editorial Board suspects fraud, it will refuse to publish the paper, and it will take measures of caution.

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Under Art. 7. para. 1 and Art. 8. para 2. of the Personal Data Protection Act (Official Gazette No. 103/03, 118/06, 41/08, 130/11, 106/12 – consolidated text), Academy of Arts and Culture request consent for (1) processing personal data for submission, processing and publishing papers in the journal *New Theories*, (2) carrying out the review process, (3) and archiving material. Information regarding the necessity of this act is available in the document titled General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC), available here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj.

By sending a paper to the journal *New Theories*, the author of the paper (1) confirms that they understand the General Data Protection Regulation act, (2) confirms that the

Editorial Board properly ensured that they (author/s) are familiar with their rights in respect to the General Data Protection Regulation act, and (3) is granting consent to the Academy of Arts and Culture for (3.1) processing personal data for the purpose of submission, processing and publishing papers in the journal *New Theories*, (3.2) carrying out the review process, and (3.3) archiving material. The personal data includes full name and surname, institution or home address, e-mail address and other miscellaneous data provided through paper submission.

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4. Paper Submission

4.1. Sending a Paper
Papers should be sent via e-mail either to the Editor-in-Chief (kresimirpurgar@gmail.com) or deputy editors (lrafolt@gmail.com or dpapo@ffos.hr); reviews should be sent to dvuger@gmail.com.

The Editorial Board of the journal *New Theories* requests no fee to be paid for accepting or publishing the paper, as well as for no other possible service in the publishing process.

4.2. Paper Length
Length of a paper should be between 5 and 8 thousand words.

4.3. Formatting a Paper
The paper should be written in the *Times New Roman* font, font size 12 pt, line spacing 1,5. In addition to the paper, photos, image printouts, tables and graphs, which should all contain a description and ordinal number, are accepted.

Papers written in Croatian, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Czech are accepted.

I. Arrangement of a Paper

- Title of the paper
- Name and surname of the author(s)
- Name and address (street and city) of the institution at which the author is employed or the author's private address
- E-mail address of the author(s)
- A summary of the paper of the length between 400 and 500 words in the language in

which the paper is written, as well as a summary in English
- Key words (up to 10 words) in the language in which the paper is written, as well as key words in the language in which the paper is written and English
- The paper should be written in sequence and without indentations
- Chapters (from introduction to the reference list) should be marked with Arabic numerals; chapter titles should be written in bold, and subchapter titles should be written in italics
- Notes in the paper should be numbered with Arabic numerals and enclosed at the bottom of the page (*footnotes*)
- A bibliography which should include doi identificators for those articles which have one (for rules of quoting and citing literature, see chapter II).

The Editors-in-Chief will provide editing and proofreading of texts.

II. Quoting and Citing Literature

Used literature and sources should be stated in the body of the text according to the Author-Date version proposed in the 17th edition of *Chicago Manual of Style*. Authors are also allowed to use footnotes, but they should be used only for important remarks, and by no means for presenting new theoretical concepts or additional explanations. If the contents of a footnote require data regarding the source, the reference must be written down using the proposed citation style.

In the section that follows, examples of reference list entries and in-text citations according to the Author-Date version of *Chicago Manual of Style* (https://www.chicag-omanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html) are presented.

a) Book
Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)
Grazer, Brian, and Charles Fishman. 2015. *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life.* New York: Simon & Schuster.
Smith, Zadie. 2016. *Swing Time*. New York: Penguin Press.

In-text citations
(Grazer and Fishman 2015, 12)
(Smith 2016, 315–16)

b) Chapter or other part of an edited book
In the reference list, include the page range for the chapter or part. In the text, cite specific pages.

Reference list entry
Thoreau, Henry David. 2016. "Walking." In *The Making of the American Essay*, edited by John D'Agata, 167–95. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation
(Thoreau 2016, 177–78)

In some cases, you may want to cite the collection as a whole instead.

Reference list entry
D'Agata, John, ed. 2016. *The Making of the American Essay*. Minneapolis: Graywolf Press.

