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1   The film *Far from War* (Yuanli zhanzhengde niandai, Cn/1987) by the female director Hu Mei depicts – with an increasingly tightening and circular flow of recurring images – the attempts of a war veteran to cope with his memories and traumata from the Second Sino-Japanese war. Being exposed to and at the mercy of the power of these images, he decides to follow them. He moves out to invoke and drive out the haunting images at the places where he experienced the war. Towards the end of the film we see old Gu Meng, at one of these places, amidst a celebration in the countryside: We see firecrackers exploding, chickens being killed and other animistic rituals being exercised. Is this an exorcism? Or is this only the expulsion of the obsessive memories of the bygone war? An image exorcism? Or just one of the common excesses – especially in many mainland Chinese films of the past 20 years – which boycott closed endings and therefore rather culminate in open endings and circular film narrations? Filmic chronotopes of this kind can also originate from the autobiographic experiences of the oncoming filmmakers of 1980s' Mainland China: Within these, the traces of the past are invoked or exorcised by these animistic rituals of and in the image. After all, the Cultural Revolution brought many of these filmmakers to the distant swathes of land of the ethnic minorities, where such practices are common until today. Another case in point may be the diverse tribes and peoples, which are, in the so-called *minority genres*[1], introduced and depicted by their partially still existing natural religions.

2   Not only in the Chinese cinema, these strange mixings of ritualistic exorcisms and abundant iconic power ("Bildmacht") are signs of the testing of image functions, which are, with common rationalistic and rationalized principles of image construction, today

either rarely or not possible to grasp. Specific image characteristics are displayed through the image excesses and orgies of movement, and the film viewers are indeed physically affected. Until today however, these have rarely been articulated in the established theories of the moving picture.

3 The dominant representational functions of film are haunted by these shadows and tell about the *efficaciousness of the images.* According to the motto: At the centre of attention is not simply the depiction through images, but the disruption of every fiber of the viewer's body. Animistic in this respect are not only the often following scenarios between utopia and dystopia, heterotopias and catastrophe. But they can also be called animistic because of their insistence on the vital force of the inanimate, their implicit demand for a resolution of the dichotomy of nature and culture, and the challenging of the predominant notion of an understanding of subjectivity. And finally in conclusion: their distinctive image pragmatics which insists on the efficaciousness or vital and effective force, effectiveness and diversifying power of the images.

Aggregate States of Iconic Energy

4 Sometimes, however, thoughts and concepts have appeared in the history of culture and media theories, which tried to promote an understanding of cinema as a device for the realization of such an iconic power. Some of them were confined to more or less explicit borrowings from ethnological concepts and dealt with the power of the image in animistic cultures. Others, however, have also drawn conclusions from this invocation of the power of the image to formulate a pragmatic or even interventionist conception of it. Indeed, images make you *see*, not only insofar as phenomenologists are concerned. Consequently, images make you *think*, not only insofar as cognitivists are considered. In a next step, images make *signs*, and not only semiologists understand that. For the interventionist image and film theorems there is a fourth one, in addition to these three gifts of the images: Images are also simply agencies which transform the viewers' bodies. They change the deep structures of body and consciousness, which are prefigured to seeing and listening, via the specific perceptual media conditions of the cinema. They form a specific subject-structure, which transforms the viewer's body by diffusing into it via the perceptual-apparatus. In consequence, according to the emphasis of the theorists of interventionist film image theories, they give incentives to act. By interfering they do something with the viewer: Images *act.*

5 It is not a rare appearance that the diverse theoretical approaches of the interplay of image, movement and the viewer's body feel the need to be ashamed: Ashamed of their old smell of pre-rational conceptions of the image as animisticly animated apparatus. The understanding of cinema as the prototypical art of modernity, as a media embodiment or incarnation of this prosthetic device, might have had a not insignificant effect on this. It's too bad, because thereby, by abandoning this child, the theories of the moving image lose a great tool. In fact, animistic thinking has broadened the horizon of iconic functions, forms, effects and elaborations in the history of the theory of film, photography and media.

6 It began around the same time as the invention of the moving image lead to the moving of the audience by the Lumière brothers. The art historian Aby Warburg turns towards ethnological and cultural-scientific questions by consciously renunciating his traditional discipline. In 1895, the year of birth of film, he sets out for a longer journey

