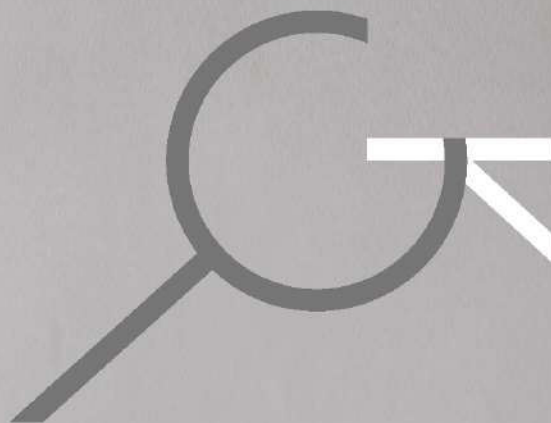ΕΙΔΙΚΟ ΤΕΥΧΟΣ

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Περιεχόμενα

ANNA-MARIA KANTA*

Proletarian Drawing: West German Pedagogy's Communicative Turn in the 1970s

Abstract

This paper argues that the medium of drawing was at the crux of a series of West German pedagogical initiatives calling for radical educational reform across elementary and secondary education in the aftermath of the student protest movements of the late 1960s. What propelled the elevation of drawing into an exemplary pedagogical medium during this decade was not only the growing dissatisfaction with traditional art education, but more importantly the intensified inquiry into the proletariat, both as a conceptual and sociological category, an inquiry that in its turn pivoted on the historical experience of the German working class's susceptibility to Nazi ideology. In the pages of the journal *Ästhetik und Kommunikation: Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* [*Aesthetics and Communication: Contributions to Political Education*] we find a specific pedagogical approach to drawing that reclaims the original meaning of "appropriation" in the sense of a distinct way of relating to and being in the world, and retrieves the collective and radical underpinnings of historical memory. As such, *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* opens the way to a differential definition of the "copy", one that is intimately linked to the mastering of the past and anchored to the tangible, sensory, class-specific reworking of contested images and signs.

* Anna-Maria Kanta is a Leverhulme Early Career fellow at the University of York. Her research, supported by the Leverhulme Trust, considers crucial transformations within the West German visual arts of the Cold War through the lens of communication.

Περίληψη

Συγγραφέας: Άννα Μαρία Κάντα*. Τίτλος: Προλεταριακό σχέδιο: Η επικοινωνιακή στροφή στην παιδαγωγική της Δυτικής Γερμανίας την δεκαετία του 1970.

Το άρθρο υποστηρίζει πως, στον απόηχο των φοιτητικών κινητοποιήσεων των τελών της δεκαετίας του 1960 στη Δυτική Γερμανία, το μέσο του σχεδίου βρέθηκε στο επίκεντρο παιδαγωγικών πρωτοβουλιών που αξίωναν ριζοσπαστικές μεταρρυθμίσεις στην πρωτοβάθμια και δευτεροβάθμια εκπαίδευση. Η ανάδειξη του σχεδίου σε παραδειγματικό παιδαγωγικό μέσο αφενός εξέφραζε την αυξανόμενη δυσαρέσκεια για τα παραδοσιακά μοντέλα καλλιτεχνικής εκπαίδευσης κατά τη δεκαετία του 1970. Αφετέρου και πρωτίστως ανταποκρινόταν στο εντατικοποιημένο ενδιαφέρον για το προλεταριάτο, ως εννοιολογική και κοινωνιολογική κατηγορία, καθώς και στην ιστορική εμπειρία της επιρρέπειας της Γερμανικής εργατικής τάξης στη ναζιστική ιδεολογία. Στις σελίδες της περιοδικής έκδοσης *Ästhetik und Kommunikation: Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* [*Αισθητική και Επικοινωνία: Συμβολές στην πολιτική εκπαίδευση*] συναντάμε μια ιδιαίτερη προσέγγιση στο σχέδιο που με μιας αποκαθιστά την αυθεντική σημασία της «ιδιοποίησης» ως ενός διακριτού τρόπου νόησης και ύπαρξης και ανακτά τα συλλογικά και ριζοσπαστικά θεμέλια της ιστορικής μνήμης. Ως εκ τούτου, το περιοδικό προτείνει ένα διαφοροποιημένο ορισμό του «αντιγράφου» που συνδέεται στενά με τη διεργασία του παρελθόντος και εδράζεται στην απτή, αισθητηριακή και ταξικά συγκεκριμένη ανακατασκευή επίμαχων εικόνων και συμβόλων.

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* Η Άννα-Μαρία Κάντα είναι Δρ. Ιστορίας της Τέχνης, υπότροφος Leverhulme Early Career στο Πανεπιστήμιο του York. Η έρευνά της, που υποστηρίζεται από το Ίδρυμα Leverhulme, εξετάζει κρίσιμες μεταμορφώσεις στις εικαστικές τέχνες της Δυτικής Γερμανίας κατά την περίοδο του Ψυχρού Πολέμου υπό το πρίσμα της επικοινωνίας.

Fig. 1. Cover of *Polizei=Terror gegen Kind und Kunst*. Reprinted in *…gegen kind und kunst,* ed. Diethart Kerbs (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1975). © Diethart Kerbs.

Fig. 2. Cover of *…gegen kind und kunst,* ed. Diethart Kerbs (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1975).

Consider the following two covers that in their forty-seven years distance register the politically explosive background against which West German art pedagy and pedagogical practice developed in the 1970s: the first is from a 1927 agitational booklet published by the Red Aid [Rote Hilfe Deutschland], the mass-membership, welfare organization affiliated with the German Communist Party [Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands] (fig. 1); the second from the 1974 reprint of the booklet by the Anabas Verlag, a leftish publishing house based in Frankfurt-am-Main (fig. 2). The 1927 cover confronts us with a rather unostentatious depiction of youthful comradeship and resistance in the face of an ostensibly invincible enemy, its title merely replicating and amplifying the message already clearly articulated in visual form: "Police equals terror against child and art" [Polizei = Terror gegen Kind und Kunst]. In the 1974 cover the illustration has been replaced with a drawing, by a child we are meant to assume, taken from the original publication. The title is now abbreviated – *…gegen Kind und Kunst–,* the set of dots signifying a foe who is not to be rendered legible, any and all contextual clues as to the nebulous, unnamed ideological enemy displaced to the margins of the cover: "on the conflict between bourgeois rule and socialist upbringing" [zum konflikt zwischen bürgerlicher herrschaft und sozialistischer erziehung].

Seemingly commercial imperatives justified this omission, noted the editor of the 1974 edition, Diethart Kerbs. Certainly "police-terror", along with words such as "exploitation" and "class-struggle", signified the sort of leftish vocabulary so markedly

alien to the "cultivated yet unpolitical" reader, their mere utterance disrupting the "congenial-contemplative atmosphere of cultural consumption" to which he was well accustomed.[1] Yet far from being a marketing strategy, the abbreviation stood for a self-imposed act of censoring that spoke volumes to the increasingly restrictive and hostile context within which many West German educators felt to be working in the 1970s, especially since the institution of the 1972 "Anti-Radical Decree", drafted in response to a series of attacks by the Red Army Faction and banning those deemed aligned to its extremist ideology from serving in the public sector. And indeed, far from dumping down his criticism, in his short introduction to the reprint Kerbs not only alerted the readers' attention to "the [present] cases of *Berufsverboten* [exclusions from work], lay-offs or employment-exclusions of Left teachers and socialist pedagogues", but crucially condemned, in no uncertain terms, the forceful closure of a self-organized cultural youth centre in West Berlin that year, a two-storey building known as the "Putte" and occupied at the time of its evacuation by eighty-six youngsters.[2]

The reprint of an agitational booklet with the evocative title *Police=Terror against children and art* seemed, then, all the more urgent. The original publication was provoked by a decree issued in 1927 by the district administrator of Osterholz demanding the removal of the murals decorating the walls of the Barkenhoff Kinderheim, a children's home in the Red Aid's trusteeship since 1923. In 1925 an order to close the home, hosting the children of communist workers imprisoned or killed during the bloody clashes wreaking havoc on the fragile Weimar Republic, was met with a counter-campaign, and ultimately failed to come into effect. Now the district administrator was back with a vengeance. The murals depicting the plight and sufferings of plebeians and peasants around the globe and across history, the brutal assaults on striking workers, and crucially the coming victory of the proletarian class were to be removed from view – that is, from the sight of children considered to be all the more vulnerable to the manipulative effects of communist propaganda. Heinrich Vogeler, the artist who had crafted the murals, was the initial owner of the Barkenhoff, and in 1923 had transferred its ownership to the Red Aid. While noting the "exemplary impression" that the exterior of the Barkenhoff made upon the visitor, a police report from 1925, included in *Police=Terror,* stressed the danger that Vogeler's murals posed in "politically inciting children".[3] And while, without doubt disapprovingly, pointing out the "romantic" and "lyrical" beginnings of an artist once engrossed in Oscar Wilde's fairy tales – Vogeler was by then an accomplished illustrator of children's books – the Red Aid praised his radical conversion into "a revolutionary, an active fighter of the proletarian class".[4] So much so that Vogeler's murals, along with

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1 Diethart Kerbs, "Einleitung", in …*gegen kind und kunst,* ed. Diethart Kerbs (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1975), 3.

[2] Kerbs, "Einleitung", 16.

