Arts and Culture: Keeping Democracy Alive or Entertainment for the Establishment?

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I   Preliminary Remarks

Our reflections first describe the influence of art and culture on democratic political systems. In this section, we will focus on various stakeholders as we consider the arts, culture, artistic and cultural institutions and practices, and the recipients of art and culture; we will conclude with some remarks about the culturalization of the social realm. In the second section, we investigate current aspects of the crisis of democracy and sketch out aspects of the crisis of legitimacy, trust and representation; describe the challenges of the growing role of identity politics; and use two examples to illustrate how cultural and political education are generating new ideas as well as the importance of trans-national educational scenarios. Finally, we provide recommendations for action that are addressed to stakeholders at the European level.

In our considerations, we assume that art and culture are always realized within a general set of social conditions. In optimal cases, art and culture are not controlled and regimented by hegemonic agents but instead serve as independent generative forces. Art and culture are capable of transcending borders, thereby making it possible to conceive of the impossible, opening up new perspectives and creating new space for expression. On the other hand, art and culture can also be instrumentalized, used to pay homage to and legitimize regimes. They do not exist in a vacuum but instead are context-dependent. Under the conditions of repressive and authoritarian political practices, insisting on the autonomy of artistic and cultural creation is risky, but art and culture thereby also gain critical, and sometimes even utopian, relevance.

In our discussion, we do not seek to "politicize" and thereby fix the context of art and culture. There are always dimensions of artistic and cultural creation that extend beyond the realm of the political, especially with regard to aesthetics. However, those dimensions are not relevant for our considerations here. We seek to provide commentary on and contextualize a few questions that arise with respect to this year's Trilogue Salzburg:

Is culture an early warning system for the erosion of democracy? Are the conditions of production and the acceptance of art an early warning system? Are art and culture prerequisites for a functional level of dialogue and communication, and thus for democracy as well? How can they generate momentum toward new ways of thinking about democratic systems today? What lessons can we learn from the basis of a cultural perspective, and what recommendations can we deduce from those lessons?

We are especially interested in the following key questions:

- What are, from a cultural perspective, the minimal standards for a democratic system/a democratic republic that serves all people?
- What deficiencies, characteristics or qualities of the democratic model would cause the entire model to be called into question?
- What are (or should be) the fundamental rules of power, participation and decision-making processes?
- What can we learn from art and culture in order to improve today's democracies?

II   The Influence of Art and Culture on Democratic Political Systems

Culture matters! There is a general consensus that art and politics have a reciprocal relationship with each other. In contemporary art, art often displays a political dimension as well as an aesthetic one; this tendency serves to emphasize the political relevance of artistic articulation. On the one hand, artistic practice serves to reveal political contexts and relationships, but it also pursues its own political objectives, such as the creation of spaces for artistic creation or societal participation. These days, artistic practice is often a realm in which alternative political experimentation and action can occur.[1] On the one hand, politics can also be understood as a specific cultural form with its own conventions of expression and specific political consequences; that cultural form coincides with the general trend toward culturalization (see below).

The scope implied by these projects makes it clear that the over-arching question of the influence of art and culture on democratic systems cannot be answered without presuppositions. Every political theorist will choose a different approach, depending on his or her orientation. In the context of systems-theoretical considerations, the answer would likely be that there is no influence. If the question is that of "influence on politics," the question of scope would be primary: Influence on content? Influence on processes? Influence on structures? Are we talking about culturalization of politics or politicization of culture?

A more difficult task is explaining what "art" and "culture" are intended to mean below. We suggest clearly distinguishing the phenomena of art and culture from one another. In our consideration of art, we take a perspective that looks at the stakeholders and their potential for constructively working, by means of artifacts (artworks), on current problems in democracy; we do not focus on the art system. We likewise view the phenomenon of "culture" by focusing on how stakeholders from the fields of cultural politics, cultural institutions and civil society influence political content, processes and structures. Finally, we want to take a look at the agency of the recipients of art and culture; here we take our cue from the discourse on reception aesthetics in the field of literary theory.

Furthermore, we find that considering "culture" as a socially structuring phenomenon is meaningful because this context enables us to discuss the society-spanning influence of cultural apparatuses and narratives, and culturalizing tendencies in the late modern era in particular. We thus talk about the background, the atmosphere or the specific social "sound" against or in which art, politics and society articulate themselves.

1.   The Artists

Representatives of political and cultural education generally find their professions capturing public or political attention primarily when societal crisis phenomena or increased public awareness of crisis become evident. Similarly, when questions get asked about the potential of art, it is safe to

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[1]   There are numerous examples of projects that illustrate this: In 2014, the "Geheimagentur" ("Secret Agency") ensemble launched a transnational convention called "The Art of Being Many" that brought together real-democracy activists from many parts of Europe and the world at the Kampnagel theatre in Hamburg. The convention was devoted to new techniques and aesthetics, strategies and theories of assembling. The gathering addressed the timing, sounds and affects of gatherings, the movement and materiality of collective decisions. The objective was to try out, experience and sample -- not just to discuss. What is the "State of the Art of Being Many"? Another contemporary example is a project called "Artfremde Einrichtung. Die Kultureinrichtung als Allmende" ("Appropriation of the institution: The cultural institution as common space") by zeitraumexit ("timespaceexit"), an independent theatre group based in Mannheim. In this project, the theatre was handed over for four weeks at a time, following voting by a public assembly, to citizens for realization of their own performances.

assume that the political realm is already in big trouble. But it's usually hard to say what exactly the question is that art answers, claims to answer or could answer. We wish to formulate and test a number of hypotheses in order to use art to counter the currently discernible problems or "weaknesses" of democracy. We suggest the following here:

Thesis 1 – Art does not want to be useful, but it can be political
Art, which has struggled for its autonomy and had that autonomy validated in Western democratic societies since the Romantic era, does not like to be assessed on the basis of functional aspects or considerations of usefulness. Until the very recent past, most artists insisted on art's (albeit mostly fictive) aesthetic autonomy and purpose-free nature. As a result of the specific German historical development of the understanding of culture and education, art was doubly apolitical in the 19th century: Culture and education, in contrast to the enlightened French way of understanding them, were seen as tools for achieving inner sublimation, spiritual and moral self-development and refinement of the personality. These realms were used polemically against modernity's alleged challenges in the social, political and spiritual realms. At issue was not just a negative political freedom, i.e. freedom from political grasping. For many representatives of German culture, (democratic) political activity per se was considered suspicious; one can find exaggerated expressions of this in Thomas Mann's "Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man" and his arguments with the "civilization literati." In the most recent phase, shaped by neoliberalism, both art and cultural education have therefore largely refused to engage in utilitarian thinking, even though representatives of politics and government have, via well-funded support programs, at least formulated the hope that access to culture and creative engagement with art have positive personal and sociopolitical consequences and can thereby help attenuate the deficits that the economization of the educational system has systematically produced. The current boom in school-based and extracurricular cultural education is among the phenomena that can be classified this way. Artists have been getting much more political in recent years, as described in the sections below, but the spaces they develop are not necessarily therefore pedagogical or political spaces per se. Section 1.4 elaborates on the idea that today, even aesthetic experience without political intent already has political implications.

