The image as the body's other: considerationson image Anthropology in Hans Belting and Dietmar Kamper[a]

A imagem como outro do corpo: considerações acerca da antropologia da imagem em Hans Belting e Dietmar Kamper

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to present an alternative approach to the image sciences, as yet little explored, which work from the perspective of the body. We will start from the bioanthropological premise that *the body claims for body*, and will seek to think about the image based on Hans Belting's image anthropology, mainly in relation to the theoretical triangulation of image, media and body, alongside Dietmar Kamper's sociology of the body, whose critical diagnosis of current media culture and of its excessive self-referentiality demonstrates an unwanted *immanence of the imaginary*. We will also include those authors who have contributed to the Kamperian diagnosis: Vilém Flusser, Günther Anders, Jean Baudrillard, Byung-Chul Han and Christoph Wulf.
Keywords: Image, the body's Other, immanence of the imaginary

RESUMO

A proposta deste artigo é apresentar uma abordagem alternativa para as ciências da imagem, ainda pouco exploradas, que trabalham a partir da perspectiva do corpo. Partiremos da premissa bioantropológica de que *corpo pede corpo* e buscaremos pensar a imagem a partir da antropologia da imagem de Hans Belting, principalmente em relação à triangulação teórica de imagem, mídia e corpo, aliada à sociologia do corpo de Dietmar Kamper, cujo diagnóstico crítico da atual cultura midiática e de sua autorreferencialidade excessiva demonstra uma indesejada *imanência do imaginário*. Em torno deles orbitam autores que dão aporte ao diagnóstico kamperiano: Vilém Flusser, Günther Anders, Jean Baudrillard, Byung-Chul Han e Christoph Wulf.
Palavras-chave: Imagem, outro do corpo, imanência do imaginário

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I N A WORLD that is increasingly ruled by the omnipresence of images and visuality, it is natural that this subject would be a matter of interest not only in the sciences of culture and communication but also in the human sciences as a whole and, in many cases, even in the medical sciences. Nevertheless, this discussion often seems to be limited to the recycling of old paradigms derived from studies of the history of art, philosophy or language sciences, frequently ignoring the more complex approaches of certain media theories[1] and reducing the issue of image to a conception either arising solely from the aesthetic, or directed to a mere functionalist channel. Our proposal is to present an alternative approach to the image sciences, as yet little explored, which work from the perspective of the body[2], this complex *Other* that often ends up being relegated to the background, or even completely ignored. We will start from the bioanthropological premise that the *body claims for body* (Baitello Jr., 2017) and will seek to think about the image and body based on two authors: Hans Belting and Dietmar Kamper.

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At least since Gottfried Boehm (2001), in Germany, and W. J. T. Mitchell (1995), in the USA, there has been talk of an *iconic turn*, or indeed a *pictorial turn*, indicating a radical change not only within the cultural sciences (*Kulturwissenschaften*) but also in the political sciences, law, and literary studies, as well as extending to the "hard" sciences, such as engineering, medicine, neuroscience and nanotechnology, to name a few (Bachmann-Medick, 2016). The inflation of images in city environments (and virtual environments) and the growing interest in their repercussions on culture and humankind have put some of the most traditional theories of image at stake and opened up a new field of knowledge, currently known as image science (*Bildwissenschaft*)[3] or image theory. As an extremely heterogeneous field, formed by authors from different areas, it is agreed that the theme of image needs to be tackled through an interdisciplinary and, if possible, intercultural perspective, in order that the complexity of the phenomenon could be effectively investigated.

Art historian Hans Belting (2001/2014, p. 21) has characterized the term *image* as a kind of narcotic that currently masks the discrepancy between the different approaches to the subject. In his view, there is a lack of precision in the formulation of the concept of image, which ends up concealing the fact that "not only do we speak of different images in the same way, but in
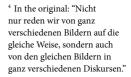
different ways in relation to the same images"[4] (Belting, 2000, p. 7). As a remedy to this problem, Belting proposes an anthropology of the image as a science of the image. His proposal is to think the image as a triangulation composed of image, media and body.

In the book *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (*Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft*), Belting (2001/2014) proposes the conceptualization of the image from an anthropological perspective from the very outset:

> An "image" is more than a product of perception. It is created as the result of personal or collective knowledge and intention. Everything that appears to the gaze or to the inner eye can therefore be made clear through the image or transformed into an image. (p. 21)

And he continues with a provocative statement: "Therefore, when taken seriously, the concept of image can only be, in the final analysis, an anthropological concept" (Belting, 2001/2014, p. 21).

As such, Belting removes the study of the image from the exclusive scope of the history of art. According to the philosopher Lambert Wiesing (2014), proposing that the concept of the image should be considered from an anthropological perspective indicates that "the conditions for the possibility of the production of images are identical to the conditions for the possibility of a conscious human existence"[5] (p. 18). Or, as Belting (2001/2014) wrote: "We live with images, we comprehend the world in images" (p. 21). Thus, production, reception and coexistence with images is the specific difference of the human species as *homo pictor* (Jonas, 1961). With Belting, the image becomes a subject of the cultural sciences and is rescued from oblivion, according to the original proposal by Aby Warburg (2010). Images must be considered from a wider environment, not restricted solely to an abstract conceptual problem, as proposed by philosophy, or to the mere aesthetic interpretation[6] of the history of art, but in the complexity of the triangulation of image, media and body, implicit in the production of images in social space. The task is not simple, as when answering what an image is, it considers that images are as varied as the artifacts, works of art and even scientific images. Contrary to that proposed by philosophy, which tends to give more value to the questions *what* and *why*, leaving aside the question of *how*, Belting goes deeper into this question which, in his view, has to do with a relational process, that is, the question, "what is an image?" can only be answered when considering *how* an image presents itself as an image.