[3] "Das Kinderheim 'Barkenhoff' der Roten Hilfe", in *Polizei=Terror gegen Kind und Kunst* 7. Reprinted in … *gegen kind und kunst,* ed. Diethart Kerbs (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1975).

[4] "Die Arbeiterkinderheime der Roten Hilfe in Deutschland", in *Polizei=Terror gegen Kind und Kunst* 15. Reprinted in … *gegen kind und kunst,* ed. Diethart Kerbs (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1975).
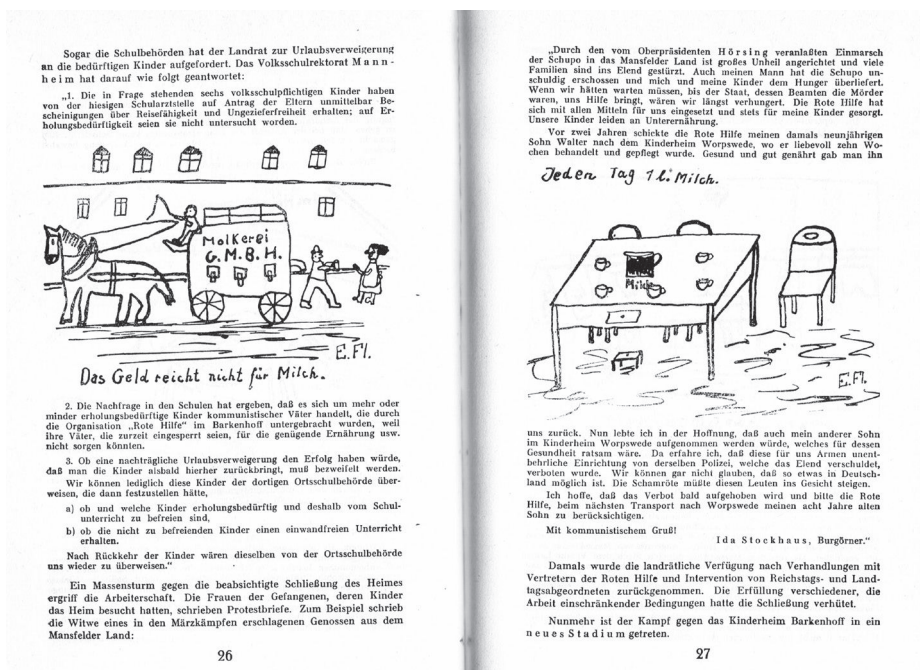
Fig. 3. Double-page spread from *Polizei=Terror… gegen Kind und Kunst.*

comprehensive reports on the living conditions of working-class children, and drawings by the children in the Kinderheim were promoted in the booklet's subtitle as "documents on the history of the Social Republic of Germany". Interrupting the reports, the drawings acted both as testimonies to the dire reality of the working class and as ideological reinforcements of the communist ideals. "There isn't enough money for milk", a child had scribbled on one of their drawings; "everyday 1lt. milk" on another (fig. 3). Children's drawings conveying the serious deprivation suffered at home were contrasted throughout the book to depictions of the material abundance enjoyed in the Kinderheim, thus reframing in their juxtaposition the ideological conflict between capitalism and communism as nothing less than a fight for the survival of the working class.

Not merely to be taken as yet another relic of a foregone proletarian culture, this interwar booklet had to be put, Kerbs insisted, into use, reinserted into the school, and repurposed as a teaching aid across a broad field of subjects spanning the humanities. Many lessons were thus still to be learned, and many pedagogical battles to be fought. For the drawings included in *Police=Terror* clearly attested to the Kinderheim children's capacity for articulating their own needs, and for making palpable – even without any particular artistic training – their "concrete living context", their *Lebenszusammenhang.*[5]

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[5] Kerbs, "Einleitung", 15.

Such "graphic and visual expressions" therefore posed a serious challenge to the disciplines of psychology and art pedagogy, and by extension to the orthodox postwar drawing instruction since it still privileged supposedly "child-appropriate" themes: "flowers, butterflies, Easter bunnies and whatever else usually hops out of art pedagogical literature from Franz Cizek to Gustav Hartlaub and Gustav Kolb".[6] That the rediscovery of *Police=Terror* also carried broader implications for the discipline of art history and the ways it was taught across secondary and higher educational institutions was for Kerbs abundantly clear: Vogeler's murals and the drawings by the Kinderheim children, he warned, required much more than a contemplative attitude on the part of the viewer. They demanded, instead, a thoroughgoing reflection on the broader sociopolitical conditions of their making and opened a route towards readdressing the complex "mediation between aesthetic and political existence".[7]

...*gegen Kind und Kunst* may be seen as belonging to what has been eloquently described as an "archive of past features": the long – and global – inventory of radical pedagogical projects from the 1960s and 1970s, and of their up to the present time unrealized possibilities.[8] It may also be seen as partaking in the process of reclamation of a specifically German interwar working-class culture, and of proletarian forms of cultural expression; a process that since the 1970s was motivated, as Sabine Hake has noted, by the "search for aesthetic modalities and collective imaginaries that could prove valuable to then-contemporary forms of protest".[9] Crucially, it is suggestive of the distinct, yet virtually ignored, position that drawing, as taught and practiced in schools, came to hold by the mid 1970s.

At first sight the medium of drawing does not appear to lend itself to the kind of ambitious and exacting pedagogical tasks associated since the late 1960s with filmmaking or performative forms of protest: all too old-fashioned and technologically regressive to contribute in any meaningful way to the construction of an alternative audiovisual infrastructure or to receive the kind of inflated publicity the "happening" enjoyed; thoroughly embedded in the history and discourse of the "fine arts"; and, crucially in the context of school education, transient in its nature and bound by the restrictions of the national curriculum.[10] As I intend to show, however, the medium of drawing was at the crux of a series of West German pedagogical

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[6] Kerbs, "Einleitung", 15.

[7] Kerbs, "Einleitung", 9.

[8] The topicality of radical and alternative pedagogies for our present has been more recently the focus of the research project *Bildungsschock. Lernen, Politik und Architektur in den 1960er und 1970er Jahren,* that culminated in an exhibition at the Haus der Kultur der Welt (27 May 2021-11 July 2021). For an abridged version of the exhibition catalogue see Tom Holert, *Politics of Learning, Politics of Space. Architecture and the Education Shock of the 1960s and 1970s* (Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 2021).

[9] See Sabine Hake, *The Proletarian Dream: Socialism, Culture, and Emotion in Germany, 1863–1933* (Berlin, Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 349.

[10] On the mutual interpenetrations between political and artistic forms of protest in the late 1960s see Tom Holert, "Learning Curve. Radical Art and Education in Germany", *Artforum* XLVI, no. 9 (May 2008): 334-339.

initiatives calling for radical educational reform in the aftermath of the student protest movements. Its critical reappraisal coincided with a hitherto unprecedented and thoroughgoing enquiry into Nazi ideology and aesthetics, and intersected with debates on the educational potentials and blind spots of art history, and its so-called "mediating", that is communicative, and by extension social, function.[11] In the course of the 1970s drawing was enlisted in the promotion of an "emancipatory" school curriculum and reconceived as a didactic tool intervening between abstract concepts and concrete experience, and between the critical apprehension of an increasingly abstract, complex and mass-mediated visual reality and its embodied concretization in pictorial form.

The pursuit of such pedagogical imperatives was nearly nowhere as cohesive as in the twentieth issue of the journal *Ästhetik und Kommunikation: Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* [*Aesthetics and Communication: Contributions to Political Education*], published in 1975. By that time the journal, with which editorship Kerbs was also associated, was in its fifth year of circulation, having established its position within a booming leftish publicist sphere. As its title already announced, it was meant to recast "aesthetics" and "communication" as inherently political categories, by dissecting their latent or suppressed educational values. Thus unsurprisingly – from our contemporary viewpoint – it was not devoted to "art education" proper, adopting instead an expansive, and not to mention contested, definition of the aesthetic. Significantly, it set from the outset to intervene in the politics, and policies, shaping West German educational institutions, and ultimately to dismantle their repressive structures – a far-reaching ambition, to be sure, that permeated a progressive and politically partisan pedagogical scene otherwise divided from within by its communist, socialist and anti-authoritarian tendencies.[12] Its editors' distinctive contribution lay in their resolute attention to the multifarious products and often unattended effects of an ever expanding mediasphere. Not incidentally sociologist Oskar Negt and filmmaker Alexander Kluge – whose joined and individual works remain emphatically associated with the theorization of proletarian "counter-publics" – were listed in several issues of the journal as its "permanent collaborators". Throughout the 1970s the interwar years figured prominently on the pages of the journal. Next to special issues documenting the cultural politics of National Socialism, the constitution of the fascist public sphere, and the demise of proletarian forms of cultural expression, *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* featured articles on virtually all main subject areas of primary and secondary education and acted as forum for intense, and often far from frictionless debates, between art historians and art educators.

Given the sheer volume of specialized journals and publications on art education from this period, and given *Ästhetik und Kommunikation's* impressive variety of topics, it might seem counterintuitive to argue for the centrality of the twentieth issue in retracing the political and pedagogical motivations stimulating drawing's changed orientation in the 1970s. It is, however, precisely the journal's wide-ranging, cross-disciplinary and cross-curricular focus that merits

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[11] This double focus was clearly articulated in an edited volume also published by Anabas Verlag in 1975. See Irene Below, ed., *Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung* (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1975).

