A black and white photograph of an astronaut in a full spacesuit standing on the lunar surface. The astronaut's shadow is cast long and dark on the moon's surface. The background shows the dark, cratered landscape of the moon under a bright light source.

*Udo J. Hebel,
Christoph Wagner (Eds.)*

PICTORIAL CULTURES AND POLITICAL ICONOGRAPHIES

APPROACHES, PERSPECTIVES,
CASE STUDIES FROM EUROPE AND AMERICA

Hebel · Wagner (*Eds.*)

Pictorial Cultures and Political Iconographies

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Approaches, Perspectives, Case Studies
from Europe and America

Edited by
Udo J. Hebel
Christoph Wagner

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Introduction

UDO J. HEBEL AND CHRISTOPH WAGNER

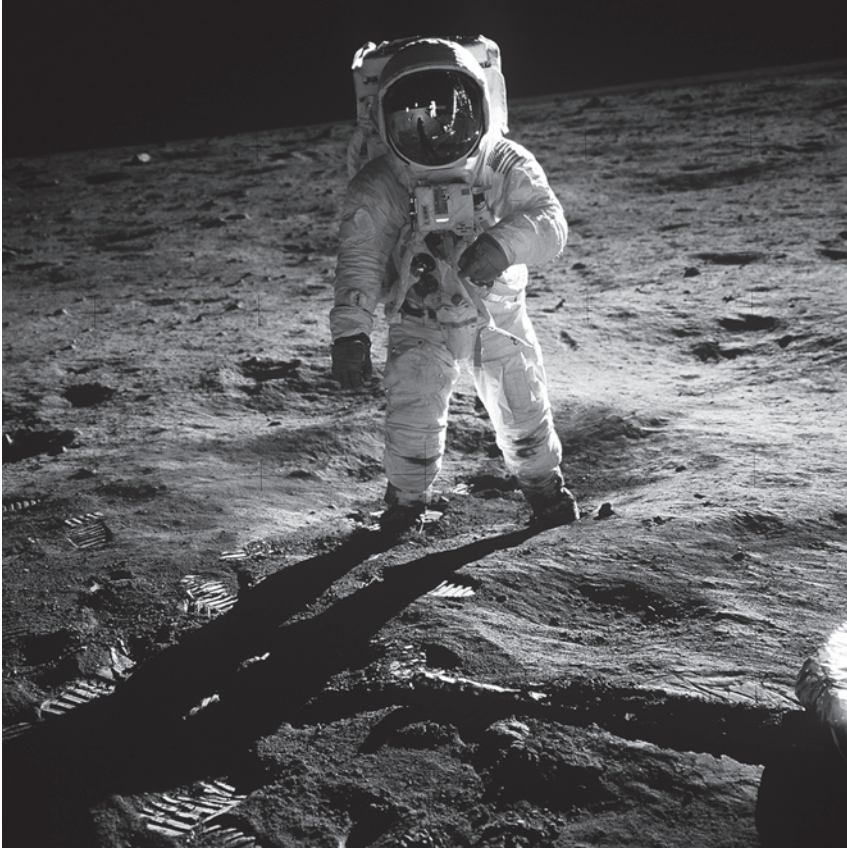
When Gottfried Boehm and William John T. Mitchell proclaimed their respective versions of what came to be known as the iconic turn on both sides of the Atlantic in the early 1990s, they laid the groundwork for lasting changes and substantial revisions of scholarly agendas across a wide range of disciplines. Some twenty years later, Art History has redefined its methodology as it appeared no longer purposeful to maintain divisions between formal and stylistic approaches, on the one hand, and iconographic interpretations in the wake of Erwin Panofsky, on the other. American Studies, though long interested in the critical understanding of American history and culture in all their diverse manifestations, has seen an intensified concern with visual representations of America and with political iconographies and cultural imaginaries related to the powerful, yet always historically and ideologically controversial, construct of 'America.'

In many respects, Art History now assumes an integrative role in a spectrum of disciplines ranging from philosophy, history, and cultural studies to the natural sciences, information science, and medicine. In a similar vein, the interdisciplinary perspective of American Studies provides for a synthesis of various approaches to the visibility of 'America' and to the visual forms productive in U.S. American politics, history, and culture. By means of methodological extension and in view of the transnational turn in large parts of the discipline, the critical paradigms and parameters productive in American Studies present promising options for the analysis of the visual dimensions of histories and cultures beyond both traditional disciplinary limits and geopolitical boundaries. It was in the spirit of such transdisciplinary affinities between Art History and American Studies that the international symposium "Pictorial Cultures and Political Iconographies" was held at the University of Regensburg, April 23–25, 2010. The present volume gathers the original contributions to this conference and newly written articles by Visual Culture Studies experts in the fields of Art History, American Studies, History, and Political Science from Europe and the United States.

Pictorial Cultures and Political Iconographies: Approaches, Perspectives. Case Studies from Europe and America positions itself in the wake of the iconic turn in the humanities and social sciences. The volume focuses on the politi-

cal power and cultural capital of images and explores the extent to which historical, political, social, and cultural processes and practices are shaped visually. It emphasizes the contextualization of distinct practices of imaging and considers visibility as an important mode of historical and cultural understanding. Individual, collective, and national identities and imaginaries are seen as constituted through systems of knowledge production which are themselves embodied in visual forms, just as scopical regimes define the boundaries of the physical, social, and psychic subject. The volume's range of subject matters draws on a notion of Visual Culture Studies that encompasses the historical trajectory of visualizations from the earliest manifestations of human cultural production to most recent media society phenomena, and that embraces a wide spectrum of possible materials and issues for inspection, from the panopticon to the fetish, from the traditional linear perspective to the ocularcentrism of modern abstract painting. Aby Warburg's replacement of the term *art* with that of *picture* opened the path for the positioning of Art History in the fields of Cultural Studies and Visual Culture Studies. In recent years, *Bildwissenschaft* has become the programmatic basis to engage, from a broad and inclusive, non-hierarchical and non-evaluative perspective, visual and material phenomena as diverse as Indian snake rituals, the feather pictures of South America, the emblems of automobile companies, objects of the crafts and design industry, movies, commercials, videos, and computer art. The essays gathered here reflect these theoretical developments and extended scholarly agendas. *Pictorial Cultures and Political Iconographies* investigates how individual pictures and larger iconographies interpret norms of action, support ideological formations, and enhance social and moral concepts. The visual rhetorics and particular items of visual production engaged in the following set of twenty-one articles from a variety of different perspectives and approaches are understood as active players in the construction and contestation of the political realm and the public space.

The individual contributions to the present volume address concepts and theories for a politics of art and perception, read individual paintings and photographs for their political and cultural power, investigate the national(ist) forms and implications of political representation on both sides of the Atlantic, and interpret the iconographic repertoires of specific cultures, historical time periods, and political systems. In that sense, the opening essay by Klaus von Beyme provides the collection with a conceptual framework, raising principal issues of a political science of the arts and assessing reasons and circumstances for the possible lack of such a discipline. A first set of four articles then explores the political function and impact of specific, exemplary pictures from the seventeenth century to the present and, by theoretical implication and interpretive practice, illustrates the importance of the historical dimension of the study of visual cultures.



Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin walking on the moon on July 20, 1969 (NASA)

Ulrich Heinen discusses Rubens's awareness of the diplomatic potential of his paintings. Pablo Schneider analyzes contemporaneous visualizations of the execution of King Charles I in 1649 as 'picture acts.' Oliver Jehle examines the reformulation of the codes and conventions of history painting in Benjamin West's visual interpretation of the outcome of the historical Battle of Quebec in 1759. Mark Thistlethwaite draws attention to Grant Wood's strategic return to narratives of colonial and revolutionary American history in the depression-ridden 1930s in Wood's "Parson Weem's Fable."

Taking up aspects of political power and national significance raised in the first set of essays, several further contributions address the collective, national(ist) implications of iconographic repertoires more explicitly and with a focus on the German scene in the first decades of the twentieth century. Claudia Bruns discusses the caricatures of the notorious Eulenburg

scandal which shook the military elite and political leadership of imperial Germany and made homosexual relations an issue of public debate and national security concerns. Christoph Wagner analyzes iconographies of history in times of political change in his exploration of the historical moment of the German national election of 1924 when time-honored connections in art and history collapsed in the clash between the production of mass media photographs and the handmade avant garde work of art from the Bauhaus. Wolfram Pyta scrutinizes a case of extreme abuse of the popular appeal of visual media in his analysis of the visualization of politics that grew out of the special power structures of the Nazi regime. Volker Depkat's essay extends the perspectives and opens up a transatlantic route of comparison in its exploration of the emergence, in part intentional construction of a postrevolutionary visual politics of democratic legitimacy in the U.S. in the early national period and in Germany in the early years of the Weimar Republic.

The contributions by Lisa Gill and Miles Orvell continue the discussion of national(ist) implications of visual rhetorics and political iconographies and open a sequence of articles on American photography and the U.S. American political, social, and cultural scene from late 19th century to the immediate present. Gill's and Orvell's analyses of the emotional power of controversial visual representations focus, respectively, on images of African American activist Malcolm X in the 1950s and 1960s, and on media coverage of the confrontational politics in Washington in the aftermath of the election of President Barack Obama. Going back to the early days of American photography, the contributions by Mick Gidley, Kerstin Schmidt, and Klara Stephanie Szlezák investigate three culturally and politically influential fields of visual othering at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. In what he calls an 'imaginary exhibition,' Mick Gidley goes beyond well-known readings of the Indian photography of Edward S. Curtis and draws attention to photographs which, in a kind of metavisual gesture, foreground photography and the very act of taking pictures. Kerstin Schmidt argues that social photographers Jacob Riis and Lewis Hine use new orders of space to put the experience of the working classes, immigrants, children, and the poor at the center of popular attention. Klara Stephanie Szlezák explores the scopic regime and politics of immigrant photography which circulated impressions of order and well-functioning administration on Ellis Island to the U.S. American public at the height of mass immigration. In another case study focused on one iconic picture, Udo J. Hebel traces the calculated political impact of the photographic documentation of the emergency inauguration of President Lyndon B. Johnson after the assassination of John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, in Cecil Stoughton's official photograph of President Johnson's swearing the oath of office. Eric Sandeen and Liam Kennedy take the discussion

of American photography back to the immediate present. Eric Sandeen presents Richard Misrach's and Camilo Vergara's photographic attempts to situate American visions and to anchor American memories in the ruins of modernity, i.e. in the ruins of a U.S. Navy bombing range in Nevada and in the ruins of postindustrial Detroit, MI, respectively. Liam Kennedy's article focuses on the impact that the war on terror has possibly had on domestic American culture and politics, drawing on examples from the work of documentary photographers and photojournalists Nina Berman, Eugene Richards, and Anthony Suau.

The volume is rounded out by four contributions that further demonstrate the diversity, productivity, and innovativeness of the topic under consideration in the volume. Wolfgang Brückle problematizes the power and possible failure of shock images in contemporary culture in his analysis of works by Gerhard Richter, Robert Morris and Alfredo Jaar. Ingrid Gessner and Peter Krieger bring issues of material culture studies and space studies to the discussion of visibility and visual images in their assessments of popular U.S. American national sites of memory and of murals and architecture in public spaces in Mexico City, respectively. Gottfried Gabriel's presentation of the iconography of coins and bills concludes the collection with a discussion of the currency and capital of visual images and pictorial cultures in a most literal sense.

The cover to the present volume shows one of the most prominent illustrations of the political impact and ideological implications of visual images. The picture of U.S. astronaut Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin walking on the moon on July 20, 1969, may be open to different and competing readings; and it may even be a bold attempt of obvious propaganda in the political contexts of the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Its very position and aura as one of the most powerful pictures of the 'American century' only enhances doubts and queries. The *mise en abyme* reflection in Aldrin's helmet which allows no view of the human eyes 'actually' seeing the surface of moon (or maybe not) extends the space for questions of visual credibility and interpretative reliability into the infinity of the universe. Does the NASA photograph 'really' freeze for our faith and inspection the moment of the first landing of human beings on the moon – or is it a deceptive construction of a theatrical performance staged, e.g., in Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho and designed as an evocative reproduction of the visual repertoire of historic moments of supposed glory, conquest, and technological superiority? And what exactly is the function of the Swiss army knife allegedly visible in the photograph and instrumental in the 'reality' of the landing on the moon (or maybe elsewhere) – or was it added to the picture in an equally bold and profitable commercial move? Such issues of the visual display of power and the power of visual display guide the articles presented in *Pictorial Cultures*

and Political Iconographies: Approaches, Perspectives. Case Studies from Europe and America as a contribution to the ongoing discussions of visual phenomena and their political, social, and ideological implications in the fields of Art History and American Studies – and beyond.

We would like to express our gratitude to all the people who made this publication possible. The Regensburg conference, which brought the larger number of contributors together for three days of fruitful scholarly exchange and wonderful personal conversations inside and outside the conference venue, was supported by the *Regensburger Universitätsstiftung Hans Vielberth*. We thank all contributors to the volume for their continued cooperation throughout the editorial process. A special word of gratitude goes to Ingrid Gessner, Oliver Jehle and Klara Stephanie Szlezák whose scholarly competence and editorial skills were indispensable for the success of the publishing project. Jedidiah Becker, Jasmin Beer, Sandra Bessenreuther, Eva Buchberger, Augustus Cavanna, Gerald Dagit, Thomas Hartmann, Theresa Häusl, Philipp Meister, Wolfgang Neiser, Lena Ringleb, Claudia Troitzke and Florian Weinzierl helped with translations, proofreading, bibliographical research, and preparing the illustrations for printing. Jörg Pütz brought his proven expertise in type-setting to the preparation of the camera-ready manuscript. Manuela Gerlof, Susanne Rade, and Susanne Mang from Verlag Walter de Gruyter provided valuable assistance and support from the early stages of planning to the final phase of seeing the volume through the press.

Regensburg, March 2011

Why Is There No Political Science of the Arts?

KLAUS VON BEYME

Introduction

Why is there no political science of art? The simplest answer to this question reads:

1. Political scientists have no competence in most periods of history in which the arts and politics were even more intimately connected than today. The competence of political scientists is normally imputed for a period after 1945.
2. Sociology of art is recognized and meets much better the conditions of a great variety of causations between art, society and politics.

Political science – according to a silent agreement with historians – is centred around studies on democracies after World War II. More precisely we should say: historians enter into competition with political scientists even in the period since 1945 – as soon as the official documents after 30 years are open to research. A new branch ‘contemporary history’ (or *Zeitgeschichte*) has been developed and works in competition with political science. Political science has changed as well: for contemporary arts there could be a subdiscipline ‘art policy’ which deals with the activities of governmental authorities in the field of art. Mostly it is included in the field of ‘cultural policy’ which is highly neglected by political scientists as well. But this field can only apply to contemporary policies. Historical patronage is left – with good reasons – to historians of art.

In cases where political scientists have interfered in studies of history of arts they got their competence not from the main subject, but from studies in history and history of arts. Most successful were historians in the history of ideas which is, however - with increasing quantification and economization of political science – a subject which hardly plays a major role in the social sciences. Famous political scientists – like Carl J. Friedrich – occasionally wrote books such as *The Age of Baroque* (1952); *Das Zeitalter des Barock*, (1954) in which history of arts and history of political ideas were dealt with in close relationship. For a while historians were divided into one school which started from events, and another one which developed a structuralist history of society. Both lines of thinking recently have been united in a new paradigm which made ‘culture’ its central concept. With the cultural turn

in historiography a ‘cultural history of the social’ was demanded. Its application to the arts was called ‘collective representation’ which embraced a study of the genesis of social groups which nourish divergent perspectives of reality, and cultural practices to symbolize their status and value in society and manifest them continuously in the political arena (Chartier 11-12). Recently, the representation of collective demands has turned to collective fashions such as: the historicist search for a classicist Greek idea in German landscapes, and the construction of classicist collective memorial buildings such as Walhalla in Bavaria (Traeger), or the romantic identification with the symbols of German history in the Rhinelands (Werquet).

The political dimension of these collective movements was heightened by the special interests of a ruler, such as Ludwig I of Bavaria, or Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia. Both kings had wide interests in the arts. Friedrich Wilhelm IV left thousands of sketches for his architectural ideas. Both rulers had, however, also interest in their rule and used these public moods and the interest of bourgeois cultural elites also for the stabilization of their political role which had been challenged by the threat or the reality (as in 1830) of revolutions.

Historians of political theories have hardly ever worked on art and architecture treaties – even when a theoretician of art like Alberti (1969) wrote a work on the society of his time. On the other hand art historians – before most recent figures such as Hans Belting, Carlo Ginzburg, Martin Warnke or Horst Bredekamp – rarely worked on important political thinkers – though metaphors taken from art were important in works from Machiavelli to Hobbes. Only when historians of art like Franz Matsche (1981) concentrated on the symbols of rule and allegorical arts thinkers such as Justus Lipsius were discovered as the founders of a Habsburg ideology of rule.

Most frequently thinkers were analysed who wrote on aesthetics as well as on politics, such as Diderot, Rousseau, Burke, Kant, Hegel, Marx or Proudhon. These contacts with the history of political theories remained, however, mostly ‘art history without pictures.’ Political science normally used pictures in an unsystematic way for the purpose of illustration such as Philipp Manow in his seminal work on representation (2008). Even Murray Edelman (1995), who was famous for his analysis of the symbolic use of politics, only occasionally sketched certain parallels between art and politics. Thus the programmatic subtitle of Edelman’s book “from Art to Politics” was hardly put into operation, despite certain hints to art works from Käthe Kollwitz down to Pop Art. The political implications of iconology were rarely studied; most frequently this happened in the lower echelons of graphic arts for everyday use with the production of symbols, emblems and events – from illustrations to Hobbes’ *Leviathan* down to revolutionary pictures since 1789.

But there was one field in which the political connotations prevailed from the outset: in the analysis of a relationship between patrons and artists. Long

before iconology was established a kind of political iconology *avant la lettre* was applied and sometimes even exaggerated the non-existence of an independent art in works such as the “legend of the artist” (Kris/Kurz).

Political science developed increasingly from the decisional system (*politics*) to the material results of politics in the policies. This led to a split of subfields such as economic, social or construction policies – a development which the neighbouring discipline of sociology had already achieved. Nobody doubts that there existed a ‘sociology of art’ since Arnold Hauser and others – mostly leftist scientists.

Political Iconology

In art history the subfield of ‘art and politics’ is mostly represented in two approaches: Iconology and social history of art. Both approaches started from a structural notion of a system combining enormous numbers of details. Both were deductive and started from the notion of a structural system which postulated – occasionally in tautological reasoning such as in Niklas Luhmann’s work – the unity of society which should be proven by empirical research. The *quod erat demonstrandum* was already present in the formulations of hypotheses. Iconology was sometimes considered as the ‘bourgeois’ equivalent of a Marxist-minded social history of art in the style of Arnold Hauser. Iconology allowed a social interpretation of art without the revolutionary connotations of teleological dialectical theories of historical development.

Iconology took up certain influences from social sciences. It was ready to accept that scientific disciplines are temporary schemes of a functional organization of knowledge about certain areas but no ontological entities like stars fixed at the sky. Since Kant’s essay *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798) there were attempts to create a hierarchy of disciplines. History of art, after its consolidation in these conflicts, was inclined to forget how difficult it has been to establish history of art as an independent discipline between the philosophy of aesthetics and historical studies on culture. It had to be accepted that each discipline can serve as an auxiliary discipline for another subject. There is no degradation, but only mutual acknowledgment of the relevance of neighbouring disciplines. Modern art historians like Hans Belting took it for granted that each discipline has only “a short overcoat of competence” (*Bild und Kult* 13). Nevertheless, “not every discipline is equally close to God” – to change a slogan of the historian Leopold von Ranke. In dealing with pictures, history of arts acquired a priority by developing a systematic method such as iconology:

- Political art history is inclined to overemphasize the meaning of pictures by hinting at their political connotations.

- Iconology – on the other hand – is inclined to underemphasize the political links of pictures. Similar to the Bauhaus, the Warburg school in Hamburg became a kind of international style of art interpretation – especially because it was led by scholars without links to nationalism and national socialism – such as Aby Warburg as the founding father and Erwin Panofsky as a kind of prophet. Panofsky differentiated iconology and iconography. Both approaches are still frequently confused. Iconology is mostly avoided by social historians who do not accept the theoretical dogmatism in the work of Panofsky. But iconography in a more descriptive sense is widely used by social scientists who look for social and political connotations in the works of art.
- “The end of the history of art” was sometimes proclaimed – but it did not happen – just as in the case of the “end of history debates” caused from Foucault to Fukuyama (Belting, *Ende der Kunstgeschichte* 25). The growing interest in the arts was increasingly caused by extrinsic motivations.
- The recent interest in exotic areas in the time of globalisation has caused this development as much as the growing interconnection between a capitalist international market and an art industry caused by the “creative class” (Florida).
- Thus the growing interest in the interconnections between art and politics is no longer the hobby of some art-loving social scientists, nor the hobby of some professional historians of art.

Both attitudes would hardly be beneficial for the establishment of a sub-discipline: ‘art and politics.’ Since 1968 radicalized students of the history of art have frequently emphasized the necessity to include ‘sociology of art’ as a generalist view on the arts in their curriculum. There was hardly ever a parallel to sociology in one respect that radical students asked for ‘politics of art’ in their curricula – maybe because political science per se was never as radical as sociology during the student’s rebellion. Even famous historians of art, such as Ernst Gombrich who advocated a “history without yawning” (212), warned against the social enlargement of a notion of art as an objective view on the history of arts. Every period will confront the alleged ‘social facts’ with examples which prove that only rather subjective views on aesthetic developments prevailed in this allegedly fresh view on the arts.

The self-appointed political-minded generalists who turned to art and politics because they were tired of a professional interpretation of forms which were hardly shared by mass publics. With growing ‘eventisation’ of arts and museums the interest of mass audiences is rather directed towards finding answers to their problems in individual life than towards connections between art and politics. In postmodern times no dogmatic Marxist sociology of art antagonizes any more the normal business of art histo-

rians. There is a growing impact of natural sciences and technical instruments to analyze well-known works of art in a new way and to challenge traditional ascriptions of works to artists. This makes traditional iconology much more complicated than it was in Warburg's times.

Political interests in interpretations of works of arts were frequently biased:

- The 'art of power' was in the centre of iconological interests.
- The 'counter-power of the arts' was mostly overemphasized in Marxist history of arts and therefore hardly integrated into conventional art history.

The work of art most frequently adapted even by political scientists was certainly Lorenzetti's frescoes on *buon governo* and *mal governo* in the Room of the Nine in Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. Conventional history of arts frequently considered these attempts as trivialisations. This monumental allegory was interpreted by research not so much as a narrative, but as a pictorial variation of an abstract system of mind. Aristotle or Thomas Aquinas were used to depicting the distinctions of distributive and commutative justice (Rubinstein; Smart; Borsook 36). One of the most fertile historians of political ideas intervened: Quentin Skinner shifted interpretation to another source of ideas (85-103). Not so much the ideas of Thomas Aquinas but pre-humanist rhetorical culture was discovered as a source which was developed much earlier than the Latin version of the Nicomachean Ethics around 1250. Historians generally are fond of tracing events back to older sources. Rubinstein as a historian of art mentions even the *postglossatores* as a source of the Siena iconology.

The more esoteric interpretations grew, the stronger was the temptation of political minded scholars to lean back to less distant political sources. The frescoes were reduced to a visual variation of the Sienese constitution and the law books of the city. The *pictor doctus*, the erudite painter Lorenzetti, did not need any more an iconological director of the program as it frequently existed in religious representation in churches. The sources discovered were open to the understanding even of moderately erudite artisan. This proved that in a quarrel between art historians and political scientists the former (Kempers) was closer to the politics of that time period than the political scientist Skinner.

This shows, however, that a fruitful dialogue between the disciplines is possible. In post-war architecture the first collective volume on reconstructed German cities in both German states was published by representatives of seven different disciplines (v. Beyme et al., *Neue Städte aus Ruinen*). In this latter case the absence of a hierarchy of disciplines responsible for the field 'reconstruction' facilitated cooperation. Art and architectural history are in no situation worse than other disciplines. In our field of political ideas the debate on the sources of Machiavelli's thought was revitalized by

an outsider who relativized certain passages as ‘rhetorics of Petrarchism.’ Speculations on the metaphors of Hobbes’s *Leviathan* have been traced back to bible interpretations of certain sectarians at the time of Hobbes. All of a sudden distant historical analogies were discarded from the agenda by an outsider. Distant fictions and myths became obsolete by hints to close political or social facts.

Political sources of great works of art have frequently been emphasized more explicitly by art historians than by social scientists. Piero’s fresco cycle in Arezzo was interpreted from Warburg to Carlo Ginzburg (43) as a political allusion to the idea of the crusades and the decline of Greece – combined with hopes for a reunification of the Eastern and the Western Christian Churches. Only later this kind of interpretation was challenged as too simple (Lavin 180; Büttner 15-17). Political iconology was easier to develop in studies of ruler’s residences than in churches. But even in residences of princes the political connotations of the painting by Gozzoli in Palazzo Medici or the work of a team of painters in Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara – so dear to Warburg – were not easily deciphered. Even in churches one can occasionally discover an ‘easy form of political iconology.’ In the Theolinda chapel in Monza the hints at the history of Lombardia and the analysis of the Visconti and Sforza families showed a rather obvious relation to the dynasties involved.

Comparative political iconology which does not dig into the details of individual works and follows the specialists into distant niches of originality will concentrate on an ‘easy iconology’ in order to remain on safe ground. The danger is that only second-class arts is chosen for analysis which might hardly interest the professional art historians – unless highlights of art for political use are found in works of Goya, Hogarth or Daumier. Autopoietic system’s theory postulates that only after the French Revolution the religious fundamentals of a *societas civilis* were destroyed. This development led to the existence of special dyadic codes for each subsystem of the society. Politics according to this view was governed by the code: power/non power. Iconology for the nineteenth century showed that political interpretations proved to be difficult. Caspar David Friedrich’s Tetschen Altar was not easy to decipher because, originally, it was not even dedicated to Count Thun (Chapeaurouge 42-47). Also Friedrich’s “A Ship in the Ice-Sea” found rather controversial perceptions: the shipwreck could stand for “disappointed political hopes,” which corresponds to the political leanings of that artist. But other interpreters took the same picture for a symbol of rather individual disappointments (Rautmann).

Sometimes political motives entered even the school books such as Delacroix’s “Liberty Leading the People.” Delacroix himself remained silent. A poem by Auguste Barbier (“La Curée”) was used as a proof for revolutionary engagement of the painter. Detailed analysis showed, however,

that the man with the hat was hardly a “citoyen” or a “student.” Similarities with the politician Laffitte have been postulated. But the contemporary spectators did not perceive this (Hadjinicolaou 9). The woman with the flag was recognized as a kind of ‘dirty provocation’ by contemporaries. The iconological interpretation by specialists therefore preferred quite apolitical interpretations. Contemporaries rather saw a symbol of a ‘great mother’ or a fighting holy woman. The naked breast of the indecent and revolutionary woman appalled bourgeois society – until the French State sanctioned civilized interpretations by printing the lady on a bill of 100 Francs (1979). Only then it could enter into the school books. This example showed that a sociology of art had to complete the efforts of a political science of art. Many political interpretations were not seen by the contemporaries and therefore a lot of sharp-minded political interpretation remained *ex post facto* ideas and went astray for the society in which such a painting was perceived by the public. Who then is right?