Thesis 2 - Artists can come up with counter-cultures and alternative visions of society
The systems theorist Dirk Baecker recently recalled Heiner Müller's well-known observation: "And for me, art's role is to make reality impossible."[2] This statement contains some weighty notions about art's potential. For one thing, artists as cultural producers are mentioned in the same breath as intellectuals, with their ability to provide culturally relevant interpretations of reality. Ideally, the representatives of the "vision business" are obligated to a "standpoint of norms and values that claim universal validity"[3] and bear no political responsibility. According to Pierre Bourdieu's fundamental determination,

> "an intellectual is... a bidimensional being. In order to deserve to be called an intellectual, a cultural producer must meet two requirements: on the one hand, he must belong to an intellectually autonomous world (a field), i.e. one that is free from religious, political, economic, etc. powers, and respect that field's special laws; moreover, he must also bring the specific

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[2]   Dirk Baecker. Von der Kunst, die Wirklichkeit unmöglich zu machen. "On the Art of Making Reality Impossible. On Heiner Müller," in: Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für Europäisches Denken, 71. February 2017 edition, p. 16-28, here p. 16.

[3]   Cf. Wolfgang Jäger. Die Überwindung der Teilung. Der innerdeutsche Prozess der Wiedervereinigung ("Overcoming Division. The Intra-German Process of Reunification"), 1989/90, Stuttgart 1998, p. 356.

competence and authority acquired within that intellectual field to a political action that must take place outside of the intellectual field in the narrower sense.[4]

Democracy needs autonomous references in order to call itself into question and be able to develop perspectives on that basis. The representatives of non-democratic political systems, or systems that are on the way there, usually permit only affirmative voices and work to eliminate autonomous realms. Artists are only left with a choice between making a "courtly gesture" or entering the cultural opposition, or else the option of invisibility.

Thesis 3 - Artists' references to democratically created politics or political systems are ambivalent

It's no secret that numerous artists have let themselves be harnessed to totalitarian propagandist fantasies by the protagonists of Germany's recent non-democratic political systems. Until the mid-20th century, a good number of cultural producers viewed the ideal of the French intellectual à la Clemenceau as un irrelevant and generally undesired measuring stick, but more recently there have been perceptible changes. There has been increasing academic discussion of the phenomena of "post-politics," [5], "anti-politics," [6] or "crisis of representation" [7] since Colin Crouch's publication of his theory of "post-democracy," [8] and the number of artists addressing political subjects as individuals or in their artistic work, and who consider these subjects using their own particular media, has also been growing. The big art exhibitions of recent years, like the 2015 Venice Biennale[9] and Documenta 2017, involved a hitherto unseen number of high-quality and high-intensity political artwork. Examples of political work that has had an especially pronounced effect on the public include that of the Swiss artist Milo Rau or the "Center for Political Beauty" founded by Philipp Ruch. In the Yearbook of Cultural Politics that appeared in the fall of 2018, Rau writes as follows about his projects "Kongo Tribunal" and "General Assembly":

> "Realism -- realistic politics, realistic art -- can thus only be this: Listening to those voices who know something, and thus putting own's own view of things into motion. Things that seem right to us from a distance, enclosed in our own logic, are often completely wrong. The present by nature appears compelling to contemporaries, even hermetic, especially in today's world, in which everything could be said to be "preordained," since it's set up for profit. ... The present, all the brilliance of our days, everyday life and in the end the meaning of life of billions of people and trillions of other living beings is reduced, in the age of finance capitalism, to being merely a transitional space in which the future is to unfold. After all, the future has been sold before it even takes place -- our task, the task of civil society, is to reclaim it.... However, the only way of breaking out of the totality of current time is to view it from a distance. Whether from the future, looking back at oneself with a utopian eye -- or, the other way around, looking in the past for comparable moments, for epochal breaks that are equally absurd and nightmarish. After all, at the beginning of every revolution there is an anti-narcissistic reflection, so to speak, a reflection of oneself in that which has become completely foreign, in the past, in that which has failed."

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[4]   See Pierre Bourdieu. die Intellektuellen und die Macht ("Intellectuals and Power"). Hamburg 1991, p. 42.

[5]   Slavoj Žižek. Die Tücke des Subjekts ("The Malice of the Subject"). Frankfurt am Main 2010, p. 272-282.

[6]   With that term, the thought is expressed that current protest is not primarily directed against established politics but rather against the "deeper conviction that politics as such is meaningless" (see Frank Furedi: Politics of Fear. Beyond left and Right, London 2005, p. 29, based on: Ingolfur Blühdorn. Simulative Demokratie. Neue Politik nach der postdemokratischen Wende ("Simulative Democracy. New Politics after the Post-Democratic Transformation"), Berlin 2013, p. 24).

[7]   E.g. the collection of essays "Repräsentation in der Krise?" ("Representation in the Crisis?"), Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ), Vol. 66, issue 40-42/2016 dated October 4, 2016.

[8]   Colin Crouch. Post-Democracy. Frankfurt am Main 2008

[9]   One of the politically most charged works was the re-enacted installation "Untitled" by Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, which strikingly staged the topic of repressed freedom of opinion in her country.

Changes to structures and symbolic actions like the expansion of Documenta 2017 to the Athens location are also clearly political in nature. To be distinguished from this is the phenomenon, associated for example with poverty, social marginalization or racism, of artists taking on roles within the social or political order. Since the migrations of the 2015-2016 years, they are increasingly helping refugees in seek jobs, look for places to live and acquire funds, and accompanying people to various authorities. The "Silesian 27," who under their leader Barbara Meyer view themselves as an "art laboratory for young people who want to change the world," have increasingly networked with refugee assistance organizations in order to offer training as well as newly set-up social services. One example is a project called CUCULA – Refugees Company for Crafts and Design. One of many other examples, albeit an outstanding one, is Neue Nachbarschaft/Moabit e. V., a Berlin-based organization founded by Belarusian artist Marina Naprushkina, who since 2013 has been using a wide range of approaches to work with people seeking refuge. The stated goal is the creation

> "of a social and artistic platform for exchange, learning and engagement for neighbors from around the world. We are learning from one another rather than helping... Our goal is to influence society, to actively help shape it, to create new possibilities for political and social togetherness that will be free of hierarchy.... Our work is done on a volunteer basis."[10]

Artists, by understanding their own work as "social sculpture," address deficits in politics by filling in for and taking care of tasks that are incumbent upon the state and society. The problems that are triggered by the state's withdrawal or refusal to act provoke a more charged form of political aesthetics that pushes the limits of artistic activity and thus aims to expand the spaces in which political action occurs.