[12] See Jack Zipes, "Educating, Miseducating, Re-educating Children: A Report on Attempts to Desocialize the Capitalist Socialization Process in West Germany", *New German Critique* 1 (Winter 1973): 142-159.

attention, for it also informed the conceptual basis upon which its instruction was to be reappraised and repurposed. The conviction that this, to all appearances, peripheral and inconsequential school activity offered a vantage point onto some of the most vexed questions and socially divisive aspects of the West German educational system was succinctly encapsulated in the title of the issue's opening article, penned by Helmut Hartwig. "A morning in the secondary school. Learning and appropriation forms at school and the planning-rationality of didactic models" it read, the phrasing at once betraying the tentative nature of conclusions derived in the course of a few hours and the author's ambition to subsume drawing under a comprehensive schema of pedagogical reasoning.[13]

In what follows, my intention is to inscribe the issue within a particular constellation of events, political ideals and theoretical formulations that gave shape to broader pedagogical, curatorial and art historical shifts, and crucially testified to the changing and volatile relation between art, education and media of mass communication in the 1970s. As I hope to show, what propelled the elevation of drawing into an exemplary pedagogical medium during this decade was not only the growing dissatisfaction with traditional art education, but more importantly the intensified inquiry into the proletariat, both as a conceptual and sociological category, an inquiry that in its turn pivoted on the historical experience of the German working class's susceptibility to Nazi ideology. In the pages of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* we find, I will be arguing, a specific pedagogical approach to drawing that reclaims the original meaning of "appropriation" in the sense of a distinct way of relating to and being in the world, and retrieves the collective and radical underpinnings of historical memory. If since the 1980s, as Isabelle Graw has noted, the terminological and philosophical nuances of "appropriation" dissolved under the reign of appropriation art, *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* opens the way to a differential definition of the copy, one that is intimately linked to the mastering of the past and anchored to the tangible, sensory, class-specific reworking of contested images and signs.[14]

From Domination to Emancipation

"That aesthetics could be positively linked to communication and communicative praxis, without completely lapsing into the culture industry, was not at all self-evident in Frankfurt", wrote *Ästhetik und Kommunikation's* past editor Eberhard Knödler-Bunte in a recent issue of the journal.[15] If back in the late 1960s, when a group of university students founded the Institute for Experimental Art and Aesthetics [Institut für experimentelle Kunst und Ästhetik,

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[13] "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule. Schulische Lern-und Aneignungsformen und die Planungsra-tionalität didaktischer Modelle", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation: Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* 20 (July 1975): 8-30.

[14] On the suppression of the term's Marxist origins see Isabelle Graw, "Dedication replacing Appropria-tion: Fascination, Subversion, and Dispossession in Appropriation Art", in *Louise Lawler and Others,* eds. George Baker, Jack Bankowsky et al. (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 45-67.

[15] Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, "Die frühen Jahre einer langen Zeitschriftgeschichte", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 180/181 (Winter 2020): 174-180, 175.

IKAe], it was unclear "what was to become of art and aesthetics in the era of technological reproducibility or simply of developed capitalism", the sense of urgency with which the question had to be addressed was palpable: "art had to relinquish its hermetic space and aesthetics should be deployed as a means to probing new modes of perception and behaviour".[16] Towards the end of 1969, following a series of seminars and lectures that were attracting attention, conditions seemed ripe for the launch of a new magazine, its first issue finally being published in the summer of 1970 and dedicated to the theme of "Visual Communication". The journal's subtitle – "contributions to political education" – emphasized both the educational underpinnings of this editorial endeavour and the affiliation of progressive pedagogues, among them Hartwig and Dieter Hoffman-Axthelm, to the Institute.[17] With its network of collaborators expanding, the editorial headquarters soon moved to West Berlin, a practical and tactical move that sealed symbolically the magazine's rootedness in the two main urban centres of anti-authoritarian revolt in the previous years.[18]

In many respects the magazine participated in the rediscovery and revision of the tradition of Critical Theory, as much as it was embroiled, even if only indirectly, in the paradoxical and contested reception of Adorno's lessons by the West German New Left, and extra-parliamentary, anti-authoritarian forces more broadly. Adorno's intellectual influence and authority at the time is well documented. So is the prolonged clash between him and his students, that at the pick of the West German student movement was further exacerbated by the philosopher's repeated admonitions that protest had long deteriorated into thoughtless "action-ism": senseless, pseudo-revolutionary attacks, of which he had been more than once the immediate target.[19] On the one hand, works such as *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* co-written with Max Horkheimer in exile, found renewed resonance in the late 1960s, with their joined analysis of the total assimilation of the public in industrial, capitalist societies through the culture industry giving impetus to a new wave of media scholarship.[20] Significantly, Adorno's 1966 radio lecture "Education after Auschwitz" would have resonated strongly among progressive teachers

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[16] Knödler-Bunte, "Die frühen Jahre", 175.

[17] Knödler-Bunte, "Die frühen Jahre", 177.

[18] Knödler-Bunte, "Die frühen Jahre", 177.

[19] See Theodor Adorno (1969), "Marginalia to Theory and Praxis", in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 259-278.

[20] Notably, the concept of the "culture industry" informed the early work of Hans Magnus Enzensberger and his formulation of a "consciousness industry". See Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of the Media", *New Left Review* 1/64 (November-December 1970): 13-36; On the critical assimilation of Adorno's work on mass media by Negt and Kluge see Miriam Hansen, *Foreword to Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere,* eds. Oskar Negt & Alexander Kluge, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel & Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), ix-xli; On the intellectual proximities between Adorno and Kluge with an emphasis on the question of "influence" see Grégory Cormann & Jeremy Hamers, "Adorno-As-Memory. Inheriting, Resurfacing and Replaying Confidence in Kluge's Late Work", in *Glass Shards: Echoes of a Message in a Bottle,* eds. Richard Langston et al. (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2015), 161-170.

and pedagogues. Emancipation, Adorno reminded, was the ultimate goal of education, safeguarding the subject from relapsing into and being crushed under the fascist ideology.[21] The school, he urged, had to be moved to the forefront of educational politics, instilling into the students "the power of reflection, of self-determination, of not cooperating".[22] "Education", he concluded, "must transform itself into sociology, that is, it must teach about the societal play of forces that operates beneath the surface of political forms".[23] That in 1966 Adorno was still reiterating observations and comments first made at the end of the 1950s would not have been lost to his careful listeners, and certainly lent additional credibility, for those in the oppositional Left, to their shared conviction that "fascism lives on", that the objective conditions that had given rise to National Socialism remained unchanged, and crucially that educators urgently needed to re-educate themselves, abandoning in the process any "pretext of scholarly objectivity" that had served to absolve them of the tasks of a genuinely democratic, and anti-fascist, pedagogy.[24]

On the other hand, as the year 1968 wore on, Adorno's credence began to wane. Not only did his clash with his students prefigure one of the most lasting fissures of 1968, that between theory and practice, but importantly pointed towards a crucial shift in the history of art, and of cultural politics more broadly.[25] The end of the 1960s may have seen the elevation of the aesthetic into a heightened realm of political action – after all, the times were calling for a revolution in the society's superstructure. Suspicion, however, towards art as a privileged site of autonomous critique was equally prevalent among anti-authoritarian protesters and those aligning themselves with the New Left.[26] Calls for the self-abolition of art and its dissolution into everyday life would have been greeted with

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[21] See Adorno (1968), "Education after Auschwitz", in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords,* trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 191-204.

[22] Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz", 195.

[23] Adorno, "Education after Auschwitz", 203.

[24] Theodor Adorno (1959), "The Meaning of Working Through the Past", in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords,* trans. Henry W. Pickford (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 102.

[25] On the correlation between the autonomy of theory and that of art in the work of Adorno see Grant Kester, "The Noisy Optimism of Immediate Action: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy in Contemporary Art", *Art Journal* 71, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 86-99; On Adorno's protracted dispute with his students see Richard Langston, "Palimpsests of '68: Theorizing Labor after Adorno", in *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives,* eds. Daniel J. Sherman, Ruud van Dijk, Jasmine Alinder & A. Aneesh (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013), 49-72.

[26] On a detailed account of the anti-authoritarians' conflicting relation to high culture see Mererid Puw Davies, *Writing and the West German Protest Movements: The Textual Revolution* (London: Institute of Modern Languages Research, 2016). As the author has persuasively shown, the ideals of the German humanist tradition informed the "anti-literary" revolt of progressive writers connected to the late 1960s West German protest movements.

great scepticism by Adorno.[27] And conversely, Adorno's resolute attention to the immanent problems of the (modernist) work of art over its purported immediate social efficacy and his defence of art's (negatively defined) aesthetic autonomy against "the narrow untruth of the practical world" would have been considered outworn.[28] For the aspiration of many cultural revolutionaries and radical pedagogues, including those associated with *Ästhetik und Kommunikation,* to free art from its "hermetic space" necessarily required an opening onto a terrain that for Adorno foreclosed the possibility of emancipatory experience as such: that of mass mediated culture.

It is worth reminding that Adorno's last radio interview, broadcasted posthumously by Hessische Rundfunk in 1969 only a few days after his death, was also concerned with education and the manipulative effects of the culture industry. "Making education an education for protest and for resistance", Adorno argued, essentially meant critically engaging with the media of mass communication and consumption; commercial films, popular magazines, and "music for young people" should be used as teaching material in the classroom, and put under scrutiny so that pupils would be "immunized" to their deceptive allures.[29] The first issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation,* published in the summer of 1970 and the collective volume *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie* [*Visual Communication: Contributions to the Critique of the Consciousness Industry*], published the following year seemingly headed Adorno's call. Both were meant to intervene in the debate over the prerequisites and conditions of possibility of a truly emancipatory education in the light of a series of liberal social educational reforms, following Willy Brandt's assumption of the Chancellorship in 1969.[30] Both also advanced the inclusion of the multifarious visual phenomena of the culture industry in the learning process. Their authors, however, enlisted Adorno's pedagogical mandates for radically new purposes as, notwithstanding differences in method, they embraced, rather than lamented, the unstable and precarious position of the work of art within a rapidly changing technological environment.

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[27] In the course of the 1960s Adorno returned to the question of art's supposed sublimation into life, so as to warn against the continuing "erosion of the arts" and the dissolution of their "demarcation lines". See Theodor Adorno, "Art and the Arts", in *Theodor W. Adorno, Can One Live After Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003), 368-387.

[28] See Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* eds. Gretel Adorno & Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London, New York: Continuum, 2002), 241. On the early reception of Adorno's Aesthetic Theory by the New Left see Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "The Politicization of Aesthetic Theory: The Debate in Aesthetics since 1965", in *Reappraisals: Shifting Alignments in Postwar Critical Theory* (Ithaka, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 156-197.

[29] Theodor Adorno & Hellmut Becker, "Education for Maturity and Responsibility", trans. Robert French, Jem Thomas & Dorothee Weymann, *History of the Human Sciences* 12, no. 3 (1999): 21-34, 29.

[30] For an introduction to crucial educational developments and reforms in the period between 1969 and 1972 see Axel Jansa, *Pädagogik - Politik - Ästhetik: Paradigmenwechsel um '68* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999), 27.

The term "visual communication" acted in this context as a shorthand for the loss of art's legitimacy, or rather of the particularity and specificity of the artistic. It registered the turn towards a materialist, and partisan aesthetic geared to the exegesis of the educational needs and interests of the lower classes and to the exploration of proletarian forms of consciousness. Significantly, the term's methodological explication and critical applications were closely entwined with German-specific historical and cultural developments and anxieties that ultimately pivoted on the question of whether the mass media, as Negt asked in an essay published a few years later, were "tools of domination or instruments of liberation".[31] Where the first issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* reintroduced the interwar debate between Adorno and Walter Benjamin on popular culture, affirming the currency of the latter's insights into the demystifying, levelling, emancipatory effects of technological reproduction, the volume refocused attention on the fate of art education in West German schools in the face of the shifting relation between "high" and "low", mass-mediated culture.[32] In the preface to the volume its editor Hermann Ehmer, while asserting the centrality of *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* in pedagogy's critical turn, lamented that art education had failed to respond, in any meaningful way, to its warnings.[33] "The first presupposition for emancipation", he asserted, is gaining "insight into the conditions of dependence of our consciousness from the consciousness industry and from those who have the means of production in their disposal". "It is no longer possible for art to claim a special position in such a learning process", he concluded.[34]

Indeed, the volume as a whole reframed the relation between art and popular culture in terms of the overwhelming and unprecedented expansion of optical mass media into all areas of life that, from a pedagogical point of view, rendered the exclusive focus on the "small sub-area" of the visual arts methodologically, and socially, irrelevant.[35]

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[31] See Oskar Negt, "Mass Media: Tools of Domination or Instruments of Liberation? Aspects of the Frankfurt School's Communications Analysis", transl. Leslie Adelson, *New German Critique* 14 (Spring 1978): 61-80. The essay was originally published in German under the title "Massenmedien: Herrschaftsmittel oder Instrumente der Befreiung?" in the volume *Kritische Kommunikationsforschung*, ed. Dieter Prokop (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1973).

[32] On Benjamin's critical reappraisal in the context of the journal see Michael Scharang, "Zur Emanzipation der Kunst. Benjamin's Konzeption einer materialistischen Aesthetik", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation 1* (July 1970): 67-85.

[33] See Hermann K. Ehmer, "Zum Thema", in *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie,* ed. Hermann K. Ehmer (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), 7-8.

[34] Ehmer, "Zum Thema", 7. Ehmer's own essay in this volume reiterated the thesis that the boundaries between art and commodities had eroded to such an extent that it justified aesthetic education's foray into visual commodified culture. See Hermann K. Ehmer, "Zur Metasprache der Werbung – Analyse einer DOORNKAAT-Reklame", in *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie,* ed. Hermann K. Ehmer (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), 162-178.

[35] Ehmer, "Zum Thema", 7.

The "quantitative dominance" of the media had turned into a "qualitative" one.[36] Art's exclusion from the school curriculum was justified on the grounds of its communicative deficiency and its mythifying function, as the "ad hoc group visual communication" [Adhoc-Gruppe Visuelle Kommunikation] added elsewhere in the volume.[37] Presenting theses advanced in the ambit of the Institute for Experimental Art and Aesthetics the collective explicitly called for the abolition of bourgeois art education and its replacement by an expanded curriculum apt to address the systematic inequalities and class divisions of West German society. The collective articulated this pedagogical demand with an emphasis on the ways in which mass mediated visual phenomena constituted a kind of "ersatz communication", a substitute for language, to which the lower classes were thought to be particularly susceptible.[38] Significantly, it placed the analysis of the visual phenomena of the mediasphere – to which the new course would be oriented – on a firmly materialist footing, a move that emphatically rejected both the "crude structuralist scheme of denotation and connotation" and the positivism of Information Theory, situating instead communication within broader social relations of production and consumption.[39]

In the same volume and starting from the same materialist premises Hartwig claimed in two separate essays, previously published in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation,* that visual training should be grounded in the life context of the pupils. Art education, as practiced in schools and higher educational institutions, amounted, more often than not, to a socially reclusive activity and to the "unconscious reduction of the social subject to an abstract percipient".[40] The extreme formalism and rationalism of the art course – with its exclusive emphasis on compositional problems – was a dubious attempt to "restore" the human faculties to their "pure" state, by purging sensory perception of the "dirt of triviality".[41] A radical conception of visual communication could not be rethought outside that which in formal terms was considered trifling, the superfluous products of the mass media, precisely because its attendant debased forms of reception were entrenched in the social, determining and being determined by the class position of the subject.

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36 See Heino R. Möller, "Kunstunterricht und Visuelle Kommunikation. Sieben Arbeitsthesen zur Konzeption eines neuen Unterrichtsfaches", in *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie,* ed. Hermann K. Ehmer (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), 363- 366, 363.

37 Adhoc-Gruppe Visuelle Kommunikation (IKAe Frankfurt), "Visuelle Kommunikation – Zur gesellschaftlichen Begründungen eines neuen Unterrichtsfaches", in *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie,* ed. Hermann K. Ehmer (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), 367-373.

38 Adhoc-Gruppe Visuelle Kommunikation (IKAe Frankfurt), "Visuelle Kommunikation", 372.

39 Adhoc-Gruppe Visuelle Kommunikation (IKAe Frankfurt), "Visuelle Kommunikation", 372.

40 I am quoting here from the first publication. See Helmut Hartwig, "Zur Ideologiekritik von SEHEN-LERNEN. Oskar Holwecks Grundlehre. Der Entwurf eines Bildungsplanes des Fachs Kunsterziehung für das Saarland. Anonyme Skulpturen von Hilla und Bernhard Becher – eine Art Industriefotografie", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 2 (December 1970): 6-21, 12.

41 Hartwig, "Zur Ideologiekritik", 13.

The analysis of the trivial – as "coded" and "decoded" in the production and consumption of visual or mass culture – was therefore potentially in close alignment with the advancement of working-class interests, Hartwig argued, but not without qualification.[42]

At the time of the volume's publication the pedagogical imperative of emancipation had found its most pronounced expression in a series of progressive curriculum guidelines proposed by the state of Hesse.[43] If emancipation was not to turn into a catchword, a "meaningless and formal" objective, Hartwig argued in response, it should remain embedded in "concrete learning processes" and directed to the class-specific needs and interests of the pupils.[44]

Fig. 4. Double-page spread from Helmut Hartwig, "Visuelle Kommunikation. Methodologische Bemerkungen zur Ableitung von Lernzielen aus dem sozialen Bereich 'Freie Zeit'", in *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie,* ed. Hermann K. Ehmer (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971). © Helmut Hartwig.

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[42] Hartwig, "Zur Ideologiekritik", 13.

[43] See Jansa, *Pädagogik - Politik - Ästhetik: Paradigmenwechsel um '68*, 132-134.

[44] Helmut Hartwig, "Visuelle Kommunikation. Methodologische Bemerkungen zur Ableitung von Lernzielen aus dem sozialen Bereich 'Freie Zeit'", in *Visuelle Kommunikation. Beiträge zur Kritik der Bewußtseinsindustrie,* ed. Hermann K. Ehmer (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), 334-339, 334. The essay was published under the same title in the first issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* in July 1970.