- the social historian who knows contemporary symbols and opinions,
- or the sharp-minded intellectual connoisseur who *ex post facto* creates an intelligent iconological interpretation?

Only politicized artists such as Steinlen, Léger, Guttuso, Kollwitz, Grosz, Hartfield, Meidner or Dix do not offer iconological secrets. But even modern avangardists who were close to politics like Picasso, Dalí, Max Ernst, Magritte or Beckmann are not open in their complicated visions to a self-evident political interpretation:

- That is why a modern trend concentrates on the history of receptions of works of art.
- On the other hand every historical discipline has to analyse events which they see different from the actors of a historical time. Otherwise history would be reduced to the compilations and commentaries to memoirs of contemporaries.

This shows a dilemma of two approaches:

- Social and political historians stick to the superficial meaning of pictures,
- whereas iconologists dig into the depth of meaning of pictures. Religious paintings were never only interpreted in terms of an unsophisticated piety of the masses.

Limits of Competence for Social Scientists in the Field of the Arts

(1) Political iconography normally suspects that behind parallel appearance in art and politics there is some kind of ideology or *Weltbild*. There is a danger that paintings are graded down to applications of aesthetic and/or political doctrines. Mostly fresco cycles of Early Renaissance in Italy

were interpreted in a way which found some hidden theoretical message behind the pictures, such as Aristotelism, Thomism or Early Humanism. Only rarely such intellectual speculations were supported by a certain similarity of some figures such as those in Benozzo Gozzoli's "Procession of Three Holy Kings" in the Medici Chapel (Roettgen 21, 331; Ahl 88-90). The personality of the artist in search of his autonomy sometimes was degraded to an "auxiliary agent of prosaic political interests," as in Carlo Ginzburg's book on Piero della Francesca (21, 8). Circular chains of interpretation – which sometimes had been reproached to the iconological orthodoxy of the Hamburg school thus was tamed by 'obvious' political messages.

In later periods of absolutist rule, art was more obviously put into the service of political power. Emblems, symbols and metaphors were canonized as in Cesare Ripa's "Iconologia" (edited in 1971 by Edward A. Maser) and were almost mandatory for artists as well as for spectators. In late absolutism forms of government were still fixed in the iconological representation of physiognomies. According to Diderot (66)

- Republicans had to be 'proud and severe.'
- Monarchs had to represent mercy, honour and galanteries.

Not all the artists stuck to the theoretical prescriptions. New republics, such as the USA, no longer inspired themselves by the systems of constitutional monarchies. Since they had hardly a traditional iconography of their own they borrowed heavily from ancient Rome. American liberty allowed more quickly to get rid of historical costumes, as in the "Death of General Wolfe" (1770) which was hailed as the first historical picture in modern costumes. American paintings of presidents were inspired by various sources such as European (Houdon in France), Europeanized Americans such as Benjamin West, or exclusive Americans such as Gilbert Stuart (Abrams 170).

(2) Continuity and discontinuity of artist's work for rulers after changes of the regime. In oligarchic republics and absolutist monarchies a change of the ruler frequently influenced the position of artists at the 'court.' There were hardly ideological implications in this change but rather changes in personal taste of the rulers. Not before the French Revolution different tastes had also different political connotations. 'Quality of art' and specialization made it possible, however, that artists of a former regime survived precisely because the 'art of power' was emphasized. Napoleon accepted the court painter of Louis XVI, Antoine-François Callet because of his abilities in painting battles (Surrender of Ulm, Battle of Austerlitz) (Schoch 85). Many revolutionary painters – including David – had worked for the *ancien régime*. Even the restoration regime, extremely intolerant in political matters, accepted certain artists of the former regime. François Gérard was nominated as the 'first painter' in 1817, Robert Lefèvre remained painter of the court and even Gros, the most demonstrative adherent of the toppled

emperor was nobilitated and got important commissions. Even Jean-Louis David could have returned from his Belgian exile if he had been ready to apologize for his alliance with the ‘king’s murderers.’ Louis XVIII bought for the Palais Luxembourg two of David’s paintings – that was more than Napoleon ever did for the painter in one move (Brooker 179). Napoleon III even negotiated with a notorious adversary of the regime, such as Courbet. He painted a picture of his atelier with a visit of the Emperor, an honour which not even Ingres – in high repute at the court – was able to experience.

Later dictators such as Bolsheviks (concerning Constructivism) and fascists (concerning Futurism) initially tried to win over the avantgarde. Only Hitler’s Nazi-Regime was so narrow-minded to not accept the vanguard which – at least in architecture with Mies van der Rohe who still in 1937 signed a letter with “Heil Hitler” – might have collaborated. Goebbels tried to save parts of the expressionists as a ‘German style.’ This failed as much as rare attempts to collaborate as in the case of Emil Nolde. Democracies after 1945 were mostly reluctant to accept the artists of the dictator. Arno Breker caused scandals – every time he got a commission – even from private persons. A comparative analysis over time might come to the conclusion that not political conviction of artists but rather the changes of styles and topics led to a neglect of the artists fashionable in the former political system.

(3) Political symbols and fashions change even within the same regime. This may have political connotations – such as the change from romanticism to realism in the nineteenth century. Rarely did a revolution, such as the one of 1848, bring a clear caesura in France which promoted realism also for political reasons. But the revolutions of 1830 or 1848 cannot be used to deduce from these events the political attitude of artists – reflected in their artistic work. The revolution of 1848 which did not have a permanent impact cannot be made responsible for Menzel’s turn to realism. His painting about the dead citizens, killed by the Prussian troops in March 1848 did not gain the importance of some revolutionary paintings of Courbet’s. That it remained unfinished was interpreted as “shame about the artist’s liberal illusions” and the preparation of a turn to political escapism in Prussian history (Hermand 51).

(4) Research on art and politics is less interested in the genesis of works, but rather in their contemporary and later impact on the public. Even iconology in the tradition of Warburg was interested in the survival of certain iconological traditions. The approach of receptionist aesthetics in the history of arts was taken over from the history of literature. A work of art was no longer separated neatly from the spectator (Kemp 240).

- Architecture and the decoration of churches were open to the public and played a major role in religious propaganda.

- Art programs in palaces, however, were accessible only for the higher estates which occasionally were invited at the court. Princes increasingly opened their treasures for the public to strengthen an element of iconological propaganda. Paintings left their autopoietic environment in which they served only the pleasure of the prince (Warnke 8). The experts for pictorial programs at the court sometimes tried to fix the attention of the prince to a certain program. Their reinforcement was a kind of help for decision-making in order not to leave the decision of a program to the artists themselves – which might lead to heretic iconology.

The more unsafe a rule the bigger was the iconographic input for pictorial propaganda, from Emperor Augustus to the ‘usurpers’ and *Condottieri* in Italian Renaissance or to the Napoleons. The Roman Senate tried to avoid private luxurious buildings, though it had no means to sponsor public buildings of some importance. In this vacuum the self-representation of Augustus became attractive for all the layers of society (Zanker 25, 329). In many respects – from Augustus to baroque princes religious reifications were used as an instrument for political propaganda. The painting had an almost sacral function. The claim for identity of the estates was that they were the country and not only represented the country. The revolutionary counter-movements therefore were so furious to destroy physically the monuments and paintings of a toppled ruler or dynasty. This was the negative side of the idea of identity (Brückner; Steinmann 337).

Aggression against icons and cult of pictures happened in various waves in European history (Belting, *Bild und Kult* 18-19). The pictorial cult during the counterreformation was a kind of compensation for the sins of destroying religious and political pictures. Even towards the end of absolutist monarchy, the picture of the ruler sometimes was used in a literal reified sense. The citizen’s council of Munich had to kneel down in front of Prince Karl Theodor because it had offended the dignity of the ruler. The Bavarian penal law knew “offenses of the majesty of the second degree,” including mockery, which was easily found in certain paintings (Schoch 12). Power and religion strengthen each other in the pictorial cult of monarchy. Sometimes the impact of pictorial propaganda was even tested. Benvenuto Cellini (90, 503) reported that Grand Duke Cosimo I found his Perseus “molto bella” but insisted on testing the people’s opinion before erecting the monument on the Piazza della Signoria. Even Napoleon made his peace with the church though a latent anticlerical trend remained. Religious art was no longer sponsored and substituted by political cult of icons. The more unsafe the legitimation of a ruler the more the reception of paintings by the public was controlled. In 1808 Gros’ “Napoleon Bonaparte on the Battlefield of Eylau,” celebrating a not very convincing victory over the Russian army, was put next to David’s painting of Napoleon’s coronation. The ironic commentary of the president of the Roman Republic regarding

the arrangement was “sacre et massacre” (Lindsay 122). The secret service knew about the ambivalent impact of that painting and suspected that this painting might promote the people’s opinions against the war and wanted to remove it. Minutes in the archives showed that the secret police also in other cases tested the success of pictorial propaganda (Lelièvre 117-120).

When the subsystems of society differentiated and became more autonomous the arts also grew in autonomy. On the one hand this was welcome to most artists – on the other hand the political system did not need the artists any more for its self-representation. Photography and mass media became a much cheaper instrument for state propaganda. Since the artists did no longer get many commissions from state agencies they were thrown into the market. The anti-capitalist writings of many artists show that originally the capitalist market was repudiated. The avantgardes from 1830 to 1930 frequently in a mixture of complaint and pride wrote about the loneliness of the artist in society. Pessimistic individualism of the artists had various consequences: some artists joined political movements, others escaped into a-political esoteric circles (Egbert; Lindey 103; Schilling 32, 194). Syndicalist experiments for self-organization of the artist’s market from Albert Gleizes (v. Beyme, *Zeitalter der Avantgarden* 181) to Günter Grass failed. Only after 1945, artists fought for the market as did Ad Reinhardt in an article on “Government and the Arts.” But even then a very un-American idea was launched with a ‘government art cabinet’ which should control the market, guarantee equal chances for all artists and fight against illegal practices of an oligarchic art market.

The Dilemma of Democratic Iconology

Conservative art historians, such as Hans Sedlmayr, resented the loss of the centre after the Second World War. But this had ambivalent advantages. It led to a post-modern total liberty. Where everything is possible at the same time the legitimacy of political art withers away. Aesthetic experience is profaned. Art is promoted by events. The museum’s shop and specially arranged ‘museum nights’ with the help of the mass media attract more public attention than the collections of art themselves (Zweite 131).

“Anything goes” was a device when Paul Feyerabend turned from rigid neo-positivism to post-modern anti-ideology. This created two tendencies which coexist:

- Democracy lives on pre-democratic myths and iconological symbols and thus tries to be popular, knowing that most citizens do not accept modern art.
- The rise of a new elitism which also leans back to pre-democratic symbols and moods – but uses the language of modern art.

(1) Only after the Second World War democracy was sufficiently consolidated and able to reduce democratic symbolism to rather abstract signs. Eagles were still close to symbolism of older regimes. A Swedish 'IKEA look' of a woven landscape in the Stockholm parliament is also traditional and not yet in tune with abstract symbols of 'constitutional patriotism.' There was a dilemma: Survey methods allowed very exactly to control the people's mood – but there was little which could be tested. The rare examples of democratic iconology were not accepted by the people's majority. When the public was asked whether it prefers the restoration of the paintings of Antoine Pesne or a modern work by Hann Trier in the Palace Charlottenburg, the least innovative solution won. Democracy in its pictorial programs thus remained – against its will – elitist. Political art aimed at the connoisseurs – not at the mass public. This was even recognized by the leading satirical artist in Germany, Klaus Staeck. The vanguard of classical modernity had a certain inclination to push the recipients of art into a defensive role. The arts in classical modernity usurped almost the position of former rulers and demanded submission. Adorno took part in this kind of sacralisation of the arts when he wrote in his *Aesthetic Theory* that the recipient "has to submit to the discipline of the work and should not demand that the work of art offers him something" (410).

The ruling class used to employ the most eminent artists for its representation. In the era of photography this practice became more and more marginal (v. Beyme, *Kunst der Macht* 120, 144) and was left to the individual taste of a ruler. There is hardly anything like a *Staatsportrait* (state portrait) any more. Clemenceau detested his portrait by Manet (1879, 1880) and Churchill – himself a hidden painter – never used his portrait by Graham Sutherland which finally seems to have been destroyed (v. Beyme, *Zeitalter der Avantgarden* 417). Queen Elizabeth II by Pietro Annigoni in the Portrait Gallery in London or the Spanish king in the vestibule of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collections in Madrid are examples of such old-fashioned representations.

Democracies also preserved a good deal of myth and neo-metaphysical thought. Even the order of sitting in a semi-cycle in modern parliaments was not the result of functional ideas about a good political discourse – but rather by a survival of theological elements of representing the "body politic" (Manow 19).

Even dictators had to check the impact of their pictorial propaganda. The cultural people's commissar Lunacharsky had many sympathies for the art of Kubo-Futurism in Russia. But he knew that neither Lenin nor the people valued this kind of art and did not dare to promote it in public (Palmier 477). Only concrete symbols could be promoted such as Tatlin's Tower as a monument to the Third International. But even in this case Lenin resented its oblique appearance. Dictatorships were able to promote

their vandalism against the ‘modern art’ of their time because they knew that the petty bourgeois taste of the majority would approve this kind of art policy. Art which was obviously political was hardly accepted by most theoreticians of aesthetics. Only some leftist treatises such as Proudhon in France or Chernyshevsky in Russia hailed a certain political realism in the arts close to the needs of the ‘working classes.’

Art historians frequently thought that the openly political phases of great artists led to the worst of their pictures. Thus David’s portrait of Napoleon was criticized as “clumsy” and “not elegant.” Only a moderate Marxist such as Arnold Hauser thought that Jacques Louis David was best when he openly represented political events (158). In some cases the debate was ambivalent. The aristocrat Delacroix – certainly not a revolutionary – did by his paintings more to undermine the plutocratic kingdom of Louis Philippe in the Monarchy of July 1830 than many leftist realists who were hailed as the forerunners of socialist realism. But even conservative art historians have to admit that Georges Grosz or Dix were best in their period of criticizing the Weimar System than later when the painted nice landscape at Lake Constance or at the New England coast in the United States. Apparently the quality of political arts depends on its authenticity. The debate of art historians was controversial: was the decline of originality in the latest part of their life a consequence of the a-political turn in their arts, or was it just the normal decline of painters in their old age? (Friedlaender 64). Even critics of political engagement in the arts recognize that in some cases, such as David, Delacroix, Courbet, Picasso or Léger, the political messages did not ruin the quality of their work.

- Conservative ethnocentric historians of art came up with the idea that governmental art policy is not able to lead to original art – unless it is founded in collective national or regional movements (Malkowsky 19). The papal court and the Prussian court which was hardly rooted in a Brandenburg regional culture would contradict this hypothesis.
- Radical and progressive historians of art, on the other hand, developed the thesis that political engagement improved the quality of art. Marxists even claimed that the exuberant temperament of a writer such as Bert Brecht needed a certain discipline by the party doctrine in order to develop his talent (Egbert 736; Lindey 103; Schilling 32, 194).

(2) Even under the rule of egalitarian democratic doctrines elitist emphasis on modern art – hardly understood by the voters of democratic leaders – was spreading in the democracies. According to a quantitative study by the periodical *Capital* (Rohr-Bongard 111) **contemporary holders of power positions in politics and economics** – 70% of the managers and even 85% of the top politicians – like to show themselves in the surrounding of modern arts. Some representatives of power or money preferred works in blue – in order to produce the feeling of distance and power. Mannerist works were

used as symbols of the capacity to decide and revealed a decisionist understanding of politics (Ullrich, *Mit dem Rücken zur Kunst* 49, 32).

The collection of portraits of German Federal Chancellors in the Chancellors office in Berlin is almost a 'horror picture show.' Only few chancellors selected interesting painters from Willy Brandt to Gerhard Schröder. The latter has compromised himself and his formerly revolutionary painter Jörg Immendorff by a painting in the style of absolutist coins in gold. Schröder was not particularly knowledgeable in the field of arts. But it is not by chance that he liked to pose with Immendorff, a painter who in 1968 proclaimed political action in a painting "Stop painting" and who later remarked that he now regretted the Maoist nonsense he formerly supported. He claimed already in the early 1990s that he never would use art any more as "a tool of propaganda" for any political opinion (Immendorff 58). Schröder might have been attracted just by a former Maoist because he himself was proud of his leftist past in the SPD youth movement. Schröder now posed as a 'hero.' "Neo-aristocratic attitudes" developed and unorthodox politicians showed themselves as "risky alpha animals," on the one hand, and via symbols such as apes and eagles as a kind of "artifex honoris causa" (Ullrich, *Macht zeigen* 17, 19) on the other.

Political art had always two aspects:

- The Art of power, mostly working on portraits of rulers and historical events which were taken as legitimation for modern power.
- The Art of Counter-Power. In classical art it had little change and was exercised only in hidden forms – such as the stupid faces in Goyas portrait of the Spanish royal family. It grew, however, in modern art. Picasso in his caricatures of Dictator Franco used his type of pictorial counter-power in the Spanish Civil War and developed the anti-ruler-portrait. The intermezzo of abstract art was hardly open for direct political messages and portraits. But with the end of classical modernity between 1955 and 1960 and the rise of pop art portraits were used to devastate the aura of rulers. Frequently it was open to debate whether Andy Warhol's paintings of some American presidents – aimed at caricature – or in some cases such as a portrait of Mao Tse Tung – at a form of creating new heroes. The 1968 movement has widely used this type of portrait – even in Germany from Immendorff to Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke who later hardly were hailed as 'political artists.'

Conclusion

A systematic political science of the arts would probably dig into the foundations of the legitimacy of political systems and the traditions of art policies in the individual political system. It makes a difference whether political systems do not intervene into the organisation of the arts – as in the United

States – or try to organize a kind of welfare state for the artists, such as Norway and the Netherlands. For art policy these two models are disappointing. Despite little state help for artists after Roosevelt's experiment during the New Deal the United States since abstract expressionism is considered a leading arts centre whereas the enormous help for artists in the Netherlands or Norway did not implicate a leading role of these countries in modern art. The political system nevertheless is involved in regulations in countries without a welfare tradition as the following typology shows.

Table: Governmental measures for the support and regulation of the arts

Regulatory level	restrictive	regulative	extensive
	(reducing liberties)	(mediation in conflicts)	extending liberties
Welfare level	protection	distributive	redistributive
	(of groups such as women or ethnic minorities)	(distribution of financial resources)	(of financial resources between groups)

Governments intervene in various ways:

Acquisition:	Construction of cities, architecture Self-representation of the system by the artists Buying works of arts for museums and governmental institutions Sponsoring political art Museum's policies Exhibition policies State ceremonies with the help of artists
Restriction	Measures against political art Measures against opposition of artists, Measures against pornography or anti-religious art
Protection	Protection of monuments Preservation of arts Restoration of buildings and cities
Distribution	Foundation of academies, art schools Granting scholarships Welfare state measures for the artists

Regulation Regulation of conflicts between artists, groups in the economy or the churches
 Tax policies for sponsors
 Guidelines for the aesthetic world in buildings and cities (Kunst am Bau).

Not all of these governmental instruments in the arts are of equal importance. Protection of monuments was created only under the impact of historicism in the nineteenth century and welfare measures grew selectively in the twentieth century. Repressions against artists once were common but became rare after 1945: Grosz' Christ with gas-helmet was fined heavily by a court decision in the Weimar Republic. Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ" – which showed Jesus in a bath of urine – aroused antipathy but no longer any trial. Political provocation has become difficult because the former bourgeois Puritanism and prudishness withered away. As Karl Kraus once put it, "the true Bohemians don't make any more the concession to vex the bourgeois" (qtd. in Schlussbericht 230, col. 2).¹

In Germany, the Enquete Committee on Culture, which submitted its report in late 2007, since then developed a fabulous program on the arts. It proved to be more detailed and refined than any attempt to sketch a political science of the arts. The promotion of art and culture – *Kunst und Kultur* in the official formula – is hoped to enter into the constitution of the Basic Law. This development hopefully one day forfeits my statement that there is no political science of the arts for the time being.

1 "Die wahre Boheme macht den Philistern nicht mehr das Zugeständnis, sie zu ärgern."

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Fig. 1. Peter Paul Rubens: *Peace and War*, oil on canvas, 203,5 x 298 cm, London, National Gallery.

Rubens's Pictorial Peacekeeping Force: Negotiating through 'Visual Speech-Acts'¹

ULRICH HEINEN

Involved in the Antwerp painter's peace mission to London, Peter Paul Rubens's "Peace and War" (fig. 1; Baumstark, "Studien" 152-162) and its forerunner, "Venus, Mars and Amor" at the Dulwich College Picture Gallery (fig. 2; Heinen, Cat.-entry) are excellent examples for the hitherto rarely noticed function of political iconography in the performative utterance of diplomatic negotiations. The important role of donating and collecting works of art in the diplomatic sphere is well known. Art history also abundantly demonstrated how art was used for presenting more or less sophisticated political arguments or for proclaiming political power. An analysis of Rubens's "Peace and War" and its predecessor, however, will show how an artist was able to turn his artistic skill into an active instrument of argumentation and negotiation. The painting process will be recognised as a kind of 'paint act' in the sense of a 'visual speech act.' As propositionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary 'paint acts' these pictures must have taken an active part in the success of Rubens's mission. Therefore, I would like to outline the way in which Rubens was able to unfold the specific power of the visual medium by vitalising the specific means of visual representation and affectation in the conceptual and painterly artistry of his work.

Seeking Peace

At the end of his mission in London, Rubens personally handed over his "Peace and War" as a present to the English King Charles I (Millar 2, 4, 229). A likely date for the presentation of the picture could have been the farewell audience on 3 March 1630, at which Rubens was honoured with a knighthood by the English king due to his success in ending the belliger-

1 This article is a condensed version of a more extensive study on Rubens's "Peace and War" that will be published later. I am indebted to David Jaffé for critically discussing my suggestions, to Rainer Bartholomai and Cordula van Wyhe, for help with the translation of the first version of a paper on the topic given in 2003 at Cambridge University, and Karin Weckermann for amending this article.

ency between England and Spain (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 347-348). The sources of information keep quiet about the more precise context concerning the painting's origin and the use for which it was intended. But the progress of Rubens's peace negotiations at the English court is well documented by many letters of Rubens and others (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5). Thus it is possible to look for closer correlations between Rubens's artistic and his diplomatic activities.

The diplomatic peace mission of Rubens as an envoy of the Spanish king, from 5 June 1629 to 23 March 1630 (Magurn 283-290; von Simson, *Humanist* 287-325),² had been the result of Rubens's and Balthasar Gerbier's strenuous efforts. The two painter-diplomats had met at the French court in 1625, when Rubens's Medici cycle was inaugurated at the Palais de Luxembourg and Gerbier was accompanying the legation of George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, for whom Gerbier had worked since 1616 as agent, painter, architect, and Keeper of the Duke's Collection. These negotiations had been supported from their beginning by the Infanta Isabella, the Governess of the Habsburg Netherlands, who had sent Rubens to the Spanish court in 1628 in order to prepare the London mission. To vest Rubens, who had been knighted in 1624, with an appropriate rank for this mission, the Spanish king had nominated him a Secretary of his Privy Council in the Netherlands on 27 April 1629.³

Only a reconciliation of the superpowers England and Spain would have ended England's support for the Anti-Habsburg rebels in the Northern Netherlands. This would have re-strengthened Habsburg sovereignty across the entire Netherlands. The Anglo-Spanish-Peace had been shattered once England had sent military and financial support to the Dutch troops in the Roman Empire finally in 1625, when England had entered the anti-Habsburg Coalition of The Hague. In a very cloudy situation, Rubens's instructions of the Habsburg courts in Brussels and Spain were to prevent an imminent anti-Habsburg offensive pact between England and France that would have left the Habsburg Netherlands completely surrounded. Therefore, it was imperative for him to achieve peace by arranging an exchange of official ambassadors between Madrid and London.

It is uncertain if Rubens could have known at the moment the Spanish king gave permission to his negotiations with England on 1 June 1629, that Spain had already signed a secret treaty with France on 2 March 1629, envisaging invading England, dividing it between Spain and France and re-establishing Catholicism (Healy 153, 206n69). But yet as early as 18 September 1627, Rubens had informed Gerbier about the first steps on the way to

2 For the context see Gardiner. For the Anglo-Spanish conflict see explicitly Heinen, "Versatissimus" 297-302.

3 Rubens's rank triggered confusion at the London court; see the letter of Sir John Coke to Jaques Han, 15 June 1629; Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 62; Loomie 62; Betcherman ch. 9, note 25.



Fig. 2. Peter Paul Rubens and workshop:
Venus, Mars and Amor, c. 1630, oil on canvas,
195,2 x 133 cm, London,
Dulwich Picture Gallery.

a Spanish-French agreement for an invasion of England, assuring him that this would be only “thunder without lightning, making a noise in the air without an effect” (Magurn 201-202). Carefully suggesting, reinterpreting, and euphemising the facts, we find that already in the preparation phase of his London mission, Rubens shows all the skills of a promising agent of the Habsburgs’ double-dealings.

Disarming Mars

The reconstruction of Rubens’s ‘visual speech acts’ in London has to begin with Rubens’s “Venus, Mars and Amor” at the Dulwich College Picture Gallery. It is widely known that Rubens executed this painting about the same time as “Peace and War.”⁴ But the common assumption that Venus in the Dulwich painting repeats the top half of the central group from “Peace and War” needs to be refuted. The iconography of the Dulwich painting is very conventional; the evolution of the composition is very clear and com-

4 See Martin 119. Particularly the very schematic face of Venus seems to have been over-painted by an assistant later.

bins only a few sources: Rubens replaced the woman of Titian's "Allegory of the Marchese de Vasto" (fig. 3; Wethey 127-129; Heinen, Cat.-entry 310)⁵ by a reversed version of his "Venus at Her Toilet" (fig. 4; Wethey 200-201).⁶ There are no indications at all that this painting presupposes the much more complicated and sophisticated "Peace and War." On the contrary, the Dulwich painting must have preceded the painting in the National Gallery.

The theme is extremely well suited to the context of a peace-mission. The locus classicus for the goddess of love attracting Mars and bringing up their mutual child is the salutation in the first line of Lucretius's "De Rerum Natura": "Mother of the descendants of Aeneas, delight of Gods and men, nurturing Venus" (1.1-2; Baumstark, "Studien" 160-161). Lucretius's hymn on Venus praises the goddess as the origin of love, lust, fertility and creativity, and even as mother of the Roman Empire and as the origin of peace. The concept of the nurturing Venus incorporates principles of natural history, poetry, ethics and political thought. Therefore, Rubens's painting sets the eternal world of this myth as a framework for his negotiations.

In the Dulwich painting not only Venus but even Mars is completely focused on the shared obligation of bringing up their little son. Together the caring gods are looking tenderly upon the young god of love.⁷ Even the god of war is converted to peace. Lucretius describes Mars and Venus in his first chapter as an unequal couple in love. The antique author states that the loving unification of Venus and Mars guarantees peace. As long as Venus succeeds in keeping Mars bound to her, peace prevails (Lucretius, "De Rerum Natura" 1.28-40). As a conventional emblem of union, Amor's unified arrows symbolise the peaceful unification of Mars and Venus in Rubens's painting.⁸

The Dulwich painting, however, interprets this story in a special way. Tired of fighting, Rubens's Mars seems to have returned from war. The twilight in the background accentuates this mood. Furthermore there are some revealing pentimenti particularly visible to the naked eye. Pentimenti (Murray 114) show that the armour of the Dulwich Mars must have reached to his wrist in an early state of painting. Then it must have been cut down to the elbow, and now it only covers the upper arm.⁹ Probably in a final

5 For a copy of a similar composition in Rubens's possession see Wood, *Rubens* vol. 1, 287-290.

6 For Rubens's copy of this painting see Wood, *Rubens* vol. 1, 190-197. For other sources see Martin 123n18; Baumstark, "Studien" 158; Hughes 157-165, esp. 162.

7 For a similar caring man at Venus's side see the Vulcan in Jacopo Tintoretto, "Vulcan, Venus and Amor," Firenze, Galleria Pitti; Pallucchini/Rossi vol. 1, 164.

8 For Rubens's comment on the representation of this symbol in another painting see Heinen/Büttner 160.

9 Apparently the overpaint is by Rubens, but further technical investigation seems useful to confirm this observation.



Fig. 3. Titian: *Allegory of the Marchese de Vasto*, c. 1530–1535, oil on canvas, 121 x 107 cm, Paris, Louvre.

step, Rubens painted the putto behind Mars's back – the red colour of the drapery just shimmers through the putto's body. More and more Mars is now willing to be disarmed. The god of war has laid down his shield at the feet of his beloved. After taking off the armour from Mars's arms, one of Venus's little helpers is loosening the clasps of the harness (Baumstark, "Studien" 227n409). In a moment, the god of war will sit naked on the bed of his beloved. Possibly some visible pentimenti in the face of Mars and Venus may indicate that suitable to this disarming, Rubens changed the facial expression of his actors.

The whole painting and the pentimenti indicate that Rubens must have performed the old iconographical concept of 'Mars disarmed'¹⁰ as an impressing step-by-step performative 'visual speech act.' This process is directly aligned to Rubens's peace negotiations. The colours that are related to the two unequal gods may be recognized as the heraldic tinctures of the negotiating parties England and Spain. Blue is the colour of the wrap

10 See for example Jacob Matham: "Mars and Venus," c. 1611, engraving, 47 x 34,6 cm; Długaiczek 110, 348.



Fig. 4. Titian: *Venus at Her Toilet with two Cupids*, c. 1552–1555, Washington, National Gallery of Art.

on Venus's lap, and the same blue is the colour of the English king's Most Noble Order of the Garter.¹¹ Red is the colour of the drapery behind Mars, and the same red is the colour of the Habsburgs and of the Spanish king's banner.¹² As a result, it must have been easy to understand Rubens's step-by-step disarming of Mars as a visual peace overture of Spain, open for turning its military power to peace. The identification of the peaceful Venus with England must have been not only a sophisticated attentive compliment to Rubens's negotiating partners. It even coincides with Rubens's general description of the English people as "rich and happy in the lap of peace" in his letter to the French courtier Pierre Dupuy from 8 August 1629 (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 147–148).

The identification of Spain with Mars being willingly disarmed and converted to the peaceful English Venus finally corresponds with the important main argument in Rubens's mission, preserved in one of his letters to Olivarez from 22 July 1629:

¹¹ For this order see Raatschen 56.

¹² For the heraldic colour of the Habsburgs see Klecker "Purpura."

I was to assure the King of England that His Catholic Majesty had the same good wishes for an agreement as he did, etc., and that 'whenever the King of England should send to Spain a person authorized to negotiate the peace, our King, in turn, would send someone to England,' etc. (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 120)

Akin to the negotiations the interaction between Venus and Mars in the Dulwich painting appears as a question of mutuality in a step-by-step process: If the English king – like Venus – shows himself as peaceful, how could there be any doubt that the Spanish king for his part would be gladly turned to peace like Mars in this painting.

Consequently, the Dulwich picture could have accompanied Rubens's negotiations perfectly, especially at the initial stage. In this phase, the painting could have helped define the subject of the negotiations and convince the English court of the Spanish king's willingness to respond to London's readiness for peace. With its sensual opulence and the smooth spirit of the scene as well as with the complex implications of transferring the actual concerns into terms of mythology, Rubens's painting should have been the perfect tool to inspire confidence, to trigger the Spanish interests gently and to set negotiations into a harmonious and prolific atmosphere. Moreover, a picture like this can inspire a pleasant conversation even about serious themes as it avoids the risk of serious conflict for the reason that it is more difficult to constrain a special meaning in images than it is in words. Finally, the visual medium makes it easy to test different viewers' approaches to the negotiations through their reactions to the painting. Hence the step-by-step evolution seems to prove that Rubens brought himself carefully closer to the different players at the foreign court by performing a perlocutionary 'visual speech act.'

Encouraging Venus

Rubens continued this gradual process by then transferring the upper part of his Dulwich composition to a new canvas. The complex evolution of "Peace and War" needs closer examining. In the support of this painting seven pieces of canvas were identified by technical investigation. They were sewn together in two or more distinct steps (fig. 5; Martin 118-119; Roy). All in all Rubens must have begun his "Peace and War" by transferring the outlines of his "Venus and Amor" from the Dulwich painting as well as their compositional position to the vertical canvas piece that now is the largest of the preserved "Peace and War" (Heinen, "Loyalität" 26-27). After visualising the conversion of Mars in his Dulwich painting, Rubens now has changed the whole scene. Without Mars but next to a satyr with fruit, Venus is being turned into the central figure of the well known motif of

'Venus freezing' obviously alluding to the very popular moral 'Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.'¹³

To overcome an atmosphere of suspicion between the enemies England and Spain was the first purpose of Rubens's mission. There is a report from Sir Isaac Wake to Lord Dorchester from 4 July 1629, that even allied negotiators at the London court were "beginning to suspect their [the Spaniards'] coldnesse." Rubens for his part is said to have "complayned [...] of y^e little satisfaction he hath receaved in England" (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 95). And yet some months later Rubens reported back to Olivarez on 21 September 1629 that he had to dissipate new doubts of the English Lord Treasurer, Baron Richard Weston, of the seriousness of the Spanish olive branch (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 202-203). Dinners must have been a perfect opportunity to inspire familiarity and sympathy between Rubens and the English negotiators. For example it is mentioned in a letter of Sir John Coke to Jacques Han, 15 June 1629, that the Earl of Carlisle invited Rubens to dine with him and that Rubens dined with the Lord Treasurer and other important persons (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 62-63). By switching "Venus and Mars" to the tempting motif of 'Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus,' Rubens obviously promoted the creation of a visual incentive for a climate of sociability in this sense. The iconography of affection, being encouraged by food and wine, could have been very useful to contribute to an atmosphere of pleasant conversation that could establish a basis for gaining the English courtiers' trust.

Promising Abundance

The further evolution of Rubens's "Peace and War" continued the chain of distinct visual messages from the Dulwich painting. By expanding the small painting on the right-hand side into a horizontal format and adding the expulsion of Mars in the background as well as some nosy kids on the attached piece of canvas, Rubens gradually, but radically changed the whole composition as well as the sense of every figure, making the whole atmosphere more and more cheerful. What it represented now was that war had to be expelled at all costs in order to save peace and wealth. This central argument was intensified when Rubens complemented the precious gifts of abundance and the appearance of luxury on the left, a peaceful leopard below, and a flying Putto above by gradually adding some more strips of canvas around the central horizontal format. Probably as a separate and last step he added the companions of Mars and the broader landscape on the small right-hand side.

13 For this motif in other paintings of Rubens see Heinen/Büttner 311-314.

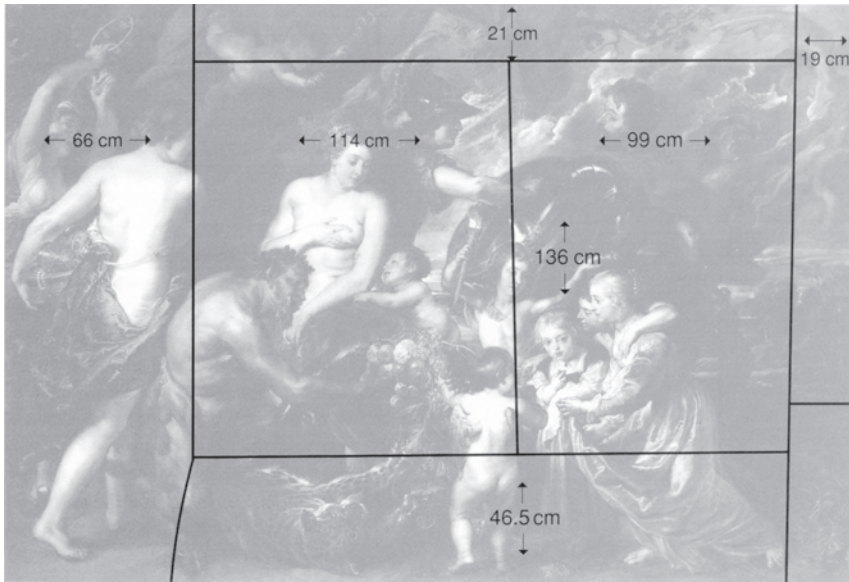


Fig. 5. Peter Paul Rubens: *Peace and War*, diagram showing the construction of the canvas support; from: Roy (note 23), fig. 2.

In order to understand the intention of these late alterations it would be useful to consider the final picture closer. Only now the whole composition that started in the painting's nucleus with the intimate mutual entanglement of mother and child is transformed into an overall wavelike rhythm. In a wide swinging motion two Maenads are dancing into the picture. One of them looks with ravished attention to heaven, beating a rhythm with castanets and a tambourine, which gives a forward drive to the whole picture. The contrapostic dance move of her companion enhances the tempo and leads to the centre of the picture. This dancer balances a golden basin overloaded with pompous gold cups and jewellery. She is resting these treasures loosely on her hip – just to swing them round her body and to present them to the group in front of her at the next moment. In her ecstatic dance her silken clothing slides down to below her hip revealing her gleaming white skin. Her golden girdle only very loosely holds the precious cloth. This swing of the fabric moves downwards thus continuing the musical motion into the contours of the squatting satyr's back. This creature of nature – as part of the entourage of Bacchus crowned with wine-leaves – has bent his goat-like knees only to transfer the verve of the dance to the Horn of Plenty. The music present in the picture seems to resound in the middle axis. The winding of the overflowing Horn of Plenty picks up the rhythm for a last time and pours it out in a more than rich flow of apples, pears, peaches, lemons, pomegranates, white and black grapes and other tempting

fresh fruit. Like an incoming wave breaks in a foaming spray and multiple whirls, Rubens plays around the overflowing Horn of Plenty with softly intertwining curves.

In front of the satyr a leopard, the companion of Bacchus, is ragging on the ground. Peacefully the beast is listening to the muttering satyr and is playing with curly wine tendrils. The motif of predators lying next to children and playing without any aggression with fruit characterises an eternal world of peace. This sign of paradise or the Golden Age pertains to the Old Testament and to Vergil and other antique authors (Baumstark, "Studien" 144). The tail of the big cat is sensuously fondling the ankles of the scantily clad woman. Its body is bending elegantly in the curve it has taken up from the blessings of the Horn of Plenty on one side. On the opposite side the cat's body prolongs the energizing compositional line that has evolved from the contour of the satyr's back over his waist cloth downwards – and is continued in the twirled tip of the Horn of Plenty.

From the left a glowing light is streaming into the scene. At first it brightly lightens the bare backside of the dancer. Then it falls directly onto the shape of the mother figure presiding in the middle of the picture. In a subtle way this figure, which is towering up behind the satyr, is taking up the vigorous energy of the composition culminating in the Horn of Plenty. The upward motion, in which the infant on her lap is reaching greedily for the breast offered by her, as well as the mother's crossed arms are connected to these powerful curves. Finally the gesture of the fingers, in which the mother offers her nourishing breast and lets a thin stream of milk shoot into the drooling mouth of her baby, echoes the satyr's arm and the curve of the Horn of Plenty with the cascade of fruits. Thus the nurturing breast of the mother, the milk dripping down the mouth of her baby and the overflowing Horn of Plenty become key-symbols of nourishment itself.

Rubens composed this circle of figures by means of whirling movements as a comprehensive symbol of natural powers. Before you even begin to understand the meaning of the picture you are already being caught by the musical verve, in which all the treasures unfold before your eyes. Even to the curved tail of the peacefully playing predator, the delicate windings of the grape branches protruding from the Horn of Plenty, and to the twine ornament on the silken gown of the dancing woman, Rubens has dispersed the vigorously pulsating powers of the rhythm all over this part of the painting.

This whirl only comes to a standstill when the viewer's eye suddenly meets the eyes of a shy girl next to the Horn of Plenty. Two young boys have led her and her elder sister – both the only figures in the painting that are clad in contemporary clothing – to the well of blessing and bid them welcome to the land of plenty. A winged putto, who seems to have been luring the group to this place, has picked a shimmering grape for the little

child, which she now seems to be moving shyly towards her mouth. Reluctantly she has come to a standstill as if being caught red-handed by the viewer at pinching a bit and wanting to ask now belatedly: "May I?" Her small clumsy hand seems to try to cover up the fruit in her apron, which she held stretched out to catch some more fruit in it just a moment ago. More courageous than the little girl is her elder sister. She is not paying any attention to the apple that the right hand of the putto is holding out for her, but is focussing her look on the masses protruding from the Horn of Plenty, which the putto is offering to her with his left hand. Behind her one of the boys leads the girls with a torch, by which he can be identified as Hymenaeus, the god of marriage (Martin 123n28). He and his companion are speaking gently in affirmation. With his right arm, which is intimately placed around the elder girl's shoulder, one of the boys is leading her towards the mountain of fruits from the satyr's cornucopia, while with his other hand he is pulling the grapes in her direction over her little sister's head. She is a bit reluctant in her approach to grip the fruit, and for a moment it seems as if the elder girl was about to kneel down in reverence. But the hem of her skirt has already been lifted by her in order to collect the treasures of nature in it. For her subtle combination of courage and respect she is being rewarded twice in the picture, as the other boy is crowning her with a wreath of flowers just at the moment, when she is ready to accept the present.

Like in a mirror the viewers, attracted by the gifts of nature, are confronted with their own insecurity in the face of such overwhelming promises by meeting the look of the widely opened eyes of the little girl. But then again viewers focus back on the promised fruits guided by the determined profile of the older girl. Each beholder, who is still keeping his distance when standing in front of the picture, is certain to be seduced by the offered delights in a similar manner as the little girls. Immediately connected with the viewer by their contemporary clothes and the little girl's direct gaze out of the picture, the children demonstrate how you can overcome shyness and mistrust towards such superabundant gifts. In the foreground of the picture Rubens hereby opens up a seductive invitation to unrestricted enjoyment. Just looking at his scene the viewer is convinced to imagine himself far of any conflicts, being immersed into this ecstatic eternal paradise of wealth, peace and delight, where even dangerous predators turn their animally instincts to bunches of grapes.

Introducing Hymenaeus

It is remarkable that it is the god of marriage who directs the way to the world of Pax and Plutus. Indeed the initiative for a wedding played an im-

portant role in Rubens's peace negotiations. In a letter from 30 June 1629 Rubens reported to Olivarez that

discussions are still being held here, and the King himself told me in a friendly way that it would be advisable to propose some marriage between the children of the Count Palatine and the brother of the Duke of Bavaria. No one has any idea of the ages and qualities of these young people, but if there is any conformity between them, all would approve the alliance. (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5, 191; see also 88)

Such a marriage had already been discussed in Madrid in 1621 with the addition that the son of the Duke Palatinate should be educated as a Catholic (Gardiner vol. 4, 328-329, 368-369). Indeed this marriage could possibly have resolved the main barrier in the Anglo-Spanish peace negotiations and could have pacified the main trouble spot of the Thirty Years' War.

The English royalty had been entangled in the diplomatic and military struggles of the Thirty Years' War from the beginning by family relationships to the Duke Palatinate. The Reformed Duke Frederick V, Elector Palatine, married to Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of James I of England, had been closely involved in the outbreak of the hostilities in the Roman Empire. In 1619 he had explicitly stood up against the Emperor. He had accepted the Bohemian king's crown and had challenged a military clash with the Catholic rulers of the Empire. Friedrich's army was beaten in the battle at the White Mountain by the imperial troops in 1620. He was declared an outlaw and had to flee to The Hague. Allies of the Emperor occupied the Palatinate's land. The Palatinate's honour and the right to be an Elector was taken away from Friedrich and handed to the Duke of Bavaria.

From then on the English king always had been faced with his son in law's demand to aid him and his descendants in regaining the Palatinate with the claim to support the Protestant party in Germany. Due to the pressure of these demands detrimental to English interior policy Charles I had broken the peace with Spain shortly after his inauguration. Even the Habsburgs in Brussels were playing a key role in this Palatinate conflict. Locked up by the Dutch rebels in the North and the mostly hostile French in the South and West, for them the Habsburg Road from Antwerp through Germany along the Rhine – particularly through the Palatinate – and over the Alps to Genua was the only doorway to the sea, essential for their economical and military survival (Heinen, "Versatissimus" 299-302 with further references).

In Rubens's correspondence the Palatinate conflict is treated again and again (Ruelens/Rooses vol. 5). In his letter from 24 August 1629 to Olivarez he analysed the Palatine conflict and the Anglo-Spanish peace as the crucible for the conflicting interests:

I consider this peace to be of such consequence that it seems to me the knot in the chain [nodo della catena] of all the confederations of Europe. The very fear of it alone is already producing great effects. I understand also the changes and the bitterness that would result from a rupture in negotiations; if these should become completely hopeless, we should in a short time see an overturn in the present state