to the United States: In the territories of the Hopi Native Americans, he starts to collect facts about animistic techniques such as snake dances and fertility rites. Behind his scientific urge was, among other things, also his interest for the virulence of the notions of the animistic power of the image ranging from the Renaissance to the so-called "modern" societies. These and similar practices were, according to Warburg, embedded like intarsia inlays into (pseudo) rational thought and haptic patterns. They repeatedly come up as words or images in the form of "mnemic energies"[2]. By taking a detour from the traditional realm of his discipline, art history, Warburg sketchily thought about four theorems for understanding images. In the following century, several scholars have pursued these ideas from different perspectives, occasionally without direct reference to Warburg. These involve, firstly, an understanding of the image as a *generator and reactivator* of imaginations removed in time and place, during the reception of the image; secondly, the examination of any kind of *image movements* as an indicator of the dynamic which is inherent in every image, be it still or moving; thirdly, the examination of the image as an *instrument of thinking and a knowledge accumulator*. And finally as the fourth theorem, the analysis of the functions of the image as interventionist forces, as an effective *vitality*, so to speak. In film studies, which have become established by the middle of the previous century, these sketches or early conceptions of visual anthropology were pushed further. By introducing the category of *participation*, Edgar Morin found a function of images both public and technically reproduced, which directly builds on and draws its power from certain pre-modern concepts of the world. By this, the sociologist, ethnologist and filmmaker transfers a fifth category of image animism from ethnology into image, film and art theory. This fifth category is based on a fundamental diffusion of subjective personality characteristics on one side, with objective image characteristics on the other and emphasizes the *image-political consequences* between the conflicting priorities or poles of animism and animation. In the meantime, a high number of filmmakers and image-affiliated scholars have influenced these transformation processes with their own ideas. The processes are founded on – as one could call them – five *aggregate states of iconic energy*. Here, they are to be used as a terminology grid to qualify animistic residuals more closely within the understanding of images of different cultural, image and film theories of the 20th century[3].

Presence: The Being-There of Images

7   What has been mentioned as the first set of problems in image animism, the generation and reactivation of the time-spatially distant Other, is based on nothing else then the *being-there of the images*[4]. Warburg breaks away considerably from the idea of the function of the image as representation and turns to the *presence* of images. Images do not (only) refer to the absent, the past or bygone and the forgotten, but also *present* an instantaneous virulence in a quasi explosion-like eruption of the past or remote within the present moment. The images themselves and their content *are there*; and because they are there, they have an effect. Like intarsia inlays in rosewood, temporal enclosures reside both within the presence of the image and within the image of this presence. Concerning this time shift, an idea flashes up within the image and as the image, but it is peculiar and difficult to grasp. When the bygone and (re)presented becomes (the) present, the difference between the image and what is depicted by it slightly fades into the background. Warburg has, according to the art historian

Philippe-Alain Michaud, not only reflected upon this convergence of the image towards its ultimate referent. But also in painting, as film did not concern Warburg much, he considered the painted surface of a painting to be a transparent canvas which portrays the subjects regarding their biographical development in vivo[5]. And indeed, if one consults Warburg's studies on Flemish art, one is amazed by the throbbing vitality and vital presence of the panorama which he unfolds. Warburg presents a panorama, among other aspects, coming in the guise of a pirate novel, in which "the reckless Hanseatic captain Paul Benecke"[6] guided the famous *Last Judgement* by Hans Memling, as the "gem or treasure of the buccaneer", safely through the wild North Sea. Then again it comes as the melodrama of the eventful and moving destiny of Katharina Tani, which makes it possible to relive the "phases of a woman's life in drastic, almost symbolic clarity"[7]. Finally, he does his utmost to intertwine the source material in a reviving spirit, "which lies at first (lifeless) as a documentary mass in front of us [...],and tries to, [by] looking out for indirect modes of resuscitation, resurrect [every character as] a lively personality"[8]. Warburg hereby invokes the potential power and force of the image as the means to attain a mimetic convergence between the object and its representation. He also was able to discover this in the European culture of the 15th century. Therefore, Warburg locates the source of animistic processes not only within societies like those of the Hopi Native Americans, but also within the processes of art and culture of the, for us, more familiar ethnicities and finally even uses them in his own creative process as a scholar. It casts a new light on the problem of the cultural function of technically reproduced images, even for art and cultural studies, when he in fact combines the technique of animistic practices of the image with the application of the latest photographic techniques such as light-sensitive optics and emulsions for reproducing old paintings. Since the beginning of photography and film, the two are integrated into discourses which aimed at an existential, in fact congruent proximity of the object with its representation. The history of animistic image presences spans from the fear caused by the arrival of the train in La Ciotat which, in first film screening in December 1895 in the Grand Café at the Boulevard des Capucines, made the viewers jump from their seats and run away[9], to the cyborgs which also spring from the images of science fiction literature.

8   Even in Thomas Alva Edison's notes, one can find a series of references that imply that more than the conservation of lost figures and objects was at stake. They suggest that the goal of the inventions of film was to create an artificial entity of a fully-realized spectacle of synaesthetic qualities through the combination of image and sound[10].

9   The device conceived by Edison is therefore indeed comparable with the one which Warburg, in the field of knowledge, has mapped out in his writing, by cumulating books and images and by planning exhibitions. He defines the subjects of the past as "remote beings", which are split between images and texts and preserved in documents and works. The historian is, so to speak, able to restore their organic solidity, "as long as he does not shy away from the struggle to restore the natural bond between word and image"[11]. In these thoughts there is, of course, the pattern that Edward Tylor has dealt with already. The founder of anthropology has introduced the term of animistic thinking, also because of the insistence on the being-there or "Da-Sein" of the iconic[12]. When Gu Meng of *Far from War*, to whom we have referred earlier, stumbles into the fireworks-display of the festivity, it *is* simultaneously the cracking and flashing from the war that haunts him throughout his life. But not only Gu Meng – and we as viewers

of the film – succumb to the magic of these images of animistic realizations of the Other. Also Zhang Yimous *Ju Dou* (Cn/1990) and many other films of the modern Chinese cinema since the 1980s, deal with or show scenes of similar content.