Here Hartwig would utilize the lexicon of Information Theory only to turn it on its head (fig. 4). The passage from signal to information was neither merely a matter of scientifically controlling communication, of explaining, predicting, and containing informational flows, nor a matter of abstract semantics. Its mapping necessitated instead a decryption of a different kind: the identification of the historically and socially specific distortions of signification taking place in the process of a signal's translation into a verifiable message. The very nature of the public sphere as a process of conflation of hitherto distinct realms, functions and activities – of publicity and consumption, politics and entertainment, public interests and private affairs, work and leisure – posed significant challenges to the implementation of a liberating curriculum, however. The critical analysis of visual media content in the classroom had to take into account both such objective obstacles, and "the actual social problems of the pupils".[45] Hartwig's "concrete learning process" necessarily entailed addressing both at a discursive level, and through group discussions. In its turn the discursive examination of mass mediated imagery needed to be premised upon an essentially dialectical understanding of the relation between abstract/theoretical and colloquial language, conceptual terms and its concrete "users".[46] In other words, it should be abstracted neither from the real concreteness of the pupils' individual everyday experiences, nor from the conditions defining the production, dissemination and reception of images.

Drawing as exemplary learning

By the time the twentieth issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* was published, the pedagogical euphoria of the early 1970s had given way to more sober, and often negative, assessments of the West German educational system, and its prospects of radical, egalitarian reform. If Willy Brandt's coalition had overseen a number of admittedly progressive policies, the anti-radical degree of 1972 was perceived by many in the oppositional Left as proof of the ultimate failure of his reformist agenda. The financial oil crisis of 1973 also affected the educational sector, and marked the turn toward more "pragmatic" approaches to politics. Radical pedagogical mandates were now translated into reformist and moderate measures.[47] The Social Democratic Party [Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands], observed one contemporary commentator, had appropriated the anti-authoritarians' emancipatory vocabulary and effortlessly inserted it into "the language of rule"; the lessons taken from critical sociology and psychoanalysis had been thoroughly functionalized.[48]

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[45] Hartwig, "Visuelle Kommunikation", 334.

[46] Hartwig, "Visuelle Kommunikation", 334.

[47] See Jansa, *Pädagogik - Politik - Ästhetik: Paradigmenwechsel um '68,* 138-140.

[48] See Heinz-Joachim Heydorn, *Zu einer Neufassung des Bildungsbegriffs* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972), 91.

These educational shifts would also cast a long shadow over the discourse on Visual Communication, and were at the crux of the twentieth issue, edited by Hartwig. One crucial point of contention still concerned the status of practical, "artistic" activities in art pedagogy, noted Hartwig, in his editorial introduction. Another concerned the idealized postulates of the discourse itself, that on the one hand still placed an exaggerated emphasis on the manipulative power and coercive hold of the mass media over the individual, and on the other hand did not correspond to the tangible needs of the less privileged pupils. Visual communication posited a fine balance between sensory perception and theoretical reflection, vision and articulation, the individual inspection of optical information and its discursive, and communal, appraisal. In this respect, pedagogues aligned to its radical learning goals typified the West German student movement's ideological investment in discussion as the paradigmatic form of political action.[49] They had failed, however, to take into account the class-specific character of language as a medium of appropriating reality, and its entwinement with an educational system that, far from being truly inclusive, posed systematic barriers to the pupils of the lower classes. Such impasses had led to the false assumption that drawing and discussion were by necessity irreconcilable and opposing pedagogical alternatives.[50]

Hartwig's own critical appraisal echoed arguments advanced by Knödler-Bunte one year earlier in the collective volume *Perspektiven der kommunalen Kulturpolitik: Beschreibungen und Entwürfe.*[51] The discourse of visual communication as translated into a series of tangible learning goals, he argued, was still indebted to the "objectivism" of the, otherwise progressive, curriculum theories of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It thus remained essentially detached from the particularities and functions both of the mass media and of the school as primary institutions of socialization, and of social exclusion. More to the point, arguments for the "qualitative dominance of the mass media" were premised on assumptions that had proved "fatal" on a theoretical and practical level. "In keeping with the tradition of the culture industry", Knödler-Bunte wrote, "an identity of the general and the particular, of the objective reality of the mass media and their subjective appropriation, is assumed, under whose lordly grip all class-specific contradictions [arising] within the experiential context of people disappear".[52] A reorientation of immediate political goals and theoretical postulations was thus urgent. A truly progressive course geared to the critical analysis of mass mediated visual culture would have at once to take

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[49] See Joachim Scharloth, "Revolution in a Word: A Communicative History of Discussion in the German 1968 Protest Movement", in *A Revolution of Perception?: Consequences and Echoes of 1968,* ed. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2014), 162-183.

[50] Helmut Hartwig, "Editorial", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 20 (July 1975): 4-7.

[51] Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, "Visuelle Kommunikation. Massenmedien und Schule im Unterricht", in *Perspektiven der kommunalen Kulturpolitik: Beschreibungen und Entwürfe,* ed. Hilmar Hoffmann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 295-316.

[52] Knödler-Bunte, "Visuelle Kommunikation", 302.

into account the specific ways in which individual and collective learning processes inescapably unfolded within "the narrow framework set by the mass media and the school", and provide tangible points of contact with the "extra-curricular" reality. It would have to start from "the concrete manifestations of class contradictions, as experienced practically and sensually by the pupils", and lead to a more comprehensive understanding of "how the process of appropriation of media content is performed in the context of everyday praxis".[53]

To be sure, Knödler-Bunte's call was not an isolated one. Most prominently, the class-specific character of appropriation underpinned Negt's pedagogical work, and his involvement in the "Glocksee" initiative, an alternative school founded in 1972 in Hannover. His remarks on the school's pedagogical and political premises were also of particular importance for Hartwig. The traditional educational system, Negt argued in an article that appeared shortly after the twentieth issue in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation,* imposed a "hierarchy of cultural techniques", prioritizing reading, writing and calculating as the fundamental skills for measuring and quantifying the performance of the pupils.[54] These techniques, while certainly valuable in themselves, had been severed from the frames of reference and experience specific to working-class children, thus reinforcing the "prevailing linguistic and cognitive climate" to which middle-class pupils were from the outset well-adjusted.[55] In equal measure, the historical specificities and embeddedness of reading and writing in broader material infrastructures and relations of production dissolved into formal learning goals that, in their turn, kept intact the school's illusory separation from extra-curricular reality. Any pedagogical practice claiming to be egalitarian, Negt argued, would need to consider the complex correlation between language, social class, and socialization that gave shape to specific modes of cognition. It would also need to take seriously the extensive, if unnoticed, transformations that the public sphere of school had undergone in the era of television. Finally, it would have to translate into "exemplary lessons", into a dynamic learning process amounting to nothing less than a collective reorganization of experience. "The immediate experiences of the child must be recognized as mediated, the experiences at home, in the apartment, on the street and at school as expressions of social conflicts and contradictions", Negt proposed.[56] Such a radical opening into the realm of everyday life, as exemplified in the principle of exemplary learning, he also added, could not be rethought outside the social constitution and "production character" of the learning process itself.[57]

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[53] Knödler-Bunte, "Visuelle Kommunikation", 313, 308.

[54] Oskar Negt, "Schule als Erfahrungsprozeß", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation: Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* 22/23 (Dec. 1975/Febr. 1976): 36-55, 53.

[55] Negt, "Schule als Erfahrungsprozeß", 41.

[56] Negt, "Schule als Erfahrungsprozeß", 55.

[57] Negt, "Schule als Erfahrungsprozeß", 55.

Like the class-bound reorganization of learning suggested in Negt's text, Hartwig's reconceptualization of the drawing instruction was built upon acts of interruption, and potentially of resistance, to the communicative order of the school. In a manner similar to Negt's materialist analysis, Hartwig's own account in the twentieth issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* rested on a fundamentally dialectical treatment of the relation between speculation and empirical observation, probing the applicability and limits of theoretical principles against conclusions reached during an "experimental" drawing course devised for Hauptschule (secondary school) pupils, with the collaboration of a group of students at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Berlin. The rationale behind this initiative is worth citing:

> Our point of departure was the thesis: in late capitalist society, the historical dimension is destroyed in everyday experience […] A particular aspect in the FRG: the repression of the historically immediate past: the memory of fascism and thus also the recognition of the possibility for a fundamental social change. Question: how can historical consciousness be reclaimed, gained anew? Reconstruction of the historical dimension from everyday experience and life history [Lebensgeschichte] by "engaging" with things? Appropriation of historical experiential content and meaning – from things – at school?[58]

So to offer their students tangible ways of dealing with the national past educators, Hartwig proposed, should engage with objects that were at once linked to everyday experience, and attached to the "public" or "semi-public" sphere. Postage stamps were ideal in this respect: "known from everyday life, concrete, portable, and available on a mass scale; carriers of an important representational function".[59] In the ensuing course, the pupils were asked to copy postage stamps of their choice, with several of their drawings printed in the journal. Interspersed with Hartwig's report and juxtaposed with their originals, they brought into sharp relief the concrete particularity and intimacy of the hand-made copy (fig. 5).

Much more was at stake in this exercise than replication, copying for copying's sake, as it were. Rather, by directing the pupils' "attention in an exemplary way on an object", Hartwig's hope was to repurpose drawing as a cultural technique, mediating between a sensual comprehension of the world and an ideational mode of apprehension, in this instance between the manual reproduction of postage stamps and the intellectual examination of their symbolic meanings. If only implicitly, Hartwig's "retooling" of the medium also aspired to a distinct theorization of the relation between aesthetic and political learning. His reframing of drawing as a "sensuous-concrete activity" [sinnlich-gegenständlich Tätigkeit], in sharp differentiation from a merely "artistic" exercise, is telling in this respect. The term "Tätigkeit" had received renewed theoretical scrutiny in

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[58] Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule", 30.
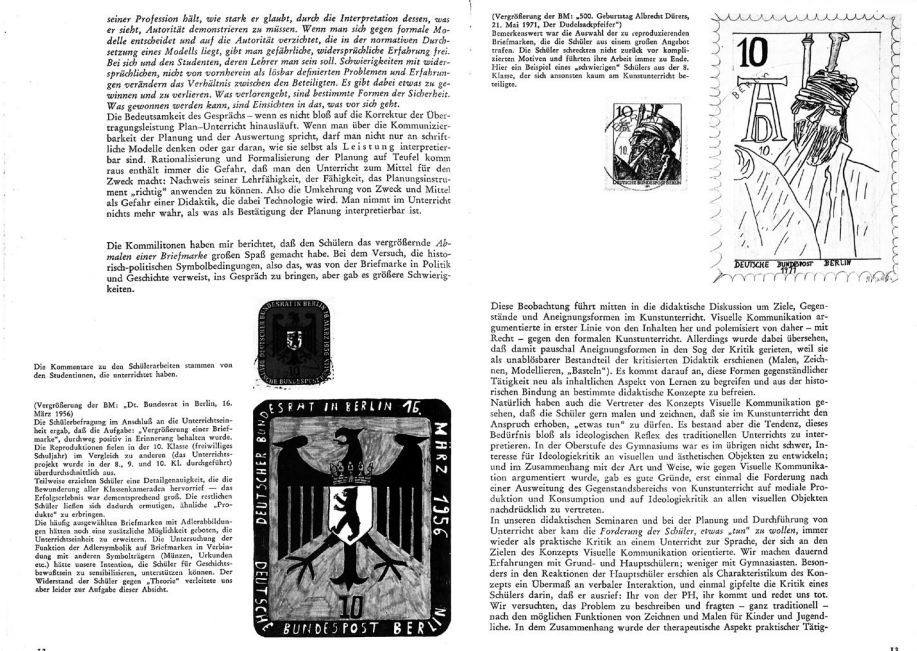
[59] Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule", 17.

Fig. 5. Double-page spread from Helmut Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule. Schulische Lern-und Aneignungsformen und die Planungsrationalität didaktischer Modelle", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation: Beiträge zur politischen Erziehung* 20 (July 1975): 8-30. © Helmut Hartwig.

the early 1970s, most prominently by Klaus Holzkamp. In *Sinnliche Erkenntnis* Holzkamp argued for the centrality of labour – the "human activity that creates objects" [vergegenständlichte] – in the societal and historical, as he insisted, evolution of the human senses.[60] This conceptual move at once situated his analysis within the intellectual framework of Soviet psychology, especially the works of A.N. Leont'ev and Sergei Rubinstein, and emphatically rejected the conventionalized theories of developmental psychology, to which traditional art education was indebted. With direct reference to this work, Hartwig proposed that the activity of drawing ought to be rethought in relation to the foundational categories of Marx's political economy, namely appropriation [Aneignung] and objectification [Vergegenständlichung].[61] In their intersection, Hartwig thought, they suggested ways of using drawing as a learning device for cognizing, or

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[60] Klaus Holzkamp, *Sinnliche Erkenntnis. Historischer Ursprung und gesellschaftliche Funktion der Wahrnehmung* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenäum Verlag, 1973), 121.

[61] Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule", 14.

rather re-cognizing, reality, and for corporeally relating to the external world and to the products of one's own labour.

It is worth reminding that a third linking term between appropriation and objectification, that of "sensuousness", formed the crux of Marx's thought and denoted a particular interpretation of human essence and its realization.[62] For Marx, reminds Elise Archias, to appropriate reality meant to "humanize", "to objectively realize each of our differently attuned senses in the objects of the world that draw out and thereby affirm them through such sensuously attuned attention".[63] Unlike traditional art education, in which emphasis was placed either on aesthetic sensitivity to the artwork's formal characteristics or on the child's unconstrained creativity and originality, copying by drawing potentially hinted at precisely these latent human capacities and political promises expressed in the concept of sensuousness.

In rethinking drawing as a mode of appropriation and objectification, Hartwig – in a seemingly contradictory move – recontextualized its teaching in relation to the division between intellectual and manual labour, already determining the structure of primary and secondary education. The split was also palpable during the course: while the pupils had enjoyed the drawing activity, the teachers had ultimately failed in initiating a structured conversation on the ideological functions of national symbols. There was, Hartwig argued, a "hidden class dimension" in the pupils' marked "aversion to theory" that underscored the barriers they faced on an everyday basis.[64] Here, Hartwig clearly echoed Negt and Kluge's remark that the bourgeois public sphere's logic of exclusion was conjoined with the arbitrary valorization of abstract language. Indeed, the public spheres of the media and of the school were not only characterized by the same linguistic logic, the same economy of speech, but essentially resulted in the impoverishment of proletarian experience, and of its means of expression. The school's communicative model, Hartwig agreed, imposed itself with particularly damaging consequences on working class children for whom

> [t]he discursive, language-centred mode of appropriation is […] apparently a forced form of appropriation, the development of which is obstructed by the objective conditions of societal life. It is not used in the family and at the working place. A worker needs discursive thinking – if any – always in connection with concrete activity, and in most cases his aptitude for reflection can bring him only trouble.[65]

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[62] For the philosophical entwinement of these three concepts in Marx's early work see Herbert Marcuse, "New Sources on the Foundation of Historical Materialism", in Marcuse, *Heideggerian Marxism,* eds. Richard Wolin & John Abromeit (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 86-121.

[63] Elise Archias, *The Concrete Body: Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2016), 166.

[64] Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule", 17.

[65] Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule", 17.

 For Negt and Kluge, the broader implication of this manufactured linguistic displacement – the alienation of the working class from its own means of expression – was the erosion of genuine proletarian language as such: a language that was dialectical in its core; able to convey the essentially corporeal – "tactile" they might have added – proximity between the spheres of work and political action, and between the sensory engagement with the objective world and the production of appropriate communicative tools; self-regulated, perpetually expanding, and grounded in the "prehistory" of its users.[66]

Hartwig also left no doubt that the public sphere's constrictive linguistic regime paralleled the withering of historical experience – the choice of national postage stamps was far from coincidental in this respect – and ought to be counterbalanced by the mobilization of alternative, and essentially marginalized, modes of expression. Political learning in this sense was not to be confused with indoctrination. It emerged, instead, out of "the engagement with an object or fact whose relation to and meaning for concrete persons unfolds situationally", and was importantly premised on a radical retheorization of the relation between verbal and non-verbal action, linguistic utterance and non-linguistic articulation.[67] Recast as a medium of political learning, however, drawing would come to perform in this context a precarious balancing act, as it was now necessarily poised between the sensory attunement to the objective world and the appropriation of its symbolic meanings. For its educational re-functionalization as an essentially transformative activity – transformative in the sense of remoulding the aesthetic relationship between subject and object – problematized, if only implicitly, the certainties and ambitions upon which the intellectual project of ideology critique was built. In short, it suggested a different path to the recognition, or rather demystification of reality.

Stealing from the enemy: Correct appropriation

A cipher, included in the *documenta* V exhibition catalogue, offers clues as to the deep-seated suspicion towards the empirically, and sensory, given in the early 1970s (fig. 6). Next to the exhibition's pedagogical motto, "seeing better through documenta", multiplied to generate the kind of retinal and physical mobility associated with mid-twentieth century poetical
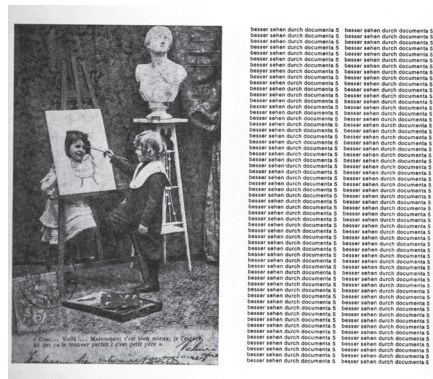
Fig.6. Interior page from *Documenta* V exh.cat (Kassel: Verlag documenta, 1972). © Documenta Archiv.

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[66] See Oskar Negt & Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere,* introd. Miriam Hansen, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel & Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), esp. chapter 16 "Vocabulary and the Proletarian Public Sphere".

[67] Hartwig, "Ein Vormittag in der Hauptschule", 18.

experiments in concretism, the fin de siècle postcard, capturing two children's mischievous attempts at faithful representation, suggests more than a temporal chasm. Indeed, here two kinds of desire – the determination to see through the surface appearances of reality and the longing for an unmediated contact with the real – confront one another. Seemingly reinforcing commonplace assumptions about the child's true creative nature, this playful insertion visually underscored the cultural anxieties that gave shape to the fifth documenta in 1972.