In-text citation
(D'Agata 2016, 177–78)
c) Translated book
Reference list entry
Lahiri, Jhumpa. 2016. *In Other Words*. Translated by Ann Goldstein. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

In-text citation
(Lahiri 2016, 146)

d) E-book

For books consulted online, include a URL or the name of the database in the reference list entry. For other types of e-books, name the format. If no fixed page numbers are available, cite a section title or a chapter or other number in the text, if any (or simply omit).

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)
Austen, Jane. 2007. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Penguin Classics. Kindle.
Borel, Brooke. 2016. *The Chicago Guide to Fact-Checking*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ProQuest Ebrary.
Kurland, Philip B., and Ralph Lerner, eds. 1987. *The Founders' Constitution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/.
Melville, Herman. 1851. *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*. New York: Harper & Brothers. http://mel.hofstra.edu/moby-dick-the-whale-proofs.html.

In-text citations
(Austen 2007, chap. 3)
(Borel 2016, 92)
(Kurland and Lerner 1987, chap. 10, doc. 19)
(Melville 1851, 627)

e) Journal article

In the reference list, include the page range for the whole article. In the text, cite specific page numbers. For articles consulted online, include a URL or the name of the database in the reference list entry. Many journal articles list a DOI (Digital Object Identifier). A DOI forms a permanent URL that begins https://doi.org/. This URL is preferable to the URL that appears in your browser's address bar.

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Keng, Shao-Hsun, Chun-Hung Lin, and Peter F. Orazem. 2017. "Expanding College Access in Taiwan, 1978–2014: Effects on Graduate Quality and Income Inequality." *Journal of Human Capital* 11, no. 1 (Spring): 1–34. https://doi.org/10.1086/690235.

LaSalle, Peter. 2017. "Conundrum: A Story about Reading." *New England Review* 38 (1): 95–109. Project MUSE.

Satterfield, Susan. 2016. "Livy and the *Pax Deum.*" *Classical Philology* 111, no. 2 (April): 165–76.

In-text citations

(Keng, Lin, and Orazem 2017, 9–10)
(LaSalle 2017, 95)
(Satterfield 2016, 170)

Journal articles often list many authors, especially in the sciences. If there are four or more authors, list up to ten in the reference list; in the text, list only the first, followed by *et al.* ("and others"). For more than ten authors (not shown here), list the first seven in the reference list, followed by et al.

Reference list entry

Bay, Rachael A., Noah Rose, Rowan Barrett, Louis Bernatchez, Cameron K. Ghalambor, Jesse R. Lasky, Rachel B. Brem, Stephen R. Palumbi, and Peter Ralph. 2017. "Predicting Responses to Contemporary Environmental Change Using Evolutionary Response Architectures." *American Naturalist* 189, no. 5 (May): 463–73. https://doi.org/10.1086/691233.

In-text citation

(Bay et al. 2017, 465)

f) News or magazine article

Articles from newspapers or news sites, magazines, blogs, and the like are cited similarly. In the reference list, it can be helpful to repeat the year with sources that are cited also by month and day. Page numbers, if any, can be cited in the text but are omitted from a reference list entry. If you consulted the article online, include a URL or the name of the database.

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Manjoo, Farhad. 2017. "Snap Makes a Bet on the Cultural Supremacy of the Camera." *New York Times*, March 8, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/technology/snap-makes-a-bet-on-the-cultural-supremacy-of-the-camera.html.

Mead, Rebecca. 2017. "The Prophet of Dystopia." *New Yorker*, April 17, 2017.

Pai, Tanya. 2017. "The Squishy, Sugary History of Peeps." *Vox*, April 11, 2017. http://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/11/15209084/peeps-easter.

Pegoraro, Rob. 2007. "Apple's iPhone Is Sleek, Smart and Simple." *Washington Post*, July 5, 2007. LexisNexis Academic.

In-text citation
(Manjoo 2017)
(Mead 2017, 43)
(Pai 2017)
(Pegoraro 2007)

Readers' comments are cited in the text but omitted from a reference list.