[4] In the original: "Nicht nur reden wir von ganz verschiedenen Bildern auf die gleiche Weise, sondern auch von den gleichen Bildern in ganz verschiedenen Diskursen."

[5] In the original: "die Bedingungen der Möglichkeit von Bildproduktion sind identisch mit den Bedingungen der Möglichkeit des bewußten, menschlichen Daseins."

[6] Aby Warburg harshly criticized the *aesthetic* reading of the images in the early decades of the 20th century. The authors who practiced it were kept in their library in a section called the *Giftschrank* (poison cabinet). Cf. Lescourret (2014) and Carl Georg Heise (2005).

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The *what* of an image (the issue of what the image serves as an image or to what it relates as an image) is steered by the *how* in which it transmits its message. In fact, the *how* is often hard to distinguish from the *what*; it is the very essence of an image. But the *how*, in turn, is to a large extent shaped by the given visual medium in which an image resides. Any iconology today must therefore discuss the unity as well as the distinction of image and medium, the latter understood in the sense of a carrier or host medium. No visible images reach us unmediated. Their visibility rests on their particular mediality, which controls the perception of them and creates the viewer's attention. Physical images are physical because of the media they use, but *physical* can no longer explain their present technologies. Images have always relied on a given technique for their visualization. When we distinguish a canvas from the image it represents, we pay attention to either the one or the other, as if they were distinct, which they are not; they separate only when we are willing to separate them in our looking. (Belting, 2005, p. 304, emphasis added)

The author proposes to enrich the concept of image by considering image and media as two sides of the same coin. Despite being inseparable, Belting believes it is possible to analyze each side individually, giving them different meanings. It is simply a question of the attention of one's gaze. The medium gives the image the body it does not have. In order for images to appear, they need the means to allow this to happen, and these means, in turn, determine how these images will appear. This is why the *how* becomes fundamental to *what* is said in an image. Images currently appear in different ways: on material physical supports, but also, increasingly, on immaterial energy supports, and this "medial [media] body of images"[7] (Schulz, 2009) is the subject of media theories. If the question about the image alone causes disorientation due to the sheer range and variation of proposals about it, then the question about what a *medium* is certainly affects us in equal measure. It is not appropriate to discuss this issue here, but it is of interest pointing out that the interpretation of many media theories is insufficient to account for the concept of the image. One of the strongest theoretical currents in this area prioritizes the technical aspect of the *media* and, therefore, has more interest in the performance and use of such. From this point of view, images are generally categorized according to technical innovations (storage, processing and distribution) that do little to help understand the history of the images themselves, which are not limited only to their media (analog or digital), but have a post-life (*Nachleben*) in the sense ascribed by Warburg (2010), that is, the images are charged with an archaic energy that ultimately has its origin in the body whose symbols are updated time and again

[7] In the original: "Die medialen Körper de Bilder."

in various media throughout the history of culture. On the concept of *medium* [media], Belting (2001/2014) makes it clear:

> For my part, I understand media as the supports or hosts that the images need to become visible. They are distinguishable from real bodies, given that they have triggered discussions around form and matter. The experience of the world is rehearsed in the experience of the image. But, in turn, the experience of the image is linked to the medial experience, to the media which carry in themselves the dynamic temporal form acquired in the cycles of their own history. . . . Each medium has its own temporal expression that leaves a well engraved imprint. Therefore, the question of media is from the outset a question of the history of the media. (p. 40)

We consider here that the most original and important contribution to the development of a science of images by Belting is the proposal of the anthropological triangle of image, media and body, which recovers the body as the first locus of images. According to these premises, the technical media, that is, the technical/medial body of images can be understood as analogous to the human natural body, considering that images always need a *medium* in which they can be embodied in order to be perceived and seen.

> The human being is the natural locus of images. Naturally, in what way? Because it is a natural locus for images or a living organ of images. Nevertheless, all the devices that we employ today to store and export images, and even if such devices supposedly set the rules, the human being continues to be the place in which the images are received and interpreted in a living sense (therefore ephemeral, not easily controlled etc.). (Belting, 2001/2014, p. 79)

For Belting, the assumption of this relationship is the human body as the first producer and sole receiver of images, highlighting an important issue, which is also relevant to the communication sciences: all communication (through images or otherwise) begins and ends in the body (Pross, 1972). If the technical and medial body of the image is a traditional subject of media theory, its living and natural body, that is, the place of origin of all images, where they are born before reaching the light of reason or the light of day, as individual and/or collective creation, is a fundamental issue for the theory of the anthropological image, especially when recalling that, according to Baitello (2005), the images are born

> firstly, we suppose, in the caves of the prehistory of human perception, where the day, the light and our eyes cannot penetrate. They are then born in the space and

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in the caves of the dream and in the equally dense and obscure daydream, in the reveries, in the cave of the power of imagination that offers an oasis of darkness in the midst of daylight. They are then born into the world of the word that recounts the origin of the world, of things and of life, telling of its heroes and their deeds. Much later, they begin to be born inside caves where they are protected from the destructive rays of the sun and light, like the inner darkness of the thinking brain, safeguarded from the light of reason. And since they were born inside, of interiorization, instead of a permanent escape to the outside, a condemnation to exteriority, an eternal call to the naked eyes. (p. 46)

The study of the place of origin, projection and reception of images is therefore important for the maturation of an anthropology of the image, and also a way to more accurately delimit the meaning that is given to this body. Just as external places have a history, so too the natural body of the image accumulates a particular history. In addition to the fact that the body is a historical construction, that is, it is itself the support of an image that in each epoch is constituted in a different manner, it is also a living medium that preserves images within itself. Based on the assumption that the body is the projector and receiver of images of the world through the senses, Belting is pointing out the body's peculiar characteristic of being inhabited by images. To better illustrate this idea, Belting uses the example of the spirit *medium*, who provides their body for spirits to make use of their voice. The author argues that the same thing happens with images in the body, albeit possessed by spirits but by the images seen, remembered or dreamed. The parallel between being possessed by a spirit and by images becomes even more evident when we consider the dream, in which there is a complete surrender of the body to the flow of images. This substantiates the idea that the reception of images that reach the body through the senses is never passively constructed.

> The body is the place for the projection and reception of images. Its repertoire of existing images is evident in the dream in a more expressive way. But the images in the waking state also do not appear simply by means of external passive reception. They encounter a memory of their own images, which continually "meddle" in the vision.[8] (Belting, 2007, p. 53)

Belting opts for the terms *endogenous images* and *exogenous images* when referring to this relationship. Exogenous images are those outside of the body, which are seen on walls, canvases and objects and that rest on artificial medial bodies, while endogenous images are those that inhabit bodies, such as dreams,

[8] In the original: "Der Körper ist ein Ort für die Projektion und den Empfang von Bildern. Sein bereits vorhandenes Bildrepertoire besitzt im Traum die nachdrücklichste Evidenz. Aber auch die Bilder im Wachzustand entstehen nicht nur durch einen passiven Empfang von außen. Sie treffen bereits auf einen Speicher eigener Bilder, die sich ständig in das Sehen 'einmischen.'"

daydreams (*Tagträume*), memories and conjecture. But Belting (2005) does not adhere here to a rigid dualism that separates these two modes from the image, as if they were distinct problems. There is a productive cooperation between them: "mental images are inscribed in external images and vice versa" (Belting, 2005, p. 73). Mutual contamination occurs through the *gaze* (*Blick*).

Finally, the image that emerges from the synthetic act of the *gaze* is only perceived as an image and comes to life through the symbolic action of animation. In this case, the animation to which Belting (2001/2014) refers has nothing to do with *primitive* animism or with the technical capacity to simulate movement. Animation is understood here as the body's predisposition to give symbolic life to dead images. The act of animation is also responsible for *detaching* the image from its carrier medium. Through this act, the physical presence of the environment differs from the mental presence of the image. The opaque medium becomes the transparent conduit for its image (Belting, 2001/2014, p. 44). In other words, image and medium are not present simultaneously in the act of perception: the image is absent in the presence of the medium, and the medium is absent so that the image becomes present. The medium has a material quality, and the image, a mental character. When we say that the image is torn, we refer to its physical environment, which is a thing in the world and, therefore, is subject to the elements of space and time. When we say that the image has depth or brings to light a memory, we refer to its mental quality, which is not part of the world, but is produced by the observer.

We can therefore note that the triangulation of image, media and body proposed by Belting allows us to think about images without reducing them to technical bodies (media), opening new fronts of investigation, especially in the relationship between exogenous and endogenous images.

"TO MAKE IMAGES MEANS, ULTIMATELY, TO KILL BODIES"[9]

The question of the image of the body and the body of the image is radicalized in the writings of Dietmar Kamper. The German sociologist and philosopher investigates this relationship from the perspective of historical anthropology, along with a critique of the current use of media images and the marginalization of the body through the growing abstraction of Western thought. Unlike Belting, whose intention is to create a new science of images from an anthropological perspective, Kamper proposes a new anthropology that investigates images in search of possible ways out of Western nihilism, which ended up abstracting all of the dimensions of body experience in the name of an absolute totalitarian and rational spirit, which is currently realized in such images. At the heart of this

[9] Kamper (1999, p. 23). In the original: "Bildermachen ist zuletzt Körpertöten."

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debate is the body and the image. But the roots of such process are deep, and therefore the historical perspective is fundamental. In Belting's anthropology, the image is the common thread of investigation. For Kamper, emphasis is placed on the Central Western human condition and its problematic relationship with the body. Thus, the image comes into play, because thinking about the human condition today means thinking about it through and between images.

Common to the anthropological theories of the image is the conception that the image presupposes a detachment from things, from the world, and a detachment from oneself, and from the body. Vilém Flusser (1985) described this process as a progressive departure from the concrete world to an increasingly abstract world. The ladder of abstraction of Flusserian communicology, structured into five levels, begins with man's first regression in relation to the Lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*). This step allowed man to become aware of his surroundings, separating himself, as a subject, from his objective surroundings. But this objective world can only be understood by a perspective that distances itself from it, meaning that a new detachment occurs. Images intrude between the world and man, and man develops the mediating capacity of the imagination (*Vorstellung*). These images are considered traditional by Flusser because they still maintain a magical connection with things. In the third regression, alphanumeric writing appears. With this growing abstraction, calculations also increase, and the world described in texts is counted by numbers, which is the last step of the ladder[10]. According to Kamper (1999), in his unique reading of the *ladder of abstraction*:

> The body's abstractions install themselves in the process of civilization like "regressions" (Flusser) down the stairs, from abundance to emptiness, from the highly dimensioned Lifeworld into the ice desert of abstraction, to zero, that is, to the calculation with zero, that is, to the calculation with zero/one.[11] (p. 12)

From this frozen world of zeros and ones, from this atemporal place of calculations, there is nowhere else to go: all that is left is to move forward. The images that emerge from this advance are not representations (*Abbilder*, that is, abstractions, illustrations), but images of a new type, which he calls *techno-images*. These are projections against the world and against humankind itself. According to Baitello Jr. (2010):

> Techno-images are no longer a surface, but the conceptual construction of a plane through the constellation of granules, points of negligible dimension which,

[10] For a detailed study of the ladder of abstraction and the concept of the technical image in Flusser, cf.