In choosing the evocative title "Inquiry into Reality – Pictorial Worlds Today" the curators explicitly challenged their predecessor Arnold Bode, whose stated "pedagogical task" was to accentuate the audience's perceptual awareness by exposing them to the giddying products of op and kinetic art.[68] A farewell to the euphoric pronouncements about an emancipated human sensorium of the previous decade, documenta V was meant to retrieve, instead, what remained hidden from view, beneath and beyond the phenomenal world. That it was marketed as a Sehschule – a school of vision – might seem misleading; for clearly there was much more to the expanded, ideologically ambiguous realms of image production, both mundane and outlandish, than met the eye. Two ultimately irreconcilable perspectives informed this exhibition of mammoth-like proportions: the first, expressed in Szeemann's curation of "Individual Mythologies'", called for a return to the inner world of the creative individual, driven and tormented by invisible, irrational, affective forces; the latter, propagated in Bazon Brock's *Besucherschule* [School of Visitors], located the mythical and invisible elsewhere, in the individual's confrontation with a historical reality appearing as petrified, "second" nature.[69] These clashing intentions notwithstanding, the ambition to grasp the tangled world of the 1970s in its totality defined the exhibition as a whole, as most commentators agreed. "Presumably", noted Harold Rosenberg in a rather unfavourable review, "the spectator was to become aware that advertisements for cola drinks and the body movements of a blindfolded performer constitute 'an interrelated structure of social realities'".[70]

Rosenberg's lament for a bygone interpretive paradigm – "art history had been abandoned", he also reluctantly conceded, dissolving into "a global mass of opinions and phenomena" – brought into sharp relief an emerging discourse, whose allure was too strong to resist, that of appropriation art.[71] Indeed, it was here that Marcel Broodthaers – the critical

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[68] See Arnold Bode, "documentadocumenta", in 4. *Documenta,* Katalog 1 (Kassel: Documenta, 1968), XII-XIII. As Bode exclaimed in the catalogue his was a "didactic" exhibition aiming "not to merely offer a comprehensive account of what great artists make, but instead to present significant examples of how the new visual reality co-creates space".

[69] For an examination of the ways in which these irreconcilable differences were expressed in the curation of the exhibition's individual sections see Maria Bremer, "Modes of Making Art History: Looking Back at documenta 5 and documenta 6", *Stedelijk Studies* 20 (Spring 2015), https://stedelijkstudies.com/journal/modes-of-making-art-history/.

[70] Harold Rosenberg (1972), "The Art World. Inquiry 1972 on the Edge", in *Art on the Edge: Creators and Situations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 263.

[71] Rosenberg, "The Art World", 263.

Fig. 7. Interior pages from Reiner Diederich, Richard Grübling, Klaus Staeck, "Realität des Abgebil-deten und "Realität der Abbildung" in der Plakatpropaganda deutscher Parteien", *Documenta* V exh. cat. (Kassel: Verlag documenta, 1972). © Documenta Archiv.

appropriationist par excellence – presented one of the final installments of his fictional *Museum of Modern Art, Department of Eagles.* If, however, *documenta* V marked for many a turning point, after which the return to the master narratives of modernism has been rendered impossible, it also hinted at historical possibilities other than dominant postmodernist accounts of appropriation would allow.

Indications of such a differential approach were to be found in documenta's section "Political Propaganda" [Politische Propaganda], that must have provided a precedent for Hartwig's own pedagogical endeavours, and more broadly reflected concerns central to the emerging discourse of Visual Communication.[72] Shifting the locus of appropriationist strategies away from art production and onto the realm of politics, it was concerned less with the deconstruction of the production of the individual in representation, than with the formation and deformation of class identities through strategies of mass appellation. The bulk of electoral posters exhibited in this section evoked the spectre of fascism, provoking the viewer to find in the often subtle, barely noticed transmutations of symbols and in the replication of seemingly out of date campaigning tricks evidence of the persistence of the national socialist past in the present (fig. 7). What the

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[72] See Reiner Diederich, Richard Grübling, Klaus Staeck, "Realität des Abgebildeten und "Realität der Abbildung" in der Plakatpropaganda deutscher Parteien", *Documenta V* exh.cat. (Kassel: Verlag documenta, 1972), 7.1-7.14.

viewer was also meant to comprehend was that the transition from the fascist to the welfare neoliberal state was effectively accomplished through what Fritz Haug identified as the "large-scale aestheticization of depoliticized politics", underway since Germany's interwar years. Segments of his *Kritik der Warenästhetik* [Critique of Commodity Aesthetics], published just one year before the exhibition, were also included in the catalogue. His was in many respects an extension of Jürgen Habermas's thesis that with the disintegration of the liberal bourgeois public sphere "even the political realm is social-psychologically integrated into the realm of consumption", with the crucial difference that this work was essentially concerned with the dissolution of any class distinctions, and thus of class consciousness as such, in the era of consumer citizenship.[73] Haug articulated this focus with an emphasis on the ways in which forms of expression and symbols consolidating working-class identity underwent a process of historical decontextualization and re-functionalization in the service of capital. Fascism was effectively an act of unabated appropriation consisting in the replication of a petrified image, an "aesthetic copy" of the workers' movement.[74] As he wrote in a passage that expressed both the theoretical and political direction of "Political Propaganda":

> Its function in those days was to politically overwhelm the workers (i.e. the mass of employees, petit-bourgeoisie and peasants), by separating the expression of the working-class movement from the movement itself and its objectives, and by separately satisfying the declared needs of the workers by means of aesthetic fascination. These superficial "borrowings" from the communists, therefore, were turned into weapons against communism, and rounded off the success of the Gestapo and the concentration camps.[75]

For Haug, it was precisely the grotesque transmutations of political appellation under the reign of commodity – this alienating, yet alluring, thing speaking "the language of camouflage" – that accounted for the dissolution of working-class identity as such.[76]

One would be hard-pressed to find areas of social life unhampered by commodification in Haug's account. Indeed, the course of one's life was so deeply interwoven with that of commodities that any separation between true needs and false desires, spontaneous

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[73] See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity, 1989), 216. Originally published in German in 1962 under the title *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft.*

[74] I am quoting here from the English revised edition of this book. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics: Appearance, Sexuality and Advertising in Capitalist Society,* trans. Robert Bock (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), 132.

[75] Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics,* 133. This segment was also reproduced in the exhibition catalogue. See "Realität des Abgebildeten und "Realität der Abbildung" in der Plakatpropaganda deutscher Parteien", 7.5.

[76] Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics,* 104.

expression and engineered passions, reality and representation dissolved. "An ambivalent conditioning from birth teaches the individual to submit their behaviour, and thus also their perception of objects of desire, to the dominance of exchange-value".[77] The senses, it followed, were simply not to be trusted. Commodities were constantly "remoulding" human sensuality, forcing "instinctual responses", only exhibiting, but never fulfilling their use value, their "aesthetic promise".[78] The curators of "Political Propaganda" certainly seconded Haug's views. If the quintessential national symbol, the eagle, served as a pictorial trope for the looming threat of fascism, contemporaneous electoral posters were meant to demonstrate how the combination of old propagandist devices and advertising's novel communicative strategies conjured up an illusionary world, deep beneath which social antagonisms lay unresolved and class consciousness remained dormant.

The process through which symbols were used to forge false affective bonds was also the subject of a short text that Hartwig published in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* in 1976.[79] In ways similar to those pursued in the documenta catalogue, Hartwig linked the appellative function and power of symbols to fascism's specific strategies of appropriation, strategies based on the re-use, albeit a manipulative and thoroughly dehistoricized one, of already available signs of belonging. The "dehistoricization of everyday consciousness", Hartwig reminded, was most vividly dramatized in the instalment of a "Day of National Work" in 1933 that was aimed at eradicating any and all traces of class struggle, whilst exploiting the visual vocabulary of the German Communist Party. Memory had turned into myth, as a new tradition was being actively constructed or "invented", to use historian Eric Hobsbawm's preferred term.[80] Close observation and the critical analysis of the conditions within which symbols were produced and re-used, Hartwig concluded, remained prerequisite skills for mastering one's own past, and ultimately for thinking historically.[81] As he suggested, however, in two other texts published that year, these cognitive capacities also needed to be cultivated in ways that surpassed the impasses of ideology critique. For in establishing meaningful, historical connections to one's past and identity, the individual ought to be encouraged to linger on, rather than simply renounce, the surface appearances of the world.

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[77] Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics,* 111.

[78] Haug, *Critique of Commodity Aesthetics,* 5-9.

[79] See Helmut Hartwig, "Plaketten zum 1. Mai 1934-39", *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* 26 (December 1976): 56-59.

[80] "Inventing traditions […] is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition", Hobsbawm argued. Hartwig's own analysis of Nazi symbolism was cited by Hobsbawm. See Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions", in *The Invention of Tradition,* ed. Eric Hobsbawm (Cambridge, New York: The Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

[81] See Hartwig, "Plaketten", 59.

Almost identical in content, the two texts reiterated arguments made in the twentieth issue of *Ästhetik und Kommunikation*. A "latent hostility to images" characterized the discourse of Visual Communication.[82] Its progressive educational values notwithstanding, it was premised on the polarity between image and concept, visual acuity and theoretical abstraction, and on a more fundamental level on the dichotomy between corrupted perception and enlightened thought. While here the emphasis was less on the notion of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung,* Hartwig expanded upon his previous reflections on drawing, arguing that if taught correctly, it opened alternate avenues to the mastering of material reality. The first step in this process would be to use drawing as a means against the constant "devaluation of the historically concrete, distinctive dimensions of objects".[83]

In her much-cited essay "Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model", Molly Nesbit has persuasively shown how the artist did not merely replicate the mass-produced modes of production of the early twentieth century, but effectively harked back to the drawing instruction of his elementary education, repurposing the specific model of repetition it imposed upon the pupils.[84] The so-called "Guillaume method", taught since the early 1880s, was based on the laborious copying of objects and required strict adherence to the language of geometry. Mastering the techniques of mechanical drawing was considered the highest skill a pupil could achieve in preparing for the adult world. It is worth noting that mechanical drawing was also meant to reveal "the truth of things behind the surfaces of appearance", in the sense that it accustomed the individual to the "means and ends of industrial production".[85] Technical drawing was therefore decidedly nonretinal, Mosbit argues, an intensive and exhausting drill, instructing the pupils as future citizens and consumers of the Third Republic.