In-text citation
(Eduardo B [Los Angeles], March 9, 2017, comment on Manjoo 2017)

g) Book review
Reference list entry
Kakutani, Michiko. 2016. "Friendship Takes a Path That Diverges." Review of *Swing Time*, by Zadie Smith. *New York Times*, November 7, 2016.

In-text citation
(Kakutani 2016)

h) Interview
Reference list entry
Stamper, Kory. 2017. "From 'F-Bomb' to 'Photobomb,' How the Dictionary Keeps Up with English." Interview by Terry Gross. *Fresh Air*, NPR, April 19, 2017. Audio, 35:25. http://www.npr.org/2017/04/19/524618639/from-f-bomb-to-photobomb-how-the-dictionary-keeps-up-with-english.

In-text citation
(Stamper 2017)

i) Thesis or dissertation
Reference list entry
Rutz, Cynthia Lillian. 2013. "*King Lear* and Its Folktale Analogues." PhD diss., University of Chicago.
In-text citation
(Rutz 2013, 99–100)

j) Website content
It is often sufficient simply to describe web pages and other website content in the text ("As of May 1, 2017, Yale's home page listed . . ."). If a more formal citation is needed, it may be styled like the examples below. For a source that does not list a date of publication or revision, use *n.d.* (for "no date") in place of the year and include an access date.

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)
Bouman, Katie. 2016. "How to Take a Picture of a Black Hole." Filmed November 2016 at TEDx BeaconStreet, Brookline, MA. Video, 12:51. https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_bouman_what_does_a_black_hole_look_like.
Google. 2017. "Privacy Policy." Privacy & Terms. Last modified April 17, 2017. https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/.
Yale University. n.d. "About Yale: Yale Facts." Accessed May 1, 2017. https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts.

In-text citations
(Bouman 2016)
(Google 2017)
(Yale University, n.d.)

k) Social media content

Citations of content shared through social media can usually be limited to the text (as in the first example below). If a more formal citation is needed, a reference list entry may be appropriate. In place of a title, quote up to the first 160 characters of the post. Comments are cited in reference to the original post.

Text
Conan O'Brien's tweet was characteristically deadpan: "In honor of Earth Day, I'm recycling my tweets" (@ConanOBrien, April 22, 2015).

Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)
Chicago Manual of Style. 2015. "Is the world ready for singular they? We thought so back in 1993." Facebook, April 17, 2015. https://www.facebook.com/ChicagoManual/posts/10152906193679151.
Souza, Pete (@petesouza). 2016. "President Obama bids farewell to President Xi of China at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit." Instagram photo, April 1, 2016. https://www.instagram.com/p/BDrmfXTtNCt/.

In-text citations
(Chicago Manual of Style 2015)
(Souza 2016)
(Michele Truty, April 17, 2015, 1:09 p.m., comment on Chicago Manual of Style 2015)

l) Personal communication

Personal communications, including email and text messages and direct messages sent through social media, are usually cited in the text only; they are rarely included in a reference list.

In-text citation
(Sam Gomez, Facebook message to author, August 1, 2017)

5. Review Process and Paper Categorization

Papers are subject to blind peer review according to the categorisation of corresponding scientific fields. For example, categorisation for the humanities is as follows:

1) Original scientific paper
2) Preliminary communication
3) Review article
4) Professional paper

The first three categories are scientific, and the fourth category is professional.

Each paper is subject to at least two peer reviews. If the opinions of the reviewers on the categorisation of the paper are divided, the Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Editors will decide on the final evaluation of the paper, whereby they may consult a third peer reviewer.

By submitting their papers for print in the journal *New Theories*, the authors agree that their papers are also published in the *online* version of the journal.

The end of the so-called belief in the power of images is not the end of philosophy and art in line with the triumphant march of the technoscientific "world picture", which will accelerate as soon quantum computers start operating. After all, the fundamental questions of today are not decided by philosophers, theologians, or artists, but only by the triad of astrophysics, cosmology, and biogenetics. This means that thinking in speculative or reflexive manner having an image as its object must become transversal and experimental in the face of a radical change in the concepts of Power and Image in general.

Žarko Paić, "We cannot lose faith in something we never believed in"; *New Theories* no. 1/2023 (6), pg. 16.

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