Images Move

10 Animistic remnants can also be seen in the phenomenon of filmic movement and its theoretisation. On the one hand, cinema can be reflected as a place which is able to create a veritable festival for the senses. This is the presence of the image, as described earlier. It proffers an experience in physical impressiveness way beyond other arts and media through the opulent use of synaesthetic procedures. On the other hand, film is, with some justification, understood as a system of recording of things from the past, a medium of absences and traces. By recording *past movements*, the image separates itself from its model image and pursues an *independent being.* And by evoking this *"soul"* of the past, as a ghost or spectre, this leads to the movement, (re)vitalization and animation ("Beseelung") of the image. Since its beginning, cinematography has developed within this paradox and lodged itself, as I see it, rather well in it. It is perhaps this magical double-sidedness of presenting and being or making absent, of making appear and disappear, which is the reason for the wild energies that are not only evoked by the images, but which also mobilize the body of the beholder. In addition to its representational function, film produces in any case a surplus: the deferred movement of the past as a phantasmagorical body of its own.

11 Since working on his dissertation on Botticelli and even before travelling to America, Warburg deals with panel paintings and the manifestation and development of movements in it: the fall of the folds make the clothes look more dynamic, gestures forcefully awaken the human or divine bodies, rituals from earlier pre-Christian epochs disrupt the static festivities. The elaborations on *image animation* in painting can consequently be seen as preparing the ground for the project of *image animism*, which has not rarely been associated with Warburg's central category of *Nachleben,* the reliving or vitalization of the past. With this term, Warburg not only traces cognitive orientations of another cultural condition of the past. It can be assumed that he draws on Tylor's category of the *Survival in Culture*[13], but this new category encompasses more than the acquisition of specific knowledge and images. According to Warburg, *Nachleben* means corporeal convergence. The difference to the common understanding during the Renaissance in the first place is emphasized by this animistic relationship between the representation of images and a historical consciousness. As the term 'renaissance' has the meaning birth (naissance) in it, the term *Nachleben* points towards vital acquisition, revision or reworking.

12 In the first decades of the 20th century, Warburg was not the only one with his approach leaning towards a theory of image animism. All throughout Europe, other scholars and artists worked on the elaboration of a para-scientific utopia of luminous energies. According to Jacques Rancière, the explorer of the politics of the image in modernity and afterwards, there was quite a number of concepts between 1890 and 1920 which dealt with the understanding of the image as a field of force: It ranged from Russian futurism to the early attempts of Ricciotto Canudo in film theory, from the films of Jean Epstein to his film-aesthetic concepts

13   on the mechanic automatism of film and its associated idea of défiguration[14]. Although a bit later in time, one finds numerous examples of strange image amalgamations of movement, vitalization and ensoulment, even considering Sergei M. Eisenstein, the great materialist of early cinema. In 1931, about 35 years after Warburg's stay in New-Mexico, he also undertakes a journey into Native American territory for the production of mechanic images. Similar in outset, he is concerned with the field of image research between animation and animism. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *La mentalité primitive* (Primitive Mentality), an ethnological best-seller about 'pre-logic' ways of thinking of cultures outside Europe[15], accompanied him on his journey. During a trip to Paris at the end of the 1920s, SME already got hold of this reading material. Therefore, it cannot be considered as an ethnological preparation only for his trip to New-Mexico[16]. Towards the end of his stay in America, he was still able to complement his ethnological collection with James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough.* Eisenstein considered the ethnological theories on iconic power to have an extraordinary potential for the development of further formal strategies in dealing with the moving image. Traces of an effort of transformation from latent image energy to kinetic dynamic can be found. This ranges from the three stone lions in *Battleship Potemkin* (USSR/1925), until the victims of the *hacienderos* in *Que Viva Mexico* (Mex/1932), which were buried up to the neck. The kinetic dynamic was supposed to function as a force of induction between canvas and the body of the beholder. The theorems were discussed regarding their application for the problem of interior monologue, for psychological questions and the topic of the dynamisation of the canvas from an ethnological perspective. Debates of the filmmaker and hobby ethnologist himself with linguist Lev Vigotsky, with physiologist and psychologist Alexander Luria, a close friend of Eisenstein, prove to be among the examples[17].

14   For Warburg it was the studies with the Hopi, for Eisenstein the debates with the ethnologists Lévy-Bruhl, Marcel Granet, James George Frazer and others before, during and after his trip to Mexico. Later came the research of Maya Deren. For her preliminary research and filmshootings for her film *The Very Eye of the Night* in the mid-1950s in Haiti, now years after SME, she collected scattered thoughts to form a theory of artistic image production which drew its important aspects from the magical practices of voodoo. According to Deren, in the course of artistical practice one comes across phenomena which generally can be argued to be animistic experiences[18]. Among the central concepts, which run through this film project, are the following: The pervasion of the body with inexplicable streams of force, the scrutiny of the boundaries between the I and the Other and the reduction of distance between the eye and the object. *The Very Eye of the Night* came into being in an intellectual climate of open cooperation and mutual curiosity between scientists, scholars and avant-garde artists. It premièred in 1955 in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, but was shown in New York not until 1959 due to legal problems and conflicts with the producer. United by their interest in questions of the logics of representation of other cultures, the well-known dancer and choreographer Antony Tudor as well as the musician John Cage were participants of the project.

The orientational functions of the image

15   Even in her early work such as *Meshes of The Afternoon* (US/1943), *At Land* (US/1944) or *Meditation on Violence* (US/1948), Maya Deren distinguishes two problem areas when dealing with the image: On the one hand, she is constantly searching for the energy inherent in the image, which allows having movement, action and modification. On the other hand, she searches within the image, especially within the film image, to search for a possibility to locate, find and orientate oneself in the world. From antiquity, via the Renaissance to the present, Warburg investigated these anthropological categories of the creation of a *thinking space* as a combination of natural sciences and iconic power, of "mathematical abstraction and cultic revering conjunction"[19]. Animistic and enlightened were mixed to what Warburg has identified as the *orientational function* of the image. According to the cultural and art theorist, this symptomatic of the image can nowhere better be found than in the direct instruments of orientation, the star constellations on the night sky from the cosmology of antiquity: "because as cosmic demons the antique gods incessantly belonged, since late antiquity, to the religious powers of Christian Europe and influenced its practical conduct of life so radically that one cannot deny the auxiliary regiment (Nebenregiment) of heathen cosmology, especially of astrology, which was implicitly accepted by the Christian church"[20]. Therefore, star constellations are not residues of a pre-logic era or thinking having become obsolete or gone out of use, but still govern our actions. Like any other images, they also help to orientate within the universe.

16   Especially this knowledge of or for orientation seems to be absorbed by Deren's images. It is not coincidental that *The Very Eye of the Night* is interspersed with displays of star constellations which are assembled like *overall models of location within the cinematographic space*. It begins with an insert of the display of Gemini, followed by another graphic, possibly an etching, with the inscription of Ariel, Oberon, Umbriel, Titania, then Uranus and Urania. What follows these graphic sheets or foliages, is a starlit sky starting to move. The image frame is expanded with a slight pan to the left. The film tries, in a slow and solemn manner, to display the infinity of the universe and the mythical embeddedness of the film within the figurations of the star constellations. Nowhere else can one find the range of the conception of Warburg's orientation function within the image more effectively adopted than in this highly improvised work by the New York avant-gardist. Aby Warburg's astrological studies, from the studies of the frescos at Palazzo Schifanoia to his exhibition at the observatory in Hamburg, were promising to convey insights about cultural conditions[21]. Promising in a similar way indeed were the studies of Maya Deren in Haiti, where the voodoo cult conveyed a key to the understanding of cultural phenomena as well as the significance of her corporeal condition within the cultural context.

Images Live

17   In the universe of the examination of image animism in the cinema of the 20th century, it is only a small step now from the orientation guides of or in the images to the understanding of the image as an animate body. From thinking images to living images? As absurd as this idea seems to be at first, it has found a place in the niches and at the margins of modernity. The being which Warburg – which is rather problematical

– thinks to have derived from a primal fear and labels as "[b]iomorphically animistically known and possibly overlooked beings"[22] could indeed be the movement of the surrounding images of the world coming from the emanating vitality of the surrounding world of images. Cinema then would prove to be the arena of the clash of mythic residues and modern technology and its images as possible evidence of a tyche of perception and object, which has been moved into an imaginary body. Warburg however locates the appearance of this living image already within the High Renaissance and gives evidence of the route to the vital image for example by the fabrication of life-sized wax figures in the churches of Florence. The so-called votive figures ("voti") were replicas of north-Italian notables in every detail and dressed up from their personal wardrobe. Similar to heroes in a *proto-cinematographic biopic,* they populate the ritualizing spaces of the modern man. Both the church and the cinema live off the mythical and animistic intarsia of a thinking, which is substantially advanced in age but nevertheless still virulent. Warburg sees this "fetishistic wax image magic"[23] as a consequence of a deep-seated belief in the efficacy of the image which should help to cope with the suffering of traumas and to ban latent fears.

18 The vitalization of the image seems to be based on a principle which has at the same time as Warburg's concepts been described by ethnology as *participation.* Hereby, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl attempts to describe a relationship between human subjects and the world of objects which is characterized by a mutual convergence and an exchange of respective characteristics: "I mean to say that, in the collective grasp of primitive thinking, the things, beings, apparitions ('Erscheinungen') can be themselves and at the same time be something different than themselves which remains a mystery to us"[24]. This elimination of the separation of subject from object is able, according to him, to encompass the forms of "tangency, transfer, sympathy, long-distance effect etc"[25] This can be considered important especially regarding the relation between the object of the image and the subject or beholder. Hereby, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, almost a star author in the 1920s and early 1930s, grasps a relationship of man to his surrounding which radically resists common forms of thinking. He argues that the cultural technique of participation is able to condense the contradictory, the mutually exclusive, and to resolve the separation of subject and object into a collective state : "I mean to say that, in the collective grasp of primitive thinking, the things, beings, apparitions can be themselves and at the same time be something different than themselves which remains a mystery to us"[26] However, at the same time, the participation also leads to a separation which makes man fall apart into two beings. Lévy-Bruhl, synthesizing Tyler's theories of animism, turns the body of the beholder into an arena in which man steps outside oneself becoming visible for the self in the process : "Without a doubt, it was the first step for them, 'wild philosophers', who looked once at both of those groups of phenomena, to come to the conclusion that everybody has two beings that are assigned to him, his life and his phantom. The one like the other are apparently in a close relationship to the body: Life, by making able to feel, to think and to act. The phantom, by being his effigy or his second ego; it can also be the case that both separate themselves from the body, the life, by being able to separate from him that he is left without feeling and dead, the phantom, by being able to appear to people who are very much distant to the specific body"[27].

19 Of course, this theorem has extensively been criticized since the first conception of this term, similar to the critique of the conceptualization of animism by Tylor. It is said to

draw on an underlying hierarchization and is for that reason only explicable from the history and ideology of colonialism; by this, one tries to find proof for a teleological development from the primitive to a 'higher' level of society; it is said to be basically a racist approach. Beyond doubt, these arguments have to be taken seriously as they are for the most part justified. However, there is a rest that is worthy of discussion and which retains heuristic value especially within cultural studies, in the discourse of media and image theory. What remains important are the specious arguments of a collective mode of representation, which scrutinizes the common logic of contradiction and exclusion, by adding a model of the co-presence of mutually exclusive enunciations or phenomena.

20   It is rather not surprising that these traces lead directly from ethnology to film theory, which was established at the same time. Béla Balász took up the lead in *Der Sichtbare Mensch* (*The Visible Man*), but it was followed most extensively by a man of letters still mostly unknown in the 1920s. Robert Musil, an acquaintance of Balázs from the Vienna coffee-house era, emphasizes this ambivalent function of the film image in his 'Approaches to a New Aesthetics' ("Ansätze einer neuen Ästhetik"). In his reviews on Balázs, Musil describes this magical process in more detail in which the beholder faces up with the image and sees it as oneself. Film has to be understood as the "sum of affects" (*Affektsumme*) in which "images, heterogeneous but influenced by the same affect, are condensed to form conglomerates"[28]. Musil, by picking up Balázs' thoughts, sees Man and animal, subject and object, the You and the I in unison within this aesthetic state: "Animal men (*Tiermenschen*) and multiple animals of the primitive cultures, dream and hallucinatory images, [...the m]agical role of hair, fingernails, shadows, mirror images and such like"[29] coalesce in a sketch or preliminary conception of an anthropomorphically informed film theory. In a dynamic arch, Musil develops a material-aesthetic (*Materialästhetik*) which originated in the pre-civilatory phases of mankind. The images' physical effects on the body of the beholder, one's pounding and banging, one's blinding and going blind, prove, even here, to be the animistic residues of past modes of representation in contemporary art : "All of these means have their earliest roots in very old cultural conditions and on the whole they effect in an extra-conceptual correspondence of man with the world and an abnormal additional movement (*Mitbewegung*) which one can notice at any moment, if one, absorbed in a work of art, all of a sudden activates the controlling normal consciousness (*Normalbewußtsein*)"[30]. Musil clear-sightedly emphasizes the relay he has picked up from Balázs which affectively connects the already mentioned double movement between the cinema-I and world outside to one another. Balázs has, according to Musil, as "first anatomist and biologist...on the chaotic field of film criticism"[31] called attention to the consonance between the perception of film and a pre-civilatory behavior, which is based on an "extra-conceptual correspondence [...] of the world and an abnormal additional movement (*Mitbewegung*)"[32], and therefore on participation: "If one reads the brilliant descriptions, which Lévy-Bruhl has given in his book *Les fonctions mentales des sociétés primitives* (How Natives Think) about the thinking of indigenous peoples and especially the labeling of the specific behavior towards things which he calls participation, one is able to feel the contiguity (*Zusammenhang*) with the experience of art to such an extent that one can believe to almost directly experience a late form of development of that early world"[33].