Hartwig's own definition of copy may be understood in direct opposition to the "Guillaume method" and accounts for his own hostility towards the non-representational, precisely because in his mind abstract and formal modes of image-making corresponded to a specific kind of visual perception susceptible to the "capitalist interest in exploitation".[86] The world his drawing instruction was preparing the pupils for was also one populated by mass-produced objects. Here, however, the individual's relation to the alluring commodity was not one kept in check by the egalitarian values of consumer citizenship, but was instead defined by the alienating effects of labour. In place of technical drawing

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[82] Helmut Hartwig, "Sehenlernen, Bildgebrauch und Zeichnen – Historische Rekonstruktion und didaktische Perspektiven", in *Sehen lernen. Kritik und Weiterarbeit am Konzept Visuelle Kommunikation,* ed. Helmut Hartwig (Köln: DuMont Schauberg: 1976), 63-118, 83.

[83] Hartwig, "Sehenlernen, Bildgebrauch und Zeichnen", 81.

[84] Molly Nesbit, "Ready-Made Originals: The Duchamp Model", *October* (Summer 1986): 53-64.

[85] Nesbit, "Ready-Made Originals", 59.

[86] Helmut Hartwig, "Zeichnen als Aneignung von Wirklichkeit: Ein Versuch zur Funktionsbestimmung des Zeichnens im Unterricht", *Kunst + Unterricht: Zeitschrift für alle Bereiche der ästhetischen Erziehung* 36 (April 1976): 32-38, 36.

Hartwig proposed a mode of copying able to accentuate the pupils' sense of their own corporeality, and of the "thingness and spatiality of the real world".[87] Suffice to say that isolated objects detached from their contexts of production and consumption did not make, in Hartwig's view, suitable teaching material. And to this end, images of all kinds needed to be introduced in the classroom, examined and copied with a "mimetic attitude" in mind.[88] Didactic principles, but we must also add political imperatives, guided what Hartwig called his "decision for realism"[89]. Carefully observing and copying the object at hand – whether a widely circulated photograph, a postage stamp or an electoral poster – encouraged the kind of endured attention and corporeal awareness denied virtually in every other realm of everyday life to the individual, and especially to the worker. Drawing teachers, Hartwig also contended, should embrace the "clumsiness of production" that often accompanied copying, taking into account both the pupils' desire to represent faithfully and their libidinal investments in the represented object.[90] If drawing, as he reiterated, was not an alternative to conceptual thinking, it still proposed an alternative mode of "appropriating reality", of grasping the disparities between the fables of everyday life and the actual social relations woven into its fabric. It was precisely in the fissures between "reality" as mediated, consolidated and reinforced through surface appearances and its representation through copying, where Hartwig situated the unexplored possibilities of drawing.

This virtually ignored episode in the history of West German education bespeaks a broader desire to locate the position of the working class within the societal whole at a time when the problem of its sociological, and ontological definition was all the more pressing.[91] It was, however, as Richard Langston has eloquently observed, also part and parcel of an extensive counter-project that was grounded in the retrieval and reactivation of those biological characteristics specific to the "proletariat", that because of their "obstinate materiality" could turn into tools of self-regulation and resistance.[92] Hartwig's return to drawing is seemingly anachronistic. Standing in implicit dialogue to Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducability", written during the

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[87]Hartwig, "Sehenlernen, Bildgebrauch und Zeichnen", 95.

[88] Hartwig, "Sehenlernen, Bildgebrauch und Zeichnen", 89.

[89] Hartwig, "Sehenlernen, Bildgebrauch und Zeichnen", 37.

[90] Hartwig, "Sehenlernen, Bildgebrauch und Zeichnen", 102.

[91] On the ways in which the debate over the exact nature of the working class registered New Left's inner divisions in the aftermath of 1968 see Horst Mewes, "The German New Left", *New German Critique* 1 (Winter 1973): 22-41.

[92] See Langston, "Palimpsests of '68", 63. For Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, writing in 1971, defending and clinging onto the word "proletarian" this otherwise ambiguous concept as they admitted – was from the outset a strategic, and polemical decision, for "it is wrong to allow words to become obsolete before there is a change in the objects they denote". See Negt & Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience,* xiv.

Nazi regime, Hartwig's work suggested that in the era of new media technologies, drawing carried forwarded the revolutionary promises once ascribed to mechanical reproduction. A necessarily solitary activity, even when taking place in the classroom, drawing does not draw the individual into what Benjamin would have described as a state of "distracted" attention, but instead into one of active contemplation. A telling example of the complex "afterlife" of the fascist past in the West German present of the 1970s, Hartwig's drawing instruction was of a redemptive nature, employing the technologically obsolete medium in the politicization of the aesthetic, in the destruction of capitalism's beautiful semblances.[93]

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[93] Every effort has been made to seek formal permissions clearance from the copyright holders.

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Στα ελληνικά η λέξη «κρίση» συμπυκνώνει τουλάχιστον δύο μεγάλες κατηγορίες νοημάτων. Αφενός, παραπέμπει στις έννοιες της απόφασης, της άποψης ή της γνώμης και, σε στενή συνάφεια με αυτές, στις έννοιες της κριτικής, της αξιολόγησης και της δίκης. Έτσι κάποιας/ου η «κρίση» μπορεί, παραδείγματος χάρη, να επηρεαστεί από την υπερβολική χρήση αλκοόλ· οι δικαστικοί, οι δημόσιοι υπάλληλοι αλλά και τα επιστημονικά άρθρα περνάνε από «κρίση». Αφετέρου, παραπέμπει στις καταστάσεις εκείνες, στις οποίες η αναπαραγωγή της προηγούμενης, της κανονικής ή ομαλής συνθήκης είναι δύσκολη ή αδύνατη. Έτσι, για παράδειγμα, κάνουμε λόγο για «κρίση» άσθματος όταν το αναπνευστικό σύστημα δεν λειτουργεί κανονικά ή για οικονομική «κρίση» όταν το οικονομικό σύστημα δεν αναπαράγει ομαλά τον εαυτό του.

Η πρώτη σημασία προκύπτει από το αρχαιοελληνικό ρήμα «κρίνω», το οποίο αρχικά σήμαινε «διαχωρίζω», αλλά αρκετά νωρίς (στα ομηρικά χρόνια), επίσης, «αποφασίζω». Η δεύτερη σημασία, η οποία είναι και μεταφορική, προκύπτει –σύμφωνα με τους περισσότερους λεξικογράφους– ως μεταφραστικό δάνειο ή αντιδάνειο από τα λατινικά ή τις λατινογενείς γλώσσες. Η «κρίση» έγινε crisis (λατ., αγγλ. & ισπ.), crise (γαλλ.) και crisi (ιταλ.) και κατόπιν «κρίση». Με αυτό τον τρόπο, ενώ τα λατινικά, οι λατινογενείς γλώσσες και τα αγγλικά έχουν δύο όρους για να αποτυπώνουν τις δύο διαφορετικές οικογένειες σημασιών (iudicium, judgement, jugement, juicio, giudizio για την «κρίση» και crisis, crise, crisi για την «κρίση»), τα ελληνικά περιορίζονται σε μία και μόνη λέξη, την *κρίση*.

Κατά ενδιαφέροντα τρόπο, ήδη από τα αρχαία ελληνικά, μπορούμε να ανιχνεύσουμε κάποιες χρήσεις της λέξης, οι οποίες συμπυκνώνουν και τις δύο σημασίες. Έτσι, η «κρίσις» μπορεί να σημαίνει το κρίσιμο σημείο μιας αρρώστιας, το σημείο όπου "αποφασίζεται" η τύχη της ζωής του ασθενούς. Επίσης, κατά ενδιαφέροντα τρόπο, η φιλοσοφία, σε ανεξάρτητους μεταξύ τους κλάδους, έχει φέρει κοντά τις δύο σημασίες, οι οποίες συμπυκνώνονται στη μία και μοναδική ελληνική λέξη. Για παράδειγμα, στη φιλοσοφία και την ιστοριογραφία της επιστήμης η κρίση σηματοδοτεί μια κατάσταση, κατά την οποία το κυρίαρχο Παράδειγμα αδυνατεί να αναπαραγάγει ομαλά την κυριαρχία του εξαιτίας μιας πλειάδας εμπειρικών ανωμαλιών. Η κατάσταση αυτή, παράλληλα, ωθεί στην όξυνση της κριτικής και στην ανάληψη μιας σειράς αποφάσεων ή αξιολογήσεων, οι οποίες δεν ήταν διαθέσιμες στο παρελθόν. Αντίστοιχα, αλλά με αρκετές διαφορές, στον χώρο της πρακτικής φιλοσοφίας, η έννοια της κρίσης σηματοδοτεί την απουσία εγκαθιδρυμένων κριτηρίων για την ανάληψη και τη νοηματοδότηση μιας πράξης – κατάσταση η οποία αναγκαία ωθεί στην κριτική και την απόφαση.

Μοιάζει, λοιπόν, η κρίση όντως «να γεννά ευκαιρίες», όχι όμως αυτές που εννοούν οι επιτήδειοι της αναπαραγωγής της υπάρχουσας κατάστασης. Η "κρίση" επισύρει 'κρίση'. *Κρίση* λοιπόν…