[11] In the original: "Die Körper-Abstraktionen installieren sich im Zivilisationsprozeß wie 'Rückschritte' (Flusser) die Treppe hinunter, von der Fülle zur Leere, von der hochdimensionierten Lebenswelt in die Eiswüste der Abstraktion, bis zur Null/Eins."

nevertheless, when brought together, offer the illusion of a surface, a mosaic of stones. "Calculus" meant "pebble" in Latin, and "to calculate" means "to reckon with pebbles." The tiny pebbles coalesce in the flat space forming the illusion of images. (p. 54)

This hypothetical model of the history of culture proposed by Flusser problematizes the progressive distancing between humankind and the materiality of the world and bodies in a didactic manner. Postmodern criticism by authors such as Günther Anders, Jean Baudrillard, Dietmar Kamper and, currently, Byung-Chul Han about the excessive propagation of images, especially those born in electronic media, has one point in common: they are images that have lost their reference in reality and cast reality itself into doubt.

In the diagnosis of humankind's obsolescence with regard to the technical world created by it, Anders (2002) has coined the term *iconomania* to indicate the attempt to overcome death and the imperfection of the human condition through the reproduction of images. The author has also affirmed that due to the multiplication of images, the world that was previously portrayed *in* images now becomes, in an inverse manner, an image that portrays the world. When writing about the soul, during the era of the Second and Third Industrial Revolution, radio and television served as the main mass media, and cinema was no longer the exclusive propagator of moving images. Naturally, this context influenced Anders (2002) to think about images from these electronic media and, although some of his observations are no longer considered valid, especially in relation to the new interactive possibilities of computational (digital) media, his criticism of the image remains relevant. By asserting that "the events that are broadcast [are] at the same time, present *and* absent, real *and* apparent, there *and* not there; in short: . . . they are phantoms"[12] (Anders, 2002, p. 131), the philosopher is problematizing the passage of the image as a representation for the image as simulation. This phantasmic nature is called "ontological ambivalence" by Anders (2002)[13], a concept that anticipates the debate of media theories around the virtual as a category of the image. The image not only calls into question the experience of things and of the world, but also affects us intimately, in what is closest to us. Through images, "that which is remote becomes familiar, the familiar becomes remote or disappears. When the phantom becomes real, reality becomes a phantom"[14] (Anders, 2002, p. 105).

In Baudrillard (1991), the loss of reference on current images is described as a historical process in four stages, in whose last and current stage the image "bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (p. 13).

[12] In the original: "die gesendeten Ereignisse [sind] zugleich gegenwärtig und abwesend, zugleich wirklich und scheinbar, zugleich da und nicht dar, kurz: weil sie Phantome sind."

[13] In the original: "ontologische Ambilvalenz."

[14] In the original: "Wenn das Ferne zu nahe tritt, entfernt oder verwischt sich das Nahe. Wenn das Phantom wirklich wird, wird das Wirkliche phantomhaft."

The issue is taken up by the author twenty years later, taking into account the power of the numerical images automatically produced by computers.

> The ultimate violence done to the image is the violence of the computer-generated image, which emerged *ex-nihilo* from numerical calculation and the computer. There is an end here to the very imagining of the image, to its fundamental 'illusion,' since in the process of computer-generation the referent no longer exists and the real itself no longer has cause to come to pass, being produced immediately as Virtual Reality. There is an end here to that direct image-taking, that presence to a real object in an irrevocable instant. (Baudrillard, 2013, p. 74)

Kamper, one of Anders' readers and Baudrillard's friend, deals with the same issue, but illustrates the problem in another way. Kamper's (2016) critique is focused mainly on abstraction:

> In relation to the meaning of the word "abstraction", a confrontation between thought and body draws attention from the outset. The fact that they were both created together is concrete, but their separation is abstract. Thought assumes the general form, while body is defined as the padding or matter and, with this, as something particular from which abstraction is possible, as it is unrecognizable and unthinkable in the final analysis. *Abstrahere*, in Latin, means to take out of sight, to look away, to remove, to separate, to segregate, to disengage, to pull out, to surrender and so on. (p. 40)

In this context, the body is understood as having the capacity to know and perceive the world through an open perception (*aisthésis*), and the spirit as the faculty of understanding that is based on this perception (Kamper, 1988). The author uses the term perception in the sense of *being vigilant*, *being attentive*: "perception (*Wahrnehmung*) has two initial meanings: attention to danger and attention in the sense of respect for the other. It has nothing to do with truth, but with being vigilant (*awareness*), with feeling" (Kamper, 2016, p. 223).

Abstraction is problematic for Kamper, as it indicates a growing separation between perception and understanding, in the sense that the overvaluation of rational understanding detached from perception produces: (1) *dis*orientation: devaluation of the multiple senses of the body as sources of knowledge and life experience through the replacement of the unique sense of abstract rational thought; and (2) *re*orientation: from outside to inside, in an excessive immanence, a self-referential knowledge without connection to the world or to the Other, now guided by the unique sense of the image: world image, body image.

The consequences of this separation erupt into an unwelcome and rigid dualism of the '*either this or that*' type (*Entweder-Oder*), between intuition/understanding, consciousness/perception, theory/esthetics, same/other, imaginary/imagination, sense/senses, simulation/mimesis, and space/time, to name a few. But the problem Kamper wants us to be aware of is not necessarily the fact that there is polarization, but the current tendency to absolutize one of the poles. The criticism directed to images by the author occurs mainly because they are the principal cultural agents and means of propagation of technical-instrumental thinking. Images of this type are not windows to the world, but mirrors of it: understanding, consciousness, theory, imagination, meaning, simulation and space are reflected and repeated infinitely on its surface. Consequently, intuition, perception, esthetics, imagination, meanings, mimesis and time disappear from the horizon and begin to inhabit the reverse of the images. With this absolutization that produces indifference, Kamper (1995) proposes differential thinking (*Differenz-Denken*), which "means to become sensitive to the ambivalence of language and, therefore, to be able to remain on both sides of the problem at the same time"[15] (p. 28). As such, Kamper wishes to recover the difference eclipsed by the illusory unity of the abstraction of the image, by relativizing, in a *dia*bolical manner, the *sym*bolic absolutization. This means breaking the images, or returning to a fragmentation of the whole, to the failure of perfection, to the localization of the global, to the deconstruction (destruction) of that which is finished. In other words, this is the reintroduction of intuition within understanding, of the Other in the same, of the meanings in the meaning, of mimesis in the simulation, of time in space, of virtuosity in virtuality through the thought-body.

But what does Kamper mean by image anyway? Curiously, Kamper rarely dealt with this topic directly in his writings. In his article "Bild" (Kamper, 1998), the author discusses the concept of the image and its relationship with the immanence of the imaginary in a more systematic manner. It must be understood that Kamper modifies the meaning of the concept of image according to the context in which it is referred to, without indicating this change clearly. This is evident when we come to understand that the conception of image for Kamper is very close to that propose by Belting (1990), mainly in its differentiation between cult images and artistic images. In keeping with Belting, Kamper (2011) proposes a distinction between the image as a magical presence and the image as an artistic representation. This is because, even in its etymological origin, the double meaning is already present.

Even etymologically, we are confronted with ambiguities: *bilidi* (Old High German) means, on the one hand, "sign," "essence," "form," and, on the other, "image, copy,

[15] In the original: "Differenz-Denken heißt, empfindlich zu werden für die Ambivalenzen der Sprache und sich deshalb immer auf zwei Seiten des Problems zugleich aufhalten zu können."

reproduction" (it is again controversial whether the root is, as in *billig*, inexpensive, given that Bilwis refers to "right" or "just"). Thus, on the one hand, that through which something receives its form reaches its essence and reaches the full unfolding of its miraculous power is emphasized. And on the other, that which such an original image reproduces, presents, draws. (Kamper, 2011, p. 2)

According to Kamper (1998), such ambivalence will pervade the entire history of the image, even the current images that seem to escape this double meaning. However, in the historical journey of the image in the West, its destiny was decided in favor of representation, or mimesis, and against its magical aspect. According to Kamper (1998), this occurs in Greek philosophy, in Plato, runs through the Judeo-Christian tradition, is taken over by modern philosophy, and reached its peak in the Enlightenment. Even so, the negated aspect remains present in all images and has the potential to manifest itself at any moment. There is also a third variant: that of images as technical simulations.

In keeping with Belting, Kamper (1998) understands the concept of image as follows: "Ambiguous from the beginning, the 'image' is, among other things, the presence, the representation and the simulation of something absent"[16] (p. 210). However, to complement Belting, Kamper does not think of this issue through the history of art, but rather as a psychological and philosophical problem. Belting (2001/2014) had already pointed out the birth of the image in the rituals of death, but for Kamper (1998), this becomes the central problem and the reason why images provoke so much fascination—death, both in its sense of physical absence and of undeniable destiny that haunts existence from the moment of birth. According to the author whether they are presence, representation or simulation, the deepest fear of emptiness is hidden on the back of the images.

Behind the horizon and the objects there is the threat of an unfathomable "horror vacui." The material to which the various images correspond is an absence, an emptiness, an elementary scarcity, so to speak, the loss experienced of the environment of the mother's womb, which permeates the entire life of the man of premature birth. The fact that he was born and must die offers the condition for the experience of loss, which seems irrecoverable, but can be replaced. Images are therefore substitutes for that which is missing, for that which is absent, without achieving the dignity of that which they replace.[17] (Kamper, 1998, p. 211)

In his brief article on images, Kamper does not go into any of the above categories in depth, but only describes them in a few words. In other writings, the author's focus is more on images that simulate, as these are the ones that

[16] In the original: "Mehrdeutig von Anfang an, meint 'Bild' also unter anderem die Präsenz, die Repräsentation und die Simulation einer abwesenden Sache."

[17] In the original: "Hinter dem Horizont und im Gegenstand droht ein abgründiger 'horror vacui'. Das Material, dem die Bilder, in ihren Versionen entsprechen, ist eine Abwesenheit, eine Leere, ein fundamentaler Mangel, wenn man so will, ist der erfahrene Verlust der Schoßumgebung des Mutterleibes, der dem Menschen als Frühgeburt lebenslänglich zu schaffen macht. Daß er geboren ist und daß er sterben muß, bietet die Voraussetzung für die Erfahrung des Verlustes, die unaufhebbar scheint, wohl aber substituiert werden kann. Bilder sind so betrachtet Substitute dessen, was fehlt, was abwesend ist, ohne die Dignität dessen zu erreichen, was sie ersetzen."

currently surround us most often. However, Christoph Wulf (2004), Kamper's writing partner in several books on historical anthropology, has elucidated the three categories mentioned above more extensively, including appropriating the same nomenclature.

Wulf (2004) explains that the magical (cult) image has the characteristic of being a producer of presence. It does not refer to something outside of itself, as is the case of the mimetic image, but points to itself, to its presence in the present. This occurs with mortuary, cult and, in some cases, artistic images. Based mainly on Belting's studies, Wulf exposes the deepest and most archaic meaning of images: they are responses to the fear of death. According to Belting (2001/2014), mortuary images—painted skulls, mannequins and masks—dating from as far as 7000 B.C. show the human capacity to overcome physical absence through symbolic presence, that is, the absence of the body through the presence of the image. There are also cult images, as in the case of the Golden Calf reported in the Old Testament, which are producers of presence through the association of the divine with the image, as an embodiment of the divine and, therefore, inseparable from it. This is a spatiotemporal co-occurrence of the divine with the image. Wulf (2004, p. 234) also mentions images of artistic type, especially certain works of modern art, whose production of presence occurs because they refer only to themselves, and not to something external to them, as in the case of mimetic images—this can be observed in the works of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman.

The second type of image is artistic representation and its ability to mimic the world. It is not a copy or similarity of that represented but, according to Wulf (2004), in the production of appearance, "mimetic act creates images of art and poetry, making visible something that otherwise could not appear"[18] (p. 236). Wulf resorts to Plato's theory to substantiate the problem of representation and to show that the subject was of ancient philosophical interest. As is already common knowledge, Plato was against poetic and artistic representations, and justified his aversion to them by understanding that poets and painters produced artificial appearances of things, not things themselves. Further, according to Wulf's (2004) reading, the result of this is "the creation of an aesthetic kingdom separated from reality and, therefore, not affected by the questions of truth"[19] (p. 236). As images mimic the world and constitute their own world of appearances from it, they do not submit to the same rules as things in the real world and are therefore dangerous. The point here is that such images are capable of exerting a powerful fascination on people, who come to mimic them—a finding which for the studies of image theory is obvious, nevertheless, fundamental. This is because, according to Wulf (2004), not only the real things can be mimicked,

[18] In the original: "der mimetische Akt schafft Bilder der Kunst und der Dichtung und macht dabei etwas sichtbar, was ansonsten nicht in Erscheinung treten würde."

[19] In the original: "dadurch entsteht ein eigener, von der Realität losgelöster und deshalb von Wahrheitsfragen nicht berührter ästhetische Bereich."

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but also appearances, that is, images. In keeping with Wulf, the philosopher Gernot Böhme (2004) states that Plato's image theory is still the fundamental basis of all image theory, or at least of the Central Western image.

However, the question of mimetic representation gains more relevance for the anthropology of the image when considered, once again, in relation to the body. Wulf (2004) argues that representation belongs to one of the most elementary forms of the human condition and that one of its central themes is the body, in other words, since the most remote times of humanity, the creation of images has the theme of the body as the main object of representation. As we saw in the previous chapter, the body is both a product and a producer of images. This overlap is evident in the first natural exogenous images. Shadow and reflection are images produced by the body exposed to light, and their theme is the body itself. Seen from another perspective, the body also marks the difference between inside and outside, between endogenous images—dreams, daydreams—and exogenous images—both images of the body and the body of images. The paradoxical condition of human existence, problematized by Plessner (1975) in the formulation of *having body* (*Körper haben*) and *being body* (*Leib sein*), is repeated in the experience with the image: we have images and we are images.

Wulf again refers to Belting (2001/2014), citing this passage directly:

> If the representation of the human being through the body derives from appearance, it is because the appearance constitutes both the condition of the being and its representation. Thus, the representation shows what man *is* in an image that makes him *appear*. And, on the other hand, the image does this in place of a body, which it staged so that it would provide the desired evidence. Man is as he appears in the body, and the body is in itself an image, even before it is reproduced in images. Representation is not what it claims to be, that is, *reproduction* of the body. In reality, it is the *production* of a body image, already given in the self-representation of the body. It is not possible to decompose the man-body-image triangle, at the risk of losing the interrelated parameters. (pp. 119-120)

According to Belting (2001/2014), "whenever people appear in the image, bodies are represented. Therefore, images of this type have a metaphorical meaning: they show bodies, but they mean people" (p. 117). Images have accompanied human existence since ancient times. Nowadays, there has been an increase in them thanks to new media and imaging devices, which offer any layperson the possibility of creating images. It is also for this reason that the studies of anthropology and philosophy have been increasingly concerned with them.

The images that surround us today are mostly characterized by their abstract nature and by their circulation in complex electronic media. Wulf (2004) highlights that such images circulate through media that radically reconfigure space and time. Electronic media allows us to overcome the limitations imposed by the circulation of images in more traditional media. In this respect, the German theorist Harry Pross (1972) has contributed significantly to an understanding of media functioning, classifying the *traditional* ones as primary (mimicry, voice) and secondary (writing, newspapers), which indicates the progressive advance from body to body communication (primary media) to communication between two bodies with the aid of a physical material support by the communicator (secondary media). In the secondary media, the intention is to ensure greater permanence of the message, overcoming the spatiotemporal limitations of living bodies. According to the author, the image is embodied mainly in secondary media but, with the restrictions imposed by materiality, it does not yet enjoy the free flow, ubiquity and instantaneity characteristics of images propagated by electronical means. Tertiary media (radio, television), as characterized by Pross (1972), is therefore the electronic media par excellence (Baitello Jr., 2005), and the difficulties of communication limited to space and time falls apart in the space-time of electricity. However, this type of communication only occurs with sender and receiver devices, which requires technical availability for participating in communication processes. The images that circulate by these means are subject to market rules and are goods to be consumed en masse. Considering the disruptive power of electronic media, it is therefore suitable to call the images that circulate through them as media images, thereby adopting the terminology of Baitello Jr. (2010).

Another striking feature of media images is the fact that they are the result of a high degree of abstraction. According to Wulf (2013), these images "miniaturize the world and make possible an experience of the 'world as image'" (p. 33). Not only the world, but also bodies and things. The process of abstraction causes bodies to be transformed into images of bodies. This has been seen before. In Kamper (1994) the issue is imprisonment in a world made up of such images and the disappearance of what is on the reverse. In this world, "the surface triumphs over all perception! The surface . . . is affirmed worldwide as the only creator of meaning"[20] (Kamper, 1994, p. 63). The disappearance of everything behind the images results in a problem of reference. Not that images no longer have any reference, but that the old *healthy* relationship that existed between image and world, image and body, and all the critical categories associated with such—truth and fiction, reality and illusion, appearance and essence—enter into crisis and do little to help understanding self-referential media images, that is, images that refer to images.

[20] In the original: "die Fläche triumphiert über alle Wahrnehmung! Die Fläche . . . behauptet, der einzige weltweite Bedeutungsgenerator zu sein."

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In addition, when images are transformed into mirrors of such (especially of logic), body and world, which were preserved by analogy as *the Other in the image*, they become positivized and disappear. The set of such images without body and world forms an immanence of the imaginary:

> Men do not live in the world today. Neither do they live in the language. They live rather in their images, in the images they have made of the world, of themselves and of other men, which others have made for them of the world, of themselves and of other men. They live badly rather than well in this imaginary immanence.[21] (Kamper, 1994, p. 7)

It is about being inside: inside a cave composed of images and signs (of the world, of oneself, of bodies), inside the head, inside the instrumental reason, inside a numerical, binary, artificial, supernatural virtual world. In this immanence, there is no space for the world, for the space of the world, for the time of the world. There is no time for the body, for the time of the body, for the space of the body. This means that perceptions, emotions and the power of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*), the faculties that interface with the Other and are linked to orientation in the world, temporality and death are exchanged for the technical surfaces of images. Instead of things and people, there are images of things and people: abstractions from the image.

According to Kamper (1994), images are created in response to the fear of death, and therefore the desires for immortality and power of the human species are associated with them. But behind such surfaces lies a kind of silent violence against life, against the body. The first image emerges from the fear of death, with the "purpose of covering up the scar from which we are originated"[22] (Kamper, 1994, p. 9). This scar is produced by the traumatic birth of bodies. Through birth, we are involuntarily cast into the world. Defenseless and alone, we desperately desire to return to our mother's arms, to return to the "cave of birth." Failing that, we create our own artificial cave: "the cave of images." Kamper bases this idea explicitly on Lacan's theory of the imaginary, for whom images are created to overcome moments of great difficulty: trauma supports the phantom; translated into Kamper's theory: the pains of the body sustain the image (Kamper, 1999).

However, even in the reverse, the fear and pains of the body do not disappear and continue to be remembered in the image. Overcoming this fear should occur through the strategy of multiplication/reproduction (*Vervielfältigung*) of images. The purpose of multiplication/reproduction is to make the first image forgotten: multiplication/reproduction should enhance oblivion. However, this

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[21] In the original: "Die Meschen leben heute nicht in der Welt. Sie leben nicht einmal in der Sprache. Sie leben vielmehr in ihren Bildern, in den Bildern, die sie sich von der Welt, von sich selbst und von den anderen Menschen gemacht haben, die man ihnen von der Welt, von sich selbst und von den anderen Menschen gemacht hat. Und sie leben eher schlecht als recht in dieser imaginären Immanenz."

[22] In the original: "Es hat den Zweck, die Wunde zuzudecken, aus der wir stammen."

is not possible, because we continue to have contact with the death of bodies (my body and the body of others), and therefore the multiplication/reproduction of images only serves as a temporary forgetting: "the imaginary is wanting to forget the remembering and wanting to remember the forgetting"[23] (Kamper, 1994, pp. 10-11). It is through this paradoxical strategy that the multiplication of images leads to the immanence of the imaginary.

> The "imaginary" is the collective name for the dead dreams of humanity, the decomposed artifacts of the force of the imagination, the remains of everything that was imagined, produced and exposed, the disillusions of high-voltage utopian politics, the mismanaged components of techno-imagination and the empty forms of philosophy and art—in short: all the rubble of human history that has in no way disappeared, but has been deposited on the globe like an impenetrable bulkhead.[24] (Kamper, 1994, p. 51)

The images that are forgotten and/or discarded are deposited, in the form of rubble, on the experience in a world that has lost its reference. The technical reproduction always repeats the same, eternal return to the same, to the equal, annulling the Other, that which is different. The Other of the imaginary is nothing more than a remote reminder of what was once in the past. Thus, there is no contact with the real, and everything in the orbit of the imaginary is nothing but fantasy, a technically (re)produced spectral reality.

> In the imaginary there is no Other. The object of the spirit is self-referential, and in such an extraordinary sense that, in the end, there is no Otherness, substance, matter or element left. The spirit that reaches itself through the imaginary is a modality of the dead God, who attains power through the disengagement of the world and a new artificial heaven. This complicates the situation. The body, which pursues a career as a corpse, nourishes the imaginary and is linked to an image of the human that advances towards a fatal eternity. Celebrity is announced, forever. In turn, the living body, capable of living and dying, is not part of this. It depends on concrete times and places, on the sensory proximity of touch and feeling. The corpse acts at a distance. The fascination of the cadaverous image is unbeatable. (Kamper, 2016, p. 74)

The subject of immanence is taken to its ultimate consequences by the German-Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han (2016), who denounces the "the terror of the Same." The thinker states that the disciplinary society has now been transmuted into a performance (Han, 2015) and transparency society (Han, 2014), in which the immunological aspect, characteristic of the previous

[23] In the original: "Das Imaginäre ist jenes Vergessenwollen, das erinnert, und jenes Erinnernwollen, das vergißt."

[24] In the original: "Das 'Imaginäre' ist hier der Sammelname für die gestorbenen Träume der Menschheit, für die verwesenden Artefakte der Einbildungskraft, für die Überbleibsel alles dessen, was man sich vorgestellt, was mas hergestellt, was man ausgestellt hat, für die Enttäuschungen einer utopisch hochgespannten Politik, die abgewirtschafteten Bestandteile der Techno-Imagination und die leeren Formen der Philosophie und der Kunst – mit einem Wort: für den gesamten Schrott der menschlichen Geschichte, der keineswegs verschwunden ist, sondern sich wie win undurchdringlicher Schirm um dem Globus gelegt hat."

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period, which still presupposed the negativity of the Other, has been replaced with the help of advanced technological means, especially imaging, by excessive post-immunological positivity. Han investigates this excess exhaustively and reveals another dark facet of the loss of Otherness which, besides annihilating the body and materiality, as already denounced by Kamper, also results in serious disorders of a *spiritual* nature—depression, burnout syndrome, tiredness, lack of attention. According to Han (2016),

> The time in which there was such thing as the Other is over. The Other as secret, the Other as temptation, the Other as Eros, the Other as desire, the Other as hell and the Other as pain disappear. The negativity of others now gives way to their passivity. The proliferation of the Same constitutes the pathological changes that afflict the social body. It is made sick not by denial and prohibition, but by over-communication and over-consumption; not by suppression and negation, but by permissiveness and affirmation. The pathological sign of our times is not repression but depression. Destructive pressure comes not from the Other but from within. Depression as internal pressure develops auto-aggressive traits. The depressive performance subject is as it were beaten down or suffocated by the self. Not only the violence of the Other is destructive; the expulsion of the Other sets in motion an entirely different process of destruction, namely that of self-destruction. In general, the dialectic of violence applies: *a system that rejects the negativity of the Other develops self-destructive traits*.[25] (pp. 7-8)

As noted, the issue of the image is important for both Belting and Kamper, and the two authors focus on it in different but complementary ways. Within the vast field of historical anthropology, Kamper considers the image from an anthropological theory of the body and its relationship with the imaginary. Meanwhile, Belting includes the body to propose an anthropological theory of the image and its flow in various media. We could say that Belting proposes an anthropology of the image, after the end of the history of art, while Kamper makes a harsh criticism of the image in anthropology, breaking it down into pieces and then rebuilding it according to the challenges proposed by the era of media image. At the intersection of these two positions is the point of the complex relationship between exogenous and endogenous images. For Kamper, there is the problem of images about the body, while for Belting, there is the introduction of the body to consider images.

Thus, on the one hand, we have a science of the image in search of understanding its object of study through an anthropological perspective and, on the other, anthropology which, by considering the human condition mainly from

[25] In the original: "Die Zeit, in der es den Anderen gab, ist vorbei. Der Andere als Geheimnis, der Andere als Verführung, der andere als Eros, der Andere als Begehren, der Andere als Hölle, der Andere als Schmerz verschwindet. Die Negativität der Anderen weicht heute der Passivität des Gleichen. Die Wucherung des Gleichen macht die pathologischen Veränderungen aus, die den Sozialkörper befallen. Nicht Entzug und Verbot, sondern Überkommunikation und Überkonsumtion, nicht Verdrängung und Negation, sondern Permissivität und Affirmation machen ihn krank. Nicht Repression, sondern Depression ist das pathologische Zeitzeichen von heute. Die destruktive Pression kommt nicht vom Anderen, sondern aus dem Inneren. Die Depression als innere Pression entwickelt auto-agressive Züge. Das depressive Leistungssubjekt wird gleichsam vom Selbst erschlagen oder erstickt. Zerstörerisch ist nicht nur die Gewalt des Anderen. Die Austreibung des Anderen setzt einen ganz anderen Zestörungsprozess in Gang, nämlich die Selbstzerstörung. Allgemein gilt die Dialektik der Gewalt: *Ein System, das die Negativität des Anderen ablehnt, entwickelt autodestruktive Züge*."

a historical perspective, begins to occupy itself mostly with the subject of the image in its historical-cultural dimension.

Reflections such as those of Belting, Kamper, Anders, Baudrillard, Flusser (to a certain extent), Han and others have opened room for a perspective that operates with scenarios of cultural environments, sometimes taken to their extremes, openly confronting the mainstream of worshipers of any technological advance that further amplifies the invasion and colonization of bodies and imaginaries. ◼

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