

Tribute to Gerhard Richter

This synopsis looks at the life and artwork of Gerhard Richter, honoring the German painter born in Dresden on February 9, 1932. He continues to produce his paintings to this day.

His style, which we utopianly name “Transcendental Photo-realism”, seeks to synthesize his unique and rebellious nature.

We notice that his paintings unfold and cover many aspects of aesthetics and art history, especially his paintings of photographs. However, Richter goes far beyond the obvious, the surface of appearance. He continues free from conceptual determinations, enjoying a glorious aesthetic freedom, connecting with his uncapturable truth.

Regarding part of his historical and pictorial zephyr represented by people who lived through the events of the Second World War, including his family in their works of art, Richter claims an aesthetic style of transcendence through abstractions. This sublimity, also in his abstract paintings, does not appeal to *something beyond corporeal* life, but rather includes us in its presence, allowing us to feel its infinite possibilities.

Richter's revolutionary thinking appears in his abstract paintings as well, with sublime ethical and aesthetic refinement. They seem to be *pure in their ineffable form of representation*, as they keep their identity preserved while still accessible, allowing contact in which the *work and the viewer* entirely lose their identities and come to exist in a liberating way. His powerful stylistic determination seems to be experienced with the totality of our being. They inspire us to experience divine aspects of our humanity!



***Timm Rautert, Gerhard Richter, Düsseldorf 1986.
Farbfotografie, 47 x 71 cm.***

“Painting is the creation of an analogy with the unpleasant and the incomprehensible, which are thus transformed and thus made available”.

Gerhard Richter

Gratitude

I am grateful for the extraordinary opportunity to get close to the fascinating works of art of the renowned German painter Gerhard Richter and his entire life story.

Under the light of his revolutionary thinking, overflowing with an astonishing ethical and aesthetic refinement reflected in his works, I developed more as a human being, researcher and artist, understanding the importance of cultural and historical connections at the moment of aesthetic appreciation of a work of art, as well as the detachment in the delivery of contemplation.

The great subtlety and aesthetic emancipation of Richter's paintings demonstrate that it is in the timeless void of fruition with his works that we sublimate the obvious. His aesthetic calls for freeing himself from the very idea of being, both of himself and of the art object, as two entities distinct and reserved in their conformity.

Gerhard Richter immortalizes in his works the beauties that represent us. They continue to shine their charms on our spirit even after our eyes are closed. Soon, they begin to be part of our playful and oneiric world, eternalizing what they were born to be: Amazingly Incandescent and Liberating!

Introduction

Thoughts of German Rebels and Romantics through Gerhard Richter's "Transcendental Photorealism":

Our generation had to pay to find out, because the only image it will leave is that of a defeated generation. That will be the legacy to those who will come.

Abstrakt

The aim of this tribute to Gerhard Richter is to develop an analysis about some works of photo-realistic art of the painter Gerhard Richter, emphasizing the "aura and ruin" idea in the German twentieth century, as well as the heritage of German idealism, historical Marxism and existentialism in Walter Benjamin's thought, in the context of the discussion of the work of art as a theoretical object at a time of conceptual resizing, whose change of "cult value" for "exposure value" reconsiders culture and communication through a new epistemological perspective, bringing to fore the changes in the value that occurred in visual language, considered as narrative structure, and representation of reality in the transition from Modernity to Postmodernity.

Seeking to reveal the forces that act in the aesthetic experience offered by the works of art of the German painter Gerhard Richter, we perceive that the plot was woven permeating the complex relationship between the aesthetics of his Works and the tragedies that appear as a result of a historical process, inter-relating the life story of the artist and that of Germany in the 20th century.

Art criticism in this compendium is treated as a philosophical and moral problem and takes a closer look at Walter Benjamin's Theory of Knowledge. We understand that Benjamin thought is the right choice in reading Gerhard Richter's arts, since the "essence" of his reflection is constituted by conceiving.

History from the point of view of the present, whose epistemological assumptions reflect the aesthetic determinations of Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel, going on to establish a certain link with the present time of Martin Heidegger and the "historical materialism" of Karl Marx, until arriving at what particularizes his temporal conception of the past: "Action of the present" (Jetztzeit).

Benjamin's philosophy of anti-historical time shows how his discourse can be better suited to reflect the issues of Modernity.

Therefore, it supports us in the reading of Richter's arts, which, in turn, deals in its themes and in some aspects of its style, with the moral implications that occurred in the same *Time and Historical locus*, which the philosopher Walter Benjamin lived and produced your theses.

Far from making a detailed analysis of the thinking of all the philosophers that somehow influenced Benjamin's reflection, we only emphasize the relationship of some points of contact between the aforementioned, aiming to apply their concepts in the reading of Richter's works produced from 1960 who, nevertheless, do not despise, but update the relationship of the "Subject with the artistic Object" from a Rational, Sensitive and Moral point of view.

The tragic content of Benjamin's thought appears materialized in the works of art by Gerhard Richter 25 years after his death. Among his numerous photorealistic works, the following opens our synthesis:



Fig. 1. RICHTER, Gerhard. **Death (Tote)**. Catalog Raisonné: 667-2. Oil on canvas, 62 cm x 62 cm, 1977.

The painting “*Tote*” was produced by Richter in 1988 in monochrome and based on a photo from a German newspaper. The portrayed is Ulrike Meinhof, one of the founders of the *Rote Armee Fraktion* or *RAF* or *Baader-Meinhof* (1970 – 1998), in Portuguese, German Guerrilla Organization of the Far Left, also known as the Red Army Faction. The group acted ideologically in defense of the fascist state, refuting the imperialism in force after the Second World War. This painting was produced by Richter among fifteen others that show the death of the members of the group in one of the tragic episodes that took place in West Germany in the 70s.

The series was titled by the artist as October 18, 1977 (October 18th, 1977), where features several of the organization's top members after they committed suicide on the so-called "Stammheim Prison Death Night". Ulrike and Meinhof hang themselves while awaiting their trial in detention in 1976. However, the death by suicide of all members of the group, as reported by the press, is still very controversial.

By enjoying a profound stylistic relevance, Richter's works are able to locate us in the actuality of the aesthetic experience, a fact that led the artist to be considered a popular artist, however, the atmosphere of a distant time and the themes of war treated in his works, demands that they be accepted as a historical narrative, impelling us to turn our gaze to the meaning of life.

The Coffin Carriers (Sargtraeger) from 1962 suggests the nature of our reflection:



Fig. 2. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Coffin Carriers (Sargtraeger)*. Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany. Oil on canvas, 135 x 180 cm, 1962.

Considered an artist who paradoxically transits between the most varied styles, Richter navigates between the Vanguardist arts as well as: Photorealist, Minimalist, Conceptualist, Pop art and Traditionalists as well as Classic Realism, however his aesthetic singularity carries an atmosphere Romantic-Existentialist far removed from the aesthetics of both Nazi and Socialist Totalitarians and North American Capitalists.

By being called a Photorealist artist, Richter would produce an art, as the typical *Pop art* artists did, aiming at the massification of popular culture, however, although he based himself on photographs to produce his works, the painter did not technically reproduce them on the canvas, but handmade.

Regarding the aspect of realistic Figurative representation, his style alludes to a photographic image, however, by abstracting its fixity through smudges, the painter proposes a painting, whose aesthetic language suggests a blurred photo. This aspect the painter developed to keep secret the life stories (identities) of his models with Nazi-political implications.

At first, the great ambiguity arises from the fact that his works were produced in the Postmodern period, conceiving simultaneously tradition and innovation. Paradoxically, its "Tragic-Romantic-Rebel" content is considered in his "*Photo-realist-transcendental*" style (emphasis added) the model with the typical objectivity of the *Revolutionary Arts*, whose quality refers to what goes beyond typical photorealism.

Considering that Richter's works, when considered by specialized critics as photorealistic, have a purely metaphorical relevance, since the abstraction on the "realistic" hand-painted images (only based on photographs), synthesize his "**unique state of exception**" which we assume to call "Transcendental".

The work **Sargtraeger** is a good example of this. Its presence in the Munich Museum of Modern Art (Pinakothek der Moderne) is narrated in Anja Brug's text as follows:

The painting "Sargträger" is one of Gerhard Richter's earliest works, dating back to the presentation of a newspaper photograph. It was 1962, a year after his move to West Germany, where Richter was concentrating on the impact of the gestural style of his master, Karl Otto Götz, at the Dusseldorf Academy and where he was primarily concerned with Informal styles. Soon afterwards, although Richter considered, in addition to the material images of Alberto Burri, that of Lucio Fontana known as "Conatti speciali", he was profoundly influenced by the Informal, from where he began to work with photographs with brush and ink on canvas. From that point on, he selects press and publicity photos as models for his paintings, as well as snapshots and the family album. free from his own ideas about composition, color, content and style creation (*stillkreierender design*). By using the image of an arbitrarily chosen photo, Richter gets his "painted photographs" to pass to the secondary level effect, which allows the emotional distance from the viewer. In "Sargträger" the realism of the coffin transport is contrasted with thick and expansive over brushstrokes. In almost monochromatic color formation, the areas eas and contours, which define the background, are covered and replaced by a circular-violent act of painting. Visual reality is ensured by the photo of reality also blurred (*verunklärt*) by paint dripping down and paint streaks (*farbschlieren*) - a style, which was simultaneously developed in the United States, especially by Robert Rauschenberg. Proof of this is the painting "Voult", painted in the same year. (BRUG, 2006, p.338).

According to Paul Moorhouse, art critic, curator and scholar of Richter's works, this work, without many references on the subject, including the author himself, says: "Despite having its origins in a newspaper photo, this painting maintains, *a priori*, the light and picturesque way reminiscent of Richter's occupation with *Informel* art earlier." (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p.23).

In consonance with our research, the term *Informal* was often associated with other artistic styles such as Tachism and Expressionism and, as such, assimilated European art in the conception of pragmatic, instinctive and spontaneous North American “action” painting (“*Action painting*”), advocated by Jackson Pollock (1912 - 1956). Informal painting is self-signifying and devalues the process of creation. He abandons any previously known form, gradually eliminating the objects of the painting, on the other hand, she also refuses the reference to the gesturalism that keeps the artist's memory at the moment of the creation of the work.

Informal artists believed that aesthetic communication was possible through images and completely new and invented languages without reference to memories or common experiences. All these artistic trends that relate to *Informal* art narrate the yearnings of societies that suffered under totalitarian regimes, whose political powers were legitimized and maintained by the mass media, including through art itself.

It is important to emphasize, relating art and politics in this context, that the technological nature of the *Aesthetics of the totalitarians*, by precipitating the catastrophic events of the 20th century, was the target of the “negative criticism” of *Benjamin's Aufklaerung* that, nevertheless, could not witness, in its time, the most “positive” form of some photographic arts, as evidenced in Richter's “Transcendental Photorealism”.

By analogy, the artist narrates in his paintings (denouncing), the memories of that same war, 66 years later, leading us to infer that “time is not capable of mitigating man's creativity, so his action is independent of his instruments, but of its ethics”. Then, the hypothesis at this point in the text systematizes the problem of the working of technical means in the sphere of art as being subsequent to the moral problem of those who use it. Ultimately, ethics as a social condition collides with the limits of life, establishing the moral tenor of aesthetics.

About the subject, Richter clarified in the excerpts collected by Moorhouse, in interviews given by the painter respectively in 1964/65 and in 1970 the following: “Photography interested me because it illustrates reality very well”. (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p.39). For Richter, the photo is “the perfect frame”. (Ibidem, 2009, p.39). In this regard, Moorhouse reiterates:

This statement contains in its secret core the idea of “authenticity” and corresponds to the possibility of the idea of a direct and true world. This undermines the moralist position of those who criticize painting using photography. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p.39).

Such philosophical observations led us to risk a critical judgment in defense of the “quality” of Richter's photographic art, contradicting the prophecies of those who condemned it in favor of classical art. Existing in full actuality, by enjoying total stylistic autonomy, his art seems to meet the formal requirements of the hypostatized aesthetic value judgments by the philosophers Kant and Hegel, who guided the quality of “High Art” in its universal capacity to affect the viewer in the experience. aesthetics.

For the German idealists, art must go beyond subjective taste, ultimately it must be evaluated in terms of the knowledge and *delight* it provides to everyone, promoting an experience of existential transformation.

Gerhard Richter, born in Dresden in 1932 (former East Germany) achieved his freedom and artistic maturity only in 1960, after moving to Düsseldorf (former West Germany). His atypical photorealistic style, whose emphasis on the abstract alludes to the transcendental, highlights the movement and achromatism of a photographic image, in themes that mainly portray and eternalize the spirit of Germany under the Nazi regime.

From hence, his aesthetics brings up the discussion about the “death of the work of art” that Hegel had already anticipated in the 19th century: “Art is and it will remain for us, from the point of view of its supreme destination, something of the past” (HEGEL, 2001, p. 35).

Summary theme, which began Benjamin's critical reflection throughout the twentieth century, characterizing, so to speak, the thinker's concern with the change in aesthetic values under which works of art were judged in the passage from Modernity to Postmodernity. The end of the “Work of art” emerges as a synonym for the end of the “History of great art”, opening space for the technically reproduced arts, thus revolutionizing the aesthetic paradigms built throughout the course of the history of Western art until the beginning of photography.

In this context, Gerhard Richter's photo frames are born, reopening old critical/philosophical discussions about the value of the Work of art: “Cult value” transformed into “Exhibition value”, which Benjamin exhaustively analysed:

The various reproduction techniques reinforced this aspect in such proportions that, through a phenomenon analogous to that produced in the origins, the quantitative displacement between the two forms of value, typical of the work of art, became a qualitative modification, which affects its own nature. Originally, the absolute preponderance of cult value made – above all – a magical instrument of the work of art, which would only be – to a certain extent – recognized later as such. Likewise, today the absolute preponderance of its exhibition value gives it entirely new functions, among which the one we are aware of – the artistic function – could appear as an accessory. It is true that, from the present, photography and even more so, the cinema testify in a very clear way in this sense. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 12).

Richter, who sought throughout his career to capture the essence of the *object-space-time* and materialize it in the form of art, meditates and considers aspects of the arts of the Modern period and does not simply dismiss them as a Postmodern artist. An example of this are his “paintings-photographs” in black and white which, by showing how the technique encloses the myth of reason and the hope of finding the “lost Aura”, translate the crisis that humanism has been going through since modernity. Thus, art as a problem-theme in this text is reflected in terms of changing paradigms that guide aesthetic values in the transition from Modernity to Postmodernity.

The change in values that humanity has faced since the beginning of the 20th century translates the crisis of aesthetic modernity between two opposing groups: those against and those in favor of technology.

Among the groups of German Modernist artists, whose opinions oscillated between before and after the First World War, there were, on the one hand, one who resisted technology as synonymous with the massification of cultural products and artistic goods, and on the other, one who was inclined to mystification of technique and which was divided into two other groups, one in favor of totalitarian regimes, such as Socialist Realism and another, which was opposed to it, such as German Expressionism.

Analyzing this historical conjuncture, we identify that some concepts differentiate, once again, Modernity from Post-modernity. Philosopher/teacher *Ciro Marcondes Filho*, reflecting on the theme, describes how the ideas of the Enlightenment spirit succumb to the realm of art, dragging with it all the fundamentals that supported the paradigms of “modernity”:

The modern art project succumbs, therefore, along with the other components of the spirit of the Enlightenment, until it reaches a

moment of absolute loss of identity. It is exactly at this moment that the debate takes place that will mark the division of directions of conceptions that guided the discussion on postmodernity. (MARCONDES F. 1991, p 13)

In the opinion of Marcondes F., the fusion in the spheres: cognitive, political-moral and expressive-aesthetic, also emphasizes the opinion of Lyotard, Juergen Habermas, following the tradition of Adorno and Kant, aim to restore a lost utopia:

Habermas is a holistic and is actually in search of a “telos” (end, realization), seeking to recover, therefore, the conception of a becoming, of a history, of a utopian future of a finalist nature. For Lyotard, in the same way, Habermas, in his proposal to revitalize the aesthetic phenomenon, reveals his unifying objective of history and the existence of the totalizing subject. For him, Habermas seeks order, unity, hope, the public sphere when he criticizes all so-called avant-garde movements and the loss he characterizes as the historical reference of art. (MARCONDES F., 1991, p. 13).

As Marcondes observes, F. the death of Art History is synonymous with post-modernity. This means that art is no longer a particular and singular aesthetic object. It took shape and began to compose life in its most varied instances:

For most authors who analyze the current post-modern moment of social development, art is a manifestation that, due to its linkage

to world concepts and the spirit of the Enlightenment and reason, has no more possibilities or hopes of recovering the lost aura. Art in technological society is no longer a specific phenomenon; people's general experience has become aestheticized, that is, the general environments that make up culture have themselves become mouthpieces, public modes of artistic expression. Both in people as designer bodies (Kroker), as well as in interior environments and in the buildings of the urban landscape, a total aestheticization of living environments is installed. This constitutes what is conventionally called an "integral artistic phenomenon". (Ibidem, 1991, p. 13/14).

Through these first reflections, we perceive how Richter, by revolutionizing the realistic style of representation, atypically contemplating photographic images in his works, proposes a new aesthetic experience.

As we have been able to observe so far, the assertions that art after the advent of technology ceased to exist or that it came to represent, as an aesthetic language, just a complex of stylistic combinations of the arts of yesteryear, is only consensual in the reflection of some philosophers and communicators, and as such, presupposes the fatality of its creator as well. Dangerous conjecture and notoriously frustrating, because centuries and centuries were reflected philosophically and scientifically about art and thus were exhaustively dedicated to freeing man from the instances that suppressed him to elevate him to the *status* of autonomous being.

All of this led us to ponder: If art and the artist still exist today, as we can see through the works of art by Gerhard Richter, would it not be because the artist, through his creativity and "genius", managed to transcend the art world? at the service of the Church and the State, as well as the intangible ideological forces of the advertising aesthetic action of both Nazis and Communists, as well as Capitalists?

Wouldn't the Work of Art, based on Richter's artistic productions, have its concept based on new assumptions, far from those who prayed their conceptions within the European aristocratic scenario and not fatally extinct as feared?

1 - *Research method*

The only real force against the Auschwitz principle would be autonomy, if I may use the Kantian expression; the strength for reflection, for self-determination, for not letting yourself go.

Theodor W.
Adorno

The criteria for selecting the arts to be analyzed in this text has as its principle to bring up the references of *Historical Materialism* and *German Idealism* in the formation of Benjamin's thought with a view to interpreting the works of "Photo-realists-transcendentals" by Gerhard Richter, whose reference is, for the most part, people in his family circle related to the Nazi system.

Although the painter has included in his iconography also, but not exclusively, elements of his family related to Nazi Germany, we will highlight these works specifically, with the aim of seeking possible points of contact between the life of Gerhard Richter and that of Walter Benjamin, while respectively German artist and German-Jewish thinker affected by the "Aura and Ruin" of 20th century Germany.

His style, which updates and tensions the paradoxes of the "Aura and Ruin" in 20th century Germany in the treatment of art in times of mass culture, emphasizes that it is in the same catastrophic locus of Auschwitz that the reflections of both theorists and artists cross. Summarily, it is against this backdrop, based on Benjamin's Moral Criticism, that we will analyze Gerhard Richter's works of art.

Therefore, the division into three parts plus the sub-items of this work aims to establish the relationship between what is presented as research data by the predominant authors and their methodological foundations. Intending with this to obtain clarity mainly of *Benjamin's concept of art criticism*, in order to expand it to the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art.

In chapter 1, we describe elements that we consider relevant about Gerhard Richter's life story, including his personal relationships, academic studies and professional career, highlighting points that help us to understand his personality through his worldview, whose elements appear effectively materialized in their works.

In chapter 2, in a first analysis, with a view to knowing the particularities of the Epistemological-aesthetic doctrines of Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) and Friedrich Hegel (1770 – 1831), we compare the works *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* of Kant and the work *Aesthetics Course I* by Hegel, highlighting the points that sustain the reflection of Walter Benjamin (1892 – 1940) in the work *About Art, Technique, Language and Politics*, in his doctoral thesis *Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism*; in the article *The Work of Art at the Time of its Reproduction Techniques* and in the texts presented in the work *Magic and Technique, Art and Politics*.

When Benjamin moves towards the existentialism of Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976) and towards the “historical materialism” of Karl Marx (1818-1883) the supporting work will be *The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin - Destruction and Experience* organized by Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne. When the theme that deals with cultural identity in Benjamin brings up the points of contact between German thinkers and German Jews born in 20th century Germany, the supporting work is *Redemption and Utopia, Libertarian Judaism in Central Europe* by Michael Löwy.

At this moment in the work, the discussion that guides the themes that relate culture, art and politics seeks to highlight from

this plot, the limits and possibilities that involve the diffusion between art and photography in Germany in the passage from the Modern to the Post-modern period. modern.

We remember that permeating the entire text, regarding the theme of subjectivity, which in this case will be treated in the sphere of art under the *Concept of taste*, the Kantian theory of knowledge confronts the theory of the unconscious of Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939) in the work *Outline of Psychoanalysis*. This will be done with a view to clarifying the different ways that the subject and the aesthetic object can be analyzed.

In chapter 3, with a view to bringing us closer to what makes Gerhard Richter's art unique, a comparative analysis is developed between some of his works and those of other Totalitarian and Avant-garde artists. For that, in addition to resorting, whenever necessary, to the thinkers who make up the basis of our theoretical corpus (Kant, Hegel and Benjamin), we anchor ourselves in the aesthetic concepts of the American art critic Clement Greenberg (1909 - 1934) in his work *Aesthetics Domestic* and in the concepts of the Italian philosopher Umberto Eco (1932) from his works *History of Beauty* and *History of Ugliness*.

In the fourth chapter, among the countless questions that Richter's works of art bring to light, we will reflect on how they allow a dialogue between the values of Modernity and Postmodernity, discussed through a dialogical process represented, on the one hand, by theories and, on the other, by art, whose foundations accompany and represent the yearnings of humanity throughout *Art's History*.

In this way, at this moment of the research, we will bring up the considerations of Stuart Hall, who emphasizes the psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan in the work *Cultural identity in Post-modernity*; by Ciro Marcondes, who now evokes Heraclitus' concept of becoming, as well as the thought of Bertolt Brecht in the *Frankenstein Society* and by Umberto Eco, who confronts the thought of Jacques Lacan and Claude Lévi-Strauss in the work *The Absent Structure*.

General information about art, style and artistic movements, which are provided in the text, were collected from the work *Modern Art* by Giulio Carlo Argan and the work *Paint History* by Wendy Beckett, in addition to virtual sources that are available in the glossary.

We emphasize that all other information in the artistic sphere and the reflections provided by Gerhard Richter to the German media throughout his artistic career are extracted from the following German works, still without translation into Portuguese: ***Abstrakte Bilder***, Herausgegeben von Ulrich Wilmes. Mit Beiträgen von Benjamin, H. D. Buchloh, Beate Soentgen and Gregor Stemmrich: ***Atlas***. Herausgegeben von Helmut Friedel: ***Text 1961 to 2007***. Schriften, Interviews, Briefe. Herausgegeben Von Dietmar Elger und Hans Ulrich Obrist and in ***Die portraets von Gerhard Richter***, written and organized by the art curator, responsible for the 20th century of the National Portraits Gallery in London, Paul Moorhouse.

These works were translated by us, respecting the fullness of their meanings within German thought as much as possible.

In addition, the text presents a list of illustrations containing the works of art that were our objects of analysis.

Chapter 1 – About life Gerhard Richter

You can believe me or not, but I see the universe full of dots. I love all the points.

With many points I am married. I wish all points to be happy. The dots are my brothers. I am also a dot. In the old days we always played together, each one goes his own way. We still meet at family parties and ask each other: How are you?

“You know, Elly”, he said calmly: one can only love, what has no style, for example, Dictionaries, Photos, Nature, me and my paintings! He sighed [...] because Style is violence and we are not violent and we don't want any War”, ends the sentence; "Never another war".

Gerhard Richter

The following information from Gerhard Richter's thoughts show us that his path and artistic influences is taken from the German text *Studium der Kunstgeschichte an der Universität de Viena* by Michael Kai and by Paul Moorhouse's *Die Portraits von Gerhard Richter* and Gerhard Richter's works: *Abstrakte Bilder; Atlas and Text 1961 bis 2007 - Schriften, Interviews, Briefe de Gerhard Richter*.

Richter was born on February 9, 1932 in Dresden, Germany. He is the first child of Hildegard and Horst Richter, whose wedded bliss did not last long. According to a *New York Times* magazine publication, Horst Richter might not be Gerhard Richter's biological father. Regarding this theme, in 2005 Richter told reporters Susanne Beyer and Ulrike Knofel of *Spiegel* magazine the following: "So it is. But these things are not exactly unusual". (ELGER/OBRIST, 2008, p.513).

At the age of 3, Richter moved with his family to Reichenau in Saxony (east of the country), where his father worked as a teacher. Gerhard Richter, from 1933 to 1945, lived for 12 years under the Third German Empire (*Third Reich*) and until 1959 under the Soviet occupation of East Germany. In 1942, he moved to Waltersdorf in the State of Thuringia, where he participated in a youth organization known as the "*Pimpfen*" or Hitler Youth. Richter declares his dissatisfaction in an interview given to Robert Storr: “the Hitler youth was very violent. I didn't like power games, because I wasn't very athletic” (RICHTER, 2002, p. 17).
About this, the artist also declares:

They were a bunch of pompous idiots. 12 years old is too young to understand the ideological whole, but even that seems funny now, I always knew I had something better than them. Hitler and the soldiers approached the crowd, the people, the mass, while my mother brought me closer to "culture", Nietzsche, Goethe and Wagner. (Ibidem, 2002, p. 17).

As we note in Richter's own words, his mother was a key figure in his life, supporting his artistic bent from adolescence. At the age of 15, Richter began to draw, experimenting with different techniques, including watercolor.

Despite being very young, he already aspired to an artistic career, a fact that led him to commit himself to learning Art History even with difficulties in keeping himself in several undesirable jobs. In 1949 in Zittau in the state of Görlitz, Richter got his first job as a calligrapher. Dissatisfied with the job, he abandoned it half a year later, going to work as an assistant painter in the theater, whose profession was recognized as "Painter of theater and propaganda". Business).

Profession that the artist learned in the vocational high school in 1948 at the *Höhere Handelsschule (Higher Business School)*. Due to his self-confident and rebellious personality, Richter refused to perform menial tasks, so in 1950 he tried unsuccessfully to enter the *Hochschule der bildenden Kunst (Academy of Fine Arts)* in Dresden. Even though he was recognized many times for his artistic talent, he was rejected by the academy of arts, which at the same time advised him to first work for a State Institution, from where he could renew his request.

Following their guidance, Richter was accepted in 1951. The Academy of Art's 5-year curriculum program was strictly traditional, consisting of learning oil painting, portraits, studying nudes, still life and composition, in addition to a very thorough theoretical training. That included art history, the Russian language, political economy and Marxist-Leninist theory.

1.1 - Academic Training of Gerhard Richter

From 1952 to 1957, Richter studied at the *Hochschule der bildenden Kunst* (Academy of Fine Arts) in Dresden and from 1961 to 1964, he studied at the *Staatliche Kunstakademie* (National Academy of Arts) in Düsseldorf. His Teachers at the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden were Karl von Appen, Ulrich Lohmar and William Graham Sumner. In 1955 Richter painted, for the final evaluation of his course, the painting he entitled *Abendmahl mit Picasso* (Dinner with Picasso). Still for the final evaluation of the course in 1956 he painted a mural in the Museum of Hygiene in Dresden, which he titled *Lebensfreude* (Joy of living).

Shortly before his flight to West Germany, Richter gave orders to paint over all the works he had produced within the Academy of Fine Arts advocated by the Realist style required by the Socialist Republic (regime in force in East Germany at the time) in order to destroy them completely. Among his portrait paintings are the well-known works *Arbeitskampf* (Struggle of work) and the city of Dresden.

1.2 - Artistic Influences on Gerhard Richter

Two years before the construction of the Berlin Wall (1961), Richter fled with his wife from Dresden in East Germany to Duesseldorf in West Germany. Fearing political retaliation, the painter, in addition to the works that were destroyed according to his orders, others he burned before fleeing, such as *Antonie Tàpies* and *Francis Bacon*.

After this period, Gerhard Richter experimented many styles and forms of expression within Modern Art. This phase did not last

long, however, it gave rise to his Neo-avant-garde art of French-American inspiration. The central characteristic of his works is the lack of objectivity, abstraction (*Gegenstandslosigkeit*), whose name created by Richter himself marks his artistic expression until 1962.

Influenced by the German popular art of *Roy Lichtenstein*, the painter gave a new stylistic direction to his art, carrying, in addition to the influences of American *Pop-art* such as Andy Warhol, German Neo-Expressionism. Among other influences, Richter assimilates *Neo-Dada* and its criticism of the institutionalization of art known for the *Fluxus* of the German Joseph Heinrich Beuys and for the conceptual art of *Ready-made* by the French Marcel Duchamp and also for the *Action painting* of the North American Jackson Pollock.

1.3 - Artist friends of Gerhard Richter

Among his main artistic and influential friends was the German painter Sigmar Polke. Both fled from East Germany to West Germany, at the *Staatliche Kunstakademie Düsseldorf* (Düsseldorf Academy of the Arts) where they met Blinky Palermo and studied together from 1961 to 1964 under Professor Macketanz and Karl Otto Götz.

Gerhard Richter, Sigmund Polke and Konrad Fischer Lueg held their first exhibitions together in 1964. From that time on, Richter started to exhibit alone in several galleries and museums. With the cooperation of his great friend Blinky Palermo, Richter produced several sculptures and paintings, marking his art from the 60s to the 70s. gestural and daring, shaved and with more layers of paint. These paintings simultaneously show and hide his creation. Richter was also a colleague and influence of the famous painter Georg Baselitz.

In 1963, Richter along with Sigmund Polke and Konrad Lueg founded the style called "Realist Capitalism" (*Kapitalistischen Realismus*), whose title was created to refute, through irony, the art of "Socialist Realism" (*Sozialistischer Realismus*), an aesthetic valid in all Eastern European countries adhering to the communist system. A time when still in East Germany, Richter and many of his friends lived, studied and worked to maturity.

According to Richter, the Realists were Satirical Capitalists often of current affairs in the print media. Thus he began to see art as something that should be separated from art history, believing that paintings should focus more on the image than on references, in other words, more on visual language and less on statement, which is why he wanted to find a new form of painting that was not so restricted. As we can see, Capitalist Realism has a strong moral character. As the term itself indicates, it mocks (ridicules) the ideology of the official doctrine of Socialist Art based on the Realist version of Totalitarian Aesthetics. It is observed that elements related to East Germany such as the house in which Richter lived never appeared in his works.

1.4 - Academic activities and artistic productions of Gerhard Richter

In 1967, Gerhard Richter was a professor at the *Hochschule für Künste Bildende* (Hamburg Academy of Arts) and from 1971 to 1993 at the Düsseldorf Academy (*Staatliche Kunstakademie*). In 1971, Richter was invited to participate in the Venice Biennale (*Biennale de Venedig*), where he represented Germany with the entourage of *48 Portraits* (48 Portraits).

To compose this immense work, Richter used portraits from the lexicons of famous people, representatives of their culture as philosophers and scientists, among which were Albert Einstein, Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka.



Fig. 3. RICHTER, Gerhard. **Photo-collage of 48 cardboard photographs 70 x 90 cm, for the production of the work 48 Portraits. (48 Portraits).** Ludwig Museum, Cologne, Germany. Oil on canvas, 70 x 55 cm, 1971 – 72.

At the same time (1972), Richter set up an important place to store the images and ideas he collected (sketches, photos, magazines, color studies, portraits, fabrics and still life), which were later compiled and published. Richter's style began to change from 1976 onwards. In 1978 he served as a visiting professor at the Academy of Arts in Halifax, Canada and in 1988, as a professor at the *Städelschule* in Frankfurt, Germany.

With the growth of his international recognition, Richter, in the years 1993/94, is honored with a retrospective of his works in Paris, Bonn, Stockholm and Madrid. In 2002, another retrospective was held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Today his

works are present in the most important contemporary art museums in the world. Works in the Abstract and Photorealistic style, he performs to this day!

1.5 – German cultural identity in Gerhard Richter

Richter's work, in terms of its technical aspect, reveals how painting always explores its resources, promoting a renewal in the artist's relationship with the spectator, updating each other.

Through the various techniques that address popular themes, Richter shows an unconventional inclination towards popular art. By using photos taken from media publications, he cuts out his iconic and consumerist titles. His work comprises, in addition to portraits and abstract paintings, landscapes, productions with mirrors and glass, and art books.

His greatest and world-renowned work to date is *Ausstellung 1*, featuring photographs, images produced since the beginning of the 60s, from which arises the thesis, on the part of some art critics, that they require a more thorough investigation. close to questions involving the history of German civilization and culture, whose tragedies also marked the history of the artist's family.

Among the paintings, whose themes are copied from magazines, newspapers and private photos, are those that were predominantly reproduced in an achromatic and disfigured way, alluding to a blurred photo. His Photorealist works, produced from the 1960s onwards, are particularly discussed for bringing to light the paradoxical and dramatic history of 20th-century Germany.

Elements that constitute her appear simultaneously reflected and hidden in her works through her “Photo-realist-transcendental” style, with the intention of keeping secret the identity of her models,

sometimes victims, sometimes leaders of the Nazi system at the height of World War II, some of them often members of their own family.

However, his artistic work reflecting the history and culture of Germany does not only tell a story of horrors, but also of thinkers, artists, scientists and philosophers, whose theories changed the course of human history.

1.6 – *Gerhard Richter's Family*

Gerhard Richter married in 1957 Marianne Eufinger (Ema), daughter of gynecologist Heinrich Eufinger. In 1968 Betty, his first daughter, was born and, in 1982, already separated, he married the plastic artist Isa Genzkene from whom he divorced in 1983.

Since 1995 the artist has married his former student, also a painter, Sabina Moritz with whom he has three children and lives since 1983 in Cologne. From the four photo-realistic paintings below, we will witness the memory of the atrocities of the holocaust, which relate members of Richter's family linked to the Nazi System.

The background of these works, whose subjects are represented as banal scenes, are recognizable only when investigated. As we shall see, none of this family idyll allows any conjecture about the tragic life history of its models. Such characteristics are declared in the journalistic novel by Juergen Schreiber, published in 2005, under the title "Gerhard Richter, a painter from Germany: "The drama of a family".

Let us contemplate the works *Tante Mariane*, *Onkel Rudi*, *Familie am Meer* and *Herr Heyde* below:



Fig. 4. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Aunt Marianne (Tante Marianne)*. Private collection. Oil on canvas, 120 x 130 cm, 1965.

The painting *Tante Mariane* (Aunt Mariana) shows Richter as a baby in the arms of her aunt Mariane, who at the age of 18 fell ill with schizophrenia and was admitted to a psychiatric clinic in Grossschweidnitz, where she was executed in one of the many gas chambers of the “National Socialist Euthanasia Program” for the mentally and chronically disabled.

It is suspected that the work *Tante Mariane* could be directly related to the representation of a criminal of the Nazi regime: *Herr Heide*:

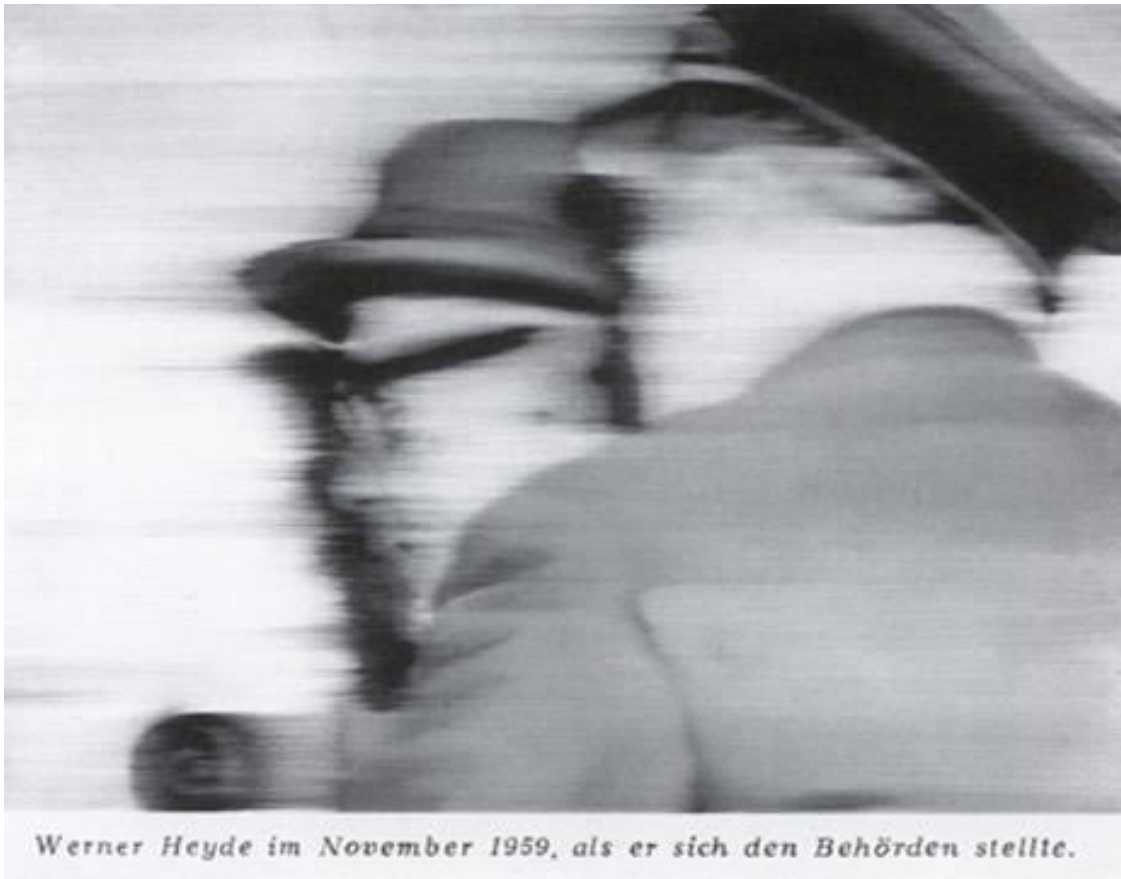


Fig. 5. RICHTER, Gerhard. **Mr. Heide (Herr Heyde)**. Private collection. Acrylic on canvas, 55 x 65 cm, 1965.

Werner Heide was a psychiatrist and neurologist member of the *SS* or *Schutzstaffel*, in Portuguese “Protection Troop” and of the *NSDAP* or *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, in Portuguese National Socialist German Workers Party or Nazi Party. At the time of National Socialism, Werner Heide, along with two other doctors, was head of the central department of the “T4 Action” or Eugenics and Euthanasia program, mandatory during the Nazi System.

The participation of Werner Heyde was fundamental for the implementation of the Program, consequently he was responsible for the execution of thousands of people. Werner Heyde lived and worked after the war under the assumed name of Dr. Med Fritz

Sanade, who again acted as neurologist and expert witness for the Court in Flensburg.

It was only in 1959 that Werner Heyde surrendered to the police, revealing his true identity. Then, judicially accused of having exterminated thousands of people, he was sentenced by the court as follows: “as a concentration camp doctor he killed at least 150,000 humans cruelly, insidiously and with intent.” (KAI, 1998, p. 51). Herr Heide, five days after his sentence was pronounced, committed suicide in prison.

Although the direct relationship between Aunt Mariane's death and Werner Heide is not known, conjecturing a relationship between them is reasonable in the opinion of some researchers who investigate more deeply the stories of the models represented in Gerhard Richter's paintings.

The next painting entitled *Familie am Meer* (*Family on the beach*), is a further work of this assumption:

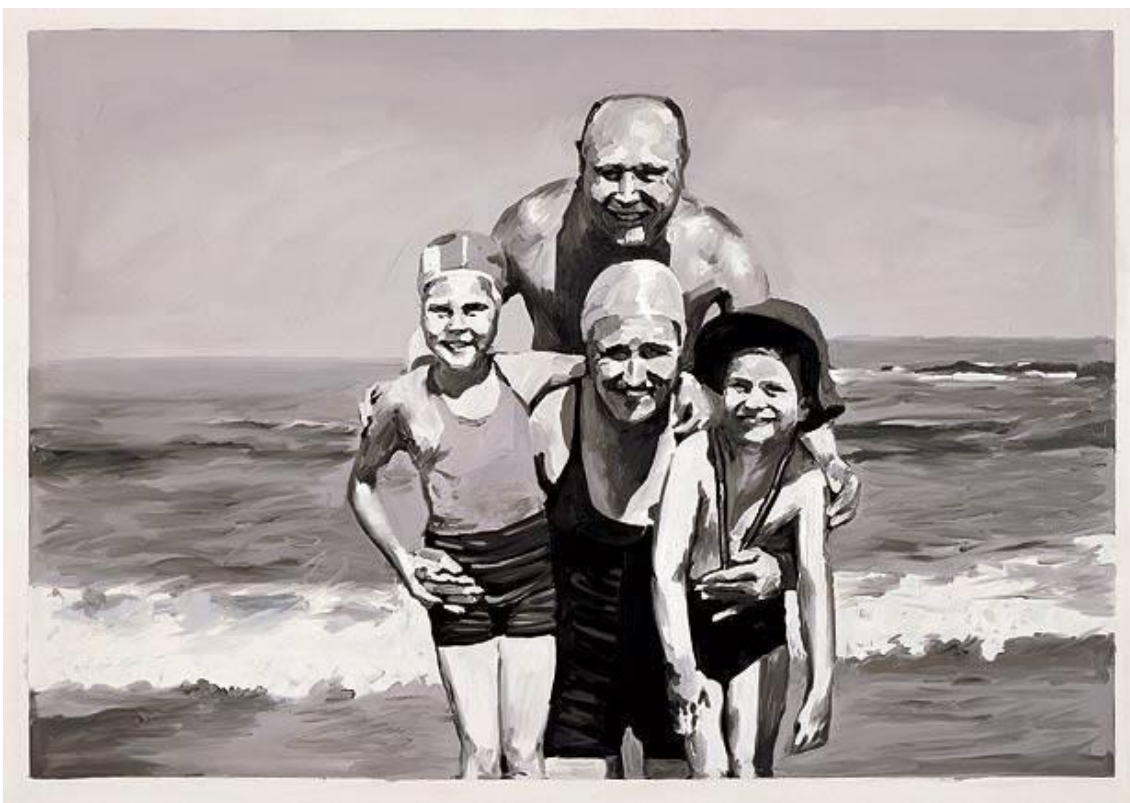


Fig. 6. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Family on the beach (Familie am Meer)*. Ströher Collection, Darmstadt, Germany. Oil on canvas, 150 x 200 cm, 1964.

Familie am Meer painting shows the family of Richter's first wife in a hypothetical situation of a happy family on a beach. The man in the painting is Richter's father-in-law, gynecologist Prof. doctor Heinrich Eufinger, together with one of his patients, who at the time was a friend of the Eufinger family. Madame Anneliese Graefin von der Osten, whose son Erimar (with hat) is together with Gerhard Richter's daughter Ema, appears wearing a swimming cap. The poetics surrounding the happy painting scene well hides Dr. Heinrich Eufinger, who worked during World War II ordering other doctors to sterilize huge numbers of people.

It is known that Mariane Schoenfelder or Tante Mariane did not count as one of his victims. Soon after the end of Nazism, Dr. Eufinger, acted as a doctor, even after being held prisoner in Soviet Russia. Upon being released, he began to operate in East Germany until 1956 and after that in West Germany, always without being persecuted.

Among the paintings produced in the mid-1960s, showing representatives of the Richter family in the dark passages that occurred during the Nazi System, are the paintings *Onkel Rudi* (Uncle Rudi) and *Horst mit Hund* (Horst with dog), below:



Fig. 7. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Uncle Rudi (Onkel Rudi)*. Tschechischen Museum der Schönen Kunst, Czech Republic, Prague). Oil on canvas, 87 x 50 cm, 1965. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 56). (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 68).



Fig. 8. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Horst with dog (Horst mit Hund)*. Agnes Gund Collection, New York, USA. Oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm, 1965.

These two paintings based on his family photographs, explain much of Gerhard Richter's relationship with these two important elements. *Onkel Rudi* or Aunt Rudi is his mother's uncle, called Rudolf Schoenfelder, depicted in Nazi uniform and smiling, suggesting Richter's idolatrous and heroic esteem for his figure at the time.

For decades Richter said nothing about the secret stories that make up the background of his paintings, but in maturity he clarified

in an interview with Dietmar Elger the following: “at that time it would be uncomfortable for me if I published these stories. Art would be interpreted as a way of recovering history as social work. So I had peace and everything remained anonymous. Now I don't care anymore if it becomes public. (RICHTER apud Kai, 1998, p. 172).

Such a revelation does not apply to the work *Horst mit Hund* (Horst with dog), in which Richter represents his father Horst Richter in a humiliating way. A slightly fat man, with disheveled hair and wearing a woman's hat. The reference photo that Richter used for the execution of the painting was captured during his sister's wedding in 1959 when their father was drunk.

Gerhard Richter refuted the Nazi ideology that, according to his opinion, his father was adept, however, other sources indicate that Horst Richter worked for the State as a teacher to continue supporting the family and not for ideology. In another episode, Horst Richter, even though he did not ideologically and directly participate in the activities of the National Socialist Party, was forced to be part of the military army of the time and shortly after the end of the Second World War, he was confined until 1946 in an American prison.

Upon returning home, he was received as a stranger and accused by his wife of destroying the family. Rejected and unable to return to work as a teacher, both in West Germany under American rule and in East Germany under Soviet rule, Horst Richter was no longer able to integrate socially.

In 2002, a mature Gerhard Richter spoke with regret about his relationship with his father in the past. He explains that much of his position at the time was due to the fact that he was manipulated by his mother's ideas.

When seeing his painting *Horst mit Hund* for the first time on display in New York in 2002, after 30 years, Gerhard Richter felt remorse for the way he represented his father in 1965. About that Richter declares: “with that ridiculous dog, along with the woman's

hat and the hair like a clown, today I feel more than ever that I painted him as a poor figure. (RICHTER apud Kai, 1998, p. 177).

From another point of view, the artist reiterates about Uncle Rudi: “he was my mother's brother, the darling of the family. There was much talk about him. He was always presented as a hero to me. He was charming, musician, elegant, brave and handsome and my father was considered talentless, disqualified. (Ibidem, 1998, p. 175).

It is not known exactly the true ideological position and real involvement with the Nazi System adopted, neither by his mother's uncle Rudi, nor by his father Horst Richter, because all the information that Gerhard Richter received came from the stories told by his mother, soon loaded of their affective relationship with such figures.

There is no proof that they were really responsible for the extermination of people, however it is known that the nationality of each individual born in Germany at that time irrevocably determined their cultural identity and their political position within the system.

A constant in Richter's works was that everything was illustrated by the passage of the work *Geschichtsbewußtsein und Posttraditionale Identität* die Habermas, highlighted in the article *Infinite Task trajectories between History, Memory and Forgetting*: by Leila Danziger, published in Ipotesi n° 13, Magazine of Literary Studies, Department of Letters, Federal University of Juiz de Fora:

Some are heirs of the victims, others of those who helped or resisted. Others are the heirs of criminals or those who remained silent. This shared inheritance (*diese geteilte Erbschaft*) does not result, for those born after the war, in personal merit or guilt. In addition to individual guilt, there are different contexts that result in different historical burdens. With the forms of life into which we were born and which formed our identity, we assume types of historical

responsibility. (HABERMAS apud Danziger, 2004, pp. 61/77).

On the theme involving Nazi issues, agreeing with Habermas' quote, Gerhard Richter declares that Mr. Rudi died in 1944 fighting as a soldier on the front line of the Nazi guard, probably an ideological victim of the system: "he was young and very naive and died a few days after entering the war" (RICHTER apud Kai, 1998, p. 20). The stories that involve Richter's private life relate to those of practically all German people, who suffered the consequences of the atrocities of Nazism.

However, the artist's works include other aspects of his culture. With regard to the thematic aspect, his iconography also includes the representation of models without any declarative or denunciative connotation, that is, significant political-ideological, such as friends, acquaintances and other members of his family, as well as animals, planes and photos from the media, whose representations contemplate only the testimonial effect of photography.

Despite not finding more concrete evidence of the connection between the life stories of the models and the Nazi System represented in their works, they certainly constitute a rich space to reflect on the historical and cultural elements intertwined in this complex plot.

1.7 - Theory of knowledge: Gerhard Richter between appearance and reality

The classic ontological problem of the confrontation between reality and appearance is often exposed in the words and in Richter's

Testimonial-Existentialist artistic manifestations and, as such, they offered the reasons for the birth of his works while launching him in the search to try to solve them. Richter, by using photographs as the source of his paintings, distinguished himself from his artist friends who were also Avant-garde-photo-realistic, inaugurating a new conceptual style of art.

The painter, who overcomes the indecision of many artists in using technical means of reproduction in the sphere of art, does not free himself from the problems that arise from subjectivity.

We remember that Richter, since 1962, never stopped painting the human theme. This is a sensitive aspect of his personality which in itself reflects his concern for all the guiding and determining conditions of human life.

Richter, who assumes to show the surface (appearance) of reality arranged on a secret plane, always leaves us reflective and perplexed. As Richter himself declares: “Illusion – or rather, “appearance”, is my life theme. Everything that exists, appears and is visible to us, because for us only the reflection of the reflected appearance is observable, nothing else is visible”. (RICHTER, 2009, p.8). Accordingly, the problem of the confrontation between reality and appearance (the visible and the invisible), which has always guided philosophical-epistemological reflection in art, is stressed to its maximum degree in Richter's works.

This summary reflection, which unfolds philosophically since antiquity, reaches its peak in the eighteenth century, with the birth of the Theory of knowledge. At that moment, the subject begins to reflect on the intellectual capacity to know and demonstrate the “truth” of the outside world, interrupting the march of history, which assumed the inferiority of man in the face of the supremacy of nature, at the expense of their substantial differences.

The most rationalist version of German Idealism reflects on man and nature, the “subject and the object” from within themselves, as we see distinctly happening in Kant and Hegel. For aesthetic Idealists, *a priori*, alien bodies or bodies of different natures can be known by the subject as long as they are transformed

into a concept or a clear, demonstrable idea. This theme, widely reflected by Richter, appears in his art as a way of breaking with the art paradigm that believed it was possible to capture the being of things through the most perfect imitation of the object, a concept known as *Mimesis*.

The concept of *Mimesis*, the genesis of all artistic creation, is linked to the imitation of Nature and not its copy. In this text, the concept of *Mimesis* will be treated artistically and philosophically, within the art portrait genre, considering its ancient meaning, when it was believed to be possible to capture the “Soul” of the being observed.

Refuting this assumption, which as a rule should reproduce the models in his presence, Richter assumes copying images from photographs as the basis of his works. About this he states: "A portrait can only be a likeness – an appearance. Consequently, contact with the person is not a requirement for portraying him. His appearance is all there is and because of that a photo is enough ". (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 9). At another point, he clarifies: “A portrait cannot be more similar to the model than just very similar.” (Ibid., p.86).

Then, the artist resolves the painter's relationship with the model with the copy of a photograph, declaring that he is more concerned with the technical aspect of the production of his works, than with the *Mimetic* concept of the Ancient period.

The imminent decision in Gerhard Richter's thought solves the problem with imitation through photography, definitively breaking with the old *Mimetic* conception of Realistic Art, whose search was to reach the essence of reality in a secret world (Metaphysical) behind appearance.

For Richter, everything is already given in physical reality and what is not there, if it exists at all, is intangible and unspeakable. Within this opposition, the two categorical imperatives that guide the subject's relationship with the object and which simultaneously exclude each other are available: the *essence and appearance* of the

object. Faced with this evidence in his works, Richter shows a strong Metaphysical-traditionalist concern.

In his own words in an interview with Rolf Schoen in 1972 published in Moorhouse's book we find: "We would like to understand and try to paint what we see, what absolutely exists (*Da ist*). Then we realized that it is absolutely impossible to represent a reality and what we do is always and only to represent ourselves. (RICHTER, 2009, p.59).

Hence, the painter hesitates between refuting the traditional art of yesteryear, which seeks to imitate nature, and a nostalgia for that same past that no longer exists. Reaffirming his distaste for the Realist style of art in the classical version, Richter quotes: "Pictures that are explainable and make sense are bad pictures." (RICHTER, 2009, p. 33).

At another point, Richter reiterates his thought in Moorhouse's book, declaring that art linked to the metaphysics of the past no longer makes sense: "The question about the meaning of life is ridiculous and gives inhuman meaning" (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 71). It follows from this, as the painter himself clarifies that: giving meaning to art by representing life is absurd!

Even though the Photorealist painting genre has remained prominent in the following of his works since 1976, Richter began to dedicate himself to the development of abstract paintings and even today, between some intervals, this painting genre makes up an important part of his work.

Yet Richter's photorealistic works remain open to multiple interpretations, without assigning any significance, as Moorhouse quotes, they "seem to convey a meditative experience beyond time." (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 7).

Therefore, its aesthetics can allude to multiple meanings or none. Many stylistic information in his works seem antagonistic, therefore, they are unavailable to a single translation and inexplicably transform into an aesthetic of distance and objectivity. Richter, who avoids making allusions through art, sabotages the

typical universal conception of the world, which does not seek to find meaning in the appearance of things. His paintings are passive as the painter himself wants them to be.

According to the History of Philosophy, the confrontation between reality and appearance, addressed by the *Modern Subjectivist Theories* of the German idealists, commemorates the decline of the pure objectivism of *Innatists* and *Empiricists*, whose theses revered the existence of the object in and of itself, regardless of and inaccessible to subjective reason.

By analogy with Richter's work, as we have seen so far, the theme of subjectivity is also widely considered. In an interview offered to Doris von Drathen in 1992, and also quoted in Moorhouse's work, Richter clarifies:

The painted picture is, first of all, closer to appearance (Schein), but it has more reality than a photo, because a painting itself, perceptibly hand-painted, has more of an object character, as it is produced materially tangible. The appearance of the painting is always more or less different in comparison with reality (*anders*), and this is irritating. (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 293).

The painter makes his position on the problem explicit, declaring that the dichotomy between appearance and reality causes him great discomfort: "I never liked subjectivity" (RICHTER, 2009, p. 34). However, for Richter, subjectivity enjoys a double and antagonistic status, at the same time that it prevents the subject's access to the external world, it solves the problem of representation, as the foundation of the will: "Creating an image and having an understanding of it, makes us human". (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 34).

This further increases the distance between the *thing itself* (Kantian term for essence) and the image of reality, the

phenomenon (aspects printed on the surface of objects, referring to the empirical world). In these terms Moorhouse quotes: "Richter defines his art from the appearance of nature distrusting the truth between what the eye sees, what nature represents and the temperament of the artist." (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 34) At this moment, the reasons that led Richter not to produce art that imitates nature appear:

The whole system of art that imitates (makes use of seeing images through perception, interpretation and creating a composition, drawing, putting paint, shadow and light) is fundamentally subjective. This means that all this work is connected with the artist's internal world and not directly with the external world. The world as it really is, is beyond appearance. This subjectivity of the artist who captures phenomena of the object's appearance, idealizing them and making them aesthetic, only serves to raise the nebulosity (*vernebeln*) of this appearance. (RICHTER, 2009, p. 35).

Richter, who explicitly and analytically alludes to the problem of knowing, bumps into the central theme of epistemology, reaffirming that it is incontestably provoked by subjectivity. Therefore, in agreement with subjectivist theories, we find Richter declaring in an interview with Rolf Schoen in 1972, the following: "I do not distrust reality, about which I know almost nothing, but the image of reality as our senses transmit us and the image of reality that is not complete, it is limited". (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 60).

The painter, through his experience as artist, interprets reality in such a way as to conclude that subjectivity is the human condition that makes it impossible for us to know the outside world (of objects).

However, he makes it clear that such a statement does not presuppose his belief in the existence of the essence of reality.

Richter goes on to clarify that subjectivity demands that reality be felt indirectly and therefore he believes that we cannot make an effective judgment about it: “Everything that exists, appears and is visible to us through the appearance that things reflect, nothing more than this is perceptible.” (RICHTER, 2009, p. 65).

Still on the subject, Richter, in another interview given to Peter Sager in 1972 and captured by Moorhouse, states: “We cannot trust the image we see of reality, because we only see the object as our eye is transmitting it to us, in addition to from other experiences, which in turn correct this image.” (Ibidem, 2009, p. 65).

Richter, upon reaching his artistic maturity in 1960, explicitly declares, through his experience as an artist, his concern with an existential problem that has never been resolved: knowing whether or not there is a reality or whether everything we are and think only exists for us. through our subjective condition, therefore, in an exclusively particular and utopian world.

Until that moment, his frustration with the impossibility of apprehending the *Being of things* (the essence of objects) is clear. Thus, the painter continues to aim to produce revolutionary works, completing a 180-degree turn, and lets his grief show over the non-existence of the spirit of a time of meanings in the realm of the arts.

Chapter 2 – Gerhard Richter’s “Transcendental-Photorealism” interpreted according to Walter Benjamin’s Concept of History

We will open this second chapter by analyzing the painting titled *Party*, painted by Gerhard Richter in 1963, based on a photograph published in the German magazine *Neue Illustrierte*. This paradoxical painting shows that although the painting is almost a perfect copy of this photographic reference, it deals with a visceral

dimension of reality, revealing the painter's particular interpretation of the world. In this aesthetic experience, the spectator is even more confused when his achromatism reverts to his media origin:



Fig. 9. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Party*. Museum Frieder Burda, Baden Baden. Various materials, 150 x 182 cm, 1963.

Although the man among the group of glamorous women is a famous television presenter called “Vico Torriano”, the title of the painting does not mention him, nor the identity of the women represented there. Quite the contrary, the fact that the leg of one of the models was painted in skin color, the red paint thrown randomly

on the canvas and the seams on its upper plane, presuppose her subjective position in front of the plane of existence.

In media times, such inscriptions oppose the typical form of Photorealistic representation. Even more interesting is to observe that under the rips, on the lower plane of the canvas, are sewn clippings of texts and photos from newspapers. These aspects, to which the art critic Moorhouse draws our attention, when interpreting it: “With this, it is suggested that in the background of the painting there is a layer, a dimension of existence.” (MOORHOUSE, 2007 p. 43).

The painting *Party* deals with the theme of the dichotomy between the essence and the surface of reality, marking the central aspect of Richter's art, which, nevertheless, subsists in his future works.

This painting is one, among many others, where Richter's subjectivity gives evidence of his tendency to understand the world through a more Ontological, Existentialist, Tragi-romantic and Rebel bias. The reasons for such an interpretation are offered in addition to the intrinsic characteristics of his style, in the words of the painter himself and by themselves, they encourage us to meditate on the meaning of life and the concept of Work of art in meta-narrative terms.

2.1 - Walter Benjamin's concept of Art Criticism oscillating between Kant's *Aufklaerung* and Hegel's Romanticism

According to our research, Kant's and Hegel's aesthetic theories depart from the dialectical *devir* (*becoming*), however, distinctions arise regarding the foundation of the concept of History in the conception of each thinker. His interpretations of the world oscillated between an exacerbated Romanticism and an arid

Rationalism.

The concept of History, as a philosophical reflection on its existential meaning, is fundamental in the artistic sphere and as such encompasses discussions of the most diverse orders, among which they oscillate meditating on Tradition and the Avant-garde.

Respecting the particularity of each of the doctrines of the philosophers of German Idealism Kant and Hegel, we will see how both thinkers agree when considering the “essential and supreme reality” rationally and how this came to be interpreted by Benjamin in the twentieth century.

2.1.1 – *Distinctions between the concept of History in Kant and Hegel* supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

It is important to note that art in this context is being treated as a fundamental element among the problems that arise from the links between *Aufklaerung* and German Romanticism. These relationships seem conflicting, since technical reproducibility starts to act in the artistic sphere, transforming art into political propaganda, demanding, so to speak, a new method of apprehending reality and configuring the reflective content and taste of the “receiver”.

With Rationalism and Empiricism, we consider the modern statement about the process of knowledge production to be valid, mainly in the relationship between the *subject* and the *object*. Since this is the guiding axis of the subject's apprehension possibilities of the object, we can say that it is possible to assimilate reality in a differentiated way, that is, according to each subjectivity, since each subject perceives the world in a particular way.

However, considering Kant, when he states that the subject performs such a process, conditioned by the apprehension that: “a priori forms of understanding: space and time” (KANT, p. 24, 1987), we can say that at least in terms of capturing the phenomena our access is uniform.

For the author of *Faculty of Judgment Review* (1790) the apprehension of reality occurs in a “regular” way. Which led him to understand aesthetics from a subjective perspective. Therefore, directing our epistemological understanding to the field of art, we understand that it is important to clarify that the term Aesthetics will be anchored in the thought of Kant, who is a remarkable figure in the perception of the Beautiful and the Sublime, in the practice of everyday life.

Aesthetics for Kant is a state of life of right of the knowing subject and that in the scope of fruition, is intimately related to the other of its capacities, that go beyond the constitutive cognitive of the faculty of the conceptual knowledge.

As reported by Kant's theory of knowledge, when confronted with the object, the subject captures its characteristics in all its fullness, and not isolatedly, as we might imagine. According to the author, aesthetically considering art, has a contemplative and non-intellective character, transcending the mere theoretical status with the purpose of conceptualizing or classifying the object, summarily, it is concerned only with the contemplation itself. In Kant's own words:

What is there with the object itself and apart from all this receptivity of our sensibility, remains entirely unknown. We only know our way of perceiving them, which is peculiar to us and does not necessarily have to concern every being, but every human being. We have to do only with this mode of perception. Space and time are its pure forms, sensations in general its matter. Those can only be known a priori, that is, before any real perception, and are therefore called pure intuition; the latter, however, is what in our knowledge makes it called a posteriori knowledge, that is,

empirical intuition. The former inhere in our sensibility in an absolutely necessary way, whatever species our sensations may be; these can be quite different. Even if we could raise this intuition of ours to the highest degree of clarity, we would still not get closer to the nature of objects in themselves. (KANT, 1993, p.49).

Such perception or capture of the phenomena of the object practiced by the subject does not want to institute the idea of a supremacy of subjectivity, but inspires us to think that this action is carried out in a very particular way. Hencefore, it can be confirmed by intersubjectivity, which Kantian interpretation calls our attention to "Universal Subjectivity".

However, for Kant, the aesthetic manifestation can only be the object of observation by those who possess, *a priori*, the necessary apparatus for its capture: *Intelligence and Sensitivity*, in addition to being necessary, it is also expected that such subjects are available to apprehend the sensitive presence of a specific object:

The faculty of concepts, whether confused or clear, is the understanding; And although the understanding also belongs to the judgment of taste as an aesthetic judgment (as it does to all judgments), it nevertheless belongs to it, not as a faculty for cognizing an object, but as a faculty for determining the judgment and representing it. without a concept) according to its relation to the subject and his inner feeling, and indeed, insofar as this judgment is possible according to a universal rule. (KANT, 2005, p. 74-75).

According to Kant, we remember that it is through the experience of the Sublime and the Beauty that the human has the opportunity to experience and realize his highest capacity:

Contemplation. Consequently, with regard to the concept of aesthetic perception, Kant brings all objects to the same scope, regardless of their character of being artistic, originating from nature or from everyday life, public or private. Finally, for the author, all objects have at least common aspects, that is, they manifest themselves from the observation of the subject, at the limit, Kantianly, it is understood that aesthetic concepts and objects are inseparable.

Contrary to what one might imagine, based on this relationship between perception and the aesthetic contemplation carried out by the subject, he frees himself from the constraints imposed by the determinations of conceptual knowledge, thus realizing his experience as a *determined Being in the world*. Kant's introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* clarifies that the capacity for knowledge comes from the "soul", therefore, such knowledge is available to all subjects, as the thinker describes:

In everyone this pleasure must necessarily rest on identical conditions, because they are subjective conditions of the possibility of a knowledge in general, and the proportion of these faculties of knowledge, which is required for taste, is also required for the common sound understanding that it can be presupposed in anyone (KANT, 2005, § 156, p. 139).

Subjectivity, which etymologically corresponds to a quality of the subject's internal world in its particular condition, is *Universal* in Kant. When we apply the Kantian critique of judgment in the aesthetic dimension, we realize that this takes place in the sphere of feeling. In order to understand this particularity in the author's thought, we unfold the theme of *becoming*, which in this historical moment represents the intellectual dialectic, distinctly conceived in Kant and Hegel.

2.1.2 - Kant: Transcendental Reason and Sensitive Intuition X Hegel: Absolute Reason and Rational Intuition supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

Hegel's concept of art comprises the dialectical *becoming* unfolded in historical time only as an idea and not empirically as for Kant. *Being* and *being* make up the universal whole that Hegel called the *absolute Idea*. The Hegelian quotes lead us to understand that autonomous art takes shape in the absolute Spirit, unlike the autonomy of Kant's art, which conceives art in the relationship between the subject and the object, empirically. This is clarified by Hegel in his work *The Philosophy of Spirit III* as follows:

The spirit is not something at rest; rather, it is the absolutely restless, pure activity, negation or ideality of all fixed understanding-determining. It is not abstractly simple, but in its simplicity, at the same time, it is differentiating itself from itself. It is not an essence (already) ready, before its manifestation, hiding behind the phenomena; but in fact, it is only effective through the determined forms of its necessary self-manifestation. (HEGEL, 1995, § 378, p.10)

1st-) The spirit is in the form of the relation to itself: within it comes the ideal totality of the idea. That is: what its concept is, it becomes for it; for him, his being is this: being close to himself, that is, being free. (It is the) subjective spirit.

2nd-) (The spirit is) in the form of reality as [in the form] of a world to produce and produced by it, in which freedom is as a present necessity. (It is the) objective spirit.

3rd-) (The spirit is) in the unity – existing in and for itself and eternally producing itself – of the objectivity of the spirit and its ideality, or of its concept: the spirit in its absolute truth. (It is) the absolute spirit. (Ibiden, § 385, p.29).

Hegel's Absolute Idealism clarifies to us how the dialectical movement of absolute Reason is the dialectical *becoming* itself in action, which after unfolding in historical time, returns to compose the "Absolute Truth", or in other words, the dialectical *becoming* is the unfolding of the thesis, as a non-deployed principle. At some point, the antithesis that puts the thesis in motion, distances itself from it by extracting its opposite and the synthesis, at the limit of this tension, extracts from both, their differences or the most intimate unity of this interrelationship.

However, as we translate from the quotation above, for Hegel this movement does not happen in a single time interval, but in multiple moments. This is due to the partial truth that constitutes the unilaterality of the thesis and antithesis, allowing the synthesis, ultimately, to be the compensation and complementation of both, transforming their non-truths into a full truth. We remember that, made available in the movement of *becoming*, the absolute or full Truth becomes a new thesis again, that is, a new partial truth, perpetuating its unfolding infinite times.

Summarily, Hegel agrees with Kant, when the thinker understands that reality is subjectively rational, however, for Hegel it is only in exclusively idealized terms, since, for his epistemology, knowledge is devoid of any possible relationships with empirical experience. According to the philosopher, the present, the past and the future are times that exist separately in each society and in each historical moment, where knowledge, values and meanings are born and die in the next period.

By Kant, in turn, time is not considered historically, it is, like space, an a priori category. As we saw earlier, the Kantian *a priori* categories of time and space constitute a purely abstract faculty responsible for capturing empirical objects. A capture that takes place without intermediaries, intuitively and regardless of time.

The subject for Kant, in the dialectic march of *becoming*, is a transcendental or logical rational being, which organizes empirical experience through sensitivity. Kant, by relocating the subject at the

center of knowledge, outlines its limits and potentials. Therefore, rational knowledge or Kantian reason, in the constitution of its particular structure and content, performs the synthesis between an *innate universal form* and the *empirical experience* realized through *intuition* that is, for the author, exclusively sensitive, and not intellectual or rational as for Hegel.

However, as we have seen so far, both theories are aligned when considering the “Absolute” rationally”.

2.1.3 - Aesthetics: The Concept of Beauty aligns Kant and Hegel supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

The beauty of nature concerns the form of the object, which consists in imitation; the sublime, on the contrary, can also be found in a formless object, insofar as an imitation is represented in it or on the occasion of this and is thought of in addition in its entirety; so that the beautiful seems to be considered as the presentation of an indeterminate concept of understanding, while the sublime as the presentation of a concept similar to reason.

Immanuel Kant

When we analyze Hegel's *Aesthetics Course I*, from a historical perspective, we realize that Kant and Hegel, reserving the singularities of their doctrines, consider that true knowledge takes place in the contemplative fruition of the aesthetic experience, ultimately, in a dimension that transcends the rational. Effective knowledge goes beyond the distinct states of what concerns the

essential state of the subject and the object, whose connection link is made through the *Beautiful*.

Hegel, in turn, agrees with the Kantian artistic Beauty, when he understands it as a unique and unifying aesthetic object:

The artistic beauty was recognized as one of the means that resolves and restores to a unity that opposition and contradiction between the spirit that rests in itself abstractly and nature - both that which appears externally and that which is interior and belongs to feeling (*Gefühl*) and subjective anonymous. (HEGEL, 2001, p.74)

Hegel, even differing as to the systematic form of his treatise, recognizes the merit of the Kantian postulate, even when it turns into a foundation, the rationality that guides its own purpose in itself.

As Hegel notes, Kant intended to prophesy "Unity" over the sphere of subjectivity. According to Hegel, for Kant:

There was no way left but to pronounce unity only in the Form of subjective ideas of reason, for which an adequate effectiveness could not be demonstrated, as well as in postulates that must be deduced from practical reason, but, according to Kant, its being in Itself (*Ansicht*) cannot be known by thought and whose practical realization remained a mere duty (*Sollen*) always pushed to infinity. And so Kant really represented the reconciled contradiction, but failed to scientifically develop its true essence or demonstrate it as the only true actuality. (HEGEL, 2001, p.75).

As we have been able to understand so far, the Kantian system of knowledge intended to solve the problem of the opposition between the subject and the object, the particular and the universal, or even the appearance and essence of reality, bumping into the old problem of knowledge, "of subjective thought and of objective things *Objektiven gegenstaenden*), of abstract universality and sensible singularity, of Will" (Ibidem, 2001, p. 75). But, in Hegel's opinion, at this point Kant fails to achieve his intentions.

Laconically, Kant hypostatizes that through merely rational thought it is impossible to apprehend the truth (essence) of things, even in a direct relationship with the knowing object, since its core remains inaccessible, even if its encounter takes place in the sphere of morality. This is where Hegel disagrees: "Actually, to define Judgment in general as the "faculty of thinking the Particular as contained in the Universal". (HEGEL, 2001, p. 74).

Therefore, Hegelian thought aims to scientifically overcome the problem of the essence of unity, of the universal, which in Kant remains open in Unity. Kant considers the essence or nucleus of the object only as a form of *subjective ideas of reason*.

The points of discrepancy that particularize each of the treatises are overcome through the concept of *Beauty*. Hegel agrees with Kant insofar as the author conceives Beauty as bringing together the Universal and the Particular, Concept (Idea) and Object (Appearance), even disagreeing with him regarding his understanding of the concept of Time and other aspects. Summarily, the ontological discussion revolved around the dual *status* enjoyed by the concept of Beauty in the work of art: ***Means and Purpose***.

2.1.4 - *The particular dialectic of Kant and Hegel* supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

As we saw earlier, according to Kant, the *aesthetic object* has its value and purpose based on itself. This is the condition of its "Ideal Universality", in other words, it is constituted by its own ends and means, in the limit, its purpose is not directly related to the interest and particular desire of a given subject, but subjectively it is understood while aiming for *Universal Compliance*.

Accordingly, Beauty, as possessor of its own purpose, is universally available for the disinterested enjoyment and pleasure of all, acting through intuition and not through the categories of understanding. However, the author warns that to be affected by the Beautiful it is necessary for the *Subject to be universally recognized as legitimate* and for that, prior knowledge is required.

In Kant's own words, quoted by Hegel in the work *Course of Aesthetics I*, we find: "to appreciate the beautiful there is a need for a formed spirit" (KANT apud Hegel, 2001, p. 77).

Reiterating, Hegel quotes: "In the observation (*Betrachtung*) of the Beautiful, we do not become aware of the concept and its subsumption that operates under this concept and we do not allow the separation of the singular object from the universal, which in judgment is always present, to take place". (Ibid., p. 77). The Kantian Idea of Beauty with which Hegel agrees is clarified in the following passage:

The beautiful is in itself infinite and free. For if the beautiful can also have a particular content and thus be limited again, this content must nevertheless appear in its existence as a totality that is infinite in itself and as freedom, insofar as the beautiful is always a concept that does not make a difference against its objectivity and thereby turns against it in the view of one-sided finitude and abstraction, but unites with its objectivity and through this immanent unity and perfection is in itself infinite. (HEGEL, 2001, p. 126).

For Hegel, the idea of Beauty is Absolute, it is Spirit, and it is not conditioned and confined in the finite limitations of empiricism, as we have seen, established in the categorical structures of the Kantian *a priori*. According to Hegel, the concept of Beauty is not, moreover, that the *Absolute Spirit* itself and, as such, it is universal and infinite. As Ubaldo Nicola also clarifies in the work Anthology.

Illustrated of Philosophy: “the subject for Hegel is the Spirit or Reason, remembering that the Hegelian reason is not something strange and opposed to nature, but coincides with it”. (HEGEL apud Nicola, 2005, p. 358). The passage emphasizes how for Hegel the Self is synonymous with discursive reason.

Nature as a representative of the finite, of the limited, is different from the absolute Spirit, however, it dispenses with it. Therefore, it is constituted by its essence intrinsically carrying its idea. However, it is not the absolute Spirit itself in its fullness, it is another of it, it is its "Creature" (*das Seiende*), being substantially admitted into its interior. In general terms, it is in the antagonism of Ideality (Infinity and Truth) and Negation (Finitude and Limitation), that nature in its apparent form (*Erscheinung*) diverges and converges within the absolute Idea, sometimes surpasses it by particularizing itself in itself, now denies it universalizing itself as its "Creator". This clarification we find in Hegel's own words:

This infinite ideality and negativity constitute the profound concept of the subjectivity of the spirit. But as subjectivity, spirit is primarily only the truth of nature in itself, in so far as it has not yet made its true concept for itself. Nature is not opposed to it as an unsurpassed and limited being-other (*Anderssein*), to which, as if the other were an object found ahead, the spirit remains related as the subjective in its existence of knowledge and will and can only figure in nature the other side. (HEGEL, 2001, p. 108).

According to Hegel, therefore, the subjectivity of the spirit is a concept that, although it is one, is understood by unfolding it. While the spirit does not overcome nature, preserving itself in its complacency, the subjective takes the form of knowledge and will, detaching itself from it.

In consequence, through the rational principle dialectically extended and maintained exclusively in the dimension of the Absolute or the Ideal, Hegel intends to overcome the inaccessible Kantian *Being-in-itself*. Ultimately, for Hegel, it is in the unfolding of the **Absolute Spirit** (*from the Idea, from the Universal, from the Infinite*) that nature is born (*from the Rank, from the Particular, from the Finite*), which as its “*Creature*” has its composition, even though it is not. in its fullness.

Kant, in turn, postulates the dual nature of Nature (Appearance) as being of essentially Universal origin. Hegel, which part of this conception differs from Kant, by determining which part of this unfolding is denied and reunites with the Universal or the Absolute. In Hegel's opinion the inaccessibility of Nature (of the Particular) in the Universal in the Kantian doctrine remains unresolved.

However, Kant, by hypostatizing that the Universal is a concept that contains the Particular and its appearance from within, supports the Hegelian conception of the Absolute, so both agree on the fact that the *Universal determines the Particular*. Next, we will see how Walter Benjamin, even living at the height of the Modern period, inherits traces of the doctrines of the German Idealists (starting with Kant from the 1780s until the mid-19th century), bringing to light the problems that arise from the overlapping of the aesthetic process of art with politics and society, considering it tragic that art loses its unconditional essence.

At this point, Benjamin, like Hegel, also considers the romantic concept of art. Both depart from the Kantian assumption that there is identity between the artistic and the Beauty of Nature: "Nature is Beautiful when it has the appearance of Art"; and that "Art can only be called Beautiful when we, while aware that it is art,

consider it as Nature" (KANT, 1993, § 45). In order to specify the nature of our analysis, we will seek to understand how this happens in Walter Benjamin's critical reflection.

2.1.5 - Walter Benjamin from the Concept of Work of art of the German Idealists supporting the reading of works of art by Gerhard Richter

Benjamin quotes, with regard to concepts such as Knowledge, Beauty, Taste and Genius, already at the beginning of his doctoral thesis in his: *The Concept of Criticism of Work of Art in German Romanticism*, there are the Kantian passages that were dear to him:

In § 1 of the *Critique of Judgment* we can read: "In order to distinguish whether a thing is beautiful or not, we do not relate the representation to the object through the understanding with a view to knowledge, but rather we relate it through the imagination (perhaps linked to the understanding) to the subject and his feeling of pleasure or pity. The judgment of taste is therefore not a judgment of knowledge; consequently he is not logical but aesthetic; which means: that whose determining principle *can only be subjective*. In § 35 in the analytic of the sublime Kant points out that "the judgment of taste is distinguished from the logical judgment, due to the fact that the latter subsumes a representation under concepts of the object, while the former subsumes nothing under the concept, since otherwise the necessary universal assent could be enforced by evidence. However, it is similar to logical judgment insofar as it intends universality and necessity, but not based on object concepts, and, consequently, purely subjective ones". As Kant makes clear later, "Genius

is the talent (natural endowment) that provides rules for art." (& 46). (KANT apud Benjamin, 2002, p. 139).

Understanding the concept Work of art in Benjamin's conception requires a closer approach to his concept of History, whose constitution departs, in addition to other concepts not considered by this text, from Kant's concept of Beauty and Hegel's History.

As we have seen so far, with regard to the external appearance of the Work of art, the Kantian treatise seems to support the Hegelian postulate. However, Hegel starts to consider the interrelationship of art with the public, opening the way for investigations about the theme of "Reception" in the more sociological sense, more precisely, he expands the theme of art to the scope of the sociology of communication, in the approach that involves the relationships between the Work of art, the Public, the Author and Society.

These relationships are deeply reflected and expanded by Walter Benjamin. For the philosopher member of the Frankfurt School (*Frankfurter Schule*), there seemed to be an urgency to establish an immanent critique of all Works of art, "if the work is criticizable, then it is a work (of art), otherwise it is not." (BENJAMIN apud Silva, 2007, p.33) This is already the first point of divergence between Benjamin and Kant.

Even though Benjamin departed from the Kantian path when conceiving the Beauty of the Work of art in its autonomy, his reflection on the concepts of form and content in the constitution of the Work of art itself hesitates between Hegelian Historical Idealism and Marxist Historical Materialism.

As the art critic Clement Greenberg observes when interpreting Kant, it is understood that issuing a value judgment about an artistic object happens from the aesthetic experience "through the form", which is available in addition to "formally" in an

artistic object produced by man, “non-formally” on a natural object (of nature). Greenberg observes that this aesthetic autonomy in the face of the suppression of political instances is a romantic aspect in Kant and this is understood when the author conceives art privileging Form to the detriment of Content.

This is the point from which it is understood that aesthetic affectation for Kant is immediate and as such produces an exclusively autonomous effect on the viewer's sensibility. Therefore, art is available to intuition in any aesthetic experience, which in itself legitimizes the free and spontaneous subjectivity of taste:

Aesthetic judgments are the aesthetic experience, they coincide with it, draw attention to it and, at the same time, are consubstantial with it. All this is still true, once again, for the raw, “non-formalized” aesthetic experience: for sunsets and dawns (which I like best), for birdsong and leaves rustling, for pleasant or unpleasant sounds or noises, odors, tactile sensations and sensations of cold or heat, moods, ideas and memories (all of which can be lived aesthetically, like anything other than the aesthetic experience itself). It is still the judgment of value that confers “form”, whether in formalized or non-formalized art. Here, aesthetic distance cooperates. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 112).

By analogy with Greenberg's thought, we remember that for Benjamin, it is not a question of uttering its opposite, that is, condemning the Form to the detriment of the Content, but of remembering that both elements are intrinsically related.

Benjamin also warns that the formal in art is not an empty structure, but is in line with its content and as such carries, in addition to the quality of style, the ideological character of its themes.

It is with great regret that Benjamin watches the contemplative nature of art (inscribed in the form of nature) succumb to

advertising aesthetics. The essence of this reflection seems to have its origin in the catastrophic vicissitudes of his time. Hegel, a century before Benjamin, describes the first signs of this moral suppression that reached its maximum in the twentieth century. In his *Aesthetics Course I* we find:

Art has at its disposal not only the entire realm of natural configurations in their multiple and colorful appearances, but also the creative imagination that can also, in addition, manifest itself in inexhaustible productions of its own. Faced with this immeasurable fullness of fantasy and its free products, thought seems to have to lose the courage to bring them in their completeness before itself, to judge them and fit them into its general formulas. In contrast, it is conceded that science, according to its Form, is occupied with thinking that abstracts from the mass of particulars. Therefore, on the one hand, imagination and its causal and arbitrary aspects are excluded from it, that is, the organ of artistic activity and enjoyment. [19] On the other hand, if it is precisely art that, distractingly, vivifies the arid dryness without light of the concept, if it reconciles the abstractions and divisions of the concept with effectiveness, if it complements the concept with effectiveness, it cannot go unnoticed that a consideration only thinking overcomes this means of complementation again, destroys it and leads the concept back to its simplicity devoid of effectiveness and to abstraction full of shadows. As for content, science, moreover, is concerned with what is in itself necessary. And if aesthetics leaves aside the natural beauty, apparently not only do we gain nothing from it, but we also move further away from what is necessary. For the expression of nature already offers us the representation of necessity and conformity to laws, the representation of a relationship that finally provides hope of a greater proximity to scientific consideration and a possibility of surrendering to it. But in the mind in general and especially in the imagination, it seems that, in comparison with nature, arbitrariness and disorder clearly reside, which in itself prevents any scientific foundation. (HEGEL, 2001, p. 31).

For Hegel, Art and Nature, Creation and Intuition, are premises of *absolute Truth*. This, which is the climactic epilogue of all romantics, also leads Benjamin to consider, at some point, the primordial meaning of Existence based on ideal Reason.

Traits of the rationalist and romantic thought of Kant and Hegel appear considered by Benjamin when founding his concept of *Aura*. By guiding the purpose in itself, the art of the romantics is synonymous with *art for art's sake*, sheltering the rebels and the oppressed. From the romantic artist echoed the voice of a new bourgeois order, which, nonconformist against the absolutism of the Old Regime, still did not envision the possibility of the existence of any other order capable of subjugating them.

They barely conjectured that the Work of art would be subject to the condition of merchandise with the establishment of Capitalism. This leads Benjamin to agree with the German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht in the following passage:

As soon as the work of art becomes a commodity, this notion (of a work of art) can no longer be applied to it; therefore, we must, with prudence and caution - but without fear - renounce the notion of a work of art, if we wish to preserve its function within the very thing designated as such. It is a necessary phase to go through without dissimulation; this turn is not gratuitous, it leads to a fundamental transformation of the object and one that erases its past to such an extent that, if the new notion should find its use again - and why not? - will no longer evoke any of the memories attached to its former significance." (BRECHT apud Benjamin, 1960, p. 12).

Benjamin reflects on the *Status* of the Work of art in terms of value judgment, realizing the need for the passage of a time that founded the notion of Work of art (Auratic, Canonical or Sacred) on

the concept of linear and progressive history of the winners, to a new historical moment, where art would be reborn autonomously. Summarily, Benjamin's disquiet stemmed from the decay of the elaborate intrinsic characteristics of the aesthetic object in the reflection and taste of the viewer, starting from the change in value from *Aura* to that of Exhibition.

The author makes it clear that the "Democratization of art" based on its technical and indefinite reproduction, to the detriment of the loss of its *Aura*, also takes with it the tradition available *in the course* of historical time:

Danger threatens both the existence of the tradition and those who receive it. For both, the danger is the same: surrendering to the dominant classes, with their instrument. In every age, it is necessary to wrest tradition from conformism, which wants to take it over. (BENJAMIN, 1994, p.224).

For Benjamin, the past is unique and nothing can be recovered from it:

The true image of the past passes by, fast. The past only allows itself to be fixed, as an irreversibly flashing image, the moment it is recognized. [...] For irretrievable is every image of the present that is addressed to the present, without this present feeling targeted by it. (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 224).

The dual function of Art, tensioned between the past and the future, led Benjamin to reflect on art in both Theological and Materialist terms: "The task of the Materialist Historian is to wrest

the history of the vanquished from oblivion, and then to engage in a double liberation. : that of the vanquished of yesterday and today.” (BENJAMIN, 1994, p.224).

In the Benjamin’s look, the concern with the events provoked by the “War Aesthetics” arises, the one that would forever mark the memory and culture of Germany, within which the thinker is born as a Jew. This led Benjamin to aspire to liberation, both from religious and political morals, that is, from those who ultimately determined the course of history to the detriment of human happiness, not just Jews, but a large mass of oppressed people.

Both, “*Tradition*” and “*Vanguard*”, in the sphere of art, according to Benjamin, equally subsisted in the determinations of political propaganda in the domains of War Aesthetics:

All efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in a single point: war. War, and only war, provides a reason for the greatest mass movements, without, therefore, touching the status of property. As for the technical language, they could be formulated as follows: only war makes it possible to mobilize all the technical resources of the present time, without changing the property regime in any way. Evidently fascism, in its glorification of war, uses no such arguments. (BENJAMIN, 1936, p. 27).

His thought in the Historical-materialist perspective appears clearly in the quotation above, legitimizing his pessimism regarding the Advertising Aesthetics in the service of Nazism. Benjamin, in the hope that technical means would serve the expression and democratization of art and culture, saw art suppressed by technique serving the “Aestheticization of politics”, demanding a new way of welcoming the *aesthetic object*. Advertising art, in the author's own words: "doesn't demand any attention span." (BENJAMIN, 1936, p. 27).

Benjamin's critical theory reflects on the **technical means of reproducing images** (photography, television and cinema) introduced into the artistic sphere, refuting that, in addition to meeting the demand of mass culture, they caused such wear and tear, vulgarization of the aesthetic object, which was capable of destroying its uniqueness as an inexhaustible source of contemplation, fruition and reflection. In this regard, Peter Osborne and Andrew Benjamin point out in Walter Benjamin's thought the following:

Mankind which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, is now for itself. Her self-alienation has reached such a point that she is able to experience her own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics, which fascism is making aesthetics. Communism reacts by politicizing art. (BENJAMIN apud Osborne and Benjamin A., 1994, p. 44).

In Benjamin's reflection, the destruction of the *Aura* that singled out the *Uniqueness* and *Historicity* of the Work of art, took with it the immanent and transcendental presence of its *authenticity*, configuring the mark of a great tragedy.

According to our research, up to this point the loss of the *Aura* for Benjamin is regretful, however, he does not regret the fact that the *auratic Art* has lost its connection with the past that founded the notion of Work of art in the agenda of the *Sacred* and the *Continuum* of the history of the winners, but regrets the fact that, when reproduced indefinitely, it loses its uniqueness, making sensitivity elusive.

Kátia Muricy interprets the author's thought as follows: “The materialist Historian, instead of simply stating the facts of scientific historiography, wants to transform what is Unfinished (Happiness) into something finished and what is Finished (Suffering)) into something unfinished.” (MURICY, 1998, p. 231). As reported by

Muricy, for Benjamin the past is important insofar as it leaves latent the hope of a happiness that did not materialize, nor was established at that moment (at the height of the Second World War).

For the author yet, this faith in a “Redemption” is the force that propelled the working class to revolutionize against the oppressing class: “this is the true strength of the working class: hatred and the spirit of sacrifice, because one and the other feed on the image of enslaved ancestors, not freed descendants.” (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 229).

For this reason, Benjamin oscillates between his heritage of historical Materialism and that of Jewish Messianism, conceiving that the social being could only be freed from this material condition through Messianic means. But this, not in the orthodox form of Jewish Messianism, which understands the past as a time that works in the construction of a present, but as a time that historically becomes unique in each new experience: “the historical materialist makes this past a unique experience” (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 231). Still regarding the Benjaminian`s Concept of History, we find in his work *Passages*, how the thinker conceives the uncapturable becoming of time:

It is not a matter of projecting the past into the present, nor the projection of the present into the past. The image is one in which what once was [Gewesen] merges with what is now [Jetzt], in a lightning-fast conjunction. In other words: the image is the dialectic in a state of rest [Dialektik im Stillstand]. For while the relationship of the present to the past is purely temporal and continuous, that of 'what was' [the once] to the now is dialectical: not a flux, but a sudden image. (BENJAMIN, 1987, p. 83).

By judging the subject and modern Art in these terms, Benjamin considers the dialectic of Historical Materialism and Jewish Messianism antagonistically tensioned between the tangible

and the elusive. This point is clarified by Hannah Arendt, when interpreting Benjamin's thought. In his conception, what Benjamin retained from both dialectics was their rebellious face: the *Antithesis*, that is, the “*Negative Face*”:

This clearly shows how little he was interested in the “positive” aspect (synthesis) of these ideologies and what really interested him in both cases was the “negative” factor of criticism of existing conditions, a way out of hypocrisy and bourgeois illusions, but a position outside the literary as well as academic institution. (ARENDR apud Neves, 1987, p. 162).

Still seeking to understand the concept of History in Benjamin's conception, we return to analyze Hegel's *Course in Aesthetics I* (1835) confronting it with Benjamin's own article *The work of art in the age of technical reproducibility* (1936). It is noticed that even though Hegel's thought historically precedes Benjamin's by 100 years, both reflect on the problems that guide modern art. Hegel reflected the effects of instrumental reason, deployed in historical events at the turn of the 16th to the 18th century and Benjamin at the end of the 19th century to the 20th. In this context Benjamin reflects on art aestheticizing politics: "Here is the situation of the aestheticization of politics, provoked by fascism.

Communism responds to it with the politicization of art." (BENJAMIN, 1977, p.44) and Hegel, who supported the materialist conception of history, is quoted by Benjamin in the following passage: “Fight first for food and clothing, and then the kingdom of God will come by itself.” (HEGEL apud Benjamin, 1996, p.223). Benjamin, stressing Hegel's Historical Idealism to its maximum degree, clarifies it by heading towards Marx's "Historical Materialism":

The class struggle, which a historian educated by Marx never loses sight of, is a struggle for brute and material things, without which refined and spiritual things do not exist. But in the class struggle these spiritual things cannot be represented as spoils awarded to the victor. They manifest themselves in this struggle in the form of confidence, courage, humor, cunning, firmness, and they act from afar, from the depths of time. They will always question every victory of the dominators. Just as flowers direct their corolla towards the sun, the past, thanks to a mysterious heliotropism, tries to direct itself towards the sun that rises in the sky of history. Historical materialism must be alert to this transformation, the most imperceptible of all. (BENJAMIN, 1996, p. 223/224).

As Benjamin observes, ideology acts by masking reality, that is, it acts as an idea, discourse or as an action that masks the object, which becomes perceived only superficially while hiding its true interests:

We must remember the existence of a first assumption of all human existence and of all history, namely, that men must be able to live in order to 'make history'. The first historical fact is, therefore, the production of the means that make it possible to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself; It is a historical fact, a fundamental condition of the whole of history, which it is necessary, both today and thousands of years ago, to carry out day by day, hour by hour. (MARX apud Benjamin, 1976, p.33).

At this point, Friedrich Engels endorses Marx's thinking by pointing out: "According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately determining moment (In letzte Instanz Bestimmen)* in history is the production and reproduction of real life." (ENGELS, 1985, p.547).

Benjamin, by assuming the Materialist character of Marx's Concept of History, shows how the author reflects the relationship between the subject and the object in the real world. According to Marx, man produces history while *being-in-the-world* (emphasis added), a condition that Hegel did not support. In this perspective, following Marx himself, Hegel's Historical Idealism prevented him from analyzing art in this sense because technology in his time was not the essential theme.

Bringing the discussion to the field of art, we remember that advertising art in the versions of totalitarian and capitalist Aesthetics, when reflected by Benjamin at the height of the Second World War, indicates that:

He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man who digs. This determines the tone, the posture of genuine [Erinnern] reminiscences. They must not be afraid to return again and again to the same situation, to scatter it as the earth is scattered, to turn it over as the soil is turned over. The situation itself is just a deposit, an extract that only to the most meticulous examination yields what constitutes the real treasure hidden in the earth [Erdinnern]: the guided images of all previous associations [aus aller früheren Zusammenhängen ausgebrochen] that remain – like ruins of torsos in a collector's gallery – in the sober alcoves of our later perception. (BENJAMIN apud Comay, 1977, p. 264).

According to this observation, it is clear that Benjamin considers that, due to their historical condition, the images of the past represent objects of “Ruin” in the present. For the thinker, aesthetic objects are, above all, historical objects and the break with history implies the unveiling of their own origin, therefore, the weak aesthetic orientation inscribed in the ephemeral and empty images of artistic objects in the present, are the very mark of its decadence. In summary, the core of the problem for Benjamin is the decay of the

aesthetic object, ruining human sensitivity as intellectual subsidies for understanding more demanding and elaborate objects.

From an epistemological point of view, guiding the question of the affectation of the “Receiver” by the Work of art, we perceive that Benjamin's philosophy retains part of the romantic content of Kant and Hegel's reflection, when they defend that the object of art, when available in the aesthetic experience, it must act as an instrument of disinterested contemplation and existential and reflective transformation.

We understand that Benjamin, who did not despise the existence of a metaphysical condition of existence, goes further and analyzes reality from a physical point of view in a more sociological perspective. This by reflecting on the aesthetic object in material and existential terms available at the present time, and not independently of it as Kant considered it transcendently and not just ideally as Hegel presumed.

Rodolphe Gasché, interpreting Benjamin from the Kantian perspective, reaffirms that the thinker refutes the beauty of *Auratic works* and not in himself. About this, we find the following comparative analysis made by the author:

If in the Third Critique Kant can get rid of the object and concentrate only on intentionality with respect to form, it is because the judgment of taste is a pure judgment of taste only if it is neither interested nor fascinated (as in the teleological judgment) by the existence of the object. Free beauty is pleasurable because its perception certifies the subject of its cognitive capacity in general and it is only achieved where the judgment of taste has kept the sensual charm and the moral connotations, which both depend on the presence of the object, in check. Benjamin's distinction between the effects of the artwork in the age of mechanical reproducibility on its viewer and the phenomenal character of the artwork coincides

with his vigorous critique of the aura. If we follow Benjamin through the various facets of the process in which the aura is repudiated, both the similarities and differences with Kant become tangible. (GASCHÉ, 1997, p. 194).

From here we realize that the aesthetic judgment about the Kantian *Beauty*, while conceiving the intrinsic characteristics of the aesthetic object, supports part of the thesis that Walter Benjamin came to support. We observe that at this point lies a possible approximation that converges to those prophecies of the “Death of art” as it appears in Modernism, hypostatized by Hegel in the previous citations.

In a more academic sense, guiding the idea of the end of the Work of art from reproduction techniques, in Benjamin's moral reflection, we consider the author's acceptance of the Kantian conception of art as valid, which guides the purpose of art in itself. As we can observe in the following Hegelian passage, art, as it develops in historical time, becomes the stronghold of the supreme sense of *absolute Truth*, where **beauty** is art itself effectively present in ideal unity:

Through this freedom and infinity, which the concept of the beautiful as well as the beautiful objectivity and its subjective consideration bring within themselves, the realm of the beautiful is torn away from the relativity of finite relations and raised to the absolute realm of the Idea and its truth. [...] “The beautiful is the Idea as the immediate unity of the concept and its reality, that is, it is the Idea insofar as its unity is immediately present in the sensible and real appearing (*Scheinen*). The initial existence of the Idea is, therefore, nature and the first beauty is natural beauty”. (HEGEL, 2001, p.130).

Kant's concept of a *transcendental Work of art* is refuted by Hegel at the point where the author understands that there must be consummate agreement between the Concept and the Phenomenon. Hegel, however, accepts that the aesthetic object has an endless purpose, as prophesied by Kant:

The consideration of the beautiful is of a liberal nature: letting objects act (*Gewährenlassen*) as they are free and infinite in themselves, and not wanting to possess and use them as useful [156] for finite needs and intentions, so that the object will not appear as and forced by us, nor opposed and overcome by other external things. (KANT apud Hegel, 2001, p. 129).

The same concept of romantic beauty was particularly accepted by Benjamin, when founding his concept of *Aura*, when he applied it to *natural Beauty*. In the author's own words we find:

It is to historical objects that we would most widely apply this notion of aura, but for better elucidation it would be necessary to consider the aura of a natural object. It could be defined as the only apparition of a distant reality, however close it may be. On a late summer afternoon, if you follow with your eyes a line of mountains along the horizon or a branch, whose shadow rests on our contemplative state, you feel the aura of those mountains and that branch. Such evocation makes it possible to understand, without difficulties, the social factors that provoke the current decay of the aura. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 9).

The quote above makes it clear how Benjamin conceives the beauty of nature by understanding how was “necessary to consider the aura of a natural object”.

However, Benjamin, who reflects on art transformed into an object of consumption, seems to have been even more impressed than the romantics, when they, in the passage from the 18th to the 19th century, were anguished with the fact that art was transformed into an object of consumption. particular delight.

Reserving the particularity of each of the theories, both that of Benjamin and that of the Idealists, they seem to reflect on what would destroy the essential character of the Work of art, which, apart from other purposes, would not remain exclusively available to universal contemplation.

We observe that although Benjamin conceives the *beauty* of the Kantian concept of work of art, his reflection has a more realistic and not so ontological character. The loss of aesthetic experience (*Erfahrung*) that tradition carried through the auratic object is for Benjamin synonymous with the degradation of taste and, consequently, of reflection. About this tragic vision, Benjamin emphasizes his thought in the following passage: “There is no document of culture that is not understood as barbarism”. (Benjamin, 1981, p. 52).

Thus Benjamin, at the other extreme, seems to disagree with Kant's conception of a work of art, when he assumes understanding it as an object capable of carrying the entire past in the present. As if the past had been a *fait accompli* in a linear and progressive historical time allowing the Work of art as a self-object, which could be self-captured in its origin, as well as the events circumscribed in it. For Benjamin “history is the object of a construction” (BENJAMIN, 1994, p.229). Reiterating about this, the author quotes at another time:

Articulating history historically does not mean knowing it as it actually was”. It means

appropriating a reminiscence, as it flashes at the moment of danger. It is up to historical materialism to fix an image of the past, as it presents itself, in the moment of danger, to the historical subject, without him being aware of it. Danger threatens both the existence of the tradition and those who receive it. For both, the danger is the same: surrendering to the ruling classes as their instrument. (BENJAMIN, 1994, p.224).

History, from the Benjamin's point of view, is pure *becoming*, whose origin is uncapturable. It is a permanent "state of exception" (Ibidem, p.226). It is also a continuous deconstruction, which carries the tragic marks of the past, written and celebrated by the rulers: "The usual history is the commemoration of the exploits of the victors." (BENJAMIN, 1981, p. 52).

Specifically Benjamin refutes instrumental reason in the historical version of the dominant. For the thinker, the present time (*Jetztzeit*) destroys the historicist identity based on the Enlightenment concept of history.

Benjamin, on March 30, 1918, writes to his friend Gershom Scholem, outlining what would become the theme of his thesis "The Concept of Criticism of Work of Art in German Romanticism". The thinker explains his agreement with the Kantian concept of a romantic work of art, even disagreeing with his Enlightenment conception of history:

Only after Romanticism did the vision dominate that a work of art could be understood in and for itself in contemplation, without its connection with theory or morals, and could achieve sufficiency through this contemplation. The relative autonomy of the work of art from art, or rather its purely and simply transcendental dependence on art, became the condition of romantic art criticism. The task would consist

in indicating in this sense Kant's aesthetics as an essential presupposition of the critique of romantic art. (BENJAMIN, 2002, p. 138).

Benjamin, even having concentrated on the study of the romantic works of the poets Schlegel, Novalis and the literature of Franz Kafka, he understands that the work of art is decisively located in the real world, from where it must be analyzed or criticized.

Benjamin's concept of a work of art had a much more immanent than transcendental content, ultimately, it is based on his atypical concept of history, whose constitution goes beyond the historical materialist and romantic idealist path (genesis of German romanticism). Even so, in 1918 Benjamin reaffirms how the works of the romantic poets and Kant's conception of a transcendental, uncritical and autonomous work of art were dear to him:

Since Romanticism, the idea has prevailed that a work of art can be understood in and for itself, without its relation to theory or morality, and that it could be satisfied with this contemplation. The relative autonomy of the work in relation to art, or even its purely transcendental dependence on art, was the condition of romantic criticism. The (doctoral) work would consist of demonstrating that Kant's aesthetics is an essential assumption of romantic art criticism. That is, little by little Benjamin left aside the study of the relationship between the romantic concept of criticism and Kant's aesthetics to focus on studying only the work of the romantics. Already in a letter, from May of the same year, Benjamin states that his thesis would aim at "the philosophical principles of romantic art criticism". In a letter from November 1918, he states that he had not yet started writing the work itself, but that he was already well advanced in his reflections: "what I learn through it (the thesis), namely, a look at the relationship of a truth with history, will, however, be little discussed in the work, but, I hope, will be noticed by perceptive readers. The work deals

with the romantic concept of criticism (of art criticism)".
(BENJAMIN, 2002, p. 11).

We realize that the romantic concept of Art Criticism, from which Benjamin weaves his considerations, had a purely transcendental dependence on art, because in the Kantian conception art was not criticizable. For Kant, the art that was transcendental was autonomous in and for itself, so contemplation had no relationship with theory and social morality.

Benjamin, in turn, even conceiving the importance of this consideration, carries in his concept of Art Criticism a much more tragic and undeniably mundane and existential character. For the author, life, both in its physical and transcendental dimensions, is conceived distinctly between the dominant and the dominated in history.

As we have seen so far, the German Idealists related the various physical aspects to the spiritual and Benjamin, even recognizing the importance of his premises, takes the critical path and is blunt in opposing the Conception of history, whose notion of development and progressive linearity favored winners (Enlightenment *continuum* of history).

Consequently, it is believed that Benjamin considers historical reality as a struggle between Immanence and Transcendence. We remember that the term immanence in this context refers to what is in this dimension of reality, exactly opposed to what transcends this state of affairs. From this perspective, it is believed that Benjamin, who did not despise Meta-narratives, understood *historical Time in its immanence and tragedy*, whose historical becoming made the object uncapturable.

According to Michael Löwy, Benjamin "As he sees paths everywhere, he is always at the crossroads" (LÖWY, 1989, p. 85).

Briefly according to Adorno, as Löwy points out, Benjamin is originally:

“Far from all currents” is the title of Adorno's article on Walter Benjamin (published in *Le Monde* on May 31, 1969). In fact, the singularity of Benjamin's work situates him as a being apart, on the margins of the main intellectual or political trends in Europe at the beginning of the century: neo-Kantianism and phenomenology, Marxism and positivism, liberalism or conservatism. Strictly unclassifiable, irreducible to established models, he is at the same time at the crossroads of all roads, at the center of the complex network of relationships that are woven in the midst of Jewish-German. The paths that lead from Berlin to Jerusalem [...] or from Berlin to Moscow [...] cross in him, and his subtle exoteric thinking seems to be the focus where all the political and cultural contradictions of the Jewish intelligentsia of the Mitteleuropa: between theology and nihilistic revolution, mystical messianism and profane utopia. (Ibid., 1989, p. 85).

As we will see below, this comes to be understood through the themes that relate cultural identity and the situation of the individual in a given historical context. These aspects, which can be even better understood by confronting points of the critical theory of Walter Benjamin and the existentialist theory of Martin Heidegger.

2.2 - Walter Benjamin & Martin Heidegger supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

Jewish messianism contains two trends at once closely linked and contradictory: a restorative current, aimed at re-establishing an ideal state of the past, a lost golden age,

and, a broken Edenic golden harmony, a utopian current, aspiring to a radically new future, to a state of affairs that never existed.

Michael Lowy

According to Michael Löwy's studies on cultural identity, Benjamin's Jewish-German culture, while remaining connected, distances itself both from anarchist religious Jews (Zionist or not) and from purely assimilated Jews (Germany), from hence:

Far from all currents (the formula is from an article by Adorno on his work) and at the crossroads of all paths, linked at the same time to both groups, is the one who personifies, better than anyone else, this Messianic Jewish-German culture-libertarian: Walter Benjamin. The differentiation between the two sets reveals that the elective affinity between Jewish messianism and libertarian utopia also involves a tension, if not a contradiction, between the Jewish (national-cultural) particularism of messianism and the universal (internationalist humanist) character of emancipatory utopia. In the first set, the predominance of Jewish particularity tends to relativize the universal revolutionary aspect of utopia, without, however, making it disappear; in the second, on the contrary, the universality of utopia is the preponderant dimension and messianism tends to be stripped of its Jewish specificity – which, despite everything, is not entirely erased. (LÖWY, 1989, p.29).

Benjamin's German-Judaism aspires to a libertarian utopia, constituting a plot that brings up the issue of cultural identity based on its Concept of History. About the theme we find:

On the “concept of History”, he owed to his studies of the first romantics. [...] The historical materialist approaches a historical object only and exclusively when it appears to him as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a messianic immobilization of what happens, or, in other words, of a revolutionary chance in the struggle in favor of the oppressed past. He perceives it in order to leap a particular epoch out of the homogeneous course of history: in the same way he leaps a particular life out of an epoch or a particular work out of the work of a lifetime. The scope of his procedure consists in the fact that, in the work, the work of a lifetime is conserved and surpassed, in the work of a lifetime, the epoch, and in the epoch, the entire course of history. (BENJAMIN, 2002, p. 144).

This clarification highlights how Benjamin's Jewish Messianism carried a strong Materialist tenor. This led us to understand that the author refuted, not only the linearity of historical time in favor of the winners, but the most orthodox version of Jewish-messianism which, according to Eliade, conceived the linear conception of history. Nelson Levy, talks about this aspect in Benjamin in the following passage: “The linear conception of history, according to Eliade, would have been born in the Israel of the messianic prophets, immediately coupled to an ideological-religious interpretation of each event as a manifestation of divine intervention.” (LÉVY, 1990, p. 14).

Correspondingly, from the point of view of *Traditional Jewish Messianism*, conceiving historical time (the past) in the present, with a view to glimpsing the future, as Benjamin did, meant transgressing Jewish tradition itself.

This clarifies how nationality, as a cultural heritage, by itself, does not completely determine the subject's thinking, but irrefutably leaves its marks, which the experience of being in the world cannot mitigate. In the case of the experience of subjects born in Germany

in the 20th century, the mark of nationality is distinctly latent between those of “exclusively” German origin and those of Jewish origin, as is the case, respectively, of Heidegger and Benjamin.

Benjamin inherits the existential content of Heidegger's reflection, to found his Concept of history, however, even though both have based their projects on the protection of the present time (*Jetztzeit*), they diverge in the inner aspect of their treatises, marking the point at which the issue of nationality as a determinant of cultural identity. The contingencies of the time impelled Benjamin to treat the aesthetic object from the perspective of a tragic immanence, while Heidegger, in trying to preserve art from the suppression of that same time, treats it from the perspective of transcendence, sublimating it beyond the limits of that time. same experience.

Paradoxically, the mark that distinguishes is the same that brings the two thinkers together. This is clarified through Benjamin's concept of origin (*Ursprung*) in the passage highlighted by Howard Caygill, in *The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*:

Origin (*Ursprung*), though an entirely historical category, has nothing to do with genesis (*Entstehung*). The term origin is intended to describe not the process by which the existing came to be, but rather that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearing (1928:45) [...] The locus of tradition is not a place where past, present and future are brought together for resolute action, but a place where the present is haunted not only by its past but also by its future of becoming the past. It is a place of mourning. Here the origin and its objects can never reach authenticity, being always indebted to something that is not revealed. (BENJAMIN apud Caygill, 1994, p. 34).

Benjamin reaffirms that *becoming* itself configures the uncapturable nature of time. For the thinker, from the historical past

nothing can be rescued in its fullness, therefore, tradition, which has never completed a cycle, is always on the verge of *becoming*.

When we consider the nature of Heidegger's and Benjamin's thought through the lens of Cultural Identity, the distinct positioning of both becomes clear. Heidegger, of German nationality, was favored by the System and Benjamin, of German-Jewish nationality, was persecuted by the system.

Although both thoughts are dissonant in the most varied instances, Heidegger and Benjamin agree again when refuting the Enlightenment content of neo-Kantian philosophies. Modernly, Concepts of origin and tradition consider the Work of art in overlapping with Technology:

In order to be transmitted to the present, the past has to be destroyed, transformed into a different kind of object, a past object. The origin is therefore destructive, leaving no room for authenticity or fullness - in Benjamin's words, it is "a sinkhole in the stream of becoming whose rhythm consumes the materials of becoming" - tradition is catastrophic, taking when it would seem to give; a perpetual state of emergency. (BENJAMIN apud Osborne; Benjamin A., 1994, p. 35).

Unlike Heidegger, for Benjamin, tradition has in its origin the character of being destructive, preventing the *Authenticity of the objects* originated there, in the limit, tradition itself is inauthentic:

Instead of authenticity within tradition, in a tragic consummation within time, tradition itself is inauthentic. Benjamin considered that the excessive moment of tradition, the moment of origin that destroyed the integrity of what originated, could be used against tradition. Tradition as the setting for transmission could itself be an object of contemplation, as

in the description of the "melancholic immersion" towards the end of the origin of German baroque drama when its ultimate goals, in which it believes it can more fully secure for itself that which is vile, are transformed into allegories, and that these allegories dilate and deny the void in which they are represented, just as, after all, the intention does not loyally rest on the contemplation of bones, but disloyally rushes into the idea of resurrection. (OSBORNE; BENJAMIN A., 1994, p. 36).

Benjamin, who in 1916 criticizes Heidegger's philosophy of history, definitively clarifies his distinctions through the concept of Tradition and Origin. In this perspective, Benjamin takes a stand against Heidegger's optimism, warning of the destructive character of art that constitutes its relationship with historical time:

The act of transmitting destroys what it transmits. The place where tradition gathers cannot be situated in a present with its past and future; it is postponed to a future that is not static, it is not the future of this present; in Kafka's words, "there is infinite hope, but not for us". For Heidegger, such destruction is potentially, but not necessarily, the consequence of tradition, since for him the excessive moment of origin not only destroys but can also bring together, can allow things and events to be revealed. (OSBORNE AND BENJAMIN A., 1994, p. 36/37).

It is clear that Benjamin disagrees with the importance that Heidegger gives to historical time when he is concerned with the authenticity of the work of art, however, he agrees with the fact that Heidegger internally encompasses the presence of two opposing elements. This point alone guarantees that History is simultaneously the Inheritance and Destruction of something wavering between the

"Truth" of a time that existed and that same time that no longer exists.

In short, Benjamin seems to understand that historical time is an inaccessible time, that it is neither present nor past, it is just an idea, as Heidegger understood less categorically:

For Heidegger, the moment of origin is potentially a moment of clarity and resolute decision, a moment that allows a subject, whether a "hero" or a "People", to decide, in the words of the first version of "The origin of the work of art", "who they are and who they are not". This moment of origin is a moment of historical decision, which allows Dasein to choose its own destiny as a subject. For Benjamin, such a choice of fate is characteristic of tragedy, which "ends with a decision", whereas baroque drama ends with indecision and non-cathartic catastrophe. 🇧🇷 It (the origin) destroys what it transmits. Without this destruction, however, nothing would be transmitted. The work of art is a ruin, a place of mourning where the destruction of tradition can be recognized. For Heidegger, tradition can bring together what it would deliver, bring it to light, and for him the work of art is a temple that exposes this reunion. Heidegger celebrates tragedy as a site of witness to this surrender, while Benjamin downplays tragedy in favor of baroque drama as a collective lament for destruction. (Ibidem, 1994, p. 37).

For Heidegger, at the origin of the historical time where the tradition of the Work of art is born, the subject chooses his destiny, whereas for Benjamin, this is impossible, since the *historical Locus of origin* guarantees the destruction of everything that originates in him, whether tradition or Being in the world (*Dasein*), however, both thinkers agree on the fact that without historical Time nothing can be transmitted. This point clarifies how auratic, canonical or sacred works of art were born condemned. Briefly, for Benjamin, a Work of art contains in itself its ineffable presence, as it is born and

dies in the uncapturable *becoming* of a historical temporality. This **place of mourning** is synonymous with the **here and now** (*Hic et Nunc* or *Hier und Jetzt*) Benjaminian concept, it is where the effective legitimization of aesthetic objects never takes place.

Thence, regardless of the historical moment of origin (birth), the *auratic works of art* have their destruction guaranteed in Benjamin's conception. Heidegger, in turn, understands that the irretrievable historical Time is the existential drama itself. Synthetically, we understand that the mark that distinguishes the two authors is born from this approximation.

Although both agree on the fact that the place of constitution of the Work of art is the very *locus* of the death of its *Aura*, for Benjamin, this happens right at its birth, at its origin and regardless of its destiny and for Heidegger this can happen, but it doesn't necessarily happen. "Heidegger's moment of origin can be a moment of decision, resolution until death, while Benjamin's origin provokes sadness and mourning for the death it causes." (OSBORNE; BENJAMIN A., 1994, p. 37).

Whence, Heidegger and Benjamin agree on the fact that "the Action of transmitting" is action in the immanent and excessive sense, however, Benjamin is more fatalistic than Heidegger. For Benjamin, it is not a question of recovering and eternalizing the past in the present, canonizing the aesthetic object in its own historical *development*, but of extracting the particularity of each object that becomes new in each origin.

For this reason, Benjamin's concept of *Aura* is clarified from the point of view of the empirical present and not the past. True history, according to Benjamin, does not result from a process, but from this dialectical readiness, to make the past a "unique experience". (Ibid., p. 230). For the thinker, "the past, as time in action or dialectical *becoming*, must free its objects while **freeing itself**".

2.2.1 – *Walter Benjamin's German-Jewishness* supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

It is observed that nationality, as a builder of the individual's cultural identity, determines his reflection, not only in ideological terms, but goes beyond the limits of experience to constitute the subjectivity of the subject. And this, not simply in the theoretical-moral sense, independent of empiricism, but encompasses the existence of this being in the world, in a given historical and cultural time.

As much as the mark of nationality appears as a watershed, distinguishing and particularizing the thought of Germans and German Jews born in central Europe (Mitteleuropa) in the 20th century, the locus of critical reflection that developed from 1910 onwards with Jews refuting, in parts, the pure and absolute reason of the German idealists, it is believed that the impetuous and romantic character is a common mark in the reflection of all.

Ultimately, all Jewish thinkers born in Germany expose, in the reserve of their moral conceptions, the desire to reach an ideal world beyond the real one. Even guided by different causes and by specific ways, everyone seemed to want to recover, a secure state of existence in the world, which could only be granted through refuge or redemption, after any luck, in another dimension of reality.

According to our research, the German Idealists, while romantic, fought the moral repression of the old regime and the German-Jewish critics, refuted the ideology of the “liberating pseudo-morals” of the regimes, both Absolutist and Capitalist, that transformed the liberating action of art romantic in political propaganda.

As Michael Löwy analyzes, he clarifies that it is in this utopian aspiration to recover an ideal world composed of the thought of German Idealists and Jewish anarchists that the reflection of Walter

Benjamin, known as one of the Jewish-Atheist-Religious or Messianic-Anarchist thinkers, appears. According to Löwy, Benjamin's thought stands out from the annexes present in this plot: Romanticism, German historical materialism and Jewish Messianism:

In the religiously charged atmosphere of neo-romanticism, many Jewish intellectuals would revolt against their fathers' assimilation, seeking to save the Jewish religious culture of the past from oblivion. There is thus a desecularization, a (partial) disassimilation, a cultural and religious anamnesis, an `acculturation´ of which some circles or cenacles will be the active promoters “since, once attracted by the revolutionary movements of the left and by socialist ideas [. ..] It is in this particular context that the complex network of links between romanticism and anti-capitalism, Jewish religious revival, messianism, anti-bourgeois and anti-State cultural revolt, revolutionary utopia, anarchism, socialism is woven. (LÖWY, 1989, p. 37/40).

The author alerts us to the fact that some children of orthodox Jews favored intellectuality to the detriment of capital and, therefore, rejected their parents' business careers, typical of the Jewish bourgeois tradition in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. And as a way of finding a place to express their utopias and “libertarian-anarchist-anti-capitalist ideologies”, they entered the academic world.

Here, as Löwy underlines, is where the figure of Benjamin appears, his rationality is conceived and based on a *Romantic-messianic* or *Utopian-rationalist* temporality, which is constituted by the assimilation of ideal aspects of German romanticism, Jewish messianism and historical materialism.

Guiding the theme of redemption in historical time, confronting the thought of Benjamin and Heidegger, Peter Osborne and Andrew Benjamin emphasize:

Heidegger keeps open the possibility of redemption in historical time, with the implication that present guilt can be redeemed in time by "promoting" the past or "combating" it. For Benjamin, there can be no reduction in historical time, all there can be is the redemption of historical time. There can be no "promotion" or "combat", no receiving an inheritance in the present. As if anticipating Heidegger's development, in *Being and Time*, of ecstatic time as the horizon for the reunion of past, present and future, Benjamin insists on the complete exteriority of messianic time, a time whose advent brings with it the "cessation of happening". In the absence of the Messianic fullness of time, there can be no fullness in time: all events in time are not only inauthentic but can never attain authenticity. (OSBORNE; BENJAMIN A, 1994, p. 27).

The passage reaffirms how historical Time for Benjamin is an irreducible **place of mourning**, while for Heidegger it is Time open to **redemption**.

With Benjamin's reflection, we see art giving up its ambition to have a universal value, synonymous with "Higher Art", "superior" and "auratic", as established by the Aesthetic Theories of the 18th century, a result of the reflection that unfolded throughout more than two thousand years of history.

2.3 - The art of Gerhard Richter interpreted based on the reflections of Walter Benjamin

Judgments of aesthetic value founded by Benjamin such as **The Aura, Rememorar, Welcoming and Reception of the work of art**, even though they were constituted before the birth of Richter's art, will be our sources of interpretation, given that concepts like these, as we will see, are of great relevance to the Criticism of a work of art, if considered from a philosophical point of view.

The photographs, the basis of Gerhard Richter's works, were captured in the same historical locus in which Benjamin weaves his analysis of the arts that use technical means for their production and reproduction as mass movements at the service of politics, or in Benjamin's terms, of the **arts that aestheticize politics**:

The growing proletarianization of contemporary man and the growing importance of the masses are two aspects of the same historical process. Fascism wanted to organize the masses, without changing the property regime, which, however, they tend to reject. He thought he would solve the problem by allowing the masses, not certainly to assert their rights, but to express them. The masses have the right to demand a transformation of the property regime; fascism wants to allow them to express themselves, however, preserving the regime. The result is that he naturally tends towards an aestheticization of political life. To this violence that is done to the masses, when the cult of a chief is imposed, corresponds the violence suffered by a sound system, when they are placed at the service of that religion. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 27).

We emphasize here the actuality of Benjaminian thought in the artistic production of Gerhard Richter:

On every occasion where the camera intervenes, nowadays, the mass can see itself, face to face. [...] The device captures mass movements better than the human eye. [...] the mass movements, and in this also the war, represent a form of human behavior that corresponds, in a totally special way, to the technique of the apparatus. (Ibidem, 1980, p.27).

It is noticed that the points of contact between Richter's works and Benjamin's thought are numerous and can be analyzed from the point of view of aesthetics and politics, undoubtedly involving the history of the great wars. Thus, the works of the German painter bring up questions that involved the life and construction of the thought of Germans and German Jews, whose implications and consequences constitute the history of German civilization for centuries and reaching its peak in the 20th century.

2.3.1 – *From Re-memorizing* supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

When analyzing the evocative themes of memories of Nazi Germany in Richter's works, it is understood that this "re-memorizing the past" according to Benjamin is something irrecoverable. For Benjamin, the past should not be removed from its natural state. Here their disagreement with Hegel's romantic conception arises. Benjamin's concept of **remembering** (*Erinnerung*), as we see reflected in Rebecca Comay's quotes, is understood in confrontation with the Hegelian conception:

The Hegelian *Erinnerung* is exactly this re-membering. Remembering would be precisely the resurrection of the idealized, transfigured body, a body restored to its organic unity and spiritual integrity as a whole. In contrast, Benjamin re-members (re-members). That is, for Benjamin, as for Proust – above all for Benjamin as a reader of Proust – memory is above all a *mémoire des membres* (double genitive) [1.2, 613n: CB 115n]; the incoherent, multiple-situated reawakening of the shattered parts of the body to re-find themselves in time and space. For Proust, such an encounter had the power to stop the homogeneous flow of time: *faire reculer le soleil [...]*. The shards of memory frustrate the conciliations of organic closure, announcing the eternity of a mourning that persists in exhuming or unearthing what was buried. Memory recovers the hidden interiority of the earth (*Erdinnern*), as the objectivity and ruptured exteriority that detaches itself (*ausbrechen*) from all interiority. (COMAY, 1977, p. 263/264).

Remembering the past in the works of Gerhard Richter is the first indication of his romantic spirit. At this point, Richter seems to confront Benjamin, for whom remembering is incapable of constituting an organic Form (the means through which human sensitivity is realized and where perception operates, on which nature and history depend). For Benjamin, in his state of remembrance, the essence of the event is lost, because in any act of elucidation “a residue remains” (*Es bleibt ein rest*). (Ibid., 1977, p. 264). In these incoherently awakened pieces, the “truth” itself is not allowed to constitute itself.

Wherefore, the evocative themes of the past in Richter's works, according to the Benjamin concept of **origin**, would be considered as a deathbed or **place of mourning**.

However, recalling Richter's clarification earlier, for him to represent people related to Nazi Germany was an act performed

unintentionally. This speech that the painter himself changed 20 years later.

2.3.2 – From Aura supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter’s works of art

Translating the first pages of Benjamin's article, which unfolds his Aura concept, we realize that he deals with the **Uniqueness of the work of art**, from which the two features of a work of art are born: **Uniqueness** and **Duration**, whose interior maintains the presence of constructions. By uniqueness, the thinker understands that this is the unique character of the thing: the Aura of the work. Its **origin** presupposes a ritualistic function legitimizing, so to speak, its **authenticity** carried by **tradition**.

The time and space of **origin** (*ursprung*) and the **Duration** (*darstellung*) are the very historical testimony of the object.

The **here and now** (*hier und jetzt* or *hic et nunc*) of historical time, as we saw earlier, maintains the Tradition and Authenticity of aesthetic objects within the competence of the ineffable. Improving our understanding of the presence of the Work of art in time and historical space, they support us in the interpretation that Rodolphe Gasché, who observes the discrepancy between the Benjamin and Kant conceptions:

The uniqueness of the work of art, its quality of being one, is therefore clearly a function of the sensitivity, in Kantian terms, of its condition as an object of nature, since, for Benjamin, nature had connotations of degradation, confusion and doom. 🇧🇷 The presence (*das Hier und Jetzt*) of the original is the prerequisite of the concept of [its] authenticity. But the original, singular object, which is the work, is also endowed with authority, and it possesses this authority as an object, that is, as an appearance, in space and time, of a distant substratum. Benjamin states that “the uniqueness of the phenomena that prevail in the cult image [die Einmaligkeit der im Kultbilde waltenden Erscheinunge] is increasingly displaced by the empirical uniqueness of the

creator or his creative realization". (BENJAMIN apud Gasché, 1977, p. 198).

When we apply Benjamin's notion of an auratic work of art to analyze Richter's paintings, we would say that the artisanal aspect of his artistic production protects its authenticity. His originality, which is legitimized by the *here and now* at the birth of his work, constituting the very uniqueness of his artistic conceptions. The unique presence of one of his works in the historic site ensures that they do not tend to depreciate the character of what is given only once" (Benjamin, 1980, p.9).

This leads us to question: How does Richter's art, which at first sight alludes so much to a photographic image, reverse the prognosis of the end of the work of art in the era of technical reproducibility, giving rise to a "photographic work of art"? As Benjamin said: "vain subtleties were spent in order to decide whether photography was art or not." (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 14).

2.3.3 – *From Welcoming* supporting the reading of works of art by Gerhard Richter

Another important fact to be analyzed about Richter's works of art is their physical situation. They are available in museums and art galleries. Regarding this, Benjamin clarifies: "The paintings are never intended to be contemplated by more than one spectator, or even by a small number of them." (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 21). Therefore, when Richter's works of art are available in museums like those of the past, they maintain a contemplative character relative to distance.

On the one hand, she is inaccessible to the general public, which keeps her uniqueness, because the more unavailable she is to the masses, the more she retains her essential character of being a work of art, but on the other hand, photographs of her paintings are available through of the mass media, which causes the loss of its depth, when received in this way.

According to Benjamin, this public availability that photography provided marked the crisis that the work of art went through, from the point of view of reception, from the 18th century onwards:

Now, it is exactly contrary to the very essence of painting that it can offer itself to a collective receptivity, as has always been the case with architecture and, for a while, with epic poetry, and as is the current case with cinema. Even if almost no conclusion can be drawn regarding the social role of painting, it is certain that at the moment there is a serious inconvenience by which painting, due to special circumstances, and in a way that contradicts its nature to a certain extent, is directly faced with the masses, in churches and cloisters of the Middle Ages or in the courts of princes until around the end of the 18th century, the reception given to paintings was nothing like that, they were only transmitted through a large number of hierarchical intermediaries. The change that intervened in this regard translates the peculiar conflict, within which the painting finds itself engaged, due to the reproduction techniques applied to the image. One could try to present it to the masses in museums and exhibitions, but the masses themselves could neither organize nor control their own reception. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 21).

It is from the change in the form of reception, provoked by the technical reproducibility in the sphere of art, as explained by Benjamin, that we believe that Richter maintains the authenticity of his works. As paintings on canvas and housed in museums and art

galleries, they retain their unique, original and authentic character of being a “Work of Art”. Thus, they remain irreducible to associating themselves with technically and unlimitedly reproduced arts, such as advertising, which only allow for fun while carrying with them all the power of the real presence of the aesthetic object.

For Benjamin, as Hegel had already foreseen a century before, the great problem that guided the discussion about the Work of art, was summarized in the form of **Welcoming**.

The question that never ceased to echo was: How would cultured value, when transformed into exhibition value, affect the “receiver” in the aesthetic experience? About this, Benjamin reflects with Hegel:

This opposition necessarily escapes an idealist aesthetic; the latter's idea of beauty only admits indeterminate duality – and, consequently, refuses any decision. Hegel, however, saw the problem, as far as his idealism would allow. He said in *Vorlesung über die Philosophie der Geschichte*: “Images have existed for a long time. Piety always demanded as objects of devotion, but had no need of beautiful images. The beautiful image thus contains an external element, but it is to the extent that it is beautiful that its spirit speaks to men; now, with regard to devotion, the existence of a relationship to a thing is an essential necessity, since, by itself, it is nothing more than the numbness of the soul... Fine Art was born within the Church. ... although there is already art”. A passage from *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* also indicates that Hegel sensed the existence of the problem: “We are no longer in the time when a divine cult was rendered to works of art, where one could dedicate prayers to them; the impression they convey is more discreet and theirs to move still requires a touchstone of a higher order.” The passage from the first mode to the second generally conditions the entire historical process of receptivity to works of art. When one is unprepared, one is, in principle, and in each particular work, condemned to oscillate between these two opposing means. (BENJAMIN, 1960, p.11).

The question that recurs at this moment is: How can “Richter's Photographic Artworks” meet the demands of past and present art simultaneously, that is, how can they be innovative and traditionalist, meeting at the same time the demands of two mutually exclusive concepts?

Richter, who does not use photography to reproduce images on canvas, nor to indefinitely reproduce his art, seems to be defended by Benjamin in the following quote:

The reproduction of the object, as provided by the illustrated newspaper and the weekly magazine, is incontestably something very different from an image. The image very closely associates the two features of the work of art: its unity and duration; while the current photo, the two opposite features: those of a fleeting reality that can be reproduced indefinitely. Stripping the object of its veil, destroying its aura, this is what immediately marks the presence of a perception, so attentive to what “repeats identically throughout the world”, that, thanks to reproduction, it even manages to standardize what exists only once. Thus, in the intuitive field, a phenomenon analogous to that which, in terms of theory, is represented by the growing importance of statistics is affirmed. The alignment of reality by the masses, the connected alignment of the masses by reality, constitutes a process of indefinite scope, both for thought and for intuition. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 10).

Was Richter, through his “Photo-realist-transcendental” style, founding a new auratic form of Work of art, meeting, in full Post-modernity, the demands of Frankfurtian critical theory? In the light of the Adornian declaration, we observe, in his *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, the following:

The element thanks to which the work of art transcends reality is, in fact, inseparable from style. However, it does not consist in the inner and outer fulfillment, of the individual and of society, but in the traits in which the discrepancy appears, in the necessary failure of the passionate effort in search of identity. Instead of exposing itself to this failure, in which the style of the great work of art has always been denied, the mediocre work has always stuck to similarity with others, that is, imitation as something absolute. (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1991, p. 123).

The idea that nowadays no original work of art is created, in what would be a “victim” of the cultural industry, can be deconstructed by Richter's atypical “Photographic Paintings”. Paul Moorhouse, gathering part of some interviews given by the painter at different moments of his career, defends the authenticity of his works: “Photography interested me because it illustrates reality very well.” (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 39). In this regard, Moorhouse reiterates:

He also refers to the photo as being “the perfect picture”: These statements contain in their secret core the idea of authenticity, corresponding to the possibility of the idea of a direct and true world. This undermines a moralist position about painting that uses photography. The use of photographic images arises from the attempt to eliminate art and, paradoxically, this use of photos continued his existence as a painter. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p 39).

Hence, it is argued that the style and classic technique of artisanal production of Richter's works provide us with clues that creativity is in favor of an Originality and as such seems to reveal

something new, even challenging the typical photographic art of the present.

Such a discussion seems to touch the sphere of morality, in a broader sense. What determined the fear of the death of art from the 19th century on was the same that determined the production of knowledge.

In the opinion of the Frankfurtians Adorno and Horkheimer, Benjamin's optimism was naive, as there was in it the expectation of technology to **democratize art** through technical reproducibility, even at the expense of its desecration.

Benjamin in his time, who believed in a process of qualification of the masses, did not witness the opposite happen. In the opinion of the Frankfurtians, art, by **aestheticizing politics**, loses the reference that justified its quality and succumbs to total banalization. Reality that characterizes most styles of realistic Art since Modernity. Faced with this, Richter struggles, creating Works of art through his atypical Photorealistic style, demanding that the terms that convened the norms of works in the past, regain validity even today. But, more than that, we believe that Richter reverses this process, producing an art that we can call a **universal force**.

Richter's works "from the point of view of form welcome the viewer, who in their presence can be affected both in the contemplative perspective of Transcendence and in the cathartic perspective of Immanence". In addition, the tragic themes that guide the life stories of his models, when unveiled, affect us existentially to the point of leading us to seek to understand their meanings.

Therefore, we infer that his art, as Adorno said: "provides the tragic substance that pure fun alone cannot bring." (ADORNO, 1991, p. 142).

Supported by the logical quantitative postulate of Capital, the **Work of art in the era of technical reproducibility**, suffered a sinister process of dilution that collided with the domains of its essence. That which legitimized its "quality" or "superiority" seems

to have disappeared with the beginning of the application of reproduction techniques.

According to Adorno, this process gives rise to “inferior art”, since the “truth” that should constitute the essence of a work of art is diluted, transforming the aesthetic experience into immediate and fleeting pleasure. incapable of affecting and transforming its users.

Such aesthetic parameters supported under the orders of the Massification of the work of art, are clarified by Adorno as quoted in the article in PDF, Cultural Industry & Media Culture: from Modernity to Post-Modern Cultural Logic by Maraisa Bezerra Lessa:

The consumer is not king, as the industry would like you to believe, he is not the subject of this industry, but its object”. [...] According to Adorno, cultural products reach all levels of the individual's psychoanalytic consciousness. Its contents convey not only an explicit message, but also a hidden message to be absorbed by the individual's unconscious. In this way, the cultural industry disseminates not only social rules and behaviors, but also ways of conceiving and analyzing the world, as it prevents the formation of autonomous, independent individuals, capable of judging and deciding consciously [...] Contributing to the maintenance of the *status quo* and for the expansion of consumption. In this sense, Adorno expresses a famous phrase: “men's dependence and servitude, the sole objective of the cultural industry” (ADORNO 1971: 288 apud Lessa, p. 6).

Adornian moral criticism, by alerting us to the dangers of the hedonistic ideology of consumption provided by the cultural industry through advertising art, makes it clear how the cognoscent function of art succumbs to its total destruction.

When we remember that, in the West, due to the birth of Advertising Art, more than two thousand years of reflective and

critical efforts about artistic manifestations, as a dear object of cultural expression, lost its reason for existing, we would say that Works of art are not technically reproduced by Richter, by remaining available for reflection in the fields of morals and aesthetics, self-legitimize their value as a source of knowledge, recognizing old efforts.

In addition, the Benjaminian *Aura* concept offered us subsidies to understand the meaning of “Long-distance” typical of the canonical arts of the ancient, medieval and Renaissance periods. According to our research, the Realist style of art, which lasted from antiquity through the medieval period, fascinated by the glory and canons of classical art, serving the interests of the Church.

The Church, which maintained its power by controlling the desires of the people through the sacralization of works of art, gradually lost this *status* in the Renaissance period, when art began to portray what we could call “icons of the European aristocratic nobility”. This moment, which marks the transition from the Feudal to the Capitalist system, led Benjamin to be concerned at the height of Modernism.

We realized that what most distressed the thinker was not the fact that the aesthetic object, by losing its *aura*, would no longer represent a safer plane of existence beyond the harsh physical reality, but that it would become irreducible to fruition and reflection. , causing the decay of **taste**. On this subject we find Benjamin clarifying:

In this connection, Renaissance painting provides us with a very instructive analogy. In it, too, we find an art whose incomparable development and importance rests largely on the fact that it integrates a large number of new sciences, or at least new data drawn from these sciences. It claims anatomy and perspective, mathematics, meteorology and color theory. As Valéry pointed out, nothing is further from us than this surprising pretension of a Leonardo, who saw in painting the supreme goal and the highest demonstration of knowledge, since he was convinced that it requires

universal science and he himself did not back down. before a theoretical analysis, whose precision and depth baffle us today. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p.22).

The work of art, when transformed into advertising art, starts to serve the interests of politics, losing everything that characterized its great value. This is verified in the aesthetic version of both Totalitarians and Capitalists who spread their political ideologies to the manipulation and control of the masses, causing apocalyptic consequences throughout the 20th century. For Benjamin, the main concern was to watch art aestheticize politics and the threat that doomed its future, already on the threshold of its complete death.

According to the History of Art, the autonomy of art, alien to political purposes and religious moral commitment and even to universal pleasure, is only achieved when it assumes a revolutionary character or, as in the term coined by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten: *it becomes Aesthetics*.

In Modern Germany, we will see how art becomes “Mass Culture”, on the one hand, under the control of absolutist, Communist and Nazi-fascist governments known as the totalitarian Aesthetics advocated by the Socialist Realism style (1930 - 1960) and, on the other hand, another, under the manipulation of capitalism in the version known as *Pop art*.

2.4 – *Subjectivity* according to Taste in Gerhard Richter's aesthetics

The theme of subjectivity is widely reflected by Gerhard Richter in the field of art and becomes visible in his work “Party”. Re-looking at the following painting:



Fig. 10. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Party (Party)*. Museum Frieder Burda, Baden Baden. Various materials, 150 x 182 cm, 1963.

The dichotomy between appearance and the essence of reality is Gerhard Richter's imminent and existential suspicion. Probes about the possible existence of a **being in itself** constituting “reality”, remain secret under the surface of the canvas, where red ink is thrown, suggesting blood and tears are produced and sewn.

These are some of the clues that seem to reveal the tragic nature of this reflection. Moorhouse, interpreting Richter, argues that the painter understands the world philosophically by representing it in this way:

Reality cannot be represented satisfactorily and adequately. This discernment (judgment) comes with the knowledge that appearance as a signifier is not only independent of the actuality to which it refers, but the very ontological status of appearance, presupposed by its own surface. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 89).

Analyzing the work *Party*, through Richter's own philosophical assumptions, we understand that it summarizes the reasons for his nonconformity in the face of the impossibility of accessing a deeper dimension of reality at the expense of subjectivity. This, which in Kant is “universal” and in Freud, in addition to being particular, has a strong unconscious substratum, is reflected by Gerhard Richter in the writings of Paul Moorhouse:

We would like to understand and try to paint what we see and what absolutely exists (*da ist*). Then we realize that it is impossible to paint, to represent a reality. What we do is always and only represent ourselves, so this is reality itself. (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 59).

What seems to distress the painter comes up against the classic existential problem of knowing whether there is something substantial secret in the appearance of reality or not. By assuming to paint pictures based on photographs, reducing the action of subjectivity to a minimum, Richter believed he had found a way to get closer to reality more effectively:

Everything that is, appears and is visible to us because we perceive only the appearance that things reflect; nothing else is visible. 🇧🇷
“We cannot trust the image we see of reality, because we only see the thing (the object) as our eyes transmit it to us, in addition to other experiences, which in turn correct this image.” (RICHTER, 2009, p. 34).

The paradox between visible and invisible reality treated in the field of art, becomes even more complicated by subjectivity in Richter's opinion. In an interview with Rolf Schoen in 1972, Richter declares: “I do not distrust reality, about which I know almost nothing, but its image, as our senses transmit it to us: incomplete and limited.” (RICHTER, 2009, p. 60).

The painter takes a stand against this perception by saying: “I never liked subjectivity.” (Ibidem, 2009, p. 34). Seeing this as a difficulty to be faced, Richter tries to overcome his antagonism by photographing the appearance of reality, aiming to capture the elements of the object, which are impossible to be captured with the naked eye. Based on the epistemological investigation and the mental structure presented by psychoanalysis, we approach what seems to occur in the subjective world of the artist, materialized in the form of art.

Since, Freud's “Particular Subjectivity” confronts Kant's “Universal Subjectivity”, more precisely in the hypothesis of an assumed “uniform” knowledge of the world.

2.4.1 – *Taste* according to subjectivity supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter’s works of art

From the art and reflection of Gerhard Richter, we have seen so far that two categorical imperatives about the subject's relationship with the object world are tensioned: objectivity and subjectivity. Opening a discussion in the light of Communication Theories, we realize that the theme of subjectivity dates back to Antiquity.

More than two thousand years distant from us, in the art of Ancient Greece through the well-known concept of *Mimesis*, an attempt was made to capture the essence of reality by imitating nature. This problem, even in advanced technological times, remains unsolvable.

Subjectivity in the artistic sphere has always represented a problem in the subject's relationship with the object. For Richter, it doesn't get any closer to reality than just very close. Summary observation, which boils down to the same and most fundamental problem of human existence: How can we know the world around us? Would we be confined, within a particular, subjective world, completely unable to know what really exists?

As far as subjective problems are concerned, despite the tendency towards a consensus of "Universal Subjectivity" around Kantian thought, modern human beings are faced with those who bump into their subjectivity in a particular way. If the essence of a Work of art for Kant, from the point of view of objectivity, is inaccessible, to the aesthetic experience it provides, from the point of view of subjectivity, it comprises sensitivity.

But this, only in the thought of Kant, for whom the Work of art keeps its ends and means faithful to its own unconditionality and infinity. However, in case the user wants to go beyond the delight and contemplation of the aesthetic object, then general and specific knowledge is required. This, even if the effects of a work do not configure links between the parts (Subjectivity and Objectivity).

Freudian psychoanalysis, in turn, explains that *a priori* we are constituted in such a way that we do not have access to the world around us, especially with regard to the domains of our unconscious, marking the point of distinction with Kant's thought. Kantian theory

allows us a greater chance of accessing the world of appearance. But more than that, Kant draws our attention to the importance of expanding the degree of cultivation.

In the work *Domestic Aesthetics*, art critic Clement Greenberg, a frequent reader of Kant, clarifies based on his theories that "subjective taste" is opinion and "objective taste" is instruction, that is, **taste** is developed from the understanding of something, at the limit, quotes: "poorly developed taste is bad taste." (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 171). "Due to their involuntary nature, judgments of taste reveal the degree of "cultivation" of individual taste." (Ibidem, 2002, p. 16). The critic also reiterates interpreting Kant:

What he meant was that we are reasonably similar in general terms. And it's the general lines that come into play when we develop our taste. The more you develop taste, the more impersonal you become. And no longer individual. (Ibidem, 2002, p. 175).

Still reinforcing the clarification that tensions Freud's and Kant's theories epistemologically, we understand that even if the aesthetic object is phenomenologically available to intuition, that is, even if it remains enjoyable to any subjectivity, it still remains hermetic as to its essential nature.

On this point Freud and Kant agree. Even with the concession given by Kant to the capture of the phenomena of the object by sensitivity, we understand that the aesthetic object in its ineffable nature remains intangible and unspeakable, however, as Greenberg clarifies, still supported by Kant, the problem can be minimized the more I like it develops. According to Greenberg, through understanding conventions and the history of culture and art itself, we expand and make our pleasure effective, considering that the more cultivable subsidies we develop, the more intellectual, sensitive

and sign connections we develop. By effecting, so to speak, our pleasure is magnified in the aesthetic experience.

This leads us to understand that reflection and taste, through knowledge (reflection and culture), is necessary for the objectification of taste, from which a greater approximation of the alien universe is possible. This to the extent that we consider our humanity equivalently. We understand that Richter's works are available, as a **form** (style) for contemplation and delight and, as **content**, both Kant's "Universal Subjectivity" and Freud's "Particular Subjectivity", but their core remains the same and substantially inaccessible.

When we consider Richter's works through the contents of their themes, we find the opportunity to conjecture about how events in 20th century Germany may have affected the painter's unconscious. This shows what impelled him to choose, among so many themes, to artistically represent the tragedies provoked by the Second World War.

In observing the behavior of people affected by the drama of the War, whether directly or indirectly, we seek to understand how this individual's subjectivity relates to the external world. For this, we seek to look at how the subject, through his abstract universe, relates to his inner world.

Richter's Photorealism, according to the artist himself, is developed by assuming photography in order to minimize the action of his subjectivity in the production of his works, with a view to universalizing them as much as possible.

However, this distancing leads us to reflect on his own ideology, bumping into the domains of his artistic-political reflection and his overlapping with German society. Richter's style, although based on realism, by representing the being photographed in the real world, does not adhere to those styles that transformed art into political advertising, as is typical in the aesthetics of totalitarians and capitalists.

As Walter Benjamin, living at the height of World War II,

points out: "All efforts to aestheticize politics culminate in a single point: war". (BENJAMIN, 1980, p.27). At this point, Richter's photo-frames, even through their disfigured Photorealistic style, by representing, among other tragic events, the victims and rulers of the Holocaust and the existential dramas arising therefrom, "do not aestheticize politics" as Benjamin condemned. We can interpret this as an unconscious act of venting by Richter in the face of the atrocities of the War.

Among the elements that make up his style in most of his works are Acromia and Abstraction, produced by the painter with a view to keeping the identity of his models anonymous. When the photos come from the media, Richter cuts out their sensationalist titles and speeches, often derogatory, as they are normally conveyed by the media. This directs our gaze to the content, which without a search, keeps its depths equally impenetrable. The illusory and diffuse appearance of his style and the unexplained existential themes confuse the viewer!

2.4.2 – *Taste according to the Far away supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art*

Returning to Benjamin's concept of *Aura*, we can say that in terms of the historical and testimonial atmosphere, Richter's works translate them in full Benjaminian as: "the only apparition of a distant reality, however close it may be". (BENJAMIN, 2002, p.10). However, the atmosphere of a "distant time" that constitutes his works is suggested through a content of physical-temporal distance (historical) and not in the intangibility of a Metaphysical state as understood by the auratic works of art of the past, to which the term refers.

Quite the contrary, the historical narrative and tragic aesthetics of his works defend transcendence in the immanence of a time that irrevocably existed. The following work supports our interpretation:



Fig. 11. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Family as in the old masters (Familie nach altem Meistern)*. Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich. Oil on canvas, 147 x 155 cm, 1965. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 62).

The painting “Family as in the old masters” above, although it does not fulfill absolutely any ritualistic function, it evokes the Memory of a time distant from our present time, at the same time that it carries elements available to infinite interpretations. These

elements, which by themselves, legitimize the authenticity of his style.

In order to objectively defend our analysis, through the reading of the intrinsic characteristics of this work, we are supported by Clement Greenberg's observations about the concept of **taste**:

Indeed, the objectivity of taste is incontestably proved by the presence of a consensus and through it over time. This consensus evidences itself in the aesthetic value judgments that endure under the ever-renewed test of experience. Certain works stand out in their time or in posterity for their excellence, and maintain their primacy, that is, they continue to impose themselves on those of us who observe, listen or read with the depth required in later times. And for this durability – the durability that creates a consensus – there is no explanation other than the fact that taste is ultimately objective. Or else the best taste; the one who makes himself recognized by the durability of his verdicts; and in that durability lies the proof of its objectivity. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 69)

Greenberg bases the value of a work of art on its ability to last in historical time. Based on his state of *Objectification of taste*, he supports us by justifying that Richter's works, in terms of their historical atmosphere, intrinsically carry the necessary qualities to qualify themselves. This happens at the same time that they meet the conventions of traditional art through themes that stimulate reflection and allow delight. His works are updated in the abstract profusions of his style.

The allusion to an old, out-of-focus photograph in Richter's Photorealistic style is unconventional. His stylistic innovation and durability over time, keep his works available to multiple interpretations, not enclosing in themselves a meaning in a tedious and banal way.

Translating our observation, we resort to Richter's statement found by Moorhouse: "After the pictures have been painted and ready, they no longer tell anything of their definite situation, the portrait is absurd. As a painting, it has another meaning, other information. (RICHTER apud Moorhouse, 2009, p. 44).

Painting portraits in postmodern times could disqualify an art, in the opinion of some aesthetes and artists. For such works, the term *Kitsch* (in German) or *Brega* (in Portuguese) would fit as a synonym for "inferior" or "bad" art.

Analyzing from this angle, we consider Greenberg's clarification on what this type of art is: The "inferior art" was the one that made the judgment of taste irrelevant. He hoped to make his own qualitative inferiority irrelevant – he also assumed that what mattered most, anyway, would be to push the frontiers of art, just as the classical avant-garde had done. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 230). Therefore, Richter's Postmodernist portraits, which do not despise the importance of artistic quality, neither in form nor in content, seem to face this verdict.

2.4.3 - From *taste* to the light of the concepts of: "*superior art x inferior art*" supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

Still guiding the theme of art without quality or "bad", we rely on the clarification provided by Umberto Eco in the work *Ugliness History*. "Inferior art" in the historical process of the origin of the word kitsch. The term *kitsch*, according to Eco, was born when American tourists in the second half of the 19th century tried to negotiate the price of works of art in Munich/Germany.

According to Eco, the term "discount" originates from the *mecklenburger* dialect, which previously existed in the verb *kitschen* (in German), synonymous with "sweeping the mud from the rubbish

on the streets”. It also meant the search for an easy aesthetic experience, of sudden and exceptional affectation, on the part of the buyer. Umberto Eco subsidized by Clement Greenberg also quotes:

Those who appreciate Kitsch consider themselves to be enjoying a qualitatively high experience. Suffice it to say that there is an art for the uneducated, just as there is an art for the educated, and that the difference between the two “tastes” must be respected in the same way that differences in religious beliefs or sexual preferences are respected. But while those who cultivate “cultured” art consider kitsch, those who cultivate Kitsch (except in the case of works whose aspiration is precisely to “shock the bourgeoisie”) do not consider the great art of museums to be contemptible (which, moreover, frequently exhibit works that the cultured sensibility considers kitsch). Quite the contrary, they consider Kitsch works “similar” to those of great art. If one of the definitions of Kitsch sees it as something that aims to provoke a passionate effect instead of allowing disinterested contemplation, another considers Kitsch the artistic practice that, to mobilize the buyer, imitates and quotes the art of museums. Clement Greenberg stated that, while the avant-garde (understanding it, in general, as art in its function of discovery and invention) imitates the act of imitating, Kitsch imitates the effect of imitation: in making art, the avant-garde highlights the procedures that lead to the work and elect them as objects of their own discourse, while Kitsch highlights the reactions that the work should provoke and elects the viewer's emotional reactions as the objective of the operation itself. (ECO, 2007, p. 397).

The artistic dimension appears as a fundamental element marking the distinction between the worlds of those considered “cultured” and “uncultured”. According to Eco, this happens to the extent that, what legitimizes the **taste** of the bourgeois would be the degree of cultivation and their own culture.

The works of art in this case carried in their style the originality of their own unique discourse, with no purpose alien to the aesthetic experience. And what legitimizes the "taste of the poor" would be their own lack of cultivation and discernment. The works of reference in this case would be those that carry the discourse of other styles. They copied their effects in order to move the general public.

When we observe that most of Richter's works, by carrying in their themes the debris of the Holocaust together with the sublime and supposedly happy expressions of his models, we realize that an autonomous aesthetic experience emerges, whose innovation does not allow his paintings to be evaluated by the criteria of taste based on the conceptions of subjectivist Aesthetics. This, according to Greenberg, would necessarily lead us to approach the conception of the sociological subject:

I believe that awareness of certain things that happened in the recent past, in the last century, has become extraordinarily widespread in our time. At least for me, I'm much older. I think in the late 1950s and early 1960s, everyone realized that the way art has managed to succeed over the last hundred years is to be innovative. And it seems to me that it took a long time for this to be discovered, for this fact to become popularly known. It is surprising that this has not been seen in this comprehensive way much earlier. In other words, we never had an educated middle class with the proportions we have today in this country or even in Western Europe. I also believe that it is known – which Marx was perhaps the first to realize – that the majority of people in all urban civilizations of the last five thousand years were exclusively those who had enough money to enjoy dignified and comfortable leisure. The injustice of this fact has been felt by many people today, and by people who, unfortunately, are not very sensitive and have not read Marx well enough to know that you cannot change your situation through fear or the desire to change it. You cannot change it, as vulgar Marxists and Stalinists felt, by bringing culture to the masses. Both Hitler and Stalin agreed on this point. You can bring culture to the masses,

but then it is no longer high culture. There's no doubt about it. And it's not because the poor were born with worse taste than the rich. Taste is something you cultivate, it is not innate. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 219).

According to Greenberg, Marx was very happy when he analyzed that consciousness is determined by the materiality of life. Thus, “taste” is the measure of the degree of cultivation, which, *a priori*, is relative to the subject's innate social condition, however, value judgments, as criteria of taste, are continuously subject to evolution.

Based on these conventions, which guide “bad”, or “inferior” and/or *kitsch* art, in the absence of culture, and applying them in the reading of Richter's works, it is clear that the artist was not guided by photographic themes with content empty and ephemeral, nor did he develop his style without commitment to the quality of form and style.

His art crossed the borders of traditional art time, however, it was never exposed to the verdict of negligence that comprises the art of “bad taste”, agreed by specialized critics, for which the decadence of *taste* is inferred from the political content and marketing of advertising or mass culture art.

On the other hand, when considering Richter's works through the eye of the present, in terms of their evocative memorial themes of the past, some critics might say that this is the point at which Richter's paintings would be judged as realistic. However, art critic Moorhouse defends it by clarifying:

Mainly with his portraits of the 1990s, such as *Lesende* or *Kleine Badende*, Richter placed his painting in an art historical tradition. *Familie nach altem Meister*, for Richter it is primarily what he already shows through the title: a family image, but in the form of a painting. The realization of an art

historical image shows that, as well as reproductions from cheap magazines and newspapers, models like this are also possible. (MOORHOUSE, 2007, p. 62).

The historical image in Richter's paintings is, according to Moorhouse, a positive factor, given that his historical narrative aims to bring the past to the present. Ultimately, it seeks to immortalize it and not keep the past exclusively confined in a world that no longer concerns us. Quite the contrary, the work above, as the title of the painting indicates "Family in the style of the old masters" (*Familie nach alter Meistern*) and as the critic warned, suggests that it is possible to produce paintings in the classical style with current images from any media.

Therefrom, the historical atmosphere of Richter's paintings is protected by the very inversion that the painter makes in time. Instead of accepting the *death of the work of art* from the birth of reproduction techniques, he uses photography to recover the historical sense of the Work of art, inaugurating an art that we could call Auratic, not Ritualistic. In this way, Richter seems not to submit, nor refute, the criticism of those who hypostatized the quality of "academic" or "elevated" art in the heralds of the taste of classical culture.

The very resistance that Richter's works offer, in the sense of presenting an outdated reality, seems to formalize it as communicable in the present time, since it is a dramatic past that affects us directly. The testimonial themes of the Second World War seem to be the very tragic mark of its culture, materialized in an art form that, nevertheless, brings to our memory the death of no less than 60 million people, including 6 million Jews. , in addition to others that were indirectly affected. Such proportions are immeasurable even today.

Being produced after 1960, his art based on photographs can be considered advanced or neo-avant-garde and, as such, must be understood in its stylistic autonomy from the artistic conventions of

the past. However, we observe that Richter proposes to go beyond the limits of immediate experience, typical of the proposal of some arts produced at that same time.

Richter's art meets the requirements of many, both from the point of view of stylistic quality and content, but it does not only and exclusively please the taste of those who judge its value from its richness of elaboration, definition and style, but often, those who are only affected in the aesthetic experience. Probably, the originality of his art, from the point of view of innovation, is the evoking of the memory of the distant atrocity of his civilization for the present. Of being innovative while being traditional.

Chapter 3 - Communication and Culture - The art of Gerhard Richter brings up a political discussion about the concepts: Subjectivity, Art and Taste in the transition from Modernity to Postmodernity

Gerhard Richter, by resorting to copying photographs onto canvas, reduces to a minimum the expressiveness of his gesture and his subjectivity in order to significantly imitate the movement of the machine and not that of nature, as he understood the mimetic art of yore. In this sense, his expression is mediatic, and as such, he not only freezes a moment of being in time in an informal and objective way, but also, when choosing among so many photos, those with a strong emotional content, he does so subjectively. His insubordination to align himself with pre-existing artistic movements is recognized through his irreducible tragic themes to other styles.

3.1 – Taste: *a priori* X *a posteriori* supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

Richter agrees that photography has a double and antagonistic function: at the same time that it keeps us away from reality, it is more effective and capable of capturing more elements of reality itself than our own eyes can. This clarifies how Richter, who so much seeks aesthetic distancing through objectivity and the allusion to a photographic image, remains uncomfortable with the intrinsic omnipresence of human subjectivity as the manipulator of these processes. This perception of the world, recognized through his experience as an artist who seeks neutrality, ends up always revolving around the same axis: no objectivity is possible when the activity carried out has the hand of man. Here Clement Greenberg supports us:

The character of elusiveness - of indescribability - belongs to all things that embrace their own goal, (all things that have their ends in themselves) and not things that are necessarily a means of, or pointers to, something else. And this applies to human beings, love and moral behavior. Ends in themselves like happiness, it even applies to fun. Like them, art is an ultimate value. Or rather, the experience with art is an ultimate value. Something that we seek only in the name of experience and from which we expect nothing more than the so-called "non-referential" experience. It is not an experience that can be conceived or deciphered. Art exists for itself. But "art for art's sake" is a concept that has been frowned upon lately, and yet it persists. It exists and remains strong. All we have to do is remember that art, because it has intrinsic value, is an ultimate value in itself, not a superior value. It is a subordinate value when set against the good and bad fortune of human beings, when set against the happiness and suffering of any particular human being. But still this does not mean that when we are concerned with art it is not valuable and does not remain valuable in and of itself and not for something else. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 137).

The fact that subjectivity is ubiquitous, even in the objective action of man, leads us to infer that in the aesthetic experience the fundamental element is intuition, however, this does not mean that the value judgment about the quality of art is exclusively particular and subjective, since, as we have seen so far, the idea that capturing evaluative elements in an aesthetic object is all the more meticulous and refined the greater the theoretical knowledge about it is.

Therefore, considering the contemplator as a receiver would be to conceive without any guarantee his passive state of being in the aesthetic experience. On this point, Greenberg agrees with Kant, when the philosopher emphasizes that taste should not remain solely and exclusively relative to subjectivity. As with the theme, we have two equally legitimate possibilities: we may not like an aesthetic object and, despite this, understand that it is loaded with innumerable objective qualities, or we may be affected in the presence of an aesthetic object, even realizing that it is devoid of objective qualities.

In short, the only certainty about the qualification of an aesthetic object is that we absolutely do not know what happens in the aesthetic experience. However, as we have seen so far in the opinion of thinkers, taste is the permanent element and that means saying that, at first, it is subjective, intuitive and relative to the contemplated object, but in a second moment, it becomes objectified, that is, carries within itself properties alien to the object relative to any taste.

By itself, the simple discourse about a work of art in terms of its quality suggests the issuing of value judgments with taste as a reference. This ancient divergence, considered between the theories of aesthetes and philosophers, is subject to innumerable discussions. Returning to the objectivity of taste in Kant, we remember that for the author it happens in the aesthetic experience in terms of *sensus communis*.

At first glance, it seems strange that the term “taste” refers to something common to everyone and is not subjective as we are used

to thinking, in Freudian terms. However, Kant axiologically clarifies his epistemology in order to delimit the relativity of subjective judgments of taste. The philosopher universalizes subjectivity as follows:

Taste makes, so to speak, possible the passage from the attraction of the senses to the usual moral interest without too violent a leap, inasmuch as it represents the faculty of the imagination also in its freedom as determinable as purposive, for the understanding, and teaches to find a free pleasure, even in objects of the senses and without their attraction. (KANT, 1998, p. 264).

We observe that this old discussion that divides the world into metaphysical based on the universality of the absolute and physical based on the singular subjectivity of the individual, continues to unfold dialectically in circular movements without ever completing a cycle.

With regard to the *universal Kantian Subjectivity*, aesthetics in these terms does not have a useful and moral purpose. It is not particularly subjective, because if it were, we would transform the concept of taste into opinion, exactly what Kant refuted. Therefore, through the aesthetic judgment, where we would find something beautiful, it would not happen the satisfaction of a particular desire, but the disinterested appreciation, of infinite and common purposes.

Kant clarifies that in the aesthetic experience, the capturing of the phenomena of the object by the subject, collides with the moral question, however, the morality to which Kant refers is the universal (metaphysics) and not the one understood contemporaneously in the fabric of social life.

His dialectic says that if morality is relative to duty, it must be universal, therefore, the aesthetic experience, which is relative to human rights, must also be aligned with the good while respecting

everyone's morals. About this, Kant in his *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* states that if we are universally similar, then our tastes also align:

Taste is basically a judgmental faculty of sensing moral ideas [through a certain analogy of reflection on both things], which is also a greater receptivity – which is based on it – for feeling from those ideas [which is called moral feeling] derives that pleasure which taste declares valid for humanity in general and not simply for the private feeling of each one; so it seems evident that the true propaedeutics for the foundation of taste is the development of moral ideas and the culture of moral feeling, since only if the sensibility agrees with it, can true taste take a determined and unchangeable form. (KANT, 2005, p. 200).

For Kant, the force would be in our reason why we are guided by the metaphysics of nature. Freud, when interpreting Ontology psychoanalytically, leads us to conjecture about our subjectivity from the perspective of the unconscious, which constitutes a large part of our being. According to Freud, we do not apprehend the world in the same way nor do we develop the same taste, as Kant defended.

At this point, we see that Freud's Theory of the Unconscious supports the critical reflection of the philosophers of the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurtians, when reflecting on life in social terms, admit that ideology can exert a great force of manipulation through the unconscious. As Adorno used to argue: "we like what we are taught to like". This point clarifies that if we are social (non-autonomous) beings, we are incapable of developing a purely particular taste. Thence, in an Adornian's way, human beings are considered universally similar while living under the aegis of the same political ideology.

3.2 – Aesthetic paradigms: cultural and historical phenomena supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

The paradigms that guided the values that underlie the conception of aesthetics and the composition of materials in Modernity suffer their greatest rupture with the action of technology (photography) in the field of art, configuring, so to speak, what came to be known as Postmodernity. Thus, Richter, who refutes the opinion of some contemporary art critics and aesthetes, that values such as art and taste, in Postmodern times, are no longer relevant, stresses the importance of such concepts through his works.

According to Ciro Marcondes Filho, the change of values in the passage from Modernity to Postmodernity brings to light the conceptions of Paul Virgilio and Lucien Sfez, emphasizing how, in the field of aesthetics, the crisis of reason happens in three different moments:

By Virgilio, painting was the expression of reality from a formalist perspective and through it one reached a full, direct, “transparent” knowledge of the reality that was being represented. Cinema and photography, as technical interventions in the way of reproducing reality, acted under the dialectic perspective of representativeness. The primacy here no longer belongs to reality, but to the present. Photography and cinema, that is, the photogram means a momentary, instantaneous current capture that gave representativeness a non-programmed, non-machined apprehension. In this case, with the privilege of instantaneity, the component of the fullness of knowledge that had to do with a lasting and exhaustive capture of the object is lost. Finally, in the current moment of sophisticated technologies marked by videography and holography, one no longer works with the present but with

a phenomenon that transcends the possibility of matching the object with the real image. It is in the field of virtuality and here knowledge becomes absolutely imprecise. (MARCONDES, 1991, p.16).

The fullness of knowledge presupposes an exhaustive and lasting capture of the object. With the instantaneousness of the technical reproducibility of the image, the component corresponding to the fullness of knowledge is lost:

Sfez, in the worldview of representation, man dominates the machine and is with it for its ends. There is a predominance and machines represent man according to the principle of Cartesian duality (body/spirit, subject/object). The means of communication translate the world, the image represents the sender, we live in a universe in terms of communication, of representation. The figure is the ball, which, instead of being deflated, reaches its goal and is sent back again with the preservation of the full integrity of the movement. The second view of the world is that of expression, in which objects are the natural environment; our world is introduced by it and man is in the world, thrown into it, not dominating it, but adapting to it. The parts relate to the whole. The means of communication are also in the world and the world is in them, but there is no more sending of messages. The figure of this second formula is the creature, and the signs are produced as organisms, they express nature. The third worldview is one of confusion; there is no subject and it is the technical object that marks its limits and determines its qualities. Technology says everything about man and his future. Man exists by technology. In the media there is an absence of communication precisely because of the excess of information. Communication becomes a metaphysical, self-referential entity; it is an undisturbed repetition of the same the silence of a dead subject. The figure of this third category is Frankenstein. (MARCONDES, 1991, p. 16).

According to Marcondes, having aesthetics as a vehicle, vision was the most politically exploited human sense and the most economically seduced. According to its new contours, the technique promotes a change in the orientation of the worldview, “it brings about the disintegration of unity and the end of perspective”:

The technique does away with the “central point of the world”, which will later lead men to question the very meaning of metaphysics and their existence as beings with stable, rooted or culturally consolidated structures. (Ibidem, 1991, p. 16).

As Walter Benjamin put it, the Work of art, whose classic form had metaphysics as a world reference, offered the receiver a painting that: “invites contemplation; in his presence people give themselves over to the association of ideas.” (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 25).

Until this moment of the research, we understand that “reading” a Work of art is not the easiest task, especially when its interpretation takes place in a passage of paradigm shift that comprises the intertwining of aesthetics with politics.

According to Benjamin: “the controversy that developed during the course of the 19th century, between painters and photographers, regarding the respective value of their works (...) in fact translated a disturbance of historical significance in the structure of the universe and neither opposing groups became aware of it. Detached from its ritualistic bases by reproduction techniques, art, as a result, could no longer maintain its aspects of independence. (Ibidem, 1980, p.13).

Summarily, regarding the discussion between painting and photography, it is confirmed that art is relative to history. At the

height of Modernity, the existentialist perspective of art is lost because of its relationship with the material world. As summarized by Michel Onfray, contemporary art, the precursor of this revolution of paradigms, shows that:

There is no intrinsic truth of the work of art and Beauty, but a relative and conjunctural truth. Art does not proceed from an intelligible moment, but from a sensitive configuration, from a sociological device. Kant withdrew and gave way to Bourdieu... The pre-made, manufactured object, straight out of the store, displayed in a place that prescribes aesthetic content, becomes in fact an art object. The artist's intention is to produce the work, sometimes they may even be enough to constitute it... Let's add to that two major propositions: on the one hand, the viewer makes the painting; on the other hand, everything can serve as an aesthetic support. On the one hand, the artist produces, of course, but the spectator also has to travel halfway for the entire aesthetic path to be consummated: the birth of the artist observer. (ONFRAY, 2010, 81).

As we have seen so far, trying to unveil a work of art is very different from just enjoying it subjectively. In the aesthetic experience, the "Receiver" is required to carry out a broad and deep historical-theoretical research on the life of the creator of the work and knowledge of the paradigms of aesthetic judgment related to each era, in addition to a distance from his gaze as a way of objectifying his particular taste. As art critic Clement Greenberg explains:

The "subjective" refers to everything that particularizes an individual as an I affected by practical, psychological, individualizing issues that involve interests. In the aesthetic experience, there is a distance, sometimes greater or less, in relation to this Self. The individual becomes as objective as his reasoning, which also requires distancing from it. In both cases, the

degree of objectivity depends on the extent of the distancing. And the greater – or more “pure” – the distance, the stricter (that is, more refined) the taste or reasoning becomes. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 56).

Greenberg alerts us, as Kant had done in other terms, to the importance of aesthetic Experience not being exclusively subject to a particular will. It must transcend the personal sphere. The artist's subjectivity is required in terms of his autobiography, privacy, temperament and talent.

According to Greenberg, it takes more than that to produce “good art”, it is of paramount importance, in addition to discipline, pressure from the environment, to overcome the action of subjectivity: “By facing them, the superior artist aims, transcends himself. a, without forgetting her” (...) “the successful artist separates himself from his private Self, overcomes it, transcends it as much as the “successful” art lover does.” (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 58). According to the author, the “good artist” is required to objectify himself in his taste and in his art.

Although the critic believes that the aesthetic experience is intellectually impenetrable and that, therefore, one cannot and should not despise intuition, where subjective taste is legitimized; he makes it clear that more cultivated and intellectually hardworking people develop more taste.

This leads us to understand that issuing some kind of value judgment when interpreting a work of art is only possible through the analysis of its form and content. Since it is immanent to the existence of a work of art, it is a basic requirement to understand its historical and cultural connections, since such relationships reveal the style of an artist, which is constituted in terms of instruction and ideology, aspects that, in the vast majority of cases, are intrinsic to the work itself.

Therefore, revealing what makes a work of art particular requires analogies. As we have seen so far, Richter's Tragi-romantic-rebel personality prevented him from associating with pre-existing styles of art, on the verge of reducing his artistic expression. For the painter, defining a style is synonymous with a false metaphysical promise, a concept defended by Adorno when he states:

In every work of art, style is a promise. By being accepted in the dominant forms of universality: this promise of the work of art to establish the truth by imprinting the figure in the forms transmitted by society is as necessary as it is hypocritical. It poses the real forms of the existent as something absolute, protesting to anticipate satisfaction in the aesthetic derivatives of them. To that extent, the claim of art is always at the same time ideology. However, it is only in this confrontation with tradition, which is based on style, that art finds expression for suffering. The element thanks to which the work of art transcends reality is, in fact, inseparable from style. However, it does not consist in the realization of harmony - the problematic unity of form and content, inside and outside, individual and society - but in the traits in which the discrepancy appears, in the necessary failure of the passionate effort in search of harmony. identity. Instead of exposing itself to this failure, in which the style of the great work of art has always denied itself, the mediocre work has always stuck to the similarity with others, that is, to the substitute of identity. (ADORNO, 1991, p. 123).

We understand that it is “in the discrepancy, in the necessary failure of the passionate effort in search of identity” that Richter remains faithful to each new aesthetic experience. His unsubmissive personality kept him in the insecurity of *becoming*, allowing him to experiment with the various forms and materials of artistic production. Unusual choice that led him to “transcend reality”.

Richter, by assuming the responsibility of remaining adrift, that is, without the protection of tradition, understands that prior to this decision-making is life, which is temporally and culturally prior to any human conjecture. Determining element of the individual's cultural identity.

According to Heidegger, our existential condition in the world (*Dasein*) is the very cause of our autonomy, consequently of our anguish; effective proof of the existence of being: “anguishing is, as a disposition, a way of being in the world that actually exists. The fundamental ontological traits of this entity are existentiality, facticity and decadence. (HEIDEGGER apud Dubois, 2004, p. 42).

From this point on, we understand that the ubiquitous elements in Richter's art are perceived through its complex constitution, whose web of meanings is available in the *episteme*. This Physical-transcendental character can be seen in his works, in the fleeting immediacy of the present moment, where Richter remained faithful, without any oath or hope for the next moment.

The fact that art bumps into the domains of historical and cultural phenomena, by itself, already denotes its precedence to the aesthetic and even to taste, however, what Richter seems to defend is that art is not capable of anticipating the existence of the being subjective. For the painter, art is for being as he is for life. Ultimately, art only exists to the extent that the being subjectively understands the events of life and his own constitution in it.

Ergo, the translation that the subject makes of the world is anticipated in the elements that make up a wide and complex web of connections that serve for his reflection and that are, *a priori*, imprinted in his unconscious. Guiding the existence of the Being and the being in the world, we reflect on how the treatment of the Work of art impels us to understand it from our culture and instruction.

Sometimes it has its own doctrine, free and independent of any relationships that determine it. His predictions of style and quality can be born, develop and die, exclusively in each historical and cultural moment. However, regardless of the validity and duration of

the rules that determine its value, the historical and cultural links that guide it remain existential judgments.

According to our research, among other ways, a value judgment about art can be issued by the aesthetic perspective, totally independent of others. This leads us to understand that Art, ultimately, does not serve other purposes, in addition to those that provide subjective pleasure through its beauty, be it harmonic or grotesque.

As we have seen up to this point, subjective aesthetics is the product of the experience of being in the world in intuitive and sentimental terms, and aesthetics of a more objective nature reduce the aesthetic to the extra-aesthetic.

As a philosophical study, aesthetics is the sphere of knowledge that studies *beauty* rationally, or in other words, it is the study of phenomena that guide the contemplation of Beauty as something that arouses emotion.

From a contemporary phenomenological perspective, as we have theoretically proven, Beauty is related to the idea of a unique aesthetic value, based on which all works of art were judged. However, in the transition to Postmodernity, this conception ceases to exist. Every artistic object today determines and represents its own type of beauty or, in other words, it itself establishes the type of value from which it will be judged.

At the same time, through the significant elements related to the aesthetic experience, it is possible to recognize an aesthetic object as beautiful or not. According to its authentic, singular and sensitive form, it is legitimate to consider an art to be both beautiful and grotesque or terrifying.

From this perspective, Gerhard Richter, in the era of advanced technical reproducibility, faces the fatal prognosis of the **death of Hegelian art** pronounced in the 19th century. The tragic fate of art included the death of *Fine Art*, uniquely produced for purposes unrelated to aesthetics and not of any other type of art. In Hegel's

Course on Aesthetics I, the famous prediction of the death of art appears in the introduction:

In all relations, art is and will remain for us, from the point of view of its ultimate destination, something of the past. With that, it has also lost its authentic truth and vitality for us and is relegated to our representation, which makes it impossible for it to assert its former need in actual reality and to occupy its superior place. Today, in addition to immediate fruition, works of art also arouse judgment in us insofar as we submit to our thoughtful consideration the content and means of exposing the work of art, as well as the adequacy and inadequacy of both. The science of art [26] is therefore much more necessary in our time than in times when art alone, as art, provided full satisfaction. Art invites us to contemplate it through thought and, in fact, not so that it can resume its former place, but so that what art is scientifically known. (HEGEL, 2000, p.35).

The famous quote not only clarifies, but also summarizes the spirit of a time when art is beginning to be directly absorbed by technology.

3.3 – Ideology in art - Capitalist Aesthetics: “Realist Capitalism” (*Capistalistisches Realismus*) X Totalitarian Aesthetics: “Realist Socialism” (*Sozialistischer Realismus*) supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

Primitive times are lyrical, ancient times are epic, and modern times are dramatic. And where eternity sings, the epic solemnizes history, the drama paints life.

Victor Hugo

According to our research, from the beginning, art, as a manifestation of an aesthetic order, presupposed the expression of emotions of human beings in face of their affective and perceptive understanding of the world and, as we saw forcefully in the Kantian clarification, it was very far from being an activity with purposes of political-ideological manipulation.

Historically, the deformation in the essence of the Arts (paintings) dates back to the medieval period, when it began to serve stylistically and thematically the interests of the Church. In the Renaissance it became known as canonical or sacred art. Thus, art, which is not born with a view to meeting the ideological interests of politics or the Church, becomes the main weapon when transformed into publicity with political appeal.

In Communism and Nazi-fascism, the Realist style of art was known through the “**Socialist Realism**” style and in Capitalism as *Pop art* or, in other words respectively: **Totalitarian Aesthetics** and **Capitalist Aesthetics**. Socialist Realism was created by the Soviet Andrej Zdanov, Stalin's right arm (1879 - 1953), who worked in the cultural area and made the style official as the art that represented the Communist Soviet Union (1930 - 1960).

The style was adopted by Adolf Hitler from 1933 to 1945 and by all other countries under dictatorial regimes. Paradoxically, even though both are totalitarian systems, Hitler as leader of the National Socialist German Workers' Party or Nazi, is also known for his opposition to the Social Democrats of the former Soviet Union. The

same apologetic aesthetic language or *Mass art* simultaneously served totalitarian systems that were politically opposed.

However, the **totalitarian Aesthetics** also fulfilled its role of ideological disseminator, through the Realist style and themes that suggested the omnipresence and omniscience of a single heroic, almost messianic leader, repudiating the ideal world of the romantic conceptions of Neoclassicism.

The Realist style of representation, which was born in France at the end of the 19th century, with a view to freeing art from the moral suppressions of the feudal State/Church, ironically comes to meet the interests of modern political systems of Stalinist, Hitlerian and Capitalist inspiration, acting with great force of repression and manipulation.

Its technical and thematic language should be easily understood and assimilated by the masses, therefore, it was perfect for the creation and maintenance of absolutist regimes, as well as the appeal to consumption.

Such considerations can be evidenced in the Realist representation of **Naziart**, “art of the people” (*Kunst dem Volk*), in the work “*Transition on the Upper Rhine*” (Übergang am Oberrhein), below:

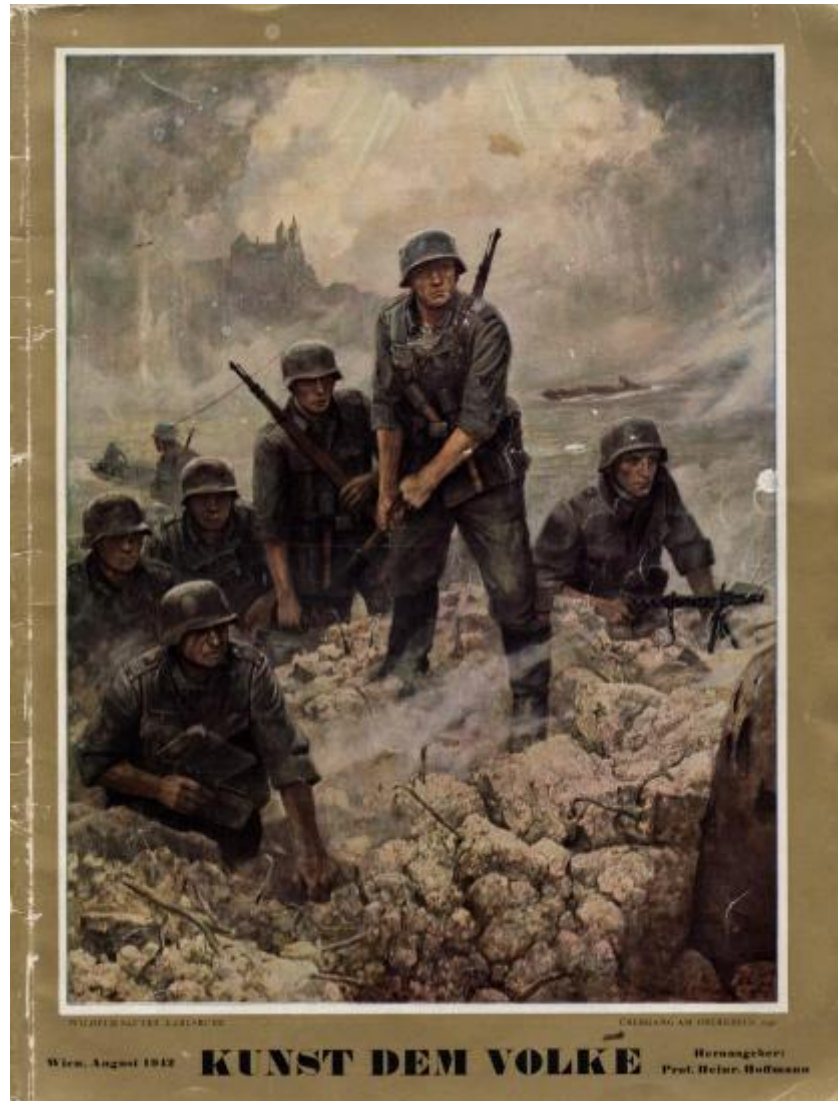


Fig. 12. SAUTER, Wilhelm. *Transition on the Upper Rhine (Übergang am Oberrhein)*. DHM - Historical Museum, Berlin (*DHM - Historisches Museum, Berlin*). Oil on canvas, 31 x 23.6 cm, 1942.

At the German Historical Museum, in Berlin (*DHM - Historisches Museum*), the work is narrated, in the article “Art and Culture in War” (*Kunst und Kultur im Krieg, 1939 – 1945*), as follows:

During the war, countless paintings and drawings by Nazi ideology appealed to solidarity with the "national community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Depictions such as Nazi propaganda mystified martial portrayals of soldiers on the frontlines of war, appealing to the willingness of the German people to provide the greatest personal sacrifices for German victory; "war destiny of the German people" (*Schicksalskampf des deutschen Volkes*). Some of them were descendants of war officers, artists and press cartoonists, who settled in the 1938 propaganda units of the High Command of the *Wehrmacht* Armed Forces (OKW) and entered the battlefield, taking a real part in the combat. Although many paintings were created in the artists' studios, the images suggest that the viewer is immediately drawn into the action, with the depictions as an authentic source of the battlefield. The distribution of these images are found in books, newspapers, magazines and art magazines, such as those published by Heinrich Hoffmann, who, very successfully, had a high number of subscribers to the monthly magazine called "Art for the people." Until recently, magazines and exhibitions such as the "Great German Art Exhibition" (*Große Deutsche Kunstausstellung*) were held to firmly stereotype the heroic and selfless struggle of the soldier. (German Historical Museum).

In short, in terms of form, Realism in painting had a strong documentary character, but in terms of content, its representation was ideological, depending on the policy that adopted it.

Often, forms and contents can encompass the entire ideological language of a work.

It appears that the strength of the links between art, ideology and politics are evident in the figure of Hitler, who, by appropriating the Realist style of art to disseminate Nazi ideology, ridiculed the artists adept at the most influential Avant-garde schools in Europe. era. Hitler closes down the important ***Bauhaus*** art school, which was the best-known representative of German revolutionary design.

Soon, the crux of Hitler's repression, he used art to destroy everything that represented the critical German culture of the time. With the end of the Holocaust, international modern and contemporary artists, with a view to recovering their expression in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), held the first exhibition in Kassel known as *Documenta*. It has been held since 1955 to the present day, in which Richter participated in 1977.

According to our research, two forces of action continually confront each other in painting: Romanticism and Rationalism. Rationalism originated Technicism and Neoclassicism. The latter aimed to recover the rationalist version based on the conception of the ancient world. Both constitute the ideological discourse with equal force. Although the Realist style of art, in terms of its form, has served the expression of Rebel-Romantics as well as Classics and Classicists, the contents of its themes are the very mark of its ideological distinctions.

The discussion about styles and artistic means reach the apex of this investigation when art starts to assume political features: For what purposes, styles and artistic movements are inaugurated and adopted?

As we can see in the popular celebratory art of “Socialist Realism”, the government's proposal was to maintain and control the people by artistically representing a leader, as a figure of a great father and protector:



Fig. 13. VLADIMIRSKI, Boris. *Roses for Stalin*, Russia, 1949.

Gerhard Richter, who was born and lived for 30 years in Dresden, had his artistic training guided by the aesthetics of Socialist Realism in force at the time in East Germany under the Communist regime, but in maturity and already living in West Germany, he founded his art vehemently refuting it. The mural below was painted by Richter in 1956, for completion of the course at the *Hochschule der Bildenden Kunst* (Academy of Fine Arts) in Dresden, respecting the style of socialist realism:



Fig. 14. RICHTER, Gerhard. *The Joy of Life*. German Hygiene Museum Foundation, Dresden. Mural, 10 m, 1956.

In the website:

Theartnewspaper.com/articles/Cold-War-cover-up-to-continue/23762, we find in the article entitled *Cold War cover-up to continue* narrated by Martin Bailey how the story of the mural was handled by the German government:

The Joy of Life portrays life under the Socialist regime in East Germany in a smooth and engaging way. The work was painted in five overlapping sections. The ten meter wide mural is located

between the museum entrance and the temporary exhibition galleries. In the first section, a young couple whisper secrets to each other. The ensuing scenes culminate with the pair picnicking on the grass with their newborn son. The tractor and factory chimney in the background is used to symbolize working in this “socialist paradise.” Five months before the construction of the Berlin Wall, Richter fled to the West. In 1979, *The Joy of Life* was covered up (overpainted). Although the mural was on display in a public building for 23 years, no color photographs of the work survive. None of Richter's paintings, made before the age of 28, are publicly displayed (most have been lost or destroyed, and the few that survive remain in private hands). When the building was renovated in 1994, the idea of uncovering the mural was briefly considered. Two "windows" were opened so fragments of the mural could be seen, however it was later overpainted. In 2002, in the Museum's most recent renovation, the wall was again painted white. The mural could be discovered, but it would be expensive due to its large size, the government claims. The Museum of Hygiene gives two reasons for keeping the painting covered: The first is that the most recent renovation has returned the building to its original state as it was in the 1930s. A spokesperson explained that the museum is complying with the authority's decision to preserve the heritage in its originality: white walls. The Hygiene Museum also wants to avoid antagonizing Richter, who said the mural is "not worth preserving" with the artist's most important postwar city. Richter wasn't explicit, but he could feel awkward about the compromises he (along with millions of others) had to make under Communist rule. The Art newspaper approached Richter...his secretary repeated what the artist had said earlier: "For God's sake, it's a waste of money. I'd rather the money be used for something of artistic value. It's just a student work (BAILEY, 2011).

According to the theme of ideology, Richter exposes his position in the book *Text* as follows: “Since I reflect, I recognize any

rule of behavior and any ideologically motivated opinion as wrong, uncomfortable, against life and criminal.” (RICHTER, 2008, p. 207).

At another point, the painter reiterates: “My condemnation of ideology: I lack the means to examine it. I have no doubt that ideologies are harmful, that we are obliged to absorb them as if they were very important: As a form of behavior and not as content. Judging by their contents, they are all equally wrong. (RICHTER, 2008, p. 221). These clarifications also legitimize the birth of his style, which the painter titled “**Capitalist Realism**” in German (*Kapitalistische Realismus*). We remember that the term was created by the German artists Gerhard Richter and Konrad Lueg, Sigmar Polke and Manfred Kuttner to refute and mock the Realist-socialist style.

Capitalist Realism was used to title an exhibition that took place in Düsseldorf on October 11, 1963. The theme was printed on the invitation mocking the time when Richter and Kutner lived in East Germany (1945 – 1959), under communist rule. Another event that marks the term was a private exhibition by Richter at the Renè Block gallery in Berlin, which took place from November 18, 1964 to January 5, 1965, entitled: "*Gerhard Richter - Bilder des Kapitalistisches Realismus*" (Gerhard Richter - Paintings of Realist Capitalism).

One of the paintings in this exhibition is the following:



Fig. 15. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Girl's Head (Mädchenkopf)*. Private collection. Oil on canvas 75 x 100 cm, 1965.

The style of this work refutes the undue appropriation that the Communists made of Marxist theory, to legitimize their atrocities: “It was not Marx's theory that created changes, but the new facts formed from his interpretations, which gave rise to ideologies. Acting through ideologies creates lifeless things and easily becomes a crime.” (RICHTER, 2008, p. 160).

Documenting Nazi history, Richter maintains in his book *Atlas* a compilation of photos that the artist recognized as summarily important. Among them are the photographic works denouncing the Holocaust:



Fig. 16. RICHTER, Gerhard. **Pictures of Books** (*Photos aus Buechern*), 1967.

3.4 - Popular Art: *Photorealism* and *Neo-expressionism* supporting the reading of Gerhard Richter's works of art

In the opinion of many thinkers and critics, art, which since the emergence of reproduction techniques, has supposedly lost its

transcendent and immanent *status* of being in its aesthetic experience without ideological purposes. Therefore, they were never the same after being largely deformed in their essence.

Richter, who faced this prognosis, founded an art that embraced innovation while being based on photographs, without losing the most peculiar aspect of “elevated” art, whose quality hypostatized by academics demanded the artist's hand in its excellent execution.

As popular or mass art (*Mass-media*), the standard of art known as Conceptual is established and in this sense both American *Pop art*, *Socialist Realism* and *Naziart* constitute the three great pillars of this form of artistic representation. Adorno, alerts us to the dangers of this type of representation:

The cultural industry ends up placing imitation as something absolute. Reduced to style, it betrays its secret, obedience to the social hierarchy. Aesthetic barbarism consumes today the threat that has always hovered over the creations of the spirit since they were brought together and neutralized under the title of culture. Talking about culture has always been contrary to culture. (ADORNO, 1991, p. 123).

Adorno criticizes the *mass media*, which defended itself by saying that it produced non-elitist art as a way of refuting the European bourgeoisie represented by the functionalism of the modernist vanguards. However, this is a false thesis, as the philosopher warns, since the artists of Socialist Realism and *Naziart* transformed the ideology of *Art for Art's sake* into Advertising Aesthetics, whose essential function was to keep their systems of government in force.

This was done exclusively through the control of the masses through the media, therefore, very far from the argument they used. On the other hand, the *Mass media* in the version of American *Pop*

art is an advertising aesthetic, which was born from hedonism to consumption, with a view to serving the arts market of the North American capitalist monopoly.

Pop art was born in the USA and England in the 50's and reached its peak in the 60's and 70's, establishing itself definitively after the Second World War, influencing popular European and Japanese artists, who took on the controversial concept of Marcel Duchamp's *readymade*, whose strong interventionist and political nature refuted Classical-Historical Art.

Thus, the *Neodadaists*, straining to the maximum degree the relationship between the *work of art and the public*, thus exposing the crisis in the sphere of art in the passage from the Modern period to the post-modern period. His political proposals sought to overcome the subjective nature of Modern art, which was opposed to the ideology of capital.

Neo-expressionism, exactly against the ideology of the Neo-Dadaists, seeks to rescue the German cultural identity. He was born in Germany at the end of the 1980s, with a view to rescuing painting as a means of expression influenced by *Expressionism* (end of the 19th century), *Symbolism* and *Surrealism*, with their critical, emotional and subjective representations, which had already been maintained for some time. decades in silence.

The expressionist idea of valuing the subject's inner world refuted objectivity or the idealization of objective reality, therefore, it was opposed to realistic Aesthetics, typical of Realist versions of advertising art such as: *Socialist Realism*, *Naziart* and *American Pop art*.

American *pop art* became its own Realist language of art, whose advertising version disseminated the Capitalist conception of the world, which Expressionism denied as *German Avant-garde art*. It can be said that Expressionism is the romantic version of "*German Folk Art*".

- **From the interpretation:**

Risking an Interpretation on Gerhard Richter's works of art, through his coined styles such as Photo-realist and Neo-expressionist, it makes sure that the painter as Neo-expressionist assumes his revolutionary personality and, contrary to what one might imagine, while Photorealist and in its Realist version of art, the ideals of Realism here are controversial through abstractions. Richter, as an artist who had an artistic orientation initiated by the realistic Aesthetics of Socialism, assumes his tragic and romantic identity from German culture.

According to our research, the discussion that guides the theme of media arts balances between innovation and convention, reaching its extreme, when photography starts to act in the artistic sphere as a representative of “Real” life.

Ironically and paradoxically, photography, which so threatened the absolute reign of painting, was the fundamental reason for the birth of Richter's art, which, in addition to embracing the strong testimonial and documentary character characteristic of photography, objectively printing images of reality, becomes ineffable with his disfiguring technique.

His “Transcendental Photorealism” shows how the presence and absence of the image can act simultaneously in the same *locus*, founding a new style of Realist art, whose uniqueness turns the reality documented by photography into a surreal simulacrum. As the artist himself said: “I am a Surrealist”. This without losing the testimonial and factual character characteristic of photography that freezes and eternalizes a single instant of being in time.

As an example of his Photorealistic works, consider the following:

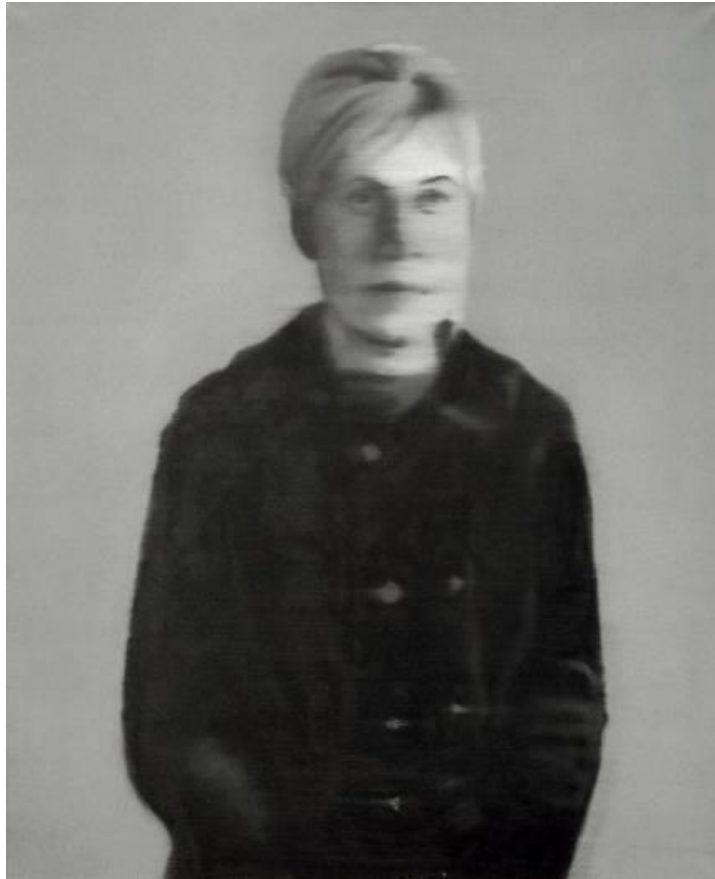


Fig. 16. RICHTER, Gerhard. **Portrait Ema (*Portraet Ema*)**. Private collection. Oil on canvas 105 x 90 cm, 1965.

Richter's revolutionary thought emerges in the following passage:

I don't follow an intention, nor a system, no sense, I have no program, no style, no interest. I don't believe in technical problems, working themes, variations down to the last detail. I avoid fixating on myself, I don't know what I want – I'm inconsequential, apathetic, passive. “I like the undefined, the limitless and the endless uncertainty.” (RICHTER, 2009, p.83).

His tragic aesthetic at some point circumvents his abstract style loaded with vibrant colors and impactful movements as we can see in the following work advocated by the Neo-expressionist style:



Fig. 18. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Meditation*. Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal. Two parts of 320 x 400 cm, 1986.

Gerhard Richter, among other German artists such as Polke, Jorg Immendorff, Georg Baselitz and Joseph Beuys, became known as the most important German *Neo-Expressionist* painter of his time. Title given to him when he took on the abstractionist style of Photorealist art, typical of rebellious German artists active in post-war West Germany.

We remember that acronia does not only contemplate his figurative works, but also contemplates his abstract works:



Fig. 19. RICHTER, Gerhard. **Waldstück**. *Raisonné Catalog: 66*. Böckmann Collection, New Museum: State Museum of Art and Design, Nuremberg, Germany. Oil on canvas, 150 x 155 cm, 1965.

Despite the multiple pictorial genres, absorbed and developed by German art in the 1960s, responsible for the strong crisis in the sphere of art, Neo-expressionism remained in the spotlight, with

Gerhard Richter as its exponent in the late 1970s. along with other German artists, forming the group known as ***New Wild*** (*Neue Wilden*), whose prominence takes place in the 1980s.

3.5 – Painting & Photography by Gerhard Richter

In addition to having painted countless paintings in the abstract style, Photorealism never ceased to be the great strength of Richter's artistic expression. As we could observe, his *monochromatic de-figurativism*, by assuming photography as a theoretical object, pluralizes the classic Realist language of representation, subverting its structure, in order to legitimize its autonomy.

The painter transgresses the typical Photorealistic representation of art through disfigurements without completely excluding the features of his models. His works, after being painted and still wet, receive dry brushstrokes in horizontal movements, deforming their initial realism. This effect gives the impression of a blurred photo, giving an illusion of being spectral beings, circumscribed in the *becoming* of an uncapturable reality.

The following work subsidizes our observation:



Fig. 20. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Helga Matura*. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada. Oil on canvas, 180 x 110 cm, 1966.

The painting by Helga Matura was produced by Richter in 1966, having as its theme a magazine photo, whose background tells the tragic story of the model's life. Thus, Richter transforms Helga's photograph into a painting, without leaving any clue that it is a media photo. Richter cuts, in addition to the title, the reportage of the image, not making any iconic apology.

In the article in *Quick* magazine in 1966, from which Richter took this image, he told Helga's story in a disparaging way. It was said that she was known, since she was nine years old, in Frankfurt nights as Karin and that she was known as the second *Nitribitt* (a famous prostitute at the time), but that she had more class, more beauty, and therefore was more desirable. and sinful. However, what the report didn't say was that Helga Matura was dissatisfied and dreamed of changing her life. She wanted to get married.

In the following work, Richter represents her with the groom:



Fig. 21. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Helga Matura with her fiance (Helga Matura mit Verlobtem)*. Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, Germany. Oil on canvas, 199.5 x 99 cm, 1966.

Richter, in this second frame of the model, once again does not allow any depreciation of her image to come from her title, nor does she explore what her end came to be. On January 26, 1966, Helga Matura was murdered by an unknown individual. In the ideological

aspect, Richter in Notizen of 1984, declares his search for neutrality as we find in the following passage from the book Text:

I accepted thinking and acting without the help of an ideology; I have nothing to help me with, not an idea whom I serve and from which to proceed, and therefore I am not ordered what to do; not a rule that defines how and not a faith that shows me the sense, not even an image of the future; a construction that has superior meaning. I accept only what exists, I accept accordingly the meaninglessness of any description and realization of what we do not know. Ideologies always seduce and abuse ignorance, legitimize war. (RICHTER, 2008, p. 133).

The Photorealistic aspect in Richter's works hesitates between the banal appearance of the form and the existential tragedy of the content. He was interested in the antagonism between the form of representation of reality and the fascination that could arise from its meanings.

It is in the uncertainty of the presence of the image represented in his works that we see the painter taking the discussion about art with photography to the limit. This theme, which emerges as an indexical object of overcoming by art critics specialized in the artistic sphere. For Richter, it doesn't mean that his paintings should mean a copy of a photo, because that's what the camera is for. Regarding this, the painter clarifies in an interview with Doris von Drathen, in 1992, in an excerpt captured by Moorhouse:

The painted picture is first of all closer to appearance (Schein), however it has more reality than a photo, because a picture itself has more of an object character, as it is perceptibly hand-painted, materially produced. The appearance of

painting is, in comparison with reality, always more or less different, and this is irritating. (RICHTER, 2009, p.119).

This summary observation collides with the considerations that Benjamin weaves in his work *History of Photography*:

In photography, being creative means ending up passing on fashion. “the world is beautiful” – that is exactly its motto. It unmask the attitude of a photograph capable of mounting any can of preserves in the universe, but it is not capable of capturing a single human situation in which it appears [...] since, however, the true face of this photographic creativity is publicity and free association, its legitimate counterpart is unmasking and montage. (BENJAMIN, 1986, p. 239).

In the case of Richter, the photograph produced as a handmade painting, in addition to enabling the foundation of an art that avoids granting meanings based on subjectivity, it denounces and eternalizes the memories of the past. Thus, Richter supports Benjamin's criticism of photography replacing painting. Both seem to clarify that the image produced by the artist's hand cannot be replaced by a technical device without changing its language, and this is due to the fact that aesthetic objects carry the marks of the means with which they are produced. In this context, the environment leaves its traces. Richter agrees with the Benjamin observation that photography never replaces painting, as it limits the artist's creativity when passing on fashion. Disquietingly, this prognosis reaches its peak when the painter anticipates this problem, remembering that the “reality”, to which Benjamin was referring, was also produced by man.

Therefore, the fact that man copied images through technical devices was not the major problem to be faced in artistic terms, but for what ideological purposes he copied them.

The painter, who does not hesitate to copy photographs as a source of his works, explains the desire and difficulty of maintaining the objectivity of the original photo: "I want to leave everything as it is in the photo, but at the same time I know that I also invent, manipulate I change and do." [...] "The painting always contains something new, like it or not." (RICHTER, 2009, p. 69).

In this artistic reflection, Richter agrees with Benjamin, when he understands that everything is already given in physical reality, however, the fact that it is not necessary to look for it in a metaphysical dimension, is what seems to distance them. What Benjamin explains as regret, Richter considers as liberation. This is clarified in Richter's words in the following passages: "it is not a question of inventing anything else, one can forget everything that painting meant. Color, composition, space and everything we knew. and thought is no longer a condition for art." (RICHTER, 2009, 34).

Later on, the painter reiterates: "You know what was good? Realizing that a simple thing like copying a postcard can result in a painting. It is the freedom to paint what gives pleasure." (Ibid., p.43).

Richter's "photorealism" seeks to create paintings that look like a photographic image and not imitate the image of the model in the photograph with an excellent realistic technique, as was required of portrait artists of the Renaissance nobility, nor does it seek to satisfy the general public through an indefinite reproduction of advertising images.

About this, Richter clarifies in an interview with Gerhard Schoen in 1972: "It is not about imitating a photo, I want to make a photo." (RICHTER, 2009, p. 69). Moorhouse goes on to interpret Richter's paintings: "His paintings aim to have the appearance of a photograph, impersonal and objective, they inform without interpreting or showing meanings." (Ibidem, 2009, p. 69).

Creating paintings with a photographic atmosphere served the painter as a way of maintaining the impersonality and objectivity of the appearance of objects without arguing or offering unique interpretations of reality that, nevertheless, he considered impossible. In addition, the art of meaning for Richter is considered “bad” because it violates the first statute of “quality art”: keeping the work open to multiple interpretations: “Pictures that are explainable and contain meaning are bad.” (RICHTER, 2009, p.33).

At the limit of representation, his technique of deforming maintains the presence of the being in the world. At the same time that something disappears through disfigurements that presuppose uncertainty, the certainty of the presence of being is maintained in the march of *becoming*.

3.6 - Gerhard Richter (Germany) X Marcel Duchamp (France/USA) X Andy Warhol (USA) X Konrad Fischer Lueg (Germany)

Making analogies in the sphere of art helps to understand the aspects that make each artist's style particular, who even when experiencing the influences of the same era, interpret reality and its trends in a unique way.

According to Richter, analogy is the only way to get closer to reality. The painter clarifies, in an interview with Rolf Gunther Dienst in 1970, how this action forms the basis of his artistic production: “I want to try to understand what exists, “*what is*”. We know very little, and I try to understand this by creating analogies. Analogy is, therefore, almost every work of art” (RICHTER, 2009. p. 55).

Hence, in order not to fall into the trap of translating Richter's works according to our taste, we observe the differences between

paintings considered within the same style of representation, whose inscriptions appear in aspects of their forms and contents.

- **Marcel Duchamp and Gerhard Richter**

Marcel Duchamp, French naturalized American, as an avant-garde artist protested against the madness of wars in the 20th century. Richter, even stylistically different from Duchamp, receives his influences. As an example of this, we find Richter studying his work “Nude descending the stairs”.

Pioneeringly, the painting was produced in 1912 by Duchamp and in 1965 and in 1966 it was reinterpreted by Richter. Duchamp's “Nude descending the stairs” is represented in a way that reminds us of the idea of *becoming*, whose continuous movement is also widely reflected by Richter's disfigured Photorealism. The stylistic characteristics that particularize the styles of each artist can be recognized in the treatment that each painter gives to the representation of the same theme:



Fig. 22. DUCHAMP, Marcel. *Nude going down the stairs (Akt, eine Treppe hinabsteigend Nr. 2)* Philadelphia Museum of Art. Oil on canvas, 147 x 89.2 cm, 1912.



Fig. 23. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Woman going down the stairs (Frau die Treppe hinabsteigend)*. The Art Institute of Chicago. Oil on canvas, 198 x 128 cm, 1965.

Gerhard Richter clarifies that when painting his “Woman Descending the Stairs” in the Photorealistic style, whose theme had been represented by Duchamp's dynamic futuristic style, he aimed to show how art can be represented without the influence of the

artist's subjectivity. Richter clarifies that he aimed: “to show how they (images of reality) really are.” (RICHTER, 2009, p. 83).

It was from this understanding that Richter spread his style capable of contemplating a blurred photographic image. From this point on, Richter goes back to explaining how he made sure that subjectivity would be eternally present in any effort at representation, which led him to strive to minimize his action: “The way our vision allows us to see things, limits the our understanding of reality at the same time making it partially impossible.” (RICHTER, 2009, p. 83).



Fig. 24. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Ema, naked going down the stairs. (Ema, Akt auf einer Treppe)*. Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany. Oil on canvas, 200 x 130 cm, 1966.

According to Moorhouse's analysis of this work: "Ema extremely radiates a 'different being': an appearance that is simultaneously real and sublime. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p.120). In an interview with Dieter Huelsmanns in 1966, Richter confirms this paradox by saying:

I am fascinated by the human, the emphatic, the real and the logical in the event, which is at the same time so unreal, incomprehensible and eternal. I would like to represent "it" on the board, in a way that preserves this antagonism. (RICHTER, 2009, p. 46).

Richter, by remaining irreducible with the idea that conceiving that a style defines an idea, produces the work *Vier Glasscheibe of 1967*:

My painting "Woman Descending the Stairs" (Akt auf einer Treppe) based on Marcel Duchamps' painting "Akt, eine Treppe hinab steigen" from 1912, as well as my "Glaeser", have exactly something against Duchamp's position. be perceived by the fact that my works are so simple and consciously uncomplicated (RICHTER, 2009, p. 111).



Fig. 25. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Four glass plates. (4 Glasscheiben)*. The installation is currently at the Tate Modern, London, England. Glass and enamelled steel, 190 x 100 cm, 1967.

In the Steiermark Museum guide, the installation was described as follows:

In this work, Gerhard Richter thematizes what is still a common metaphor in many places today: an image painted as a window to the world. With a clear and unequivocal commitment to the painting tradition, the four rectangular glasses, framed and unadorned, capture all the reality of their real environment. In contrast to the dull surface of a painting, they are colorless, transparent, clean jewels. The plates are framed with metal frame and side by side are hung from the ceiling in rotating verticality, tilting back and forth in different positions. As the artist himself clarifies: “let us see everything, but not understand.” The panes are empty and yet, paradoxically, they show everything in its context. The view is directed through the frames of the glass panes and, of course, the instantaneous content of the work takes place behind. (STEIERMARK MUSEUM GUIDE).

The work *4 Glasscheiben* by analogy to Duchamp's "Nude descending the stairs" is clarified by Richter as follows:

I met Duchamp and he certainly influenced me. Perhaps it was a certain anti-attitude of mine to have been a little irritated by his painting "*Akt, eine Treppe herabsteigend*". I liked it a lot, but I couldn't accept that with that his way of painting was resolved as art. I then did the opposite and painted a "Conventional Nude" (konventionelle Akt). But this happened, as I said, unconsciously, not strategically. As also happened with "*Vier Glasscheiben*" (four panes of glass). I believe that something bothered me about Duchamp [...] This secret shape, and because of that I produced these simple glasses, showing the problem of the "Glasscheibe" in a very different way (RICHTER, 2008, p. 276/277).

In both cases, the subject seems to have been affected in his essence, a fact that brings the two artists together again. However, Richter's photographic-realistic aspect shows, even in an abstract way, how he faced the paradigms of photography by acting in the sphere of art.

In the preamble of his article *The work of art in the age of technical reproducibility*, Walter Benjamin recalls that art has always been subject to copying, and at this point, the photographic base of Richter's paintings, in terms of their quality, is protected by the eye of the philosopher:

The work of art, by principle, was always susceptible to reproduction. What some men did could be done by others. At all times, disciples have copied works of art as an exercise, masters reproduced them in order to ensure their dissemination and forgers imitated them in order to extract material profit. Reproduction techniques are, however, a new phenomenon, in fact, which was born and developed in the course of history, through successive jumps, separated by long intervals, but at an ever faster pace. The Greeks only knew two technical reproduction processes: casting and coinage. The bronzes, terracottas and coins were the only works of art that they were able to reproduce in series. The others only held a single specimen and did not serve any reproduction technique. With engraving on wood, the reproduction of drawing was achieved for the first time, long before the printing press allowed the multiplication of writing. It is known of the immense transformations introduced in literature due to typography, by the technical reproduction of writing. Whatever its exceptional importance, this discovery is only an isolated aspect of the general phenomenon that we face here at the level of world history. The Middle Ages itself would add wood, copper and etching and, at the beginning of the 19th century, lithography. (BENJAMIN, 1980. p. 5).

Hencefore, Benjamin subsidizes us in defending that the photographic basis for the production of Richter's paintings does not deprive his painting of the status of Work of art. According to Clement Greenberg, “bad art” could be that which does not provoke any aesthetic judgment in the “Receiver”, or rather, it would be monotonous art, incapable of provoking any affection in the viewer, or worse than that, that whose boredom is capable of making emotion bump into the sphere of displeasure, far from fulfilling its most important “functions”: moving and transforming.

Richter, who aims to get closer to reality in a more objective way, takes on producing “Photo-frames” of tragic themes, marking the universal aspect of his art. At this point, the painter emphasizes once again, explaining that the reason that led him to use

photographs as a source of his works, sought to reduce the problem of subjectivity as much as possible, keeping intact the reality captured at the moment of photography: “our vision allows us to seeing things and, at the same time, limiting our understanding of reality and making it partially impossible”. (RICHTER, 2009, p. 57).

Ultimately, it is understandable that both Richter's and Duchamp's conceptual proposal was to propose the liberation of moral-rationalist dictates as psychic automatism. Duchamp's avant-garde art, whose style evokes the idea of chaos and absurdity, denied the culture of war, whose power of expression continued to affect the reflection of contemporary artists, such as Richter.

The art of the Modern period, whose Enlightenment spirit was based on the conception of universal, continuous and progressive time, begins to see its *aura* fade already in Duchamp's Vanguardism, but reaches its prognosis in Abstract Expressionism and completely succumbs in Post-modernity, when art definitively assumes technique.

- **Andy Warhol and Gerhard Richter:**

Reserving the particularity of their arts, in terms of their ideological aspect, both Richter and Andy Warhol, as Vanguardist or *Pop-artist* painters, break with the entire order of the “Ancien Régime” (*Ancien Régime*).

Warhol's art is the very ideological propaganda of Capitalist hedonism, outlining the spirit of a time that transforms art into mass culture through the "Aesthetic recycling of garbage", while Richter's art, appears impregnated with forms and contents existentialists, not advertising at all. In the work *Ugliness History* by Umberto Eco, we find Warhol in 1975 declaring himself as an esthete of the refuse:

I've always enjoyed working with scraps. Things that are discarded, that are not good and everyone knows it: I always thought they had great potential for fun. It's a recycling job. I've always thought there's more humor in rejects. (WARHOL, 2007, p. 388).

The aspects that distinguish the arts of Richter and Warhol are evident in the very material basis of their works. In Richter's words:

Andy Warhol is less an artist than a symptom for a cultural situation. From it it was created, using that image as a substitute for an artist. His merit lies in the fact that he did not make art, so all the methods and subjects that other artists traditionally obliged themselves to do, did not touch him. With that, Warhol prevented us from seeing artistic absurdities, which we observe in paintings by other artists. (RICHTER, 2008, p. 222).

Using photographic references from newspapers and magazines allowed Richter to free himself from the pressure that art exerts on the artist, demanding an ideological position from him through the choice of his themes.

However, Richter, as an avant-garde artist, remains distant from the sensationalist and glamorous themes of Warhol, whose extravagance is proposed with a view to mass consumption.

Richter's own detachment from both Vanguardists and Traditionalists shows his ideological position. Refusing to

materialize an ideological position through art is the very mark of his ideology.

Richter, who stylistically founds an innovative avant-garde photographic art, with a view to maintaining a distance from the conventionality of subjective art, is immersed in such a profound existential atmosphere when he deals with his themes, exposing romantic aspects of his personality.

This can be evidenced by confronting the representation of Brigitte Bardot in Warhol and Richter's version below:



Fig. 26. ANDY, Warhol. *Brigitte Bardot*.. Christie's London FEB. 8, 2007. Overlaying synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen inks on canvas, 47.1 / 4 x 47.1/4in, 120 x 120 cm, 1974.



Fig. 27. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Mother and Daughter (Mutter und Tochter) (B)*. Ludwig Gallerie Schloss Oberhausen, Düsseldorf region, Germany. Oil on canvas, 180 x 110 cm, 1965.

Traces of tradition and innovation that earned Richter the title of “formal” artist are antagonistically tensioned and perceived through his style. Moorhouse, when analyzing this work, clarifies about this:

“Mutter und Tochter”, is part of a group of paintings whose increment, in such a sphere, is not clear. It is a picture taken from reality, whose translation through ink (color) comes from the bright light of obscurity. The girl painted is Bridget Bardot coming to her very strong mother, whose resemblance is quite clear. The picture represents an appearance, enlarges meaning clues and becomes non-translucent. It represents the incorporation of something perceived, understood and at the same time rejected. (MOORHOUSE, 2009, p. 88).

Even using a mixture of means to produce his paintings, as they did by innovating Duchamp and Warhol, Richter seems to prefer to remain faithful to what particularizes his style as “Transcendental-Photorealist”, misaligning, so to speak, of popular arts that intended to make available any everyday object in the aesthetic experience. This, which was the Dadaist cry of Duchamp's aesthetics of everything, is quoted by Greenberg in the following passage:

Duchamp and *Dada* wanted to expose objects or entities devoid of any artistic interest. Duchamp didn't mean that he wanted the bottle holder to be seen as a piece of sculpture. Its intent, and the fuss of it all, was a cultural void. But as these entities or objects persisted, the taste crept in there somehow. Duchamp didn't get away with it aesthetically. That was a historic event, a unique demonstration. He didn't say: I can call anything formalized art. That was not your wording. What he said was: anything I wanted to present as art is art. And he was right. If someone had done this fifty years ago, they would have been right. But nobody did

it before Duchamp. So now I can pick any part of this room and look at it artistically, like that beam up there, and I can do it inadvertently. (GREENBERG, 2002, p. 242).

Clement Greenberg alerts us to a very important aspect about Dadaist and informal arts conventionally referred to as “advanced”. In his opinion, his greatest contribution was to deconstruct the idea of conventionalizing the arts as “superior” and “inferior”. According to Greenberg, avant-garde art can be understood as that which progresses and which alerts us to a conscious aesthetic experience, and as such, it is demonstrably refutable, therefore it needs to be evaluated in a very different way, regardless of the generalization of the term.

Richter, who claims to have been profoundly influenced by the avant-garde of American *Pop art* since 1961, clarifies the reasons for their differences:

For a short time, I felt like a Pop-art artist. But more important was that Pop-art and Fluxus touched me decisively, as Tachism did before. However, Neorealism and Zero weren't important to me at all. (RICHTER, 2008, p. 280).

In another interview given to Robert Storr in 2002, Richter improves this clarification by saying that together with his German artist friends Polke and Lueg he aimed to represent a broader and more complex experience of reality than simply the appealing character of American *Pop art* photography.

Richter assumes that regardless of the ideology that disseminated commercial culture, *Pop art* had such an optimistic aura that German art, even expressionist art, was never able to overcome. Richter goes on to clarify that, although both arts are avant-garde, in the sense of using photographs, his art as German did not have the slightest chance of competing with the advertising

force typical of American *Pop art*, even considering it limited. About this we find in his own words:

Maybe we didn't even get a chance to run. The assertion of American Pop-art was so powerful, so optimistic, but also limited, that we could think, that it can only be overcome by setting another objective. We could not produce the same optimism and the same manner of humor and irony as Pop-art. Roy Lichtenstein has a special way of humor. In Polke and in me, everything was more broken (tragic, difficult). This is for me very difficult to explain. (RICHTER, 2008, p.422).

The painter, distinguishing between American *Pop art* and German popular art, responds to the questions of art critic Robert Storr by saying that his artistic expression and that of Polke, as German popular artists, seemed to be “more broken” (*Gebrochener*) than German art. popular in the American version like that of Warhol. This happened even in a more German version of popular art, such as that of Roy Lichtenstein.

For Richter, the historical experience that the artist called the “break” was connected to a personal life experience: “Are the two experiences (the personal and the historical) connected, or not? I do not know why! But if it weren't like that, we would also have been important. Some actually participated, they imitated the Americans: so optimistic, huge, colorful, strong.” (RICHTER, 2008, p. 422).

Although Richter distanced himself from Warhol's *Pop art*, it was a source of great appreciation for him. According to Richter, their abysmal differences are marked by the ideological-political distinction that constitutes their cultures, which did not prevent his admiration for Warhol. As Richter himself said:

I always liked him a lot. But there is a huge difference: that is, he had freedom – here we are all full of complexes. And that he was not. But also, the fascination [die Allueres] of his life story regarding the theme of homosexuality, had less importance here. Polke allowed himself some liberties, but this too was totally different than Warhol's. A special stage is needed, where you can stage like this. It didn't exist for us. (RICHTER, 2008, p.422).

The works by Warhol and Richter below show how, at times, private will manages to reduce the imprint of cultural identity to a minimum:

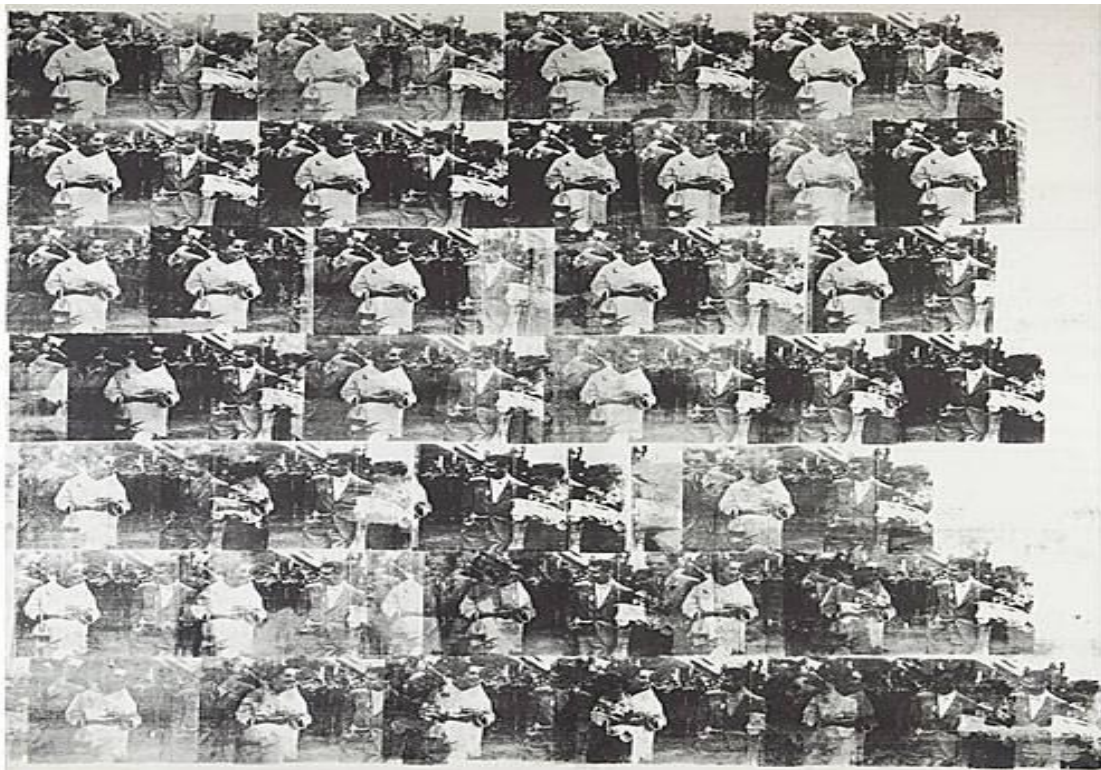


Fig. 28. WARHOL, Andy. *Men in Her Life*. Private collection of a French art consultant. Silkscreen and pencil on prepared canvas, 214.6 x 211.5 cm, 1962.



Fig. 29. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Portrait Schmela (Portrait Schmela)*. Private collection. Oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm, 1964.

As can be seen, although both assume the “desaturatization of the work of art” when representing images serially, Richter and Warhol are distinguished in the way of producing them. Warhol does it mechanically and Richter paints them in the classic way, one by one by hand.

Richter, in an interview with Storr, makes a value judgment about the morbidity of Warhol's paintings, which, at some point, lead them to converge at the same point. This happens even when Richter criticizes the American artist, as we see in the following passage: “I prefer tragic art, and this also applies to Warhol's disaster paintings, which I prefer. Apart from them, I think most of

his pictures, for example the huge output in commissioned portraits, pretty bad.” (Richter, 2008, p.422).

Despite their profound differences, Richter is grateful that Warhol's art taught him to eliminate information from the image of reality captured by photography. Richter confesses that he learned from Warhol that it is only possible to make art when elements of the original photograph are eliminated, otherwise this would mean producing an art that is willing to give meanings, as was the proposal of the hyper-realists, which, however, Richter refutes:

I think that to concentrate on this essentially (*wesentlich*) is at bottom the work of all painters at all times. That, the Hyperrealists didn't do, they really copied everything, every detail. Because of this they were not surprised. It was obvious to me (*selbstverständlich*) to leave out details. In this aspect I have to thank Warhol a lot, he legitimized the mechanical technique. He demonstrated this through plot and photo printing and it was then that I developed the smudges (*diffuse*) in my paintings. They assume mechanically produced blurs. This was a very liberating method. (RICHTER, 2008, p.422).

Richter, still clarifying how art as form and content, appears inexorably through the artist's culture, reinforces his thought once again in an interview given to Jan Thorn Prikker in 2004. For him, regardless of ideology, American *Pop art* had a force much more revolutionary than the German one, which in its most controversial version was represented by Expressionist art. This Richter understood when he absorbed, in addition to style traits from *Pop art*, elements from ***Informal*** art and ***Fluxus***. Richter in 1961 in Duesseldorf quotes:

Pop-art through inspiration to the outside world and Fluxus through its disrespectful (ideologically speaking) attitude. Pop-artists gave the imposing answers to abstract artists: “We do something new, something that is totally prohibited, where your criteria do not reach.” (Ibidem, 2008, p. 488).

At this point, it becomes clear that the tragic-romantic tendency of Richter's style is due to the hybrid and changeable conglomeration of elements of his German cultural identity, which in itself leads him to carry a more existentialist and dramatic content in his works.

*** Konrad Fischer Lueg and Gerhard Richter**

Robert Storr alerts us to the differences that distinguish even German artists considered within the same popular style of art as Richter and Lueg. Lueg's German folk art is closer to American *Pop art* than Richter's. This is evident in the representation of the Helmut Klinger model, in the style of Konrad Fischer Lueg and Gerhard Richter, respectively, below:



Fig. 30. LUEG, Konrad Fischer. *Painting by Helmut Klinker (Bildnis Helmut Klinker)*. Museum of Art: Fortune from the collection of Helmut Klinger, 1965.



Fig. 31. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Painting by Helmut Klinker (Bildnis Helmut Klinker)*. Museum Bochum. Oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm, 1965.

We found that what remains communicated, singling out the style of each of the works, is always the ideological aspect. Richter's anti-ideological style continues to represent life existentially, keeping it irreducible to the apologetic arts.

- **From the analysis:**

The existentialist-romantic tenor that appears in the works of Gerhard Richter, if considered through the *Reception of the work of*

art nowadays, we could say that this point configures the most critical mark of his works. That, according to some communicologists, it would be possible to conjecture the fact that his works were produced in “Postmodernity”, that they are suffering the compression of the time-space of the advanced technological world.

We understand the relevance of this, when considering the subject in his *Modus vivendi* and *operandi* on the threshold of consumer goods exhaustion, with the virtual replacing and preventing the experience of the “real”. The question that arises is: Would man today be able to appreciate an art as tragic as Richter's?

Thence, the fetish that Beauty in the form of glamor proposes through advertising in advanced capitalist societies, replaced the pain and pleasure inherent in human existence, so we could conjecture that, in the opinion of some, Richter's works that appeal to alterity and compassion in the face of the painful state of the other, would be doomed to failure at that moment. However, the painter's aesthetic and moral response provokes the following reflection: Who would not access their own humanity while contemplating some of their works, even without knowing the life history of their models?

As we have witnessed, the intrinsic characteristics of Richter's works make the ancient world shine in the present, transfigured by tragedies and utopias, contemplating the human with great clamor and depth, which, being so existential, no possibility of liberation and apathy would be allowed in the experience aesthetics.

3.6.1 - The *Sublime* according to Gerhard Richter

The abstract aspects inherent in the Photorealistic and Neo-Expressionist style of Richter's works transform his art into its

own “self-reality”. This is translucently evidenced through his gestural impetuosity, which favors feeling to the detriment of reason and morality.

Judging by the achromia and the tragic themes of his “Photo-realistic-disfigured” works and by the large dimensions of his Neo-expressionist canvases, it is inferred that his art, by analogy with the German romantic spirit, bears traces of the *Sublime* movement, whose ideas refuted the postulates of Enlightenment rationalism regarding the absolutist authorities of the former German regime and the monarchy of the bourgeois world, in force from the 16th to the 18th century.

Richter, in turn, rebelled against the rationalist ideals of totalitarian aesthetics, which already in the era of romanticism (end of the 18th century), gave the first signs of what would become the aesthetics of war in modernity. The drama that “negative rationality” precipitated in 20th-century Germany is brought to the fore by Richter's art like barely healed wounds. This seems to reaffirm that the ballasts of great events maintain their duration in historical time, as their impact force ultimately determines the course of history.

It is in the interrelation of form with content, similarly to terror, as in the concept of *Sublime*, that Richter also transcends the modern concept of beauty. The desolation of Richter's aesthetic contrasts with the devastating and grandiose power of nature's events, reflecting life while considering the “grotesque” and “cruelty” equally constituting the plane of existence, alongside “beauty” and “goodness”.

Richter's aesthetic seems to go beyond the exotic and collide with the grotesque, already on the verge of degeneration. Thus, we conjecture how *grotesque* aspects of the *Sublime* movement echo in Richter's works, as the representation of human suffering is once again conceived representing eschatologically life in its “existential” dimension.

Therefore, the painter, when recalling the spirit of a time when violence and astonishment composed the scenario of reality, imposes himself in the face of criticism that collides with the

grotesque. This is the point at which, in the history of art, the grotesque is associated with “bad taste” and the beautiful with “good taste”. Richter, therefore, faces the verdicts of judgments of these aesthetic values, which have always been based on moral conceptions within art.

Observing the traces of tragedy in Richter's works, according to Umberto Eco based on the words of the romantic Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), it is inferred that the *Sublime* in his works: "It is a generalized phenomenon in our nature that what is sad , terrible and even horrendous attracts with irresistible fascination; that scenes of pain and terror disgust us with equal force, attract us. (SCHILLER apud Eco, 2004 p.289).

Elsewhere, Umberto Eco supported Burke's observation by pointing out:

Burke claims not to be able to explain the causes of the effect of the Sublime and the Beautiful, but the question that arises is: how can terror be delightful? And his answer is: when it doesn't threaten too closely. But we understand for this statement. It implies a distancing from the thing that is frightening, hence a kind of lack of interest in it. Pain and terror are causes of the Sublime if they are not really harmful. This interest is the same that, over the centuries, appeared linked to the idea of Beauty. The beautiful is that which produces a pleasure that does not necessarily induce the possession or consummation of the thing that pleases. In the same way, the horror linked to the Sublime is a horror that cannot be possessed and cannot harm us. (BURKE apud ECO, 2004, p. 291)

Thus, based on Eco's observations, we interpret the dramatic and dangerous aspect in Richter's works as a force that exerts a *cathartic*, sublimating, even liberating effect, but which, above all, remains always available to feeling.

The following works by Richter respectively could support the nature of our analysis:



Fig. 32. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Claudius* [603]. Landsbank Collection, Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Oil on canvas, 311 x 406 cm, 1986. (RICHTER, 2008, p. 47).

His art, which does not retain anything, understands that the playful impulse is synonymous with freedom, thus privileging

emotion to the detriment of reason, provoking a process of returning the subject to within himself. For Richter, since art is unreal, it must grant unconditional pleasure.



Fig. 33. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Woman with Umbrella (Frau mit Schirm)*. Daros Collection, Zürich, Swiss-German. Oil on canvas, 160 x 95, 1964.

The one depicted in the painting is Jackie Kennedy crying moments after the death of her husband John F. Kennedy, whose history and identity remain equally hidden through the title. About this Richter clarifies:

I intentionally chose an anonymous and neutral title because people shouldn't look up and immediately recognize Jacky Kennedy. I wanted to avoid this, without fail. A title like *Frau mit Schirm* [Woman with Umbrella] reveals nothing and tells no story. (RICHTER, 2008, p. 269).

The strong reflective nature of this work confronts ancient prophecies, defending that the Work of art still exists today. Thus, his art, while available for enjoyment, requires a wide range of perspective and reflective disposition. Hegel supports us in this regard:

In addition to immediate fruition, works of art arouse judgment in us, insofar as we submit to our consideration the thinker, the content and the means of exposition of the work of art, as well as the adequacy and inadequacy of both. The science of art is therefore much more necessary in our time than in times when art, therefore, as art, provided full satisfaction. Art invites us to contemplate it through thought and, in fact, not so that it can resume its former place, but so that what art is scientifically known. (HEGEL, 2000, p. 35).

The Hegelian citation defends Richter in what preserves the reflexive character of his art.

3.7 - Memories of the Second World War through Gerhard Richter's "Transcendental-Photorealism" - Portrait: Ethics as a backdrop for aesthetics

White has the harmony of silence [...]. It is not a silence of death, but of the possibilities of life. White draws attention to the pre-life nothingness of the ice age world. Black is something burnt, like the ashes of a funeral pyre, something motionless, like a corpse. The silence of the black is the silence of death. Apparently black is the color with the least harmony of all, a kind of neutral background against which the most significant shade of another color stands out clearly. It differs from white, with which almost all colors are in harmony, or cancel each other out together.

Wassily Kandinsky

The monochrome and disfigurement in Richter's style raise countless reflections that take us beyond what is visible in the appearance of the model printed on the surface of the "real", although, the fact remains that it is an image of an impressive and surprising intimacy.

Once unveiled, the photos of Richter's existentially dramatic memories, as subjects of his paintings, do not allow us to be deceived by his desire for impersonality and distance provoked by the technique that connotes the sensation of displacement, as well as monochrome, inciting us to perceive how this marks its historical abstraction at that time.

However, the painter's quest to remain hermetically closed in on himself, in a secret and intangible world makes us even more curious.

Concerning this, we find Richter declaring:

I deface (*Verwische*) to make everything seem equally important and equally unimportant. I disfigure it so as not to look like an artistically handcrafted production, but technical, smooth and perfect. I smudge, so that all parts mesh together. I delete perhaps what has the most, unimportant information. (RICHTER, 2009 p. 33).

This statement refers to the year 1965, however, in an interview with Sabine Schuetz in 1990, the painter confesses the true reasons for this old attempt at distancing:

I refuted the empty sentences of public opinion about my lack of style and the private opinion of some, whose empty words were partly polemical, against all trends of the time (of fashion), even when they were defensive statements. For, at some point and in a certain way, I liked the motives of the originality of the models, whose families I often met. And if I hadn't met them, they would at least have similarities with the families and destinations I've known. (RICHTER apud Schuetz, 1990, p. 258).

The themes of war in Richter's monochrome iconography show how his painting deals with the reproduction of a testimonial photograph. In addition to his *black and white photo-paintings* taking us back to the past, this seems to mean that painting portraits

like this replaces the aura of paintings of yesteryear. Walter Benjamin clarifies about this:

With photography, display value begins to push cult value - in every sense - into the background. The latter, however, does not give in without resistance - its final trench is the human face. It is by no means a coincidence that the portrait played a central role in the early days of photography. Within the cult of remembrance dedicated to loved ones, distant or missing, the cult value of the image finds its last refuge. In the fleeting expression of a man's face, old photographs, for the last time, replace the aura. It is what gives them that melancholic beauty, incomparable with any other. But since the man is absent from the photograph, exhibition value decidedly trumps cult value. (BENJAMIN, 1936, p. 13).

The Benjamin citation interprets the Photorealism of Richter's portrait genre, as the mark of his tragic-Romanticism. It is clear that Richter privileges in his art the most violent aspect of our humanity to the detriment of the simple contemplation of Beauty transacting between the “presentation of the real” and the “representation of the ideal”.

The following Benjamin's words make other possible interpretations of Richter's works: “In the fleeting expression of a man's face, old photographs, for the last time, replace the aura”. It is what gives them that melancholic beauty, incomparable with any other.” (BENJAMIN, 1988, p.13).



Fig. 34. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Portrait of youth (Jugendbildnis)*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Oil on canvas 72.4 x 62 cm, 1988.

Despite the impressive variety of subjects considered by Richter, his paintings almost always point in a single stylistic and thematic direction. From 1962 to 1966, his works included those that the painter produced monocratically based on photographic images.

Richter, who avoided having just one style, always sought to maintain impersonality and inconsequence in the march of *becoming*, however, he seems to surprisingly reveal himself as possessing a particular stylistic uniformity.

Since 1966, he has used his own family photos as a source for his paintings. This step was inaugurated by a second innovation, the change from white and black to color. Which seems not to have altered the essence of his style, whose beauty and drama continued to demand compassion and intellectual effort from the beholder.

An example of this is the portrait of his daughter Ella Maria below:



Fig. 35. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Ella*. Private collection. Oil on canvas, 40 x 31 cm, 2007.

Its themes remain faithful to the portrait genre, however, this one that was born with a view to eternalizing the image of aristocratic representatives has its essence controversial by Richter through its disfiguring effect.

In summary, regarding the uniqueness of his portraits, Richter's stylistic-ideological rebelliousness seems to inaugurate a new form of representation of Portraiture Art, which, guiding the theme of abstraction, contemplates the autonomous character of art, emancipating its freedom of creation.

For many traditionalist aesthetes, copying models from photographs mischaracterizes the portrait art genre. The portraits which Richter has created since the 1960s reflect a refined sense of this situation standing on the threshold between the known (*Vertrautheit*), the hidden (*Versteckt*) and otherness (*Andersheit*).

Paradoxically, his portraits have the character of exploring a world of appearances while inciting innumerable assumptions.

In an interview given to Dieter Huelsmanns, we find Richter reflecting on this aspect:

I think that a painter does not need to see or know the model, and none of the model's "being", character or "soul" needs to be expressed. A painter must not see a model in a personal way, because a portrait cannot be more like the model than just very similar. Because of this, it is much better to paint a portrait from a photograph, given that it is not actually possible to paint a human being in his "in himself" – on the contrary, it is always just a painting, which has nothing in common with the model. The mere and supposed resemblance of my paintings to the models is not intentional, this resemblance is *a priori* useless. (RICHTER, 2009, p. 45).

When the artist concentrated on portraits of well-known people, family, friends and colleagues in the art world, he broke a

little more with the impersonality that was common in his earlier works. Among the anonymous models, there are some identifiable ones, however, only those without political and ideological implications.

Chapter 4 – Gerhard Richter in the light of Communication Theories: A dialogue between the values of Modernity and Postmodernity

Observing Richter's works through the dialogue between the two moments, we realize that the fact that his themes narrate the History of a subject, symbolizing a culture in a specific historical time and *locus*, makes relevance to relative values, rationality, memory and otherness, characteristics considered by many thinkers to be related to the Modern period.

However, on the other hand, the diffuse aspect diluting the clear identity of the subject, a mark developed for his style, promotes a rupture with the historical and epistemological time/space, characterizing the lack of necessary reference for the construction of the subject's identity. Such characteristics are also considered by some thinkers like Nilson Thomé, typical of the postmodern period.

The author, in his article, made his *Considerations on Modernity, Post-Modernity in the Historical Foundations of Education* available in PDF. Quoting Nilson: “Welcome to Postmodernism: to the world of the media spectacle, the disappearance of reality, the end of history, the death of Marxism and a host of other claims of this millennium.”

Hence, we understand that the paradoxical way in which the subject's identity is treated in Richter's works highlights points of contact between the values of Modernity and Post-modernity, allowing them to be interpreted by current communication theorists who, nevertheless, rely on in modern philosophical theories. But

Richter, although he considers some passages of aesthetic reflections through time, moves and flows alone towards infinity.

As an example, we rely on the ideas of Ciriaco De Maria, sometimes evoking Henri Bergson, sometimes the thought of Bertolt Brecht as well as Martin Heidegger and Stuart Hall supported by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Nor did he fail to quote Umberto Eco supported by Lacan, confronting him with Claude Lévi-Strauss.

Reserving the particularity of each thinker, we find the common point of their observations on the subject: “The lack of symbolic identity of the Postmodern subject is interpreted as incomplete.

Unanimously in the light of such consideration we illustrate this with the following painting by Richter:



Fig. 35. RICHTER, Gerhard. *Sailors (Matrosen)*. Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, Germany. Oil on canvas, 150 x 200 cm, 1966.

Redefining what is understood by figurative paintings of classical Realism, we can say that Richter's portraits conceive a fixed reality at the moment of its capture by photography, but, at the same time, the diffuse aspect conveys the idea of constant movement, leaves the fluidity of becoming make it impossible for the Receiver to capture the identity of the subject.

About this, Richter clarifies in Moorhouse's work the following: "I deface to make everything seem equally important and unimportant." (RICHTER, 1964, p. 37). Moorhouse, in turn, interprets the diffuse effect as follows: "In group portraits like this one, despite the conventions of this type of representation, what is taken away from the represented models: the individuality and significance that the relationship between people could suggest." (RICHTER, 2002, p. 52).

The painter, through the lines that run away as if dripping horizontally, materializes the uncapturable movement of time, the ephemeral, from which all our reality escapes. This perception is shared by Ciro Marcondes Filho when contemplating Henry Bergson's "reason during" cited in Gustavo Said's work:

The thought and the mover, a single movement that initially had two back and forth movements. Now Bergson says – in the same direction of our proposition of reason during – to advance with the moving reality, it is in this that we must position ourselves: "settle in the change that you will understand at once the change itself and the successive states in which she could at any moment immobilize herself. (EC, p. 307). Contrary to the successive states, apprehended from the outside as "real immobilities" and no longer virtual, complements Bergson, you will never reconstitute the movement. What is valid for the traversed line is not valid for the movement. (BERGSON; MARCONDES F.; SAID; 2008, p. 62/63).

Following the reflection, guiding the disfigured face of the Post-modern subject treated in Richter's works, the "Concept of emptying and dilution", is also found in the studies of Stuart Hall, whose main focus is based on the development of culture, above all, the impact of the mass media on the formation of cultural identities.

Hall, analyzing the research carried out by the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and Jacques-Marie Émile Lacan, on the mental structure of the subject, comments that "identity arises not so much from the fullness of the identity that is already within us as individuals, but from a lack of wholeness that is "fulfilled" from our outside." (Hall, 2006, p. 39).

Therefore, we would say that Richter's works affect us through their diffusion effect on a "portrait-realism", contemplating the idea of Lacanian emptying conceived by Hall above, when he emphasized the phenomenon of emptying that configures the lack of completeness of our own identity.

This may be the way the artist uses to symbolize the fragility of the Postmodern subject as a representative of the other in the formation of this identity, at the limit, it may represent the lack of structure that we see in the image of the other as a construct of our own identity.

Transcending the static and obvious idea of a simple photograph, Richter takes from the trivial moment of capturing the image by the camera, the elements for the construction of an art that transforms a photograph into a painting, connoting a blurred photographic image, and not its inverse.

Thusly opening up possibilities for interpretations that can go far beyond the pose or angle chosen by the photographer. This is a paradigm that Richter confirms in Moorhouse's work, when he states that everything is just an impression: "the truth in fact is always the truth of what we see and experience/feel/reveal." (RICHTER, 2002, p. 263).

When we resume Umberto Eco's studies, when he uses Lacan's ideas to the detriment of Claude Lévi-Strauss' assumptions, we understand that the symbolic order, in which the structure of the unconscious is constituted, is, *a priori*, relative to the very essence of the spirit of man, therefore, precedes myths and language:

Lévi-Strauss affirmed that: “myths signify the spirit”. But behold, Jacques Lacan, skipping over all research on language, on myths and on the various events through which man communicates, sets out to study the nature of the spirit itself, and as a psychoanalyst his discourse deals, therefore, about the unconscious and its structure. [...] In Lévi-Strauss, one could still think of the existence of a human spirit whose laws were reproduced in linguistic as well as social behavior. In Lacan, on the contrary, the symbolic order is not constituted by man [or by the spirit that constitutes man], but constitutes man. (ECO, 1976, p. 324).

Following Lacan's premise that we are constituted in the image of the other, we can also consider the relevance of being what is already established in society, in this way, both our subjective conception and our representation are constructed through our interaction with our parents, family, friends, society and everything that somehow refers us to the other.

As follows, the “social-historical subject” is also clarified through the analysis of a class society through the eyes of Ciriaco De Mita. Based on Brecht, De Mita makes his considerations about the situation of the subject in Post-modernity:

The metaphor is now that of the monster, created by man, which threatens him, and the world view, that of the short circuit of representation-expression, of confusion. Unnoticed the subject, it is the object that now marks the limits of

individuality and determines its qualities; man comes into existence through technology. In relation to communication, he enters a delirious and tautological spiral, where excess produces exactly the loss of information. (MARCONDES F., 1991, p.45).

Marcondes takes Hall's idea of the lack of fullness of the identity of the individual to a limit and supports us in interpreting the disfigured identities of the models in Richter's works as synonymous with an era in which man, long before becoming an individual, is replaced by the object of his own creation.

About the implications that guide the formation of the identity of the being in the hyper-capitalist world, synonymous with Post-modernity, Marcondes F. reiterates:

The weakening of the being is directly proportional to the elevation of the object's *status*. The moment discredits the heroes, the leaders; identities now fluctuate. People become "lost"; it is the domain of masks, schizophrenia, loneliness and the desire for suicide. Narcissism, need to prove one's existence, minimalism are the new behaviors. The other, ceasing to be our mirror, decrees the suppression of the social exchange relationship, of access to the imaginary. (MARCONDES F., 1991, p. 19).

In kind, we infer that Richter's portraits contemplate Marcondes F.'s disbelief in "heroes" and "leaders", however, Marcondes F.'s "world of lost souls" is an idea conceived in Richter's works, not symbolizing the narcissistic personality of the Postmodern subject, who has the "need to prove his own existence", but symbolizing the situation of the being, who has the need to protect his own life against the repression of a greater power.

Still subsidized by the look of Marcondes F., who at that moment is based on Martin Heidegger, we reflect on the disfigured images in Richter's works:

It is the technical apex, of the universal imposition and provocation of the technical world, the *Ge-stell* (picture) that marks the chance of this humanism and the appearance of what he called *Ereignis* (event), the weakening of the being, the vertiginous circularity in which man and being lose their metaphysical character. (HEIDEGGER apud MARCONDES F., 1991, p. 21).

In such a way, in the aspect of symbolic form, spectral beings are symbolized in the elusive aspects of Richter's "Transcendental Photorealism", however, in terms of their material existence (photography), the painter shows how the subject uses the technique in its favor, strengthening itself in it and not submitting.

Still supported by the reflection of Marcondes F., we understand that the subject in Postmodernity is in a: "incessant pulsation for *becoming* without any substantive investment in being." (Ibid., p. 22). This conception that Richter, even as a means of protection, contemplated in his art.

As we've seen so far, Richter's styles make no apologies for Capitalism; Nor do his themes despise the situation of being in a world, which Ciro Marcondes interprets as follows:

Immediacy and disposability are valued, including values, lifestyles, stable relationships, fixation on things, buildings, places, people, authentic ways of doing and being, even though it may represent the state of the subject in the present, nor does it seek to found a new metaphysics. (MARCONDES F., 1991, p. 22).

Respectively, starting from a Post-modern approach, we can assume that the art of Gerhard Richter, in terms of his conception of the subject, is closely linked to his life story and that of those who constituted his plot, emphasizing the importance that the artist gives the existence of the subject as a *being* that is constituted by identity within social relations, but that never submits to the condition of object.

It is against this background that we interpret the “excessive state of being” in Gerhard Richter's artistic representations. His art acts as an instrument of *aesthetic-ethical-cognitive* transmutation, but above all, while Germany was the epicenter of the incongruity between technology-science and humanization, it opened possibilities of an antinomy with societal structures that compromise the sense of humanity.

Final considerations

Even after years of philosophical research in the field of aesthetics and the arts, our conclusion about Gerhard Richter's paintings will remain open.

At first, we noticed that the studies on “*A work of art critique*”, having *Richter's figurative and historical paintings in black and white* as their object of analysis, including showing images of his relatives linked to Nazism; brought to light the fabric of a complex fabric involving the memories of the Second World War.

However, Richter, who does not despise this historicity in his works, does not seek to rescue them from their past, but to recognize them in their event.



Gerhard Richter, *Nurses*, 1965 - Krefeld Museum of Art.

The inexorable splendor of his works strikes us without any conceptual promises. This led us to realize that “Richter assumes the substantial foundations of his own aesthetic concepts, sustaining their originality and spontaneity in the incessant flow of the force of *becoming*”. We risk saying that the ephemeral nature of his works in the aesthetic experience seems to eternalize the divine in us.

Pleasantly, we felt that the situation of finding any definition that risked describing the particularities of his paintings implied keeping us adrift, unfolding theories in an eternal dialectical game without proposals or oaths.

Gerhard Richter's own philosophical, ethical and aesthetic understanding translates his worldview into his paintings, including through pictorial and stylistic effects so complex and profound that

they impel us to bump into the domains of our own cultivation and sensibility, straining its reach and Limits.

His paintings presume to reach their climactic epilogue in their unspeakably explosive and fleeting abstractions. However, they seem to remain established in their “uniqueness”, raising important reflections.



Gerhard Richter, Abstract painting, 1988.

The aesthetics and metanarratives also based on Richter's abstract paintings, as a symbol of German communication and culture, provoked our transition through philosophical conceptions

that deal with the arts more deeply in the passage from Modernity to Postmodernity.

By itself, the fact that the causal links and purposes, which involve communication as a basis for understanding Gerhard Richter's works of art, cannot be exhausted or confirmed by theories, urged us to welcome them in their sensitive nature and creative, especially in light of its intrinsic aspects of “unity and abstraction”.

Nor does the appreciation of Richter's genius in his paintings allow us to welcome them in their entirety, as they claim an intimate participation of our nature, as well as our talent for a more meditative aesthetic reception.

The fact that we are only witnesses of our own experiences and that our condition of “*being in the world*” does not allow us, in any way, to enter into the particularities of Richter’s “being” as creator of his paintings, required us to accept the undeniable: *the detachment for the search for aesthetic understanding*. This is the key to bringing us closer to something superior inscribed in his works: Behold, the mystery begins in his eternity!

As soon as the attempt to control the energies involved in the event of fruition dissipated, a space for the appreciation of the *intrinsic presence of beauty* in his works was hypostatized.

Therefore, without any understanding, we began to enjoy a great freedom of feeling through the fantastic and unknown effects of his works on us. Launching ourselves into a complete unknown, by including ourselves in the strength of its whole, of its universality!

His paintings seem to open gateways into a “*timeless void*” that allows the *universality* through which we connect to a “*Superior Force*”. The transcendental of his works, while reflecting us, encompassing us and transporting us beyond and through their creative state. This takes place in an eternal dialogue, which allows us to witness and feel his works through the nature of the *whole in its parts, as well as the parts in their whole*.

We intuit that the beauty of his paintings praises his state of origin and *authenticity*, expressing his synchrony with the eternal presence of the Absolute. From this point of contact *with Richter's arts*, we reflect:

“Would we give up our quest for understanding and our own subjective taste in favor of universal delight”? In other words, would we risk stripping ourselves of the prisons of our egos over the *sieve of our preferences*, to experience Richter's aesthetics, whose transitory duration determines its *state of emptiness, of freedom*, where anything can happen?

Confirming what started as a suspicion: “Would we welcome Gerhard Richter’s works as a single object, considering their historical, ethical, aesthetic plots, knowing that: *“His great “truth” would remain forever secretly built in his “spirit?”*”

It is “the cry of the memory of Germany through the ethics and libertarian aesthetics of Gerhard Richter” celebrating the love of life in all its causalities and vicissitudes!

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ANNEXES

A - GENERAL GLOSSARY

West Germany and East Germany

West Germany was the name by which the Federal Republic of Germany was known between 1949 and 1990. The State was formed from three of Germany's Allied occupation zones, following the Second World War. The other occupation zone, the Soviet one, constituted a separate state known as East Germany. West Germany was also often referred to by the acronym RFA as opposed to *GDR*, East Germany. **East Germany**, officially the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in German (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik - DDR*) was a state created in 1949 on the territory of the Soviet occupation zone, one of the zones occupied by the Allies in Germany after World War II, when German territory was divided between the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Soviet Union. While the Soviet zone gave rise to the GDR, the junction of the other three gave rise to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), or West Germany. (BBC Report).

Art

(gr. *xé%vr|*; lat. *Ars*; in. *Art*; fr. *Art*; al. *Kunst*; it. *Arte*). In its most general meaning, any set of rules capable of directing any human activity. It was in this sense that Plato spoke of A. and, therefore, did not establish a distinction between A. and science. A., for Plato, is the art of reasoning (*Fed.*, 90 b), like philosophy itself in its highest degree, that is, dialectic (*Fed.*, 266 d); A. is poetry, although delirious inspiration is indispensable to it (*ibid.*, 245 a); A. is politics and war (*Prol*, 322 a); A. is medicine and A. is respect and justice, without which men cannot live together in cities (*Ibid.*, 322 c, d). [...] Kant summarized the traditional features of this concept by distinguishing between A. and nature, on the one hand, and between A. and science, on the other; and he distinguished, in A. itself,

mechanical A. and aesthetic A.. On this last point, he says: "When, conforming to the knowledge of a possible object, the A. performs only the necessary operations to realize it, it is said that it is mechanical A.; if, however, it has as its end the immediate feeling of pleasure, is A. aesthetic. This is A. pleasant or beautiful A. It is pleasant when its purpose is to make pleasure accompany representations as simple sensations; it is beautiful when its purpose is to combine pleasure with representations as forms of knowledge" (*Crit. of Judgment*, § 44). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 81).

Abstract Art or Abstractionism

In a broad sense, abstractionism refers to forms of art not governed by the figuration and imitation of the world. In a specific sense, the term is linked to the European vanguards of the 1910s and 1920s, who rejected the illusionist representation of nature. The decomposition of the figure, the simplification of form, the new uses of color, the discarding of perspective and modeling techniques and the rejection of conventional shadow and light games, appear as recurrent traits of the different orientations sheltered under this label. Numerous movements and artists adhered to abstraction, which became, from the 1930s onwards, one of the central axes of artistic production in the 20th century. [...] It includes two strands: 1. Expressionism and Fauvism. 2. geometric abstraction. Among others are Suprematism, European Tachism, Constructivism, Neoplasticism, Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism. (ITAU CULTURAL ENCICLOPEDIA).

Classical Art or Classicism

The term, correlated to classic, is used in the history and criticism of art with different meanings. In a stricter sense, referring to the context of Greek art, "classic" designates the specific production of the phase between the years 510 BC. and 460 BC, considered the height of Greek artistic production (Miron, Polycleto, Phidias and Praxiteles are among the greatest sculptors of the period). More often, "classicism" is thought of as opposed to romanticism. If the term "classic" refers to order, balance and objectivity, the designation "romantic" appeals to passions, excesses and subjectivism. Classical beauty is defined in Greek art, based on an

ideal of perfection, harmony, balance and grace that artists seek to represent through symmetry and proportion (Praxiteles, *Hermes with the Young Dionysus*, 350 BC). Human forms are presented as if they were real and, at the same time, perfected examples (*Venus de Milo*, 1st century BC) [...] Both the classic and the romantic are theorized between the mid-18th century and mid-19th century. XIX. [...] The terms classic and classicism can be used based on a mixture of value judgments - as if Greco-Roman art established a standard for all art produced later - and historical periodization. [...] it is possible to use the notion of "classic" and also "romantic", as some critics do, as more general guidelines, detached from marked chronological locations, which would lead to distinguishing "classical" or "romantic" tendencies in different eras. The classic/romantic opposition would explain, at the limit, the development of arts and culture in Europe and the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. In a more current sense, close to common sense, it is also possible to use the term as a reference to clarity of expression or as an index of conservatism. (ITAU CULTURAL ENCICLOPEDIA).

Art as Unconscious

Modern art was profoundly influenced by the theoretical foundations of Freudian psychoanalysis and the analytical psychology of Carl Jung. So much so that André Breton, when launching the First Surrealist Manifesto, in 1924, stated that that artistic movement was governed by 'pure physical automatism that expresses verbally, in writing or in other ways, the true process of thought, without the control required by reason. (SON, João Dummar).

Conceptual art

For conceptual art, the avant-garde that emerged in Europe and the United States in the late 1960s and mid-1970s, the concept or mental attitude takes priority over the appearance of the work. The term conceptual art is used for the first time in a text by Henry Flynt, in 1961, among the activities of the *Fluxus Group*. In this text, the artist argues that concepts are the matter of art and therefore it would be linked to language. The most important thing for conceptual art are

the ideas, the execution of the work is in the background and has little relevance. In addition, if the project is carried out, there is no requirement that the work be built by the artist's hands. He may often delegate the physical work to a person who has specific technical skills. What matters is the invention of the work, the concept, which is elaborated before its materialization. Although conceptual artists criticize the modern claim to the autonomy of the work of art, and some even intend to break with the principles of modernism, there are some historical assumptions that can be found in experiments carried out in the early 20th century. Marcel Duchamp's *ready-mades*, whose artistic quality is conferred by the context in which they are exposed, would be an important antecedent for the re-elaboration of the critique of conceptual concepts. (ITAU CULTURAL ENCICLOPEDIA).

Informal Art

The French word 'informel' means 'formless' rather than 'informal'. In the 1950s, 'Art Informel' artists were looking for a new way of creating images, without adopting the recognizable forms used by their predecessors (Cubism and Expressionism). His aim was to abandon geometric and figurative forms and discover a new artistic language. The works of the 'Art Informel' artists are very varied, but they often use loose brushstrokes and thick layers of paint. Like Abstract Expressionism, which developed at the same time in the United States, 'Art Informel' is a very broad label, which includes both figurative (Jean Fautrier) and non-figurative (Hans Hartung) painters. Although mainly centered in Paris, its influence reached other parts of Europe, mainly Spain, Italy and Germany." (Chilvers). Artists: Burri, Dubuffet, Fautrier, Hartung, Riopelle, Soulages, De Stael, Tàpies. (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

Modern and Contemporary Art

Although it emerged in the West at the end of the 19th century, the so-called modern art has its beginnings marked in 1905, with the presentation of the Fauvists at the Autumn Salon, in Paris, or in the 1910s, when movements that broke the canons of academic art appeared simultaneously. (Costa, Cacilda Teixeira. Folha de S.

Paulo, São Paulo, September 28, 2004, Sinapse, n. 27, p. 4). These movements, known as vanguards (a term of military origin), meant the advance of small groups of cultural actors over the great mass of the population and engendered permanent revolutions until approximately World War II. These were the so-called "isms": fauvism, cubism, futurism, expressionism, constructivism, suprematism, neoplasticism, sadism, surrealism, etc. From the 1960s and 1970s, with the postmodern movement, we have contemporary or current art. using all the iconographic repertoire of art history, the postmodern movement began in architecture and quickly spread to other artistic fields. The process of dismantling the figure began with Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque with the creation of "cubism" around 1907. In 1910, the Russian Wassily Kandinsky painted the first watercolors with signs and graphic elements in order to only suggest figurative models . Dominant movement in the 1950s, "abstraction", a non-figurative representation (does not present immediately recognizable figures), became one of the essential issues of art in the 20th century. "Concrete art", an expression coined by the Dutchman Theo van Doesburg in 1918, represents painting done with lines and right angles, using the three primary colors (red, yellow and blue), as well as three non-colors (black, white and Grey). [...] "Conceptual art", born in the late 1960s, rejects all previous codes and works with the deepest strata of knowledge, hitherto only accessible to thought. One of the Brazilian artists most connected to the conceptual is Cildo Meireles. The "ready-mades" are works using ready-made objects and have become classics in contemporary art. The presence of the object in art begins in Picasso's cubist "assemblages", in Marcel Duchamp's inventions and in the "objets trouvés" (found objects) of the surrealists. In 1913, Duchamp installed a bicycle wheel on a kitchen stool ("Bicycle wheel") and paved the way for the development of "ready-mades". In Brazil, experiments began to be carried out in the 1960s with neoconcrete and neofigurative. The installations are characterized by tensions between their different pieces and also by the relationship between these pieces and the characteristics of the place they are in. A single installation can include "performance", object and video, establishing an interaction

between them. The "happening", which emerged in New York in the 1960s, when artists tried to break the boundaries between art and life, is attributed to Allan Kaprow. He carried out most of his actions seeking (from a combination of "assemblages", environments and the introduction of other unexpected elements) to create impact and make people aware of their space, their body and their reality. The first Brazilian "happenings" were carried out by artists linked to "pop art", such as Wesley Duke Lee, author of "O grande spectacle das artes", in 1963. "Performance" was born in the 1970s from the integration between "happening" and "conceptual art". A "performance" can be carried out with intimate gestures or in a large theatrical presentation. Its duration can vary from a few minutes to several hours, happen just once or be repeated on countless occasions, taking place with or without a script, improvised on the spot or rehearsed for months. [...] The multimedia artist experiments with various media and works with the hybridization of these media or new media (computer, sensors and other "interfaces" or technologies). The word hybrid is a word suited to contemporary times, in which plastic artists or visual artists work with the body, with sound, with movements, with flows, with performances... The media transform our relationship with the world. The artist tries to show this process from a new angle and uses his sensitivity to present another look at the relationship between man and the media, comments Gilberto Prado, multimedia artist, professor at the Department of Plastic Arts at the School of Communication and Art at USP - ECA-USP (Diário do Nordeste, Fortaleza, 04.Oct.2004, Section 3, p. 6). [...] The problem of the meaning of the work of art has arisen since Cubism, when painting ceased to represent objects recognizable (Gullar, Ferreira. "Cultural death of art" in "Cultura put into question & Avant-garde and underdevelopment". Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 2002, p. 66). [...] From Cubism to the present day, the evolution of contemporary art has been a succession of "movements". After stunning the critics and being admitted by them, they are then replaced by other movements that equally stun, scandalize and consecrate themselves, observes Gullar (idem). In the name of a more immediate representation of nature, impressionism destroyed perspective and the internal unity of objects, pulverizing them into an ephemeral spectrum of decomposed luminosity. In the

name of reconstructing the object as a structure, Cubism ended up decomposing perception into "stages" (the various sides of the object) and the planes began to be arbitrarily recomposed on the surface of the painting. Neoplasticism understood that there was nothing left of the old painting and sought to found a "new plastic art", in which the figure of the object was reduced to simple orthogonal rhythms (vertical and horizontal) expressed through primary colors (red, yellow, blue and black). Neo-Plasticism did not happen and Cubism moved on to other experiences opposed to Neo-Plasticism, seeking not impersonality and abstract order, but hallucinations and symbols of the unconscious world (Dadaism, Surrealism and Tachism). Inseparable from the art produced in Brazil until today, constructivism, adopted here with great enthusiasm, has numerous and important national artists and it is even forgotten about foreigners. Lygia Clark, Lgia e Pape, Ant4nio Maluf, H4lio Oiticica, Abraham Palatnik, Luiz Sacilotto, Ivan Serpa and Geraldo de Barros are national artists dedicated to the development of constructivism (and its manifestations, concretism and neoconcretism), points out Celso Fioravante, critic of art, curator of

show "Constructives and Kinetics", held in S4o Paulo, opened on 06.Oct. 2004. In constructive art, the artist makes conscious use of geometric shapes. In kinetic art, movement is part of the structure of the work of art, instead of just being represented by it (Folha de S. Paulo, S4o Paulo, 06 out. 2004, p. E2). [...] Surrealism is probably the most misunderstood of the movements of the 20th century, practically without followers in Brazil. Surrealist works completely changed the way of looking at artistic creation and opened the way for transformations. To this day, artists are inspired by these transformations, a direct influence of surrealism on contemporary art. One of the main creators of surrealism was Andr4 Breton. But they are part of the movement, among others: Francis Picabia, Jean Arp, Max Ernst, Joan Mir4, Wifredo Lam, Yves Tanguy. Followers of surrealism preach the ideas of liberation of the unconscious, as well as immense freedom. Marcel Duchamp is also featured in a Surrealist exhibition. He revolutionized the way of making art with the introduction of objects ("ready-mades"), that is, pieces displaced from their original functions to compose works of art. Before

surrealism, some artists had already realized the importance of the dream, the bizarre and the unconscious in art, among them: Lewis Carroll, Francisco Goya, William Blake, Alberto Dürer and Paulo Gauguin. A multifaceted collection or show is made up of collages, photos, drawings, engravings, sculptures, in addition to various publications (Bittencourt, Elaine. "The surrealists and their enigmas". Gazeta Mercantil, São Paulo, 08 out. 2004, Weekend , p. 8). [...] Contemporary art, presented in halls and several museums around the world, does not require knowledge of balance, rhythm and composition. In other words, with her it was easy to be a bad artist, evaluates Carlos Perktold, member of the Associação Brazilian Society of Art Critics – ABCA (Revista da Academia Mineira de Letras – volume XXXIII, Belo Horizonte: Academia Brasileira de Letras, 2004, p. 141). [...] The world has changed a lot in the last 40 years and, with it, art has changed, observes Rafael Cardoso (Bravo, São Paulo: Abril, Sep.2004, p. 38). Much of current artistic production favors the process, experimentation, the concept, often despite the traditional concern with form and appearance. Art does not always need to be understood rationally, but it needs to impact the senses in order to reach emotion. Art can amuse, excite, shock, disturb. It just can't be boring, because that way it gives up the possibility of transforming the spectator, its main goal. [...] Certain people admit that they are making "non-art", without an artistic and aesthetic focus, a product outside of "art", but they want to occupy the museum and gallery space and want to be entries in the "art history" books ". Art criticism practically disappeared. In the 50s and 60s, newspapers had a staff of critics. Today, reporting prevails and not criticism. The culture of superficiality, spectacle, lack of reasoning construction is reinforced. This also happens with literature and other genres. (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

"Pop Art"

Current that emerged in the United States in the 1960s and characterized by the search for a critical expression of modern urban and industrial civilization. It uses everyday objects, from newspapers to scrap iron, to obtain works representative of the so-called "consumer society". 'Pop' art has elevated the most expensive consumer objects to icons, such as hamburgers, sanitary ware, lawn

mowers, lipstick cases, piles of spaghetti and celebrities like Elvis Presley. In 1962, 'pop' artists were rising to super stardom like comets in superhero comics. 'Pop' was easy to like. The bright colors, the dynamic design, sometimes blown up to heroic size, and the mechanical quality gave it a glossy familiarity. Overnight, 'pop' became a 'marketing' phenomenon as much as a new artistic movement." (Strickland). At the end of 2001, the engraving "Little Electric Chair", by Andy Warhol, who died in 1987, reached at auction the record price for the artist of US\$ 2.3 million. A work from the same series could be bought for US\$ 1,500.00 in the 1960s. Georg Frei, an art critic, analyzes: "Warhol is the first American artist who makes total references to American culture. He must also be among the first to recognizing the omnipotence of the media and, above all, exploring the pictorial potential of television in his art. The beginning of his serial works is probably the most impressive phenomenon in his work. This can be seen in his first works, the soups Cambell from 1962, or in the latest from 1987, endless reinterpretations of Da Vinci's famous fresco of the "Last Supper." Today, Warhol's aesthetic reverberates in the continuous repetitions that mark music videos and in the endless abundance of images on the internet. " Warhol is the author of the maxim according to which in the future everyone would have 15 minutes of fame Artists: Blake, Dine, Hamilton, Hockney, Johns, Jones, Kitaj, Lichtenstein, Oldenburg, Rauschenberg, Rosenquist, Segall, Thiebaud, Warhol, Wesselmann. (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

Popular art

The division between erudite art and popular art dates back to the Renaissance, when the denomination fine arts was created as a counterpoint to craftsmanship. For Mário Pedrosa, a critic, it was an ideological difference of the modern era, which conferred a positive value on cultured art, sponsored by the bourgeoisie, and a negative value on art of peasant or proletarian origin. (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

Axiology

(in. *Axiology*, fr. *Axiologie*, al. *Axiologie*, it. *Axiologia*). The "theory of values" had already been, some decades ago, recognized as an important part of philosophy or even as the totality of philosophy by

the so-called "philosophy of values" and by similar trends (see VALOR) when, at the beginning of our century, the term "axiology" began to be used in its place. The first texts in which this term appears are: P. LAPIE, *Logique de la volonté*, 1902, p. 385; E. VON HARTMANN, *Grundriss der Axiologie*, 1908; W. M. URBAN, *Valuation*, 1909. This term was widely accepted, contrary to the *etymology* proposed for the same science (KREIBIG, *Psychologische Grundlegung eines Systems der Werttheorie*, 1902, p. 194). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 101).

Catharsis

From Greek Κάθαρσις, "*kátharsis*". Liberation from what is foreign to the essence or nature of a thing and therefore disturbs or corrupts it. This term, of medical origin, means "purgation". Plato defines C. as "the discrimination which retains the best and rejects the worst" (*Sof*, 226 d). And he recalls the existence of books by Museum and Orpheus, according to which "the adepts celebrate sacrifices by persuading citizens and entire cities that there are absolutions and purifications of unjust acts, through sacrifices and pleasant games, both for the living and for the dead ". [...] Of the many interpretations of aesthetic C., Goethe's prevails (*Nachlese zu Aristot. Poetik*, 1826), for whom it would consist in the balance of emotions that tragic art induces in the spectator, after having aroused these emotions in him. same emotions, and therefore, the feeling of serenity and peace that it provides. Although there is something similar in Aristotle, it should be noted that, for him, the meaning of aesthetic C. is not different from that of medical or moral C.: a kind of treatment of affections (physical or spiritual) that does not annul them. but reduces them to dimensions in which they are compatible with reason. In modern culture, the term C. has been used almost exclusively to refer to the liberating function of art. Freud sometimes called C. the process of sublimation of the *libido*, by which the *libido* separates itself from its primitive content, that is, the voluptuous sensation and the objects connected with it, in order to concentrate on other objects that will be loved for their own sake. same. According to Freud, to this process of C. ("sublimation") all progress in social life, art, science and civilization in general are due,

at least insofar as they depend on psychic factors. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 120).

Classic

(lat. *Classicus*; in. *Classic*; fr. *Classique*; al. *Klassische*, it. *Classic*). In late Latin, this adjective designated one who is excellent in his class or who belongs to an excellent class (especially the military class). Aulus Gélío (*Noct. At.*, XIX, 8.15) opposed the writer C. to the "proletarian" writer (*proletarius*). [...] But the diffusion of this word to designate an excellent and ancient way or style, in art and in life, is due to Romanticism, which always liked to define and understand itself in relation to "classicism". According to Hegel, the classical character is defined as the total union of the ideal content with the sensible form. The ideal of art finds its perfect realization in C. art: the sensible form was transfigured, subtracted from finitude, and entirely conformed to the infinity of the Concept, that is, of the Self-conscious Spirit. And this happens because, in art C, the infinite Idea has found the ideal form in which to express itself, that is, the human figure. However, the defect of C. art is that it is art, art in its entirety, but nothing more. Compared to it, Romantic-Christian art is at a higher level, since in it the unity of the divine nature with human nature (that is, of the infinite and the finite) becomes self-conscious and, therefore, is no longer expressed in a formal way. external, but its expression is interiorized and spiritualized. In romantic art, beauty is no longer physical and external, but purely spiritual, because it is the beauty of interiority as such, of subjectivity infinite in itself (*Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, ed. Glockner, II, pp. 109ff.) . From these ideas of Hegel, repeated in little different form by numerous writers of the Romantic period, was born the conventional ideal of classicism as measure, balance, serenity and harmony, against which Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian spirit (see APOLLINEAN) represented the first reaction. Cf. the articles by Tatarkiewicz and others in *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 1958, 1 (n. 43). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p.147).

Communication

(in. *Communication*; fr. *Communication*; al. *Kommunikation*; it. *Co-municazione*). Philosophers and sociologists use this term today to designate the specific character of human relationships that are or can be relationships of reciprocal participation or understanding. Therefore, this term becomes synonymous with "coexistence" or "life with others" and indicates the set of specific modes that human coexistence can assume, as long as it is a matter of "human" modes, that is, in which there remains certain possibility of participation and understanding. In this sense, C. has nothing in common with coordination and unity. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 161).

Culture

(in. *Culture*; fr. *Culture*; al. *Kul-tur*; it. *Cultura*). This term has two basic meanings. In the first it is older, it means the *formation* of man, his improvement and his refinement. F. Bacon considered the C. in this sense as "the georgic of the spirit" (*De augm. scient.*, VII, 1), thus clarifying the metaphorical origin of this term. In the second meaning, it indicates the product of this formation, that is, the set of cultivated, civilized, polished ways of living and thinking, which also; they are also usually indicated by the name of civilization (v.). The passage from the first to the second meaning occurred in the 16th century. XVIII by the work of Enlightenment philosophy, which can be clearly seen in this excerpt from Kant: "In a rational being, culture is the ability to choose one's ends in general (and therefore to be free). Therefore, only C. can be the ultimate end that nature is able to present to the human race" (*Crít. of Judgment*, § 83). As an "end", C. is a product (rather than being produced) of the "georgics of the soul". In the same sense, Hegel said: "A people makes progress within itself, it has its development and its twilight. What is found here, above all, is the category of C, of its exaggeration and its degeneration: for a people, this last it is the product or source of ruin" (*Phil. der Ges-chichte*, ed. Lasson, p. 43). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 225).

Becoming

(gr. *TíyveoGat*; lat. *Fieri*; in. *Becoming*; fr. *Devenir*; al. *Werdent*; it. *Diveniré*).

1. Same as change.

2. A particular form of change, the absolute or substantial change that goes from nothing to being or from being to nothing. This is the concept of Aristotle and Hegel. Aristotle stated: "D. is said in many senses: beside that which comes to be absolutely (ὄτ' ἄνωγε), there is that which comes to be this or that. The absolute D. is only of substances: the other things that come to be being necessarily need a subject, since quantity, quality, relation, time, and place come into being only in reference to a certain subject; and while substance cannot be ascribed as a predicate to anything else, all other things can be attributed as predicate to a substance" (*Pts.*, I, 7, 190 to 30). Heraclitus made becoming itself the principle of reality. It should be noted, however, that becoming, in Heraclitus, although it is pure flow, is subject to a law: the law of measure, which regulates the incessant lighting up and extinction of worlds. Parmenides and the Eleatics took, in this respect, a position opposite to that of Heraclitus. Since reason does not apprehend becoming, they declare that the reality that becomes is pure appearance; true being is immovable: before Heraclitus's "everything flows", they proclaimed "everything remains". (MORA, 2004, p.70).

1. Change is considered in itself, as a process and passage from one state to another. In this sense, it is in opposition to the states static and perfect that serve as a point of reference. 2. A series of changes in modes of Being. In this sense it is in opposition to Being as unchangeable. (LALANDE 1999, p. 253). 3. A special form of change, which goes from Nothingness to Being or from Beingness to Nothingness. In this sense, it is opposed to Being as immutable, but it does not deny it, in fact, it confirms it. (ABBAGNANO 1998, p. 268).

Signifying both the process of Being (meanings 2 and 3) and Being as a process (meaning 1), Becoming opposes the notion of immobile Being and establishes the concept of change as a constituent of reality. It is happening, becoming, moving, transforming, passing. It is necessary, however, to address the issue of change and the meaning of this change. To consider Becoming in a teleological way is to consider it a finalistic process (meaning 3), while it is possible,

as much as necessary, to also consider it a state of continuous and simple transformation: indistinction, chaos... (meaning 2). The whole of philosophy found itself entangled in the problem of Becoming. Inapprehensible by rationality for the simple fact of not having a detectable sufficient or necessary reason, Becoming was and is a recurrent problem until the present day. We could say that Philosophy is born in the face of the questioning of Becoming as a sensible reality, just as it develops in the questioning of man in the face of this perception. The question of Becoming goes beyond the question of foundation; of what is primary and persisting against what is transitory and derivative. The question of Becoming is in what constitutes the perception of change: if it is a constituent of the foundation or if it is derived from it and, therefore, transitory.

Critical analysis: The search for the *quid*, the foundation from which all things derive, undertaken by the so-called naturalist philosophers (or pre-Socratics, from *physis*) was a way of defining the status of Becoming within reality, brought to the point of fact by Parmenides and Heraclitus in opposing positions (at least in this regard). But Devir was not always a problem. Until the advent of Philosophy in Ancient Greece, Greece itself, the ancient civilizations before it and contemporary to it (Assyrians, Babylonians, Chinese, Egyptian Indians, Persians and Hebrews) obtained their knowledge from Technique. That is, they undertook a dialectic between their needs and the possibility via trial and error, culturally incorporating what generated results. To preserve the result, they created mythical narratives that fixed them culturally. In the Greece of the c. VI BC problematization is born and with it the Theory: a way of thinking and a new mentality that anticipates and conjectures the applicability of the different techniques in other areas of knowledge, as well as the formulation of general principles that guide the techniques from the theory. A new type of knowledge, commonly called philosophical-scientific, was inaugurated in Greece during this period. (MARCONDES 2006, p. 19).

It should be noted, however, that there is no clear and strict break between what we call mythical thinking and philosophical thinking. There are at its extremes. The passage from one to the other is tenuous, without ruptures, although we can outline the factors that make them distance themselves in each phase.

In this aspect, it is possible to delimit mythical thought from a rational human explanation sought within its relation of necessity with the environment. In all cultures, man identifies an indistinct initial state (Chaos for some or Unity for others) and, from that state, one has the perception of the multiplicity that walks towards Order; or even the "customization" (which is a meaningful order) of this indistinct initial state to an intelligibility. The Homeric and, mainly, the Hesiodic mythical narratives organize with meaning (and therefore rationally) the diverse scattered narratives that, historically, composed the identity of the Greek people. Its pedagogical aspect incorporates the identity semantic field, but it is possible to abstract from it a whole rationality in the form of composition. (MIRANDA, Gilberto Jr.).

Style

(in. *Style*; fr. *Style*; al. *Stil*; it. *Stil *). Set of characteristics that distinguish a certain form of expression. In its origin, in the century. In the 18th century, the notion of style was expressed by the French motto *le style c'est homme m me* is considered the manifestation in expressive form of the characteristics of the subject in his relationship with the material used. Hegel considered this conception too restricted and included in the E. also the determinations that the conditions of the art in question produce in the expressive form; in this sense, one can distinguish, p. eg, in music the *Gregorian E.* of the *operatic E.*; in painting, the *historical E.* of the *generic E.*, etc. (*Vorlesungen  ber die Asthe-tik*, ed. Glockner, I, pp. 394-95). In this sense, the E. would not be the man, but the *thing* itself. In any case, however, the E. would be a certain uniformity of characters, to be found in a certain domain of the expressive world. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 375).

Totalitarian Aesthetics

It is a type of aesthetic manifestation typical of totalitarian regimes and their phenomena of the 20th century, such as Nazism, Fascism, Stalinism, Maoism and even Salazarism. Totalitarian art is an indisputable type of mass culture that peculiarly uses the cultural industry under strict state control (and state policies for cultural production). This aesthetic, then, is generally considered typical of,

as well as resulting from, Advertising Art and design, eventually allied to the use of State Violence. In this way, more current thinkers, such as Noam Chomsky, point to the existence of another form of totalitarian aesthetics, basically supported by propaganda and reigning within the scope of Western democracies. (WIKTIONARY).

Expressionism

It understands art as an expression of the artist's inner world and, therefore, admits the deformation or alteration of the colors and shapes of the objects represented. In a broad sense, the term applies to a work of art in which subjective aspects predominate. "In Germany, a group known as 'Expressionists' felt that art should express the artist's feelings and not images of the real world. From 1905 to 1930, distorted, exaggerated forms, colors intended to have an emotional impact dominated art. The subjective bias on which much of 20th-century art is based began with van Gogh, Gauguin and Munch in the late 19th century and continued with the Belgian painter James Ensor (1860-1949) and the Austrians Gustave Klimt (1862- 1918), Egon Schiele (1890-1918) and Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980). But it was in Germany, with two groups called 'Die Brücke' and 'Der Blaue', that Expressionism reached maturity." (Strickland). [...] "Expressionism is an opposition to the realism that characterized Impressionism. Expressionism is less concerned with the reproduction of the outside world, its forms and harmonies, and more with transferring to the work of art the emotional impact, of the artist's inner feelings and experiences." (Marcondes). The term has merged into common parlance, and today any artist can be considered "expressionist" if they exaggerately distort form and apply paint subjectively, intuitively and spontaneously, says Shulamith Behr, professor of 20th Century German Art at the "Courtauld Institute of Art", in London ("Expressionism". 2nd ed. São Paulo: Cosac and Naify, 2001). Artists: Beckman, Van Gogh, Heckel, Jawlensky, Kirchner, Kokoschka, Marc, Munch, Nolde, Pechstein, Rouault, Schiele, Schmidt-Rottluff, Soutine. Erich Heckel, Fritz Bleyl, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff founded in Dresden on 07 June. 1905, the group "Die Brücke" (The

Bridge), beginning of German expressionism. These artists wanted to free expression and social habits from academic canons and bourgeois good taste. They aspired to create forms of expression and transform moral values and behavior. Max Pechstein, Otto Mueller and Emil Nolde joined the group. The group's innovative aesthetic included the use of bold colors, a fast compositional style, a rustic appearance, and the depiction of nude figures. The artists were inspired by images of African, oceanic and Asian cultures, known through publications, museums and anthropological exhibitions (Folha de S. Paulo, São Paulo, 24 Feb. 2005, p. E3). (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

Existentialism

(in. *Existentialism*; fr. *Existentialisme*; al. *Existentialismus*; it. *Esistenzialismo*). This term has been used to indicate, since approximately 1930, a set of philosophies or philosophical currents whose common characteristic is not the presuppositions and conclusions (which are different), but the instrument that would be used to analyze existence. These currents understand the word *existence* (v.) in meaning 39, that is to say, as man's own way of being insofar as it is a way of being in the world, in a given *situation*, analyzable in terms of *possibility*. Existential analysis is, therefore, the analysis of the most common or fundamental situations in which man finds himself. In these situations, obviously, man never is and never contains the infinite totality, the world, being or nature. Therefore, for the E., the term existence has a completely different meaning from that of other terms such as consciousness, spirit, thought, etc, which serve to internalize or, as the saying goes, make reality or the world in its entirety "immanent" in man. To exist means to *relate* with the world, that is, with things and with other men, and as these are non-necessary relationships in their various modalities, the situations in which they are configured can only be analyzed in terms of *possibilities*. (v.). This type of analysis was made possible by *phenomenology*. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 405).

Photography

Photographing is not just taking a portrait. Since the first photograph of a human being, taken in 1839 by Louis J.M. Daguerre

(1789 – 1851), photographers advanced and greatly expanded the operative capacity of photography. Julia Margaret Cameron (1815 – 79) was the first to have special lenses and the first to take out-of-focus photographs in order to convey a mood. Cameron photographed portraits of friends, including Tennyson, Carlyle, Browning, Darwin and Longfellow. I have always tried to faithfully record the inner greatness as well as the traits of the outer man, Cameron said. The photograph thus taken was almost the embodiment of a prayer, she concluded. Nadar (1820 – 1910) also photographed portraits. He conceived the pose, had the person pose, and lit the figure in such a way as to emphasize its character traits. At the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, influenced by modernism, photographers, already free of the inferiority complex in relation to painting, began to express their personal vision of the world and concentrated on tense compositions and pure form. In post-modernism came the introspective style and the photographer, with the more subjective use of the camera, expressed more feelings. A good photograph fully expresses feeling, and the photographer is "an instrument of love and revelation", as Ansel Adams (1902–84) put it. In contemporary photography, the main trait is diversity. (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

Photorealism or Hyperrealism

The term refers to an artistic trend that took place in the late 1960s, especially in New York and California, United States. It is about the resumption of realism in contemporary art, going against the directions opened by minimalism and formal research in abstract art. Less than a retreat from the realist tradition of the 19th century, the "new realism" takes root in the contemporary scene, say its adherents, and benefits from modern life in all its dimensions: it provides the material (themes) and the means (materials and techniques) used by artists. 🇧🇷 Hyper-realism or photorealism, as some prefer, the terms allow us to capture the ambition to reach the image in its objective clarity, based on a close dialogue with photography. Hyperrealists "make pictures that look like photographs", says critic Gilles Aillaud on the occasion of an

exhibition at the National Center of Contemporary Art in Paris, in 1974.

works, which does not mean that artists fail to point out the differences between painting and photography. Richard Estes (1932), one of the great exponents of the new style, is emphatic: "I don't believe that photography gives the last word about reality". Even so, he says, "photorealism could not exist without photography". If painting and photography cannot be confused, the photographic image is a permanent resource of the "new realists", being used in different ways. The photo is used, above all, as a means of obtaining information from the world, painting is based on it. The painter works with movements frozen by the camera as a first record, in a precise moment. If the living model - person or scene - permanently suffers interference from the environment and is, therefore, always in motion, the image recorded by the machine is crystallized, immune to any immediate external effect, which gives it a tone of unreality. . (...) The resumption of figuration after the Second World War (1939-1945) had already been undertaken by pop art, from the 1950s onwards, with the help of symbols taken from mass culture and everyday life. The rejection of the "hermeticism" of contemporary art, the attraction for themes and technical resources offered by the modern world, as well as the desire to depict reality in a detailed and impersonal way brings hyper-realism closer to pop art. The recognition of these affinities does not prevent the location of strong distances between the two movements. Pop art preferentially turns to the standardized objects of mass society and to the icons of the media world, such as the images of Marilyn Monroe worked by Andy Warhol (1928-1987). Hyperrealism makes use of clichés, prefabricated images and everyday elements, but in the opposite direction: seeking to give them the value of particular works. Thus, it removes the mass image from its usual circuit, recovering it as a unique art object. The human figure, for example, less than an icon or anonymous subject, has a name, age and specific characteristics, meticulously registered by the painter. It is, according to McLean, "re-authenticating the photographed event as a pure pictorial event". The everyday world portrayed by hyperrealists, in general, refers to banal aspects, to familiar scenes

and attitudes, to details captured by precise observation. (ITAU CULTURAL ENCICLOPEDIA).

Genius, Talent and Originality

(in. *Genius*; fr. *Génie*; aL. *Genie*; it. *Geniό*). From the second half of the century. In the 17th century, this term began to be indicated (which, according to Varrão, originally indicated "the divinity that is preposed to each of the generated things and that has the capacity to generate them", S. AUGUSTINE, *De civ. Dei*, VII, 13) inventive or creative talent in its superior manifestations. Pascal already uses this word in this sense: "The great geniuses have their empire, their splendor, their greatness, their victories and they don't need carnal greatness, which has nothing to do with what they seek" (*Pensées*, 793). And La Bruyère said: "It is less difficult for great geniuses to come across great and sublime things than to avoid any kind of error" (*Characters*, 1687, ch. 1). The aesthetics of the century. XVIII reduced the notion of G. to the domain of art. Kant (probably inspired by an English work by GERARD, *Essay on Genius*, 1774) defends this point of view: "The talent of discovering is called genius. But this name is only given to the artist, to the one who knows how to *do* something, not to the one who knows and knows a lot; and it is not given to the artist who only imitates, but to those who are capable of producing their work with originality; finally, it only happens when its product is *masterful*, when, on merit, it deserves to be imitated" (*Antr.*, § 57). This is the meaning of the definition of G. that Kant gives in the *Critique of Judgment* as "talent (gift natural) that dictates rules to art". As a talent, G. escapes all rules; but as a creator of exemplars, he distinguishes himself from any extravagance. It is nature because he does not act rationally; and it is nature that dictates rules to art. Kant observes that, precisely because of these last characteristics, "the word G. derived from *genius*, which means the very spirit of man, what was given to him at birth, which protects and directs him, from whose suggestions come the original ideas" (*Critique of Judgment*, § 46) (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 481). **Genius** is a **talent**, and talent consists in producing that which cannot be given any determined rule, which is why **originality** is the first property of genius" (Kant). It is attributed to the Chevalier de La Palice (Jacques de Chabannes), Marshal of

France (1470-1525), the **distinction between talent and genius**: "Talent consists in doing with ease everything that is considered difficult; genius in making everything easy as talent thought impossible." (...) "The artist must do what has to be done, not what is expected of him". (Waltércio Caldas, contemporary plastic artist). "Is the artist an incarnation of God, who wants to convey new perceptions to humanity?" "The real tradition in great things is not to repeat what others have done, but to rediscover the spirit that created these great things – and to create totally different ones at different times." (Paul Valéry).

Grotesque

(in. *Grotesque*; fr. *Grotesque*; al. *Groteske*; it. *Grottescò*). A kind of comic, distinguished by modern treatise writers. It is characterized by Santayana as "an interesting effect, produced by the transformation of an ideal type, which exaggerates one of its elements or combines it with those of other types". In that case it is considered "its divergence from the natural type and not from its internal possibility" (*Sense of Beauty*, 1896, § 64). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 492).

History

For **Hegel**, the necessary and providential character of H. derives from the belief that H. is the work of an Absolute Reason whose perfection and whose power knows no limits. A slightly attenuated form of this conception is the one that considers H. as a *revelation* from God. This concept is not alien to Hegel himself, for whom God's revelation in the world and God's realization coincide. But he points to the attenuation of the relationship between the two concepts of revelation and fulfillment. (...) **Kant** in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), in turn, overcoming the limitations of Cartesianism, proposes a philosophy of the Enlightenment that reconciles the "positive/empirical" with the "rational/logical". Briefly, then, it can be said that the philosophy of the Enlightenment establishes the reciprocity between "subject" and "object", "internal truth" and "external reality", which was lacking in Descartes' systematic thought. It is in these terms that the Kantian-positive

demand for *adaequatio res et intellectus* arises, which is the condition/dilemma of all knowledge that claims to be scientific. In this way, the path of knowledge unfolds indefinitely, as it depends both on the nature of the object (*res*) and on the specific force of thought (*intellectus*). On the other hand, from the sociological perspective, **Marxism** considers H. as a unilinear and progressive process that, through class struggle, will necessarily lead to a classless society, which is the perfect society. Marx says, by the way, that the passage to the new society will occur "with the same fatality that presides over the phenomena of nature" (*Das Kapital*, I, 24, § 7). The notion of the historical world, like all totalitarian notions and the notion of the *world* itself, is beyond the effective capacities of investigation and understanding available to man. H. as an *object of historiography* is never a world in this sense, that is, the absolute totality of human events. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p.507).

Historicism and Anti-historicism

Historicism (in. *Historicism*; fr. *Histo-ricisme*; al. *Historismus*; it. *Storicismo*) was the term first used by Novalis (*Werke*, III, p. 173), from which three lines of thought can be understood. different, namely: **1st** Doctrine according to which reality is history (development, rationality and necessity) and that all knowledge is historical knowledge; it was expressed by Hegel (cf. especially *Geschichte der Philosophie*, I, intr.) and by Croce (*La storia come pensiero e come azione*, 1938, p. 51). This is the fundamental thesis of *romantic* idealism (v.), which assumes the coincidence between the finite and the infinite, between the world and God, and considers history as the realization of God. It can be called *absolute H.* **2nd.** God's revelation in H. substantially occurs through faith, or in other words, in history there is God's revelation in the sense of considering that each moment of history is in direct relation with God and is permeated with the transcendent values that He included in history, a concept defended by E. Troeltsch and F. Meinecke (cf. the entry HISTORY, 3, e). **3rd** The doctrine that the units whose succession history constitutes (Epochs or Civilizations) are global organisms whose elements, necessarily linked, can only live together; it affirms, therefore, the relativity between values (which

are some of these elements) and the historical unit to which they belong; the death of these elements being inevitable with the death of this unit. This is the view of Spengler and others, and it may be called *H. relativist*. **4th** The current of German philosophy that, in the last decades of the 20th century. XIX and in the first of the century. XX, debated the *critical problem* of history. The fact that, in the century In the 19th century, historical disciplines were raised to the level of science, creating a problem analogous to what **Kant** proposed with regard to the natural sciences: the problem of the possibility of historical science, that is, of its validity (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 508) and **Anti-historicism** (in. *Antibistoricisni*; fr. *Antihistoricisme*, ai. *Antihistorismus*; it. *An-tistoricism*) is the term used mainly by Croce to designate the Enlightenment, which, as "abstract rationalism", would have considered "reality divided into above history and history, in a world of ideas or values and in an inferior world that reflects or has reflected them up to now in a fugitive and imperfect way and to which it will be convenient to impose them once and for all, making imperfect history, or history, succeed. pure and simple, a perfect rational reality" (*Lastoria*, p. 51). From this point of view, all doctrines that distinguish what is from what should be are "anti-historical", that is, that do not admit the Hegelian identification between reality and rationality. Indeed, the Enlightenment is not "anti-historicism" but "anti-traditionalism", for it constituted the first and most radical condemnation of tradition as the bearer and guarantor of truth. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 63).

Idealism and German Idealism

Kant formulates his own idealism, the only one he thinks acceptable: transcendental idealism. This underlines the role of rank in knowledge. Kantian transcendental idealism differs from what Kant calls "material idealism" in the fact that it is not incompatible with "empirical realism", but actually justifies it. It is not claimed, therefore, that external objects do not exist or that their existence is problematic; it is only asserted that the existence of external objects is not knowable by immediate perception. Kantian transcendental idealism does not base knowledge on the given, but on the whole

makes the given a function of the rank. Post-Kantian German idealism offers many different aspects in its great representatives: it is characteristic of all of them to have dispensed with the “thing in itself”. For this reason, it is sometimes thought that authentic idealism coincides with post-Kantian German idealism. In such idealism the world is equated with “the representation of the world”, which does not mean the subjective and empirical representation. In fact, as soon as it is a representation, it is a matter of representing, that is to say, of a representative activity that its subject exercises and that in this way conditions the world. Contemporary idealism, comprising at least the idealist currents from the last two decades of the nineteenth century onwards, has taken various forms, but in most cases has been based on one of the types of idealism manifested during the modern era. (MORA, 2004, p. 129).

Messianic Judaism

It is the name of a religious branch that accepts Jewish religious traditions, but also believes in the figure of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah expected by Jewish prophetic tradition. We highlight this topic precisely to differentiate Judaism from Messianic Judaism since the latter is not considered Judaism by most Jews. [...] General Judaism in all its branches rejects Messianic Judaism as Judaism. For them, Messianic Judaism is just a religious artifice for disguising Christian doctrines in a Jewish guise to become more easily assimilated by Jews. As for Christianity, despite its opposition to historic Messianic-Jewish movements such as the sect of the Nazarenes and the Ebionites, it accepts (the evangelical denominations) Modern Messianic Judaism which is an offshoot of these denominations. According to Michael Löwy in *Redemption and Utopia*, *Jewish Messianism* contains two trends that are at the same time closely linked and contradictory: a *restorative* one, aimed at re-establishing an ideal state of the past, a lost golden age, a broken Edenic harmony, and a current *utopian*, aspiring to a radically new future, to a state of affairs that never existed. The proportion between the two tendencies may vary, but the messianic idea only crystallizes from their combination. They are inseparable, a dialectical relationship that Scholem admirably highlights: “Even the restorative current conveys utopian elements and, in utopia,

restoration factors are present.” [...] This entirely new world still contains aspects that clearly depend on the old world, but the old world itself is no longer identical with the world's past; it is rather a past transformed and transfigured by the explosive dream of utopia.” (LÖWY, 1989, p. 20/21).

Enlightenment

(in. *Enlightenment*; fr. *Phi-losophiedes lumières*, al. *Aufklàrung*; it. *Illuminismo*). Philosophical line characterized by the commitment to extend reason as a critic and guide to all fields of human experience. In this sense, Kant wrote: "The I. is the departure of men from the state of *minority* due to themselves. Minority is the inability to Use one's own intellect without the guidance of another. This *minority* will be due to them if it is not caused by intellectual deficiency, but by lack of decision and courage to use the intellect as a guide. '*Sapere aude!* Have courage to use your intellect!' is the motto of I." (*Was ist Aufklarung?*, in *Op.*, ed. Cassirer, IV, p. 169). [...] By modern I. it is commonly understood the period that goes from the last decades of the century. XVII to the last decades of the century. XVIII: this period is often called simply I. or century of lights. [...] The I.'s own critical attitude is well expressed in its resolute hostility *to tradition*. In tradition, the I. sees a hostile force that keeps alive beliefs and prejudices that it is his duty to destroy. What has been improperly called Enlightenment *anti-historicism* is really anti-traditionalism: the refusal to accept the authority of tradition and to recognize in it any value independent of reason. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 535/536).

Cultural Industry

(German: *Kulturindustrie*) is a term coined by German philosophers and sociologists Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) and Max Horkheimer (1895-1973), members of the Frankfurt School. The term appears in the chapter *Kulturindustrie - Aufklàrung als Massenbetrug* in the work *Dialektik der Aufklàrung* (Dialectic of Enlightenment), from 1947. While the terms "mass culture" or "popular culture" refer to the idea that there is a culture of elite, when it should refer to the

culture produced by the people, or even, for the people, the concept of Cultural Industry clarifies that the artistic or cultural contents belonging to a market logic, becomes, automatically, merchandise. Therefore, the term "cultural industry" was used as a replacement for the term "mass culture", in order to exclude in advance the interpretation that it is a culture that arises spontaneously from the masses, such as popular culture. (COELHO, T.). In *Kulturindustrie - Aufklärung als Massenbetrug* in the work *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Dialectic of Enlightenment) from 1947, Adorno and Horkheimer discuss the term as follows: "By far surpassing the theater of illusions, the film no longer leaves fantasy and thought spectators no dimension in which they can, without losing the thread, walk and wander within the frame of the filmic work, remaining, however, free from the control of its exact data, and it is precisely in this way that the film trains the spectator surrendered to it to become immediately identify with reality. Today, the atrophy of the cultural consumer's imagination and spontaneity need not be reduced to psychological mechanisms. The products themselves (...) paralyze these capacities by virtue of their own objective constitution." (ADORNO & HORKHEIMER, 1997:119). The ear has not

consequences for him who can only nod to be released, but too late: his companions, who cannot hear, know only the danger of the song, not its beauty, and leave him tied to the mast to save him and themselves. They reproduce the oppressor's life at the same time as his own, and he can no longer escape his social role. The bonds by which he is irrevocably chained to praxis at the same time keep the sirens at a distance from praxis: their temptation is neutralized into a pure object of contemplation, into art. The chained person attends a concert listening immobile, as a concert audience will do, and his passionate cry for liberation is lost in applause. Thus, artistic pleasure and manual work are separated in the farewell to the anteworld. The epic already contains the correct theory. Cultural goods are in exact correlation with commanded work and both are based on the ineluctable coercion of social domination over nature (ADORNO & HORKHEIMER, 1997:45).

Hitler Youth or Pimpf

The Hitler Youth or Hitler Youth (in German, *Hitlerjugend*) or *Pimpf* was a mandatory institution for young people in Nazi Germany, which aimed to train German children and adolescents aged 6 to 18 of both sexes for Nazi interests. Young people organized themselves into paramilitary groups and militias. These groups of individuals, indoctrinated by the state, existed between 1922 and 1945. Before the Hitler Youth was a relatively small movement, as of 1936 with mandatory conscription, 3.6 million members had been recruited, by 1938 the number reached 7.7 million. In 1939, already in the pre-war period, a general recruitment order was enacted. In 1936, Hitler unified the youth organizations and announced that all young Germans should join the Jungvolk (Young People) at age 10, when they could be trained in extracurricular activities, which included playing sports and camping, as well as indoctrination to Nazism. At age 14, young people were supposed to enter the Hitler Youth, subjecting themselves to semi-military discipline as well as outside activities and Nazi propaganda. Parallel to the Hitler Youth, there was the League of German Girls, where girls learned the duties of motherhood and domestic chores, and, like boys, learned the true goals of Nazism, and what to do to achieve them. At age 18, they were required to enlist in the armed forces or the labor force. (BARTOLETTI, Susan Campbell).

Historical Materialism

(in. *Historical materialism*; fr. *Matérialisme historique*; al. *Historischer Materialismus*; it. *Materialismo storic*d). With this name Engels designated the canon of historical interpretation proposed by Marx, more precisely that which consists of attributing to economic factors (work and production techniques, labor and production relations) preponderant weight in the determination of historical events. The assumption of this canon is the anthropological point of view defended by Marx, according to which the human personality is *intrinsically* constituted (in its very nature) by work and production relations in which man participates to provide for his needs. Man's "conscience" (his religious, moral, political beliefs, etc.) is the result of these relationships, not their presupposition. This point of view was

defended by Marx mainly in the work *German Ideology* (*Deutsche Ideologie*, 1845-46). In view of this, the thesis of the historical M. is that the forms assumed by society throughout its history depend on the prevailing economic relations in certain phases of it. Marx says: "In their productive life in society, men participate in certain relations that are necessary and independent of their will: relations of production that correspond to a certain stage of development of their material productive forces. This set of relations of production constitutes the economic *structure* of society, which is the real basis on which a legal and political *superstructure* is erected and to which certain social forms of consciousness correspond. (...) Therefore, the mode of production of material life in general conditions the process of social life , political and spiritual" (*Zur Kritik derpolitischen Okonomie*, 1859, Pref.; trans. it., p. 17). Marx elaborated this theory mainly in opposition to Hegel's point of view, for which it is consciousness that determines the social being of man; for Marx, on the contrary, it is man's social being that determines his consciousness. However, one should not think that Marx was a partisan of economic fatalism, according to which economic conditions would necessarily lead man to certain forms of social life. In these economic relations, which depend on techniques of work, production, exchange, etc., man is an active and conditioning element. Therefore, the conditionality that the economic structure exerts on social superstructures is at least in part a self-conditionality of man in relation to himself (*Deutsche Ideologie*, I, C; trans. it., pp. 69 ff.). Engels then spoke of the "inversion of historical praxis", that is, of an opposing reaction of human consciousness to the action of material conditions on it. But from Marx's point of view, this inversion is not necessary, since it is not the superstructure that reacts to the structure, but the man who, intervening with his techniques to change or improve the economic structure, conditions himself through it. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p.652).

Metaphysics

(from ancient Greek μετα [*metà*] = after, in addition to; and Φυσις [*physis*] = nature or physics; lat. *Metaphysica*; in. *Methaphysik*; fr. *Métaphysique*, al. *Metaphysik*; it. *Metaphysics*). *First science,*

because it has as its object the object of all the other sciences, and as its principle a principle that conditions the validity of all the others. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p.660).

Mimesis, Metexis or mimesis

(μίμησις from μιμείσθαι) Greek imitation or representation. Participation. Basic theoretical principle of artistic creation, which defines the imitation of nature, in a representative sense and not as a mere copy (Plato, 2004, p.87). This word was used by Plato to indicate one of the possible modes of relationship between sensible things and ideas (*Parm.*, 132 d). The other ways in which Plato conceived this same relation are: *mimesis* or imitation (*Rep.*, 597 a; *Tim.*, 50 c) and *presence of the idea* in things (*Fed.*, 100 d).

Minimalism

Minimalism refers to a trend in the visual arts that takes place in the late 1950s and early 1960s in New York, raised to the main artistic center with the abstract expressionism of Jackson Pollock (1912 - 1956) and Willem de Kooning (1904 - 1997). The cultural effervescence of the 1960s in the United States can be gauged by the various counterculture movements and by the coexistence of disparate artistic expressions - from pop art, made famous by Andy Warhol (1928 - 1987), to the performances of Fluxus - each one exercising a critical temperament private. Minimalism appears in this scenario with its own diction, contrary to the romantic exuberance of abstract expressionism. (ITAU CULTURAL ENCICLOPEDIA).

Modernism and Postmodernism (globalization)

Nilson Thomé, in his article *Considerations on Modernity, Post-Modernity in the Historical Foundations of Education in the Contested*, clarifies **post-modernism** in the following terms: “Welcome to post-modernism: to the world of the media spectacle, of the disappearance of reality, the end of history, the death of Marxism and a large number of other allegations of this millennium” [...] (Nilson Thomé). Stabile reiterates: “Society has moved closer to the edge of the now level world, postmodernists claim, and the only

thing we can know for sure is that we cannot understand what brought us there or what lies below us. into the abyss.” (STABILE, 1999, p. 146). For Stabile, postmodernism is imprecisely identified as a historical epoch – the post-industrial, post-Fordist or even post-capitalist society – where consumption took precedence over production, making the class struggle (a society divided between workers and capitalists) an obsolete concept, meaning that “people no longer identify themselves as a class, but through more particular identities, that is, small groups” (op. cit., p. 147). In her assessment of post-modernity and popular movements, she understands that the

totalizing principles of modernity and enlightenment, including appeals to rationality, progress, humanity and justice, and even to the ability to represent reality, were fatally undermined in the postmodernist perspective. The relations between **modernism** and **postmodernism** are ambiguous. Current individualism, for example, was born with modernism, but its narcissistic exaggeration is a postmodern addition. The old man, product of industrial civilization, mobilized the masses for broad political struggles; the man of today, present in post-industrial society, dedicates himself to minorities – sexual, racial, cultural – and, for this very reason, acts only in the micro-cosmos of everyday life. For Aijaz Ahmad, “we have to treat aesthetic postmodernism as an American cultural style at the moment of its **globalization** and, therefore, irretrievably linked to a certain hegemonic tendency that is imperialist in its very origins” (In: WOOD & FOSTER, 1999, p. 63). In this same work, referenced here, in another chapter, Terry Eagleton exposes that postmodernism has several sources - modernism itself; the so-called post-industrialism; the emergence of vital new political forces; the resurgence of the cultural avant-garde; the penetration of cultural life by the commodity format; the decrease of an autonomous space for art; exhaustion of certain classical bourgeois ideologies, and so on (op. cit., p. 29). [...] Since economic globalization is the material basis of postmodernity, as Sanfelice understands it, indicating the irruption of an absolute novelty in the scenario of world economy and politics, we highlight Ianni, who warns us that the historical rupture promoted by the globalism (or globalization) is the same

epistemological rupture that shakes social and mental frames of reference, thus shaking the meanings and connotations of time and space, of geography and history, past and present, biography and memory. Thus, globalization induces us to post-modernity – or vice versa – in the record of profound changes and acceleration of the process of internationalization (or globalization) of capitalism. In the same direction, Milton Santos believes that globalization “is, in a certain way, the apex of the process of internationalization of the capitalist world” (SANTOS, 2003, p. 23). Milton Santos (op. cit., p. 33) reminds us that the history of capitalism can be divided into periods, that is, into pieces of time marked by a certain coherence between its significant variables, which evolve differently, but always within of the same system. He clarifies that one period succeeds another, and that periods are preceded and succeeded by crises, that is, moments in which the established order is compromised. The current period of capitalism, due to the great concentration of capital and power, the deepening of competitiveness, the production of new totalitarianisms, the confusion of minds, the diminution of State power and the impoverishment of the masses, would, however, be at the same time a historical period and a real economic, social, political and moral crisis, hence why the current era appears, for us, as a “new thing” and this novelty is called “globalization”. For José Claudinei Lombardi, globalization and post-modernity are not “conceptions”, but “movements”. As an “ongoing movement”, globalization does not characterize “the death of modernity”, but it is marking the overcoming of the modern. The author understands that the notion of globalization is intended to characterize life in a global world that tends to break or dissolve borders, economies, cultures and societies. The word postmodernity goes in the same direction and is expressing this new global condition of humanity, through which modernity has overcome the beliefs arising from it, such as reason, objectivity, totality and resolutions (NILSON THOMÉ, 2001, p. XXIII).

Objectivism and Subjectivism

Objectivism (in. *Objectivism*; fr. *Objecti-visme*, al. *Objektivismus*, it. *Oggettivismo*) is any doctrine that admits the existence of objects (meanings, concepts, truths, values, norms, etc.) that are valid

independently of beliefs and opinions of the different subjects. (Online Dictionary) and **Subjectivism** (in. *Subjectivism*, fr. *Subjectivisme*, ai. *Subjectivismus*; it. *Soggettivismo*) is a modern term that designates the doctrine that reduces reality or values to states or acts of the subject (universal or individual). In this sense, idealism is S. because it reduces the reality of things to states of the subject (perceptions or representations); similarly, we speak of moral S. and aesthetic S. when good, evil, beautiful or ugly are reduced to individual preferences. This term is most often used with polemical intentions, and therefore its meaning is not very precise. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 922).

Work of art

"The expression work of art designates an object that has no practical function but only the function of communicating an aesthetic message." (Gullar).

Realism

(lat. *Realismus*, in. *Realism*; fr. *Réalisme*, ai. *Realismus*, it. *Realism*). This word began to be used at the end of the century. XV, designating the oldest current of Scholasticism, in opposition to the so-called "modern" current of terminists or nominalists, whose doctrine does not admit the existence of the universal either in the world of things or in thought. The first to use it was probably Silvestro Mazolino de Prieria, in *Compendium dialecticae*, 1496 (cf. PRANTL, *Geschichte der Logik*, IV, p. 292). R. affirmed the reality of universals (genera and species), however understanding this same reality in different ways. In the most general and modern sense, this term was taken up by Kant in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, to indicate, on the one hand, the doctrine (opposed to the one he defended) according to which space and time are independent of our sensibility, which is the transcendental R., and on the other hand a doctrine of his, which admits the external reality of things and which is the *empirical* R.. Kant said: "The transcendental idealist is an empirical realist who attributes to matter, as a phenomenon, a reality that does not need to be deduced, but is immediately perceived" (*Crít. R. Pura*, Ia ed., Transcendental

Dialectic, Critique of the Fourth Paralogism of transcendental psychology). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 834).

Realism in art

"French movement of the late 19th century that sought to realistically represent contemporary life. It was a reaction against the romanticism that preceded it." (Cumming). The proposal of Realism, notes Cumming, "was that art should adopt as its subject the reality of life and show it without elaboration, idealization or sentimentality." "Realism is one of the few terms used in art criticism where the style and the actual meaning of the word are the same." (Strickland). Giotto was the pioneer of realistic representation and Cézanne, in the opposite direction, freed art from the reproduction of reality, reducing reality to its basic components (idem). "The need for realism, both in art and in life, can result from the feeling that fantasy, imagination and speculation have diverted human attention", evaluates James Malpas, critic and art historian, who emphasizes: "The realists they aim for a level of objectivity that 'romantic' abhor." Artists: Gustave Courbet, French, Winslow Homer, North American, James Whistler, North American. "Realism was not and is not an art style. It was and still is an artistic trend that aims to portray common subjects, without distortion or idealization. It is quite different from Naturalism, which is only concerned with the literal transcription of accurate nature. It was stimulated by Coubert, who had the merit of organizing the first exhibition of Realist Art, in Paris, in 1875. For some scholars, it was a movement that opposed the academic naturalism then reigning, in the second half of the 19th century, in Europe." (Marcílio Reinaux) Naturalism is characteristic of art inspired directly by nature, and the artist represents it by reducing his personal interpretation to a minimum. "Naturalism glorifies nature and excludes supernatural and spiritual elements. It can be romantic (with Jean-Jacques Rousseau) or deterministic (with Emile Zola) in literature. (OBOE DICTIONARY OF ARTS).

Representation

(lat. *Repraesentatio*; in. *Re-presentation*; fr. *Représentation*; al. *Vorstellung*; it. *Rappresentazione*). A word of medieval origin that

indicates *image* or *idea*, or both. The use of this term was suggested to the scholastics by the concept of knowledge as the "likeness" of the object. Kant established its very general meaning, considering it the genus of all acts or cognitive manifestations, regardless of their nature as a picture or resemblance (*Crit. R. Pure*, Dialectic, book I, sec. I), and it was in this way that the term came to be used in philosophy. Hamilton advocated the use of this word also in English (*Lectures on Logic*, 2nd ed., 1966, I, p. 126).

Portrait

Representation of an individual figure or a group, made from a live model, documents, photographs, or with the help of memory, the portrait (from the Latin *retrahere*, to copy) in its first sense linked to the idea of *mimesis*. For this reason, it was widely used in academies and art schools for learning the craft and mastering the technique. In painting, the portrait asserts itself as an autonomous genre in the fourteenth century, after being used in Egypt, in the Greek world and in Roman society, with different purposes: commemorative, religious, funerary, etc. *Giovanni the Good* (1360), belonging to the Louvre Museum, is considered one of the first painted portraits known to exist. From then on, the portrait began to occupy a prominent place in European art, crossing different schools and artistic styles. The production of self-portraits follows the development of the genre, from the beginning, constituting a vein widely explored by artists of all times. [...] The diffusion of portraiture follows the aspirations of the court and the urban bourgeoisie to project their images in public and private life. [...] The 18th and 19th centuries provided new contours to portraits, projecting figures from broader social segments (and not just from aristocratic circles) through greater expressive freedom. The reflection on the possibilities and limits of representation crosses the art of the 20th century, and finds particular expression in portraits. A specific example, such as the clash between Alberto Giacometti (1901 - 1966) and one of his models, the writer James Lord, has the advantage of showing, by accompanying the making of a painting, the dilemmas of the modern artist in an attempt to reproduce the that you see, outside the naturalist agenda. Some 20th century artists are directly associated with the genre, such as Amedeo

Modigliani (1884 - 1920), who produced a large number of faces, in general, simplified and elongated forms. After the Second World War (1939-1945), pop art resumed the figure and the portrait in another key: from advertising images, comics, cinema, etc. Also within the so-called hyper-realism, a large number of portraits were produced. After the Second World War (1939-1945), pop art resumed the figure and the portrait in another key: from advertising images, comics, cinema, etc. (ITAU CULTURAL ENCICLOPEDIA).

Romanticism

(in. *Romanticism*; fr. *Romanticisme*; al. *Romanticismus*; it. *Romanticism*). This name is given to the philosophical, literary and artistic movement that began in the last years of the 18th century. XVIII, flourished in the early years of the century. XIX and constituted the characteristic mark of that century. The common meaning of the term "romantic", which means "sentimental", derives from one of the most evident aspects of this movement, which is the appreciation of sentiment, a spiritual category that classical antiquity had ignored or despised, whose strength the 19th century XVIII Enlightenment had recognized, and that in R. it acquired preponderant value. This great appreciation of feeling is the main inheritance received from the *Sturm und Drang* movement, which constitutes the attempt, through mystical experience and faith, to overcome the limits of human reason, recognized by the Enlightenment. According to the philosophers of *Sturm und Drang*, Haman, Herder and Jacobi, one can obtain with faith what reason is not capable of giving, faith being understood as a fact of feeling or immediate experience. But, precisely because of this, for the followers of the *Sturm und Drang* (among whom were Goethe and Schiller in their youth) the reason remained what it had been for the Enlightenment: a limited human force, capable of gradually transforming the world, but which it is neither absolute nor omnipotent, being therefore always more or less in conflict with the world and in struggle with the reality it is destined to transform. From *Sturm und Drang*, one moves to R. only when this concept of reason is abandoned and one begins to understand as reason an infinite (omnipotent) force that inhabits the world and dominates it, constituting its own substance. The principle of *self-awareness*,

infinity of the consciousness that is everything and does everything in the world, is fundamental in R., and from it derive the relevant aspects of the movement. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 860).

Common sense

(gr. KOIVÍÍ aioor|ecaç; lat. *Sensus communis*; in. *Common sense*; fr. *Sens commun*; al. *Gemeinsinn*; it. *Senso comune*). 3- In Kant's doctrine, the common S. is *the principle of taste*, of the faculty of forming judgments about the objects of feeling in general. "Such a principle could only be considered common S., which is essentially different from common intelligence, which is sometimes also called common S. (*sensus communis*), because the latter does not judge according to feeling, but according to concepts, although it is in question generalization of obscurely represented concepts" (*Crit. of Judgment*, § 20). The common intelligence (*Ge-meine Verstand*) in this passage is the common S. of the Latin writers and of the Scottish school, which Kant regards as useless and philosophy (*Prol.*, A 197); this is also the opinion of Hegel and others (cf. R. CANTONI, *Tragic and common sense*, p. 35 ff.) (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 873).

Socialism

(in. *Socialism*; fr. *Socialistne*, al. *Sozialismus*, it. *Socialismo*). This term, which spread in England (as opposed to individualism) in the first decades of the 20th XIX, has two main meanings: a broader meaning, designating, in general, any doctrine that defends or advocates the reorganization of society on collectivist bases. In this sense, they are S. of Plato and Marx, of Owen and Proudhon, of Lenin and Stalin. Refers to this meaning the distinction made by Marx and Engels between *utopian S.*, for which socialist society is an ideal that does not take into account the ways or means of realizing it, and the *scientific S.*, which, without presenting any ideal, it foresees the inevitable advent of socialist society on the basis of the very laws that determine the development of capitalist society (cf. on this distinction, especially: ENGELS, *Antidühring*, 1878, introduction and chap. I of part III). In this sense, the term is very vague and indicates any aspiration, ideal, tendency or doctrine that aims at some transformation of current society in a collectivist sense. 2S In a more restricted sense, by S. are understood the collectivist

currents that distinguish themselves from *communism* (v.) and are opposed to it, while: a) excluding the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat; b) exclude that such dictatorship can be exercised, in the name of the proletariat, by any political party; c) they exclude the radical difference, which is observed in countries with a communist regime, between the quality of life of the ruling elite and that of the majority of citizens; d) exclude the subordination of cultural life to the demands of the party, to the will of its leaders; e) demand respect for the rules of the democratic method. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 912).

Sturm and Drang

This expression, which means "storm and impetus" and was the title of a drama by Klinger, written in 1776, designates a philosophical and literary movement that emerged in Germany in the second half of the 18th century. XVIII and constitutes the immediate antecedent of Romanticism. The peculiar attitudes of this movement are symbolized by the above two words. These are irrationalist manifestations whose philosophical expression is found in the doctrines of Haman, Herder and Jacobi: these refer to the limits imposed by Kant on reason only to go beyond reason and resort to mystical experience or faith (see FAITH, PHILOSOPHY OF). From "S. und Drang" we move on to Romanticism when moving from the Kantian concept of *finite* reason to which faith or feeling is opposed, attributing superior cognitive power to them—to the concept of infinite reason or reason capable of reaching the infinite; this begins with Fichte, in whom the first inspiration of *romanticism* is found. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p.921).

Sublime

(gr. *üyoç*; lat. *Sublime*; in. *Sublime*; al. *Erhaben*; it. *Sublime*). *1st.* Linguistic, literary or artistic form that expresses high or noble feelings or attitudes. According to Kant, the feeling of the S. has two components: 1) apprehension of a disproportionate dimension to the sensitive faculties of man (*mathematical S.*), or of a terrifying *power* for those same faculties (*dynamic S.*); *2nd* the feeling of

being able to recognize this disproportion or threat, and, therefore, of being superior to both. Kant says: "The quality of the feeling of the sublime is that it is, in relation to some object, a feeling of suffering, represented at the same time as *final*; this is possible because our impotence reveals the consciousness of an unlimited power of the same subject, and sentiment can judge the latter aesthetically only through the former" (*Crit. of Judgment*, § 27). Therefore, Kant defines the S. as "that which pleases immediately by its opposition to the interest of the senses" (*Ibid.*, § 29, General note); with this he understands that, by warning the disproportion or the danger that S. represents for his sensitive nature, man realizes that, precisely by warning it, he is not a slave to that nature, but free before it. Hegel, for his part, expressed the typical conflict of the Sublime in the infinite-finite opposition. "The S. is the attempt to express the Infinite, without finding, in the realm of appearances, an object that lends itself to this representation" (*Vorlesungen über die Asthetik*, ed. Glockner, I, p. 483). Therefore, "the forms through which that which manifests itself is also abolished, in such a way that the manifestation of contents is also the overcoming of expressions, is sublimity: therefore, this does not consist", as Kant says, "in the pure subjectivity of feeling and in its power to be above the ideas of reason, but, on the contrary, it is based on the representative meaning, by virtue of which it refers to an Absolute Substance" (*Ibid.*, p. 484). Therefore, Hegel saw in S. a special form of art, more precisely symbolic art. In it, the pain and danger that, for the aesthetics of the 20th century, XVIII, represent the cause of S., were replaced by the ineffability and majesty of Infinite Substance. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 922).

Talent

(lat. *Talentum*; in. *Talent*; fr. *Talent*; al. *Talent*; it. *Talent*). The metaphorical meaning of this term, derived from the evangelical parable of the T. (*Mat.*, 25, 14-30), is of "superiority of the cognitive power, which does not come from teaching but from the subject's natural aptitude". This is the definition of T. found in Kant (*Antr*, I, § 54), who also distinguishes the T. in productive ingenuity, wit and originality: the latter is **genius**. This Kantian doctrine has been repeated many times with little variation; it is even present in

modern psychology, although the importance of the so-called *specific T.* is emphasized. (ABBAGNANO, p. 2000, p.938).

Theory of Knowledge, Epistemology or Gnosiology

(in *Epistemology*; rar. *Gnoseology*; fr. *Gnoséologie*; rar. *Épistemologie*; al. *Erkenntnistheorie*; rar. *Gnoséologie*; it. *Toeria della conoscenza*; *gnoseo-logia* (frequently used); *epistemologia* (less used). In Italian, the most common term is *gnoseologia*. In German, the term *Gnoséologie*, coined by the Wolffian Baumgarten, had little success, whereas the term *Erkenntnistheorie*, employed by the Kantian Reinhold (*Versuch einer neuen Theorie des menschlichen Vorstellungsvermögens*, 1789) was commonly accepted. In English the term *Epistemology* was introduced by J. F. Ferrier (*Institutes of Metaphysics*, 1854) and is the only one commonly used; *Gnoseology* is quite rare. In French, *Gnoséologie* is commonly used and, more rarely, *Épistemologie*. All these names have the same meaning: they do not indicate, as is often naively believed, a general philosophical discipline, such as logic, ethics or aesthetics, but a way of dealing with a problem born of a specific philosophical assumption, within the scope of particular philosophical current, which is idealism. The problem whose treatment is the subject

specific to the theory of C. is the reality of things or, in general, of the "external world". **Gnosiology or Theory of Knowledge** is the branch of philosophy that deals with the validity of knowledge in terms of the knowing subject. The **Knowledge** (gr. YVÜXTIÇ; lat. *Cognitio*, in. *Knowledge*, fr. *Connaissance*, al. *Erkennt-niss*; it. *Conoscenza*). In general, a technique for verifying any object, or the availability or possession of a similar technique. (...) d) Romantic idealism and its contemporary ramifications affirmed the thesis that knowing means positing, that is, producing or creating, the object: a thesis that allows one to recognize in the object itself the manifestation or activity of the subject. [...] The concept of knowing as a process of unification dominates all of Hegel's philosophy. The protagonist of this philosophy, the Idea, is the consciousness that realizes itself, gradually and necessarily, as a unit with the object. Hegel says: "The Idea is, in the first place, one of the extremes of a syllogism, inasmuch as it is the concept that has as its end, above all,

itself as subjective reality. The other extreme is the limit of the subjective, the world. The two extremes are identical in being Idea. Their unity is, first, that of the concept, which in one of them is only for itself and, in the other, only in itself; secondly, reality is abstract in one of them, while in the other it is in its complete exteriority. This unity is placed through knowing" (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, III, chap. II; trans. it., p. 282). Thus, knowing is the process that unifies the subjective world with the objective world, or rather, that brings to consciousness the necessary unity of both. All forms of contemporary idealism hold to this doctrine. [...] By the way, Kant's "Copernican revolution" does not consist in radically innovating this concept of C, but in admitting that the objective order of things is modeled on the conditions of C, not vice versa. The categories are, in fact, considered by Kant as concepts that prescribe *a priori* laws to phenomena and, therefore, to nature as a set of all phenomena" (*Crít. R. Pura*, § 26). Phenomena, not being "things among themselves", but "representations of things", for that they need to be thought and, thus, be submitted to the conditions of thought that are the categories. For Kant, the objective order of nature, therefore, is nothing other than the order of the formal procedures of knowing, insofar as this order is incorporated into an objective content, which is the sensitive material of intuition. From this point of view, knowing is not an operation of assimilation or identification, but of synthesis; and as such must be considered under another aspect, of C. as transcendence. This phase of the doctrine of C. as assimilation, according to which the object of assimilation is order, can be considered to lie between the first and second main interpretation of knowing, that is, in between the interpretation of knowing as assimilation and the interpretation of knowing as transcendence. [...] This concept of C. as an operation of connection or interconnection, which has nothing to do with identification or assimilation with the object, is called by Kant the operation of *synthesis*. Synthesis is, in general, "the act of bringing different representations together and understanding their multiplicity in a C." (*Crít. R. Pure*, § 10). But, for Kant, cognitive synthesis is not only an operation of linking representations: it is also an operation of linking these representations with the object through intuition. "If a C. must have an objective reality", says Kant,

"that is, refer to an object and have meaning and sense in it, the object must be able to be given in any way. Without this, concepts are empty and if one thinks with them, that thought will know nothing, but will only be

playing with representations. Giving an object that is not to be opined indirectly, but immediately represented in intuition, is nothing more than to link its representation with experience (whether this is real or possible)" [*Ibid.*, Analytic of Principles, ch. II. sec. II]. Thinking an object and knowing an object are therefore not the same thing." The C. comprises two points: first, a concept by which an object in general is thought (the category) and, second, intuition with which it is given" (*Ibid.*, § 22). Intuition has the privilege of referring immediately to the object and of, through it, the object being given (*Ibid.*, § 1). doubt that the operation of knowing tends to make the object present in its reality: an object, that is to say, which is a phenomenon, since the "thing in itself", by definition, is foreign to any cognitive relationship. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 174) **Gnosiology** as *Aufklärung* - Etymology: From *aufklären* ("clarify") + *-ung* ("-tion"). inism. The term is described in the *Duden German Philosophy Dictionary* as follows: "*Ihr zufolge ist aufklaerung der ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbest verschuldeten Unmündigkeit.*" According to him, *aufklaerung* (education) is man's way out of his self-imposed minority. (Our translation). (DUDEN, 2002, p.47).

Totalitarianism

(in. *Totalitarianism*; fr. *Totalitarisme*; al. *Etatismus*; it. *Totalitarismo*). Theory or practice of the totalitarian State, that is to say, of the State that intends to identify itself with the lives of its citizens. This term was coined to designate Italian Fascism and German Nazism. It is also sometimes used to designate any absolutist doctrine, in whatever field it refers to (it is used in this sense by G. H. SABINE, *A History of/Political Theory*, 1951, ch. 35; trans. it., pp. 708 ff.). Often, by extension, T. is understood to mean any form of doctrinal or political absolutism. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 963). T. is a form of government in which the leaders of the nation have total control over the rights of the people in favor of the reason of State. In totalitarianism, only one political party is allowed,

headed by an absolute leader, who maintains power using force and violence. Freedom of religion does not exist because the State only allows the existence of those Churches whose ministers cooperate with the government. Free unions are also illegal. The political party determines the economic guidelines that the country will follow. The government exercises complete control over the media and generally eliminates private schools, forcing public schools to teach along the party line. The first modern totalitarian state was created, with the Communist Revolution in Russia, in 1917. Other totalitarian states of the 20th century. XX were Nazi Germany, from 1933 to 1945, and fascist Italy, from 1925 to 1943. (Online Portuguese Dictionary). The concept of Whole accompanied the formation of political liberalism because it served as a touchstone or symbol for everything that liberalism condemned. As such, it also constitutes one of the themes of revolutionary and liberal rhetoric from the 19th century onwards. XVI. Today this term is much less used, not because tyrannical regimes have disappeared or because there is no longer any danger that they will be established even where a certain degree of freedom prevails, but only because it seems to belong to a kind of outdated rhetoric. *Absolutism and totalitarianism* are the terms that replaced tyranny, but the concept has not changed, and these same words still mean: regime in which individual discretion takes the place of law; slavery imposed by slaves; government that cannot be changed or corrected except by violence. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 960).

Traditionalism

Attachment to traditions. Religion System of belief that, in the knowledge of the truth, gives more importance to revelation than to reason.

Tradition

(from Latin: *traditio*, *tradere* = to deliver; in Greek, in the religious sense of the term, the expression is *paradosis* παραδοσις; in. *Tradition*; fr. *Tradition*; al. *Überlieferung*; it. *Tradizione*). Cultural heritage, transmission of beliefs or techniques from one generation to another. In the field of philosophy, resorting to T. implies recognizing the *truth* of T., which, from this point of view, becomes a guarantee of truth and, sometimes, the only possible guarantee. In

Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1783-1791), J. G. Herder praised T. as "a sacred chain that links men to the past, preserves and transmits everything that was done by those who preceded them". Hegel explicitly exalted and even insisted on its providential character: "The T. is not an immobile statue, but lives and flows like a rushing river that grows the more it moves away from the origin. (...) What each generation produced in the field of science and the spirit is a heritage to which all the former world has contributed its economy, it is a sanctuary on whose walls men of all races, grateful and happy, have posted everything that helped them in life, what they drew from from the depths of nature and spirit. And this inheriting is at the same time receiving the inheritance and making it strengthen" (*Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Glock-ner, I, p. 29). In that sense, obviously, T. is just another name for the providential plan of history. This was the dominant point of view throughout Romanticism, so-called *traditionalism* being just one of its manifestations. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 967).

Transcendental

(lat. *Transcendentalis*; in. *Transcendental*; fr. *Transcendental*; al. *Transzendental*; it. *Trascendentale*). With this term or with transcendent, they began to be denominated, at the end of the century. XIII, the properties that all things have in common, which therefore exceed or *transcend* the diversities of genres in which things are distributed. (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 967). [...] for Kant, the T. is not identified with the *a priori* conditions of human knowledge and its objects (which are the phenomena), but it is considered the knowledge (or the science, if there is a science) of these conditions *a priori*. Kant says: "I do not call T. the knowledge that takes care of objects, but the one that takes care of our way of knowing objects, and that it is possible *a priori*" (*Ibid.*, Intr., VII). And clarifies: "One should not call T. any *a priori* knowledge, but only the knowledge that makes it possible to know which representations (intuitions or concept) are applied or are possible exclusively *a priori* and how this happens. That is to say: it is T. the knowledge of the possibility of knowledge or of the use of it *a priori*" (*Ibid.*, Logic, Intr., II; see Prol, § 13, obs. III). From this point of view, T. is not "what is beyond experience", but rather "what

precedes experience (*apriori*) even though it is not intended for anything other than to make simple empirical knowledge possible" (*Prol*, Appendix, note [A 204]). However, it should be noted that KANT does not strictly adhere to this meaning of the term and that he often called T. that which is independent of experience or empirical principles (cf., e.g., *Crit. R. Pure*, The Ideal of the Pure Hand, Section 5, Discovery and Illustration of Dialectical Appearance). In any case, based on the meaning explicitly accepted by Kant, only knowledge that has *a priori* elements as objects, and not these same elements, can be called T.. Therefore, aesthetics, logic and their parts are T., but not pure intuitions, categories or ideas. But even this usage is not rigorous, since Kant calls T. the ideas and the unit T. the *I think* (*ibid.*, § 16). (ABBAGNANO, 2000, p. 971/972).

Avant-garde

Avant-garde character or quality. 2 Cultural, artistic, scientific movement, etc., which has combative and advanced tendencies. (Online Portuguese Dictionary).

B - SPECIFIC GLOSSARY (Kant, Hegel and Walter Benjamin)

Beautiful - Aesthetics – Taste

(gr. Τὸ Καλόν; lat. *Pulchrum*; in. *Beautiful*; fr. *Beau*; al. *Schön*; it. *Bello*). The notion of **Beauty** coincides with the notion of **aesthetic object** only from the 19th century onwards. XVIII; Before the discovery of the notion of taste, B. was not mentioned among the *producible* objects and, therefore, the corresponding notion was not included in what the ancients called *poetics*, that is, the science or art of production. Five fundamental concepts of B. can be distinguished, defended and illustrated both inside and outside aesthetics: 1Q B. as a manifestation of the good; 2Q the B. as manifestation of the true; 3g or B. as symmetry; 4Q o B. as sensible perfection; 5Q or B. as expressive perfection. Ia B. as a manifestation of the good is the Platonic theory of the beautiful. According to Plato, only beauty, among all perfect substances, "fits the privilege of being

the most evident and the most lovable" (*Fed.*, 250 e). [...] 2S The doctrine of B. as a manifestation of truth is characteristic of Romanticism. "B.", said **Hegel**, "is defined as the sensible apparition of the Idea." This means that beauty and truth are the same thing and that they are distinguished only because, while in truth the Idea has objective and universal manifestation, in B. it has sensible manifestation (*Vorlesungen über die Asthetik*, ed. Glockner, I, p. 160). Rarely, outside of Hegel, has this point of view been presented with such decisiveness, but it reappears in almost all forms of romantic aesthetics, undoubtedly constituting a typical definition of the beautiful. 39 The doctrine of B. as symmetry was presented for the first time by Aristotle: B. is constituted by order, by symmetry and by a magnitude capable of being encompassed, as a whole, by a single glance (*Poet*, 7, 1.450 b 35ff.). This doctrine was accepted by the Stoics and was long established in tradition. It was adopted by the Scholastics (e.g., St Thomas, *S. Tb*, I, q. 39, a. 8) and by many Renaissance writers and artists, when they wanted to illustrate what they were trying to do with their art: P. e.g., Leonardo in *Trattato della pittura*. 4S It is with the doctrine of **Beauty as sensible perfection** that **Aesthetics** (in. *Aesthetics*; fr. *Esthétique*; al. *Aesthetik*; it. *Aesthetics*) was born. This term designates the (philosophical) science of art and beauty. Aesthetics as "sensuous perfection" means, on the one hand, "perfect sensible representation" and, on the other hand, "pleasure that accompanies sensitive activity". *Aesthetica*, 1750, §§ 14-18). In the second sense, it was used, above all by analysts

English, firstly by Hume (*Essay Moral and Political*, 1741) and by Burke (*A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 1756), both concerned with determining the characters that make sensible pleasure what is customary call it "beauty". **Beauty as "Sensible perfection" in Kant** unified the two complementary definitions of Beauty as sensible perfection ("perfect sensible representation" and "pleasure that accompanies sensible activity") and insisted on what until today is considered its fundamental character, that is, *disinterest*. Consequently, he defined B. as "**what pleases universally and without concepts**" (*Crít. do Judgment*, § 6) and insisted on the independence between B.'s pleasure and any interest, both sensible and rational. of pleasant

what satisfies him; of Belo, what pleases him; of good what he appreciates or approves of, what he confers an objective value on. [...] With Kant's doctrine, the concept of B. was recognized in a specific sphere, it became a fundamental value, or rather a class of values. Together with the True and the Good, it entered into the constitution of a new kind of ideal trinity, corresponding to the three forms of activity recognized as proper to man-intellect, feeling and will. Although this tripartition was considered for a long time as an original fact, witnessed by "conscience" or by "inner experience", in reality it is a historically derived notion, which, in the second half of the century. XVIII was born from the insertion of the "faculty of feeling" among the other faculties (recognized since Aristotle's time): theory and practice. **Taste** (in. *Taste*; fr. *Goût*; al. *Geschmack*; it. *Gustó*) in turn, is a criterion or canon for judging the objects of feeling. Since only from the century. XVIII the *feeling* began to be recognized as an autonomous faculty, distinct from the theoretical and practical faculty, the notion of G. was determined, in the same period, in correlation with the notion of the criterion to which this faculty, in its valuations, is adequate or should adapt. The faculty of feeling soon received aesthetic activity as an attribution: thus, G. is understood above all as the criterion of aesthetic judgment, and it was in this sense that this word was incorporated into current usage. In its most general sense, G. is defined by Vauvenargues as "disposition to judge correctly the objects of feeling" (*Intr. a la connaissance de l'esprit humain*, 1746, 12); and by **Kant**, who declares, in *Anthropology* (§ 69): "**The G. (as a kind of formal sense) leads to sharing with others the feelings of pleasure and pain and implies the capacity for pleasure, thanks to this same sharing of feeling satisfaction (complacitid) in common with others**". For Kant, **Taste** is a kind of *common sense*, indeed common sense in its most exact meaning, because it can be defined as "the faculty of judging that which makes the feeling aroused by a given representation universally communicable, without the mediation of the concept" (*Crit. of Judgment*, § 40). Therefore, the universality of G.'s judgment is not the same as that of intellectual judgment, as it is not based on the object, but on the possibility of communicating with others. In other words, "**G.'s judgment is only universal because it is based on the**

communicability of feeling.” (*Crit. of Judgment*, § 39). Kant also distinguished between G. as a faculty of judging and genius as a faculty of producing (*Ibid.*, § 48).

From the artwork concept:

Beautiful synonymous with natural *beauty* in Kant

The concept of work of art in Kant understands the autonomous, free, infinite and contemplative nature of the beauty inherent in the work of art, which can be both related to aesthetic objects and nature. For Kant, the beautiful is "what pleases universally and without concepts" (*Crit. Judgment*, § 6). The autonomous faculty of feeling, which receives aesthetic theory as an attribution, is the same that understands **taste as an aesthetic judgment**: "the faculty of judging that which makes the feeling evoked by a given representation universally communicable, without the mediation of the concept" (*Crit of the Judgment*, § 40). **For Kant "G.'s judgment is only universal because it is based on the communicability of feeling."** (*Crit. of Judgment*, § 39). Therefore, the universality of G.'s judgment is not the same as that of intellectual judgment, as it is not based on the object, but on the possibility of communicating with others. **Beauty and the Sublime**: The beauty of nature concerns the form of the object, which consists in imitation; the sublime, on the contrary, can also be found in a formless object, insofar as an imitation is represented in it or on the occasion of this and is thought of in addition in its entirety; so that the beautiful seems to be considered as the presentation of an indeterminate concept of understanding, while the sublime as the presentation of a concept similar to reason. (KANT, 1998, sec. 75).

Beautiful synonymous with natural beauty in Hegel

"Beauty", said Hegel, "is defined as the sensible apparition of the Idea." This means that beauty and truth are the same thing and that they are distinguished only because, while in truth the Idea has objective and universal manifestation, in B. it has sensible manifestation (*Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, ed. Glockner, I, p. 160). Thus, as for Kant, Hegel understands the Beautiful as natural and of a contemplative and liberal nature: The consideration of the beautiful is of a liberal nature a letting act (*Gewährenlassen*) the

objects as themselves free and infinite, and not a desire to possess and use them. it as useful [156] to finite needs and intentions, so that the object will not appear as and forced by us, nor opposed and overcome by other external things. (HEGEL, 2001, p. 129). (...) "Beauty is the Idea as the immediate unity of the concept and its reality, that is, it is the Idea insofar as this unity is immediately present in the sensible and real appearing (Scheinen). The initial existence is therefore *nature* and the first beauty is natural *beauty*. (HEGEL, p. 131)

Beautiful synonymous with natural *beauty* in Walter Benjamin

Part of Kant's concept of a work of art that Benjamin accepts reflects Kantian aesthetics in terms of judgment of taste. In the following passage from his doctoral thesis *The Concept of Art Criticism in German Romanticism*, Benjamin highlights Kant's concept of a work of art:

In § 1 of the *Critique of Judgment*: "In order to distinguish whether a thing is beautiful or not, we do not relate the representation to the object through the understanding with a view to knowledge, but rather we relate it through the imagination (perhaps connected with the understanding) to the subject and the feeling of pleasure or pity of this. The judgment of **taste** is not, therefore, a judgment of knowledge; consequently he is not logical but **aesthetic**; which means: that whose determining principle *can only be subjective*. In § 35 in the analytic of the sublime Kant points out that "the judgment of taste is distinguished from the logical judgment, due to the fact that the latter subsumes a representation under concepts of the object, while the former subsumes nothing under the concept, since otherwise the necessary universal assent could be enforced by evidence. However, it is similar to logical judgment insofar as it intends universality and necessity, but not based on object concepts, and, consequently, purely subjective ones". As Kant makes clear later, "Genius is the talent (natural endowment) that provides rules for art." (& 46). (KANT apud Benjamin, 2002, p. 139). Thus, Benjamin is based on Kant, when he establishes the identity between artistic and beautiful, by stating that "nature is beautiful when it has the appearance of art"; and that "art can only be called beautiful

when we, while aware that it is art, consider it as nature" (*Crit. of judgment*, § 45). (KANT apud Benjamin, 1980, p. 9).

Beautiful natural: Aura of historical objects relative to the natural object

Although Walter Benjamin distinguishes the two meanings of beauty, one **historical** and the other **natural**, both refer, each in their own way, to the theme of distance and, as such, refer to the past. The first, historical, seeks to determine the relationship of the "auratic experience" of correspondences with tradition through the notion of cult of the aesthetic object; and the second, the **natural beauty**, clarifies the intangibility of the aesthetic object relative to the experience of the aura: It is to **historical objects** that we would apply this notion of **aura** more widely, but for better elucidation, it would be necessary to consider **the aura of a natural object**. It could be defined as the only apparition of a distant reality, however close it may be. On a late summer afternoon, if you follow with your eyes a line of mountains along the horizon or a branch, whose shadow rests on our contemplative state, you feel the aura of those mountains and that branch. Such evocation makes it possible to understand, without difficulties, the social factors that provoke the current decay of the aura. (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 9).

Concept of history according to Walter Benjamin: Historical Materialism and Jewish Messianism

Benjamin in *Magic and Technique, Art and Politics* clarifies his concept of history as follows: 4 "Fight first for food and clothing, and then the kingdom of God will come by itself". (HEGEL apud Benjamin, 1996, p.223). Reiterating the nature of this caveat, Benjamin turns to historical materialism: "The class struggle, which a historian educated by Marx never loses sight of, is a struggle for brute and material things, without which refined and spiritual things do not exist. But in the class struggle these spiritual things cannot be represented as spoils awarded to the victor. They manifest themselves in this struggle in the form of confidence, courage, humour, cunning, firmness, and they act from afar, from the depths

of time. They will always question every victory of the dominators. Just as flowers direct their corolla towards the sun, the past, thanks to a mysterious heliotropism, tries to direct itself towards the sun that rises in the sky of history. Historical materialism must watch out for this transformation, the most imperceptible of all.”⁵ The true image of the past passes by, fast. The past only allows itself to be fixed, as an irreversibly flashing image, the moment it is recognized. “The truth will never escape us” – this phrase by Gottfried Keller characterizes the exact point at which **historicism** separates from historical materialism. For irretrievable is every image of the present that addresses the present, without this present feeling targeted by her.⁶ Articulating the past historically does not mean knowing it “as it actually was”. It means appropriating a reminiscence, as it flashes at the moment of danger. It is up to historical materialism to fix an image of the past, as it presents itself, in the moment of danger, to the historical subject, without him being aware of it. Danger threatens both the existence of the tradition and those who receive it. For both, the danger is the same: surrendering to the ruling classes as their instrument. **Walter Benjamin's Jewish messianism:** In each age, it is necessary to tear tradition away from conformism, which wants to take over it, because the Messiah does not come only as a savior; he comes also as the conqueror of Antichrist. The gift of awakening sparks of hope in the past is the exclusive privilege of the historian convinced that even the dead will not be safe if the enemy wins. And that enemy has not ceased to win. (BENJAMIN, 1996, p. 223-225). According to Michael Löwy, the most astonishing and radical formulation of Walter Benjamin's new philosophy of history – Marxist and messianic – is undoubtedly to be found in the *Thèses sur le concept d'histoire*, of 1940: Benjamin's fundamental demand is to write history from against the grain, that is, *from the point of view of the vanquished* – against the conformist tradition of German historicism whose adherents always enter into “empathy with the victor” – Thesis VII. It is evident that the word “victorious” does not refer to the usual battles or wars, but to the “class war”, in which one of the camps, the ruling class, “has not ceased to vanquish” (Thesis VII) the oppressed - since Spartacus , the rebel gladiator, to the Spartacus group of Rosa

de Luxemburg, and from the Roman *Imperium* to the Nazi *Tertium Imperium*. O

Historicism emphatically identifies itself (*Einfühlung*) with the ruling classes. He sees history as a glorious succession of high political and military events. Praising the leaders and paying homage to them, it confers on them the status of "heirs" of past history. In other words, he participates — like those people who raise the laurel wreath above the winner's head — in a "triumphal procession in which today's lords walk over the body of the vanquished" (Thesis VII). Benjamin's critique of historicism is inspired by the Marxist philosophy of history, but it also has Nietzschean origins. In a youthful work, *On the Usefulness and Inconvenience of History* (cited in Thesis XII), Nietzsche ridicules the historicists' "bare admiration for success," their "idolatry of the factual" (*Götzerdienste des Tatsächlichen*), and tendency to bow to of the "power of history". Since the Devil is the lord of success and progress, true virtue consists in rebelling against the tyranny of reality and swimming against the historical current. (Löwy, 1989).

Photography by Walter Benjamin

It reflects the image as display value to the detriment of the image as the cult value of the work of art. "With photography, display value starts to push cult value — in every sense — into the background." (BENJAMIN, 1980, p. 13).