Thesis 4 - Art can support democracy, but also questions it

Both types of "politicization" of artists are equally suitable for both supporting and questioning the democratic political system. On the one hand it becomes clear that democratic politics alone, within the framework of the nation-state, can no longer address or solve the global challenges of the present, like climate change, human rights violations during war, global refugee movements, organized crime, the dangers of finance capitalism, etc. It needs transnational models of politics. On the other hand, democratic politics now also depends on support and participation by civil society even within its nation-state framework; that support and participation must go beyond the level traditionally desired on the basis of the representative democracy model. However, this need not necessarily be interpreted as an indicator of the erosion of democracy, since democracy is still the only form of government in the world that can handle at all efficiently the problems we face and that offers its citizens a reasonable amount of quality of life, health care, public safety, welfare and social support as well as cultural and educational opportunities that non-democratic political systems cannot even dream of. A central aspect here is the necessity of distinguishing between art that sticks its finger in the wound and art that leaves its own field and treads on the ground of political activity. Even if this occurs with the best intentions for democracy, the various ways of seeking to fulfill governmental tasks constitute a tendency that could also contribute to weakening democratic political systems in the long run. The "third sector" supports and supplements the state's tasks, but it cannot replace them.

Thesis 5 - Art can negate the world, generate freedom

The quotation cited above by the dramatist Heiner Müller, which asserts that art's role is to make reality impossible, points to the concept of negation, which is of interest in both philosophy and sociology. Jean Paul Sartre, in his main ontological work "Being and Nothingness," had considered the necessity of negation as a constitutive moment for being ("a being that is what it is not and is

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[10]   http://neuenachbarschaft.de/info./.

not what it is") and emphasized in particular consciousness' ability to "nihilate." Grossly simplified, "nihilation" implies that because of their existential feeling of lack, people seek to overcome a current condition and replace it with a different one, thereby referencing the future and its possibilities: A person is not just what he or she is, but will be something different in the future.[11] This presence of nothing or of not-yet, to leave Sartre's language, is the fundamental condition for being able to be. Negation can inspire destruction, elimination, a new beginning or be a constitutive element of social systems' self-correction. As examples of the latter, systems theorist Dirk Baecker lists the following: opposition in politics, competition in business, doubt in religion, falsification in science.[12] In art, it's mainly about the ability to consider "everything" to be false. Using theatre as an example, Baecker shows that the ability to make reality impossible depends on interaction; "circumstances [are] presented... that can only be negated thanks to specific encounters, thanks to dramatic developments, thanks to clever intrigue." And this social interaction must be critical:

> "Art's role lies in finding it true that everything is false, and thereby giving us as individuals and in interaction the breathing room and the desire to start again, differently. The longing remains to be able to find it true that something is true, to find it possible that something is real. This longing is fulfilled in interaction precisely when it is freed for negation...." [13]

What results for our topic from dealing with negation, with the act of finding things false? Sartre, especially after the second world war, is concerned with demonstrating opportunities for human freedom on the basis of existential responsibility. Consciousness is referenced to its possibilities. Through their ability to negate, through their relationship to not-yet and no-longer, people have choice, invent themselves, have the ability to be free and also bear responsibility. With regard to art, the discussion concerns the potential for developing utopia on the basis of negation and thereby envisioning alternative worlds. Political scientist Maria do Mar Castro Varela also takes up the thinking of Ernst Bloch when she speaks about utopia, positing that we have to call the system into question without already being able to pull a different, better model out of the hat.[14]

Thesis 6 - Art can reflect the world, create worlds
On the one hand, these days we move within surroundings that are the result of technical, political or artistic strategies and processes and that place certain expectations of people. On the other hand, there are already realms that have left human reception or participation behind. Examples of this are designed artificial worlds, already practically taken for granted, in which people move, live and work, worlds that they use and by which they are used. These include self-driving cars, smart homes, vacation resorts, shopping malls, gentrified neighborhoods, downtowns designed based on economic imperatives, aestheticized workplaces, consumption and wellness industry establishments, and culture. All of these worlds "do something" with people. All architecture, every atmosphere shapes peoples' moods and also shapes them socially, urges them into roles and actions. These phenomena are generally associated with cultural capitalism, which has blossomed primarily since the point in time when markets became "saturated" and the intention became to sell people lifestyle components and identity characteristics rather than just products. Sociologist Heinz Bude, in his current book "Adorno für Ruinenkinder" ("Adorno for Children of the Ruins"), writes that

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[11]   Jean-Paul Sartre. Das Sein und das Nichts. Versuch einer phänomenologischen Ontologie ("Being and Nothingness. An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology"), Frankfurt am Main/Vienna 1991, e.g. p. 337 et seq.

[12]   Baecker, op. cit., 2017, p.22.

[13]   Ibid., p. 27 et seq.

[14]   Maria do Mar Castro Varela. Verlernen und die Strategie des unsichtbaren Ausbesserns. Bildung und Postkoloniale Kritik ("Unlearning and the Strategy of Invisible Revision. Education and Post-colonial Criticism"), in: http://www.igbildendekunst.at/bildpunkt/2007/widerstand-macht-wissen/varela.htm.

the term "capitalism" in the context of the 1968 student movement stood metaphorically for the belief that "something wasn't right" in the realms of society and politics.[15] It had negative associations, while the term "cultural capitalism," the primary task of which is to transmit positive affects and stimuli, is usually used merely with a tired smile today. However, artificial-immersive worlds push the unspectacular realistic world of democratic political encounters into the background. The authoritarian nature that inscribes itself into these artificial worlds is hardly even perceived anymore. This observation leads philosopher Byung Chul Han to observe that, if a system were to attack freedom, people would certainly resist -- but the current system does not attack freedom, it just instrumentalizes it.[16] For example, in the use of images, words and/or crafted objects that recall the collective memories of the bourgeois freedoms of the 19th century. Supported by the "transparent," i.e. generally not visible, potential of digitization, which is what makes possible these environments for people and society that are designed based on completely new criteria, the world of the global West has become a feel-good atmosphere for those members of the public with deep pockets, who have essentially tuned out society's underbelly. This has become a central subject for art in recent years. Starting from a consideration of the phenomena that accompany offers of virtual immersion, i.e. opportunities to dive into digital worlds, many artists now focus on the dark sides of commercially inspired world-building. Performance artist Johannes Paul Räther, for example, develops avatars for himself with whom he enters economically coded immersive worlds, sharing a critical viewpoint with his public as "companions." Occasionally, this can even lead to police evacuation orders, as occurred in the Apple Store on the Kurfürstendamm in Berlin, because it becomes impossible to distinguish between art and reality.[17] The "Immersion" program of the Berliner Festspiele event provides numerous other examples and public discussions; over the course of three years, the festival is focusing on artwork that sharpens awareness of the authoritarian and disciplining aspects of world-making.

2. Cultural Politics and Cultural Education

Cultural institutions and practices are almost inestimably significant to our considerations here. This is true with respect to the many cultural institutions with their wide range of funders as well as with respect to their curatorial and pedagogical transmission practices and academic and extracurricular cultural education. Here too, we offer two theses to help provide some insight into the relevance of the agents of culture and cultural politics.