Participatory Politics of the Image

21   It comes by no surprise that, around 30 years after Balázs and Musil, going to the cinema was included as a participatory act into the thinking about cinema once more. It was Edgar Morin who built one of the bases of his film theory out of it. In his attempt on the 'imaginary man', he introduced four effects (effective powers = *Wirkkraft*) of the cinematograph, in a way both poetical and melodramatic (*pathetisch*). First, the "magic of the image", or photogénie, second, the technical requirements of the movie theatre, and third, a relationship of the audience to the film's manufacturer of which the meaning rather remains unclear, he most of all emphasizes the effort for the transfer from individual experiences and feelings to the surrounding world of things and human beings. For Morin, the "cosmic participation" is the central motor of filmic perception and the starting point of the collective experience of the world, of the "We" in the cinema.

22   In doing so, the mythical act of participation is also provided with a dimension of image politics. Morin at first understands the movie theatre, in which the images are subjected to the participation of the viewers and at the same time the viewers make sure that the images participate as well, most of all as a place of a More-Than-I. Man discovers one's Other as an image here, one's *double*. In the preface of the 1977 French edition, Morin even goes further. This double, describing the "homme imaginaire", is basically a magician, a medicine woman, a madman: the "homo demens"[34]34. The "homo demens" is however far from mentally decaying, according to Morin. Under the light of the projector one's disruption is even for a short time reversed and man is rebuilt as an ensemble of two sides. Lévy-Bruhl's *participation mystique* suspends the separation between subject and object and slides into the magma of the "We" (Wir-nis). It unites the goods-making and myth-producing man. We recognize in that demented filmgoer, as seen with Tylor and from Warburg to Eisenstein and now with Morin, the character which mediates between ethnology and image theory, between moving image and ritual, between animation and animism. With his anthropological theory, Morin outlines a peculiar inversion: Instead of describing the media transformation process between subject and object, Man and world, as a separation, abstraction and distancing/dissociation[35], he understands it as the most immediate and direct relation ever. Participation in the cinema is understood as an act of mediation which ties Man to the world, instead of separating him/her from it. Image and viewer enter a "relation(ship) of mutual assimilation"[36] which directs the flow of images by a, as Morin calls it, "supplementary stream of consciousness" of viewing. Instead of a one-directional process of *perceiving* things, a paradox process of synchronous convergence *and* separation of the subject takes place: In the cinema, the subject of beholding and the object being looked at are unified as a *Man-Thing-Animal-We*, as well as a *separation of the subject* into beholder and imaginary body.

23   As Morin derived cinema from the spirit of magic, this can be finally considered an assessment of media anthropology and media politics. This is definitely worthy of being on an equal footing, considering its effectiveness, with the great semiological, psychoanalytical or cognitivist approaches of film theory of the second half of the 20th century. Morin's act of derivation builds on ethnological findings as well as – even if only implicitly – on Warburg's questions in cultural studies in order to, not in the least, also to prepare contributions on the politics of the image of the present day.

In the End: Film Animism Today

24   Even as these attempts of the classics from Warburg to Morin outline an almost animistically inspired theory of the (moving) image, they were forgotten quickly, but especially in the last decade they seem to be increasingly relived and revitalized. New traces of an anthropologically informed politics of the image are laid out which try to shape a consequent development of the function of the image ranging from the *contemplation* (*Anschauung*) of the image to the *demand* for (*Anspruch*) its ethic dimension and to an *impetus* (*Anstoß*) for real action. Once more, the political dimension becomes the focus in the history of the theory of image animism. The image functions as an agent of intervention which has removed both its contemplative cloak of pure vision and representation and its modest gesture of showing and telling. Being concerned with the thinking of film images, theorists like Rey Chow, Jacques Rançière, Gertrud Koch or W.J.T. Mitchell try to circumscribe this iconic power, but from extremely different theoretical perspectives.

25   Already in 1995, Rey Chow took up the trace of image animism as well with the term of 'primitive passions'. In her work on the mainland Chinese film since the 1980s, cinema is described as a privileged space of the staging of image extremes like absence and abundance or original phantasies and gigantomania (or love of big things). Chow refers to that "'invisible violence' of [...] primitive passions"[37], which presents the reverse of the inability of letting go of the past. Taking a small scene or incident from the notes of Lu Hsun, she tries to explain the development of an autonomous, self-confident identity of modern China from an ultimate referent image which was experienced in a film screening by arguably the most important Chinese writer. The power of the image of this documentary material of a decapitation of Chinese civilians during the Sino-Japanese war, is said to lead, for Lu Hsun and China, to the dissociation from the constantly relived phantasmagoric formal canon of the invention of "origins and primariness"[38].

26   Jacques Rançière also proposes an enrichment of the functions of the image with pragmatic and process-oriented factors. With the example of Bresson's donkey film, Au hasard Balthasar (F/1966), he demonstrates that the film's specific *operations of the image* are generally based on their ability to refer to something Other, to highlight *the Other* and to become effective by the hereby produced alterity. Bresson's images "are operations which either connect the visible with its meaning and the word with its effect, or separate them by producing expectations and disappoint them"[39] With his proposition, he brought forward a clearly highlighted understanding of the image as intervention by conceptualizing the image as an operation as far as very specific modes of appearance and effect are concerned. In 1995, in the same year as Rey Chow's image animistic attempt, Getrud Koch interprets Béla Balázs's 'Visible Man' as a "new anthropomorphic aesthetics"[40] of modernity and of the cinema. This lies within the characteristic of the recording apparatus of not only showing the things, as they are, but on the contrary by giving them a human imprint. Cinema is able, according to Koch's reading of Balázs, to give us the possibility to assimilate the world to some extent to ourselves and thereby to animate it[41]. This double movement, to draw the image from the things and at the same time to imprint ours on them, comes from the repertoire of classical ethnology. Strangely enough, in this case it came to us by the

detour of the Frankfurt School. Koch picks up the idea of a pre-logic "We" ("Wir") and describes the subject which is formed from it in the cinema. According to her, a specific cinemagoer emerges from the diverse participations in the cinema hall. This demiurgic and quite friendly cinemagoer who *animates* the world according to our image of ourselves in an *animalanimistic* manner also has an evil twin: the terrible brute as "descended from savage tribe chiefs [, who brings out the] timeless, animal nature in all human beings"[42]. In a very different way yet with comparable effects, in his latest book, W.J.T. Mitchell seems to build directly on this magic of the images. In his approach on a 'life of the images', indeed very critically dealing with representation, he begins by ascribing an autonomous existence to the gaze of the beholder. Referring to Nelson Goodman, he understands images as ways of worldmaking which are in fact able to "act as living things"[43], in order to arrive at his main thesis: "I believe that magical attitudes towards images are as powerful in the modern world as they were in so-called ages of faith"[44].

27   What emanates from the images in *Far From War* is not simply the representation of a sacrificial ritual which has become obsolete in the present. It rather shows a symptomatic of the image which is never the more explicit than in a society where the contradictions of cultural functions have become heated up. Other examples include the antilope-hunt of a Mongolian tribe turning into a massacre in *On The Hunting Ground* (Liechang zhasa, Cn/1984, Tian Zhuang Zhuang) or the rituals dealing with the sky burial in *Horse Thief* (Dao ma zei, Cn/1986, Tian Zhuang Zhuang). When Hu Mei calls up the former soldier's memory images, in constant circles in order to finally dissolve them in the close-up of animals being slaughtered, these images are depicted in their fullest virulence: They urge the old man to go on but also make us think, they *affect* him and us. Images affect us by their presence and induce their movement into our bodies. In this way, this film and other works of contemporary Chinese cinema have opened my eyes and ears to even recognize this facet of cinema at all: the ritually always recurring convergence and reworking of image animistic functions. Hu, Zhang, Tian and the others have taught me – just as Warburg, Eisenstein, Deren and Morin have – to see the images as orientation guides and instruments of thinking in the Here and Now: Images not only move – they act, even when this dark or evil but nevertheless virulent part of the images often remains hidden.

NOTES

1. Cf. Clark, Paul. *Reinventing China: A Generation and its Films.* Sha Tin, N.T.: Chinese Univ. Press, 2005.

2. Cf. Gombrich, Ernst H. Aby Warburg. An Intellectual Biography. London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1970. p.244.

3. Cf. Sierek, Karl. *Images, Oiseaux. Aby Warburg et la Thèorie des Medias.* Paris: Kliencksieck, 2009. p. 48-52.

4. By arguing this, it has to be noted that the term "presence" differs considerably to the one elaborated by Gumbrecht. cf. Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *Diesseits der Hermeneutik. Die Produktion von Präsenz.* Frankfurt/Main: Edition Suhrkamp, 2004.

5. Michaud, Philippe-Alain. *Aby Warburg et l'Image en Mouvement.* Paris: Editions Macula, 1998. p. 121-126.

6. Warburg, Aby. "Flandrische Kunst und florentinische Frührenaissance." In: Wuttke, Martin (ed.). *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen.* Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1992 [1907]. p. 103-124, here: p. 107.

7. Ibid., p.113.

8. Ibid., p.255.

9. That this anecdote seems to have been (although plausibly) made up has been proven by Loiperdinger. cf. Loiperdinger, Martin. *Lumières Ankunft des Zugs. Gründungsmythos eines neuen Mediums?* KINtop. Jahrbuch zur Erforschung des frühen Films 5 (1996) p. 37-70.

10. Cf. Michaud, l.c., p.96.

11. Ibid.

12. Georges Didi-Huberman convincingly proved the affiliation of Warburg to anglo-saxon anthropology, particularly to Edward Tylor. He points to the fact that this is not to be understood as a return to the roots, but, on the contrary, as a discovery of anachronistic flashes of the survival ("überlebselns") of the history or past within the present. See Didi-Huberman, Georges. "Das nachlebende Bild. Aby Warburg und Tylors Anthropologie." In: Boehm, Gottfried (ed.). *Homo Pictor.* München/Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2001. p. 205-224, here: p. 207.

13. Tylor, Edward Burnett. *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom.* 3rd American ed. 2 vols. London: John Murray, 1871. Vol. 1, p. 101-145.

14. Cf. Rancière, Jacques. *Film Fables.* Trans. Battista, Emiliano. Oxford/New York: Berg, 2006 [2001], p.4.

15. Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. *La Mentalité Primitive* (Primitive Mentality). 4. édit. ed. Paris: Alcan, 1925.

16. Cf. Bohn, Anna. *Film und Macht. Zur Kunsttheorie Sergej M. Eisensteins 1930-1948.* München: diskurs film Bibliothek, 2003. p.78. In contrast, Phil Rosen argues, by referring to Masha Salazkina, that Eisenstein purchased the book on his journey to Mexico, during a stopover in Paris. cf. Rosen, Philip. *Revolution and Regression: Temporality in Eisenstein's Theories of Cinema and Culture.* Conference paper for 'Jetzt und Dann: Zeiterfahrung in Film, Literatur und Philosophie', SFB 626 Ästhetische Erfahrung im Zeichen der Entgrenzung der Künste. FU Berlin, 2008. p.9.

17. Rosen, l.c., p.9.

18. cf. the several suggestions to Deren's work in: *The Mirror of Maya Deren* (Kudlacek; A/Ch/D 2001).

19. "[M]athematische Abstraktion und kultlich verehrende Verknüpfung", vgl. Warburg, Aby. *Heidnisch-antike Weissagungen in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten. 1920. Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen.* Ed. Wuttke, Martin. Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1992, p. 199-304, here: p.202.

20. Ibid, p. 202

21. Cf. Warburg, Aby. "Italienische Kunst und internationale Astrologie im Palazzo Schifanoja zu Ferrara. " In: Bredekamp, Horst et al. (eds.) *Gesammelte Schriften.* Vol. I. 1. Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1998 [1912]. p.459-482, 627-644; Fleckner, Uwe et al. (eds.) *Aby Warburg. Bildersammlung zur Geschichte von Sternglaube und Sternkunde im Hamburger Planetarium.* Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1993.

22. [b]iomorph animistisch bekannte und übersehbare Wesen" see Note 3, quoted in Gombrich, p. 298, trans. K.S.

23. Fetischistischen Wachsbildzauber", Warburg, Aby. *Bildniskunst und florentinisches Bürgertum.* In: Wuttke,

Dieter (ed.). *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen.* Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1992 [1907], p.73, trans. K.S.

24. Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. *Das Denken der Naturvölker.* Trans. Jerusalem, Wilhelm. Wien: Braumüller, 1921. p. 58, trans.K.S.

25. Ibid *.*

26. Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. *Das Denken der Naturvölker.* Trans. Jerusalem, Wilhelm. Wien: Braumüller, 1921. p. 58, trans.K.S.

27. Ibid, p. 61, trans. K.S.

28. Musil, Robert. "Ansätze zu neuer Ästhetik. Bemerkungen über die Dramturgie des Films." In: Id., *Prosa und Stücke. Kleine Prosa, Aphorismen, Autobiographisches, Essays und Reden, Kritik.* Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1978 [1925]. p.1137-1154, here: p.1139. Trans. K.S.

29. Ibid.

30. Musil, l.c., p. 1141.

31. Musil, l.c., p. 1138.

32. Musil, l.c., p. 1141.

33. Ibid. Little more than ten years later, in 1935 at the *Soviet Filmmakers' Union Congress*, Eisenstein will also define this theorem of art as an artificial regression to the earlier stages of emotional thinking. He argues that the participatory momentum is however dialectally connected to the highest points of consciousness and modernity : "art might be nothing other than an artificial regression to the earlier emotional thinking". Quoted after Rosen, l.c., p. 13. I am grateful to Markus Hahn for the first hint on Musil's reading of Lévy-Bruhl during our time as fellows at the IFK Vienna.

34. Morin, Edgar. *Le Cinema et l'Homme Imaginaire. Essai d'Anthropologie Sociologique.* Paris: Minuit, 1982 [1956], p. x.

35. As with the great approaches of philosophical anthropology by Portmann and Gehlen, in a different manner also by Lacan.

36. Morin, Edgar. *Der Mensch und das Kino.* Stuttgart: Klett, 1958, p. 117.

37. Chow, Rey. *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography, and contemporary Chinese Cinema.* (Film and Culture). New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 51f.

38. Chow, l c., p. 37.

39. Rançière, Jacques. *Politik der Bilder.* Berlin: diaphanes, 2005, p. 11, trans. K.S.

40. Koch, Gertrud. "Nähe und Distanz: Face-to-Face-Kommunikation in der Moderne." In: Koch, Gertrud. *Auge und Affekt. Wahrnehmung und Interaktion.* Frankfurt/Main, 1995. S.272-91, here: p. 272, trans. K.S.

41. Ibid. p.280.

42. Ibid. p.282.

43. Mitchell, W. J. Thomas. *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. Preface, xv. Cf. Goodman, Nelson. *Ways of Worldmaking.* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1978, p.6.

44. Ibid., p.8.

INDEX

Mots-clés : Chronotope, iconic power, efficaciousness of the images, agency, theory of film, photography, media

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