Thesis 1 - Political art needs "political" cultural politics
Cultural politics not only creates the framework within which art and culture happen, in the process using a wide range of practices to make decisions about and promote those happenings. It also proposes societal models. This is especially true for the "New Cultural Politics" developed in Germany since the 1970s, the two protagonists of which, Hilmar Hoffmann and Hermann Glaser, recently passed away. Within its scope, this movement dealt from the very beginning with modernity's social transformation processes. The current transformation processes in the late modern era raise the question of how the agents of culture and cultural politics adapt to an increasingly heterogeneous society on the one hand and to the new inequalities on the other.

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[15] Cf. Heinz Bude on his book "Adorno für Ruinenkinder. Eine Geschichte von 1968" ("Adorno for Children of the Ruins. A Story from 1968"), Munich, 2018 in the "Questions for the Author" program of the radio station Saarländischer Rundfunk SR 2, May 6, 2018 https://www.sr.de/home/der_sr/kommunikation/aktuell/20180430_pm_fragen_an_den_autor100.html, retrieved on July 18, 2018.

[16] E.g. https://www.zeit.de/zeit-wissen/2014/05/byung-chul-han-philosophie-neoliberalismus/seite-2, retrieved on July 18, 2018.

[17] https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/polizei-justiz/kunst-performance-sorgt-fuer-verwirrung-polizei-raeumt-apple-store-am-kudamm/13853580.html, retrieved on July 18, 2018.

Knowledge transmission practices that are fine-tuned to particular target groups, along with low-threshold access to cultural institutions, play a key role in this process. Across Europe, one can observe increasing attention being given within institutions to cultural education aspects. The price that cultural facilities would otherwise have to pay would be very high. Focusing on a privileged core public inevitably leads over the long term to a loss of legitimacy in the eyes of a society in which many interest groups are asserting their needs. But the internal transformation and modernization processes of societies are not the only relevant topic today. Konrad Paul Liessmann, a philosopher based in Vienna, explains in his current book "Bildung als Provokation" ("Education as Provocation") that it is primarily the territorial state and the nation, the people of a country as an imagined body of free citizens, as a "collective within borders that obtained its sovereignty as a political subject from those borders,"[18] that have given up their omnipresent relevance. The dissolution of borders and the specific transnational and global mobilities of "culture" have long made clear that the division between "inside" and "outside" can scarcely be asserted in this realm anymore, even if political responsibilities are still governed by this dichotomy from the past.[19] The mobility of people, a wide range of ideas and cultural economics, on the other hand, are countered by the post-national cultural and educational politics that are taking shape, such as the ideas currently being formulated, with European art and culture foundations as models, by entities including the German Foreign Office and its intermediaries. As the state withdraws from the business of engaging in representation politics, for example through guided artist exchanges, and instead gives the agents themselves plenty of space to act, new freedoms and responsibilities arise for civil society, which in turn generate new forms of legitimacy. This applies in particular in places where artists can no longer work in democratically secured environments and are subject to repression and/or withdrawal of financial support. Transnational legitimacy is nourished in part by support from a transnational public and an art system that operates transnationally, as was recently shown, for example, by the discussions at the "Active Part of Art" conference that the Bundesakademie für kulturelle Bildung (German Federal Academy for Cultural Education) held in cooperation with the German Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine (Working Group of German Art Organizations) in Wolfenbüttel.[20]

Thesis 2 - Democracy needs resistant cultural and educational agents
Democracy needs criticism like we need oxygen to breathe. Unlike in authoritarian political models, where the protagonists first seek to silence and control intellectuals, artists and critical journalists, democracy is a future- and discourse-oriented political system model that has to constructively develop further on the basis of criticism and discussion. For this reason, in difficult times, democracy also needs critical and corrective voices from the realm of culture: Artists, representatives of cultural facilities, cultural policymakers and free agents. Two years ago, the long-serving late president of the Deutscher Museumsbund (German Museum Association) and Director of the Victoria and Alberta Museum in London, Martin Roth, sparked a vigorous discussion with an article in the ZEIT in which he accused representatives of cultural institutions of "hiding their faces" in times of re-nationalization and growing racism and xenophobia:

> "National museums, national theaters, and opera houses are not unpolitical. Anyone who thinks
> they are is exposing those institutions to political influence. Among their tasks is representing

[18]   See also Konrad Paul Liessmann. Bildung als Provokation ("Education as Provocation"), Vienna 2017, p. 172 et seq.

[19]   Cf. Sonja Zekri. Auf Augenhöhe ("At Eye Level"), in: Süddeutsche Zeitung dated May 21, 2017, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/essay-auf-augenhoehe-1.3515524.

[20]   https://www.bundesakademie.de/programm/__dokumentationen/the-active-part-of-art.

the moral and ethical dimension of their work in public. Museums and collections are to some extent resistant by nature, or they would not have survived the countless changes to the system in Europe. I am therefore very surprised that in Germany practically no one from the realms of culture and art is standing up to the increasing nationalism, the xenophobic hate. In the town of Bautzen, in the state of Saxony, neo-Nazis harass young migrants, and what do the police do? They put the migrants under house arrest. Where are the voices of warning from the realm of culture?"[21]

Sparked in part by that article, many stakeholders from the realms of art and culture redirected themselves and discussed questions of political positioning, decolonizing their institutions[22], social inequalities or opening up their buildings into the cities. An especially interesting aspect of the article was that Roth accentuated the "resistant" nature that has been inherent to museum collections or theatre repertoires since the era of the Enlightenment. In this way, he wrote, the hegemonic, Western-biased practices and productions of knowledges could be interrogated. This change in perspective away from individual agents and toward institutions is especially noteworthy for two reasons. For one thing, it contains the thesis that "subjects of culture" inherently involve (socio-)political statements. Here, cultural education can find and critically discuss points of departure for dealing with cultural products in a way that is also politically relevant. On the other hand, talking about institutions is also important because they have the job of representing societal experiences and societal will. When there is talk about representation deficits in the political system, it is usually also about groups of people not feeling represented by institutions, for example with regard to their interests or their allegiances and identities. For this reason, cultural institutions now also discuss how access can be opened up for under-represented groups to both the offerings of and positions within institutions. However, representation also has a significant symbolic role: The trust that institutions and their representatives arrange things for the common good is fundamental for legitimizing democracy. This also includes cultural facilities being aware that they "administer" not just cultural products but also associated attitudes and feelings. The (interpretive) power that inheres in cultural institutions must not be under-estimated politically. The role assigned in a democracy to critical cultural institutions and their representatives is important in this context. In addition to acting as institutionalized regulators of democracy, they also, as institutions of the democracy, represent key population groups *for* the democracy. The more social milieus define themselves via cultural parameters, the more important their (political) representation by cultural institutions becomes. However, many cultural facilities have significant catching up to do in this area with respect to their personnel and organizational development.

3. The Recipients

However, meanings are not produced solely by artists through their works and the institutions and political practices that support them. The extent to which recipients themselves (readers, viewers, listeners) influence and help produce meanings and the context-dependent transformations implicit in those meanings is often under-estimated. This also applies to political opinion formation processes. In the academy, these questions are dealt with in the discourse of reception aesthetics, which considers people's perceptions of cultural and artistic works, in contrast to structuralism, which argues solely on the basis of the works themselves. The Constance School, led by Wolfgang Iser and Robert Jauß, established this debate in the German-speaking world. In the English-

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[21] Martin Roth. Der Traum vom intellektuellen Widerstand ("The Dream of Intellectual Resistance," in: DIE ZEIT, October 8, 2016, https://www.zeit.de/2016/42/nationalismus-intellektueller-widerstand-populismus-theater-museen-martin-roth.

[22] This topic was addressed, for example, in the three-part series of colloquia on "colonial repercussion" held by the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung in early 2018.

speaking world, it is known as "reader response criticism." In a well-known essay called "Coding, Decoding" (1977), communications scholar and ground-breaker in the field of Cultural Studies Stuart Hall explained that a message or text is never determined by the sender alone, and the receiving parties are never just passive recipients.[23] Literary scholar Wolfgang Iser theorizes about the relational work that the reader does by imbuing "empty spaces" with meaning and thereby allowing a holistic work to come into being.[24] This question has long been reflected and mirrored in the arts. There is a famous example at the conclusion of Toni Morrison's vibrant novel "Jazz" about a love that has to fail because it does not know its roots. She ends her novel with a surprising reference:

> "...That I want you to love me too and to show me that you do. That I love how you hold me, how close you let me be to you. I like your fingers there and there, they lift and turn me. I have been watching your face for a long time and missed your eyes when you left me. Speaking with you and hearing you answer -- that is the most beautiful thing. But I can't say that aloud; I can't tell anyone that I waited all my life for it and the being chosen to wait is the reason I can even do it. If I could, I would say it. Would say: Bring me there, make me new. You have the freedom to let you do it, because look, look. Look where your hands are. Now."*[25]*

Toni Morrison empowers her readers. They hold the book in their hands. It is a sign of the times that the empowered recipients today understand themselves increasingly as co-creatives, as co-producers who turn passive reception into active participation. Not long ago, the German cultural press accused the curators of Documenta 14 (2017) of poor aesthetic quality and obtrusively didactic and graceless presentation. Visitors, on the other hand, engaged in a highly political discourse with and about the works of art, thereby coming with an entirely different impression. The London-based collective Forensic Architecture achieved particular attention for its work about the NSU (National Socialist Underground) murder in the city of Kassel. The work incorporated all available sources to painstakingly reconstructed in a digital fashion and played a key role in interrogating the investigative process and the role of the secret service.[26] An area of the exhibition called "Schöne Aussicht" ("Beautiful View") funneled visitors through an installation called "Rose Valland Institute" and made by German artist Maria Eichhorn, who dealt with looted art and questions of provenance.[27] Already shaken up by this work, visitors were then led to view a large number of other pieces, some of them older, for example from the era of the Eastern bloc, and there discovered the relevance of those works for themselves, perhaps for the first time. The example of Documenta 14 clearly shows that recipients today play a key role in assessing the political relevance of art and culture. It has become impossible to think about the role that art and culture play as stabilizers of democratic societies without thinking about the reception side of the equation. Attempts to investigate and potentially activate the stabilizing role of art and culture on shaky democratic societies can no longer succeed without the potential co-creativity and the collaborative practices of a public that has developed self-awareness.

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[23]   Stuart Hall. Kodieren, Dekodieren ("Coding, Decoding") in: Ideologie, Identität, Repräsentation. Ausgewählte Schriften 4 (Ideology, Identity, Representation. Selected Writings 4), Hamburg 2004.

[24]   Wolfgang Iser. Die Appellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa ("The Appeal Structure of Texts. Indeterminacy as a Condition of Effect of Literary Prose"). Constance 1971, p. 6 et seq., later also in Umberto Eco "Lector in Fabula" 1979, where he develops the concept of the model reader who fills up these empty spaces with his or her knowledge of the world.

[25]   Toni Morrison. Jazz, Reinbeck 1993, p. 250.

[26]   https://www.forensic-architecture.org.

[27]   https://www.monopol-magazin.de/raubkunst-documenta-14-kassel.

4. Culturalization of the Social Realm: Transformation of the Global Sound in the Late Modern Eera

The nature and extent of the reciprocal relationships between art and politics become evident against a specific backdrop -- that of the culturalization of the social realm. Culturalization implies that politics reacts with "cultural" arguments or decisions to societal concerns. One example is the homeland ministries that have recently been founded in Germany. But culturalization also means that people and social groups define themselves via cultural characteristics. This is expressed in the great significance of the phenomenon of "identity." In contrast, earlier social structuration criteria such as income and wealth have become secondary. Political conflicts form along the boundaries of cultural allegiances. Sociologist Andreas Reckwitz has investigated this phenomenon with his theory of the singularization of the social realm.[28] In his earlier work as well, he had already observed the increasing significance of the cultural realm in Western societies since the 1970s. The insight on which his work is based relates to the transformation from modernity to late modernity. Traditional industrial modernity is associated with processes of standardization and orientation toward a model of generality. Politically and socially, this was expressed in a middle-class self-image that was based on the criterion of equality. In the world of work, as well as that of products and consumption, people oriented themselves toward a general societal standard; everyone wanted a washing machine, a television and a car. Politics handed down decisions that were "good for all." Historical development into late modernity involves a change spurred in part by the lack of stimulus and affect that was generated by the standardization of modernity. Today, the "new middle classes" seek that which is innovative, special and unique. Individuals now achieve their social positions via cultural decisions about what to do with the income they have obtained. In order to reach a favorable position within society, people have to eat food that is culturally "right," live in the "right" neighborhood, take the "right" vacations and send their children to the "right" schools. "Right" is defined by whether the selected cultural options have a high societal status, which in turn depends in part on their cultural quality and their singularity. As a result of digitization and the development of social media, aesthetic and especially visual qualities play a key role in this competition within cultural markets. People don't buy what they need; instead, they seek to equip themselves with the utensils that will make their own singularity, their own lifestyle, visible. This desire, considered historically, harkens back to Romanticism. Reckwitz shows that today even terrorist attacks have the character of aesthetic performances, with primarily visual qualities.

There is no lack of criticism concerning this world of Western "hyper-individualists" who construct themselves in a culturally capitalistic way. But it is interesting that such criticism itself also, to a great extent, shapes itself in a cultural way. Reckwitz calls them "cultural essentialists": identity-based movements, or groups that construct themselves as collectives and carry out "an extremely active re-evaluation directed against the way of living they have 'found' to exist in the modern area." They model "the world in the form... of antagonism between inside and outside, between ingroup and outgroup, which is also a dualism between valuable and worthless." This process, at its core a racializing one, thus does not operate in a way that is "dynamic and mobile; instead it seeks to maintain internally the unambiguous nature of valuable assets -- sets of beliefs, symbols, national history, the ordeals of a group with shared origins - while also carrying out a rigorous devaluation externally: one's own, superior nation against the foreign ones (nationalism), one's own religion against the non-believers (fundamentalism), the people against the cosmopolitan elites (right-wing populism)." Status is bestowed not on the new but rather on the old, on tradition, on the collective's

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[28] Cf. Andreas Reckwitz. Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten. Zum Strukturwandel der Moderne ("The Society of Singularities. On the Structural Transformation of Modernity"). Berlin 2017.

origins, "which expresses itself in a corresponding reference to the narratives of history or to historical moral codes. The collective and history are used to help essentialize culture."[29] Other scholars, like Wolfgang Merkel, confirm that the cultural conflicts between these cultural regimes, which he describes using the terms "cosmopolitans" and "communitarians," are a global phenomenon in which national borders play almost no role at all.[30]

III   Current Aspects of the Crisis of Democracy

1.   Crisis of Legitimacy, Trust, Representation

Wolfgang Merkel, of the Berlin Social Science Center, emphatically notes in his more recent publications that a significant problem for current democracies stems from deficits of representation: "In the last two to three decades, a growing group of citizens has been taking shape that does not feel represented economically, discursively or culturally by the established parties."[31] Representation, as is implied here, always has several dimensions. On the one hand, in a democracy the interests of population groups always need to be met politically, otherwise the non-represented groups withdraw their trust and approval from the democracy. Democracy appears either in the form of its institutions or of its leading protagonists ("elites"). These interests, however, are not always clear economic, environmental, legal, social or political demands, but also include cultural desires such as recognition, appreciation, consideration of collective, subjective feelings and perceptions. The culturalization processes described above are also characterized by a renewed emphasis on the affective dimension of politics. Only on the surface do cosmopolitan viewpoints seem to coincide here with factual, technocratic politics. On the contrary, the political styles and political articulation of population groups in both cases have significant affective components that become visible in the public realm. It is therefore not surprising that the theoretical approach of researching culture politically, developed after the second world war by the Chicago School and early systems theory and since then declared dead, is currently undergoing a renaissance.[32] The pioneers of political research on culture, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, had emphasized the role of the subjective dimension of politics in stabilizing political systems. They defined political culture and the totality of political orientations in a population, and these orientations are cognitive as well as affective and evaluative.[33] In plain English this implies that positive feelings toward and assessments of the political system, its institutions and representatives are indispensable for the legitimacy of political system. But political theory of culture was also interested in political structures, asserting that only when political culture and political structures are congruent does a political system no longer need to fight for its life. Democratic political cultures, then, can only be reflected in democratically designed political structures. The opportunities for political participation in Germany may well, in light of ever-more complex political problems that transcend national borders, already be scarce. But with regard to the European Union, there has not even been an attempt to think through and establish democratic political structures. The

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29   See Andreas Reckwitz. Zwischen Hyperkultur und Kulturessenzialismus ("Between Hyperculture and Cultural Essentialism," 01/16/2017, in: http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtspopulismus/240826/zwischen-hyperkultur-und-kulturessenzialismus Offen? Abgeschottet? ("Open? Sealed off?"). December 2016.

30   Cf. Wolfgang Merkel. Bruchlinien. Kosmopolitismus, Kommunitarismus und die Demokratie ("Faultlines. Cosmopolitanism, Communitarianism and Democracy"), in: WZB Mitteilungen, no. 154: zb.eu/artikel/2016/f-20214.pdf.

31   Ibid., cf. also Wolfgang Merkel. Krise der Demokratie? Anmerkungen zu einem schwierigen Begriff ("Crisis of Democracy? Notes on a Difficult Term"), in: Repräsentation in der Krise ("Representation in the Crisis"). Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ), 40-42/2016, pp. 4–11.

32   Cf. Paula Diehl, and Samuel Salzborn. Editorial: Politische Theorie(n) der politischen Kultur ("Political Theory/Theories of Political Culture"), in: ZPTh Vol. 4, issue 2/2013, pp. 143–146.

33   Cf. Gabriel A. Almond, and Sidney Verba. The Civic Culture. Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. Princeton/New Jersey 1963. (Ed.): The Civic Culture Revisited. Newbury Park/London/New Delhi 1989.

European Union needs to reconsider the fundamental rules of power, participation and decision-making processes if it wants to be more than just an administrator of its member states' primarily economic and security-related interests.

2. Identity Politics and Social Democracy

The politicians of the traditional party landscape reacted to the singularizing tendencies in the culturalized society of late modernity with offers that were tailored to the needs of the milieus and groups that were singularizing themselves. "Western societies have experienced a profound cultural shift in the past four decades," explains Wolfgang Merkel. "New ways of life, same-sex marriages, equal opportunity for women, multi-culturalism and environmental issues dominate the discourse. In social democratic parties, these questions have crowded out the issue of the distribution of wealth." The earlier principle of "politics for all" has changed into a situation in which even though politics still has sought or seeks to serve society, it is an increasingly pluralistic society in which groups with special needs must be increasingly taken into consideration. The criteria on which such politics is based are not primarily cultural criteria, and the resulting policies are called "identity politics." The conflict described above, between cosmopolitans and communitarians, takes shape in a special way in this realm, because it has not only accentuated contrasts but also revealed marked asymmetries, and it thereby reveals a moral face: "Progressiveness is increasingly defined in cultural terms. Cosmopolitan elites occupy the top positions in business, government, parties and the media. The cosmopolitan discourse of those who rule has become the dominant discourse. Criticism of it has often been morally delegitimized in the public sphere. This discursive refusal has recklessly allowed right-wing populists to appropriate the term political correctness as a weapon," [34] continues Merkel. Political theorist Jan Werner Müller introduces a consideration into this discussion that differs from conventional arguments. Using the example of Hillary Clinton, whose defeat in the presidential election is often explained by a failure to talk more about the general good and less about the situation of marginalized groups, Müller describes a misunderstanding about the function of democracy: The public good, he says, is not an objective fact, but is instead always the result of discourse and argument. He asserts that it is generally accepted that representation refers to reproduction of interests and identities. An argument is made accordingly that right-wing populists understand the problems of "ordinary people," that they essentially fill a gap in representation, which implies that this gap simply already exists. Müller, on the other hand, considers it plausible that self-perception with regard to ideas, interests and identities is to some extent actually formed by the available forms of representation. He writes that although representation is not based on random values, views or interests, in fact identities are indeed variable, as can be observed with swing voters in particular.[35] Müller's interpretation implies, with respect to politics, that the forms of representation on offer bear more responsibility for the representational transaction than is generally assumed. Politics, he says, does not just reflect orientations and interests but is also involved in their formulation. This relationship may also apply to the specific cultural character of supply and demand. The establishment of homeland ministries could, in this sense, be viewed as a cultural "answer" to culturalized interests or as mirrors of interests that are initially formulated through that process.

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[34] Ibid., p. 11.

[35] Jan Werner Müller. Professor of political theory at Princeton, on June 4, 2018 at the bpb conference "Was ist Identität?" ("What is Identity?"), Cologne; documentation of the conference will be published soon at www.bpb.de/kulturellebildung.

Thesis 1 - Democracy's strength lies in its "weakness"

Even though "leftist" or emancipatory identity politics definitely offers adequate answers to the culturally determined society of late modernity, it is opposed by those political forces for whose adherents the (cultural) homogeneity of a "people" forms the main basis for legitimizing their existence -- even though they too, as shown above, find their way to one another via cultural arguments.[36] According to Reckwitz, these are the cultural essentialists described above, identity-based movements that inform their narratives of cohesion with ideas about a shared history, tradition, cultural inheritance, values and a culture that is particular to that people or that group, and about fighting modernity and liberalism. Structural racism is not a problem for such groups. They represent identities with a decidedly anti-pluralistic orientation. Political questions are reduced to questions of cultural identity. These groups react very sensitively to moods within society, and functionalize the realm of emotions, which the politics of enlightened modernity did not mobilize -- for reasons including the fact that the protagonists of the totalitarian systems that came before had based their regimes on emotionalized politics, or "psychopolitics," as it is called today in right-wing populist circles. Despite all attempts to close themselves off to the outside, such politics will not be fruitful, if only because it will not be possible to create an identity of interests, even in society as it is. Philosopher Konrad Paul Liessmann explains this concept by using the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) as an example of an original milieu-based party that also to a great extent shaped its own milieu:

> "Something like a counter-model to bourgeois society was supposed to be woven into that society: a dense network of implementing organizations, social and economic institutions, cultural and educational facilities, adult education entities, health care organizations, leisure and athletic offerings and, last but not least, communication platforms and its own media... All of this was supposed to make possible a way of life and a way of feeling that would allow individual members not just to anchor themselves in a particular social and cultural ecosystem but also to plan and pursue life and career trajectories within that ecosystem and outside of the capitalist competition-based society."*[37]*

The disappearance of these offerings is, in Liessmann's opinion, associated with the dissolution of the milieu that is built around similar interests -- its members no longer have collective identities to pursue. However, politics that just has the struggle for equal opportunities on its agenda in fact offers too little to those who have drawn the shorter straw in the attempt to reach higher positions in an opportunity-based society.[38] It is not yet possible to conclusively evaluate how this situation ultimately affects the parties and parliamentary democracy. The breach between cosmopolitans and communitarians, in any case, runs straight through the SPD's remaining adherents. However, it is likely indisputable that a successful guarantee of minimal standards for a democratic system/a democratic republic that serves all people must still be based on politics oriented toward cultural identities and needs. What at first looks like the weakness of democracy in its late modern formulation is essentially already an expression of its ability to adapt to abrupt social transformation processes.

Thesis 2 - Democracy stands on paradoxical foundations

Politics, however, must also engage in dialogue with the members of a pluralistic society about those areas in which equality and neutrality are the constitutive elements of democracy. The example of equal rights shows that this is not an easy path. While equal human and civil rights will be acceptable for most, although difficult to implement, minorities need special protections, which

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[36]   This is the central thesis Jan Werner Müller's essay "Was ist Populismus?" ("What is Populism"). Berlin 2016.

[37]   See Liessmann, op. cit., 2017, p. 174.

[38]   Ibid., p. 175 et seq.

sometimes give them advantages that others judge to be indicators of inequality and even injustice. During a conference held by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (German Federal Agency for Civil Education) in June of 2018 on the topic of identity, philosopher Heike Delitz sketched out a democratic paradox. Modern democracy, she said, is based on two extra-societal and imagined foundations that contradict one another: Human dignity and sovereignty of the people. While human dignity is thought of as universal, the notion of a people's sovereignty needs the exclusion of (groups of) people in order to define "the people." This tension can, in her opinion, always be only partially dissolved by hegemonic positioning in favor of one of the two aspects. In Delitz' view, the fact that democracy is based on these two contradictory bases can be explained by the fact that democracy orients itself using monarchy's structural logic: "At a time when the absolute sovereign embodied in his person, in his body the entire society and was legitimized from the outside to do so, in that situation the revolutionaries took over this matrix of power," i.e. the idea about how society is represented. And they replaced God with human nature, and the king's sovereignty with the sovereignty of the people."[39]

3.   Cultural and Political Education Generate Transnational Democratic Momentum

It would make sense for the question of art's and culture's effects on democratic political systems to be supplemented by the question of cultural education's socio-political effects. The realms of culture and education are in many respects closely interwoven. Often, they are structurally situated in the same department in democracies. Stakeholders within the government and civil society from the areas of art, culture and education face similar challenges if they want to use transnational activities to generate democratic momentum. In doing so, ideally cultural or political education will not be exported as some of the greatest hits of Western thought but will instead be permitted to further unfold their emancipatory powers and critical potential even outside of a particular nation's borders. If cultural and political education offerings are understood as invitations to self-education, and if they open up autonomous spaces for experiments and creativity, then uncontrolled effects occur that also have societal consequences. One example of this is a program of the Bremen Chamber Orchestra that was first rehearsed in a national context as a "future lab" and then initiated, in collaboration with the Kamel Lazaar Foundation, as a socio-cultural project in Tunisia under the title "Future Lab Tunisia." The chamber orchestra's original pilot project in Bremen based its work on a number of quality criteria, with the goal of confirming them in the course of the practical work. Against a backdrop of the idea of being closer to a lived world, the orchestra moved its rehearsal location to the Bremen-Ost school in Osterholz-Tenever, which is considered a disadvantaged neighborhood, and developed opportunities for students and neighborhood residents to take part in participative musical formats that made it possible for the participants to experience their own effectiveness and new forms of social togetherness. The idea of designing oneself in a liberating way, albeit in a way that also involved taking responsibility for one's own needs and those of the neighborhood, was at the heart of the projects. The future lab received numerous awards.[40]

The transfer of the concept to Tunisia was based on a call for proposals by the Tunisian Ministry of Education that offered the opportunity to use a public school in a residential neighborhood of Tunis as a project site. Recently, a concert hall was completed on the school grounds, and in June of this year the Tunisian Symphony Orchestra moved into it. A wide range of institutions and stakeholders, all of whom already viewed the project both as a way of creating inter-connections in

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[39]   Delitz   on   June   4,   2018;   documentation   of   the   conference   will   be   published   soon   at www.bpb.de/kulturellebildung.

[40]   E.g. the "Zukunftsaward" ("Future Award"), the "Vision Award" and the "German Engagement Prize of the BMFSFJ (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth).

art and education and as communitarian action with a socio-political intent, were involved in the design and construction. As in the example in Bremen, the idea was to make possible lived togetherness by citizens, students and artists, as well as involvement in participatorily-designed music formats that allow people to experience their own effectiveness; the gatherings served as social anchors and provided opportunities for regular group rehearsals and performances. One format, "Melody of Life," involves critical reflection on one's own biography and artistic consideration of one's own personal issues and conflicts. The encounters between artists and students are not set up to be pedagogical encounters, but instead open up spaces for self-education with a professional partner. Based on this model, collaborative work also took place with neighborhood residents as agents and developers of a "neighborhood opera" that addresses neighborhood issues and incorporates socio-spatial resources into the non-formal project setting, which is set up with great attention to detail. The work is about using art to appropriate world, but also about self-determined and interest-guided transformation of world, i.e. society through networked creative activity. Involvement by a wide range of stakeholders on site is key here; their involvement gives them street cred and allows them to be perceived as local contact people for further activities above and beyond the initiative. The artistic program is supplemented by exchanges between German and Tunisian students, educators and artists, each of which is linked to musical events. This leads to the creation of transnational audiences that in turn create resonances in Tunisian society. The program acquired a wide range of institutions as supporters while it was taking place, including the Goethe Institute, the German Embassy, the Deutsche Welle Akademie, the Gustav Stresemann Institute and the Tunisian organization L'Art Rue. The program points to important ideas about what can be considered a cutting-edge approach to post-national, transcultural education, because it blurs the borders between artists and audience or participants and is based on the central principle of co-creativity, which also becomes sociopolitically effective.

4. Cultural Difference, Irritation of Western Thinking and Foundations of Post National Politics

Implicitly, we have underlaid these descriptions with a concept of culture that has more to do with the ways people live than with the idea of different (world) cultures that are determined ethnically, religiously, historically or ideologically. At the same time, we have proposed a concept of education that calls itself "intercultural" and is thus based on the idea of "cultures" that are different from one another and border along the outside. We have not at all addressed the idea, long widespread and to some extent still current today, that global conflicts take place between "cultures" understood in this way. Terms like "cultural pluralism" or "cultural difference" can be traced back to the idea that people have developed different ways of living, and different notions of how to life a right and good life, because of their different historical, political, social, economic, religious and mental experiences, subjective determinants like education, origin and cultural capital, and characteristics like sexual orientation, race and sex. In the last fifty years, extremely extensive cultural pluralization processes have taken place, and not just due to global mobility and migration, but also within nationally formed societies with a certain amount of continuity. At the same time, global cultural capitalism also causes ways of life within global milieus to become ever less differentiated. Although the idea that national borders are not cultural borders has now become well established in Europe, there has still been no lasting disruption of the assumption that Europe should organize its future along a historically generated set of traditions, values and interpretations of the world -- that is, cultural factors.. A society that calls itself an "open society" thus needs, if we interpret the most recent conflicts about refugee policies correctly, to be closed off to the outside in order to enjoy human rights and bourgeois freedoms -- left in peace by those who are culturally "different." This interpretation initially appears plausible. When viewed more closely, however, things have been amiss with freedom for quite a long time already, and this presumably does not have a whole

lot to do with immigration. Despite constantly growing wealth, there is a shortage of almost all the assets that the first theorists of democracy, in early Greece, considered fundamental: time, leisure, reflection, education, development of one's personality, discourse, political self-realization and emancipation. The reasons for these shortages are presumably to be found in a borderless and hypertrophic economy that can no longer be sufficiently curbed by the political administrators of democracy.

However, we would like to encourage consideration of non-Western ways of seeing. These could even include perspectives from southern or eastern Europe. For education providers, this is of supreme importance, because the education practices that have been handed down to them contribute to deepening social rifts by proposing people or "target groups" as not-equal, different and possibly deficient subjects. Educational offerings generate and reproduce power relationships to such an extent that people who belong to majority cultures identify, mark and simultaneously devalue minorities by assigning identity categories as part of their educational concept, and also to a great extent prescribe what is to be understood by "culture," "education" or "the political." Alternative practices of knowledge have been and are still suppressed or not acknowledged, and institutions and systems of education and knowledge are often very difficult to change. In recent years, new concepts of education and knowledge transmission are being formulated under the not uncontroversial rubric of "transcultural education" or "transcultural transmission of knowledge"; these concepts consider aspects of cultural ambiguity, non-translatability, fluidity, openness, inter-connection, mixing and hybridization as well as border-crossing. With regard to methodology, this often has to do with withdrawing one's own positions and developing empathy, with co-creativity and egalitarian collaboration as well as with unlearning traditional interpretations and developing new narratives.[41] With regard to institutions, it's about eliminating structural barriers and privileges that block members of minority groups not just from accessing key positions but even from accessing entry-level positions within the systems of culture and education. With regard to bodies, first exploratory forms of access would need to be created to investigate how years or even centuries of marginalization affect body conditioning, and how power asymmetries are thereby fixed even further. One highly interesting example in that field is a partial project of the three-year trans-disciplinary program "Untie to Tie" (2017–2020) at the ifa-Galerie Berlin, led by curator Alya Sebti, which invites people to join a discourse about colonial legacies, movement, migration and environment. In its second section, "Movement.Bewegung" (2018–2019), diversity and plurality are understood as fundamental characteristics of design through which the present becomes perceptible as a constantly changing reality. "The program challenges people to think beyond mental and territorial colonial borders. Movement and migration are understood as natural, ongoing phenomena, as emancipatory processes that promote interpersonal interactions." In laboratories with school pupils, for example, there is artistic investigation of incorporated power structures that take effect in institutions like schools or governmental agencies, as well as of strategies for unlearning or restructuring. Participants work on alternative body images in workshops in order to allow other forms of criticism or resistance to be generated. Performances are also created "that address the relationship between body and societal power and presence, especially the way in which women's spatial presence manifests in dramatic plots and daily actions."[42] If the idea has

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[41] In this context, Elke aus dem Moore's essay "Imagination, Joy & Trust – Collective Wisdom. Kulturelle Übersetzung im Feld internationaler Kulturarbeit ("Cultural Translation in the Realm of International Cultural Work") is very illuminating. In: Christiane Dätsch (Ed.) Kulturelle Übersetzer. Kunst und Kulturmanagement im transkulturellen Kontext ("Cultural Translators. Art and Culture Management in Transcultural Context"), Bielefeld 2018 p. 53-63, especially p. 54 et seq.

[42] https://www.ifa.de/kunst/untie-to-tie.html.

gained currency in recent years that centuries of "mindfucking"[43] are partially responsible for what is terms educational disadvantaging, then it is time now for thinking in a new way about education, in a way that includes aspects related to the politics of the body. The examples do not just point to the importance of unlearning hegemonic Eurocentrism in education, but also to the political potential of such unlearning. Development of new societal and political narratives cannot be the only focus, but such narratives can be a constitutive part of a change in focus that moves toward the future. The image of Rome falling has often been chosen in recent years to describe society and politics in Europe. If Europe wants to remain vibrant and dynamic, regression and defensive rejection of mobility of any kind cannot be constructive approaches. As the two examples of forward-looking cultural education suggest, Europe's challenge is essentially about democracy, human dignity and the willingness to take risks and experiment.

IV   Recommendations for Action

- In our opinion, the interrelationship between art and culture has little to contribute to backward-looking models of Europe. Art and culture develop their autonomous and delimiting power in the process of becoming. And becoming, because of Europe's normative codes, essentially means "daring more democracy" in and for Europe. This applies to the internal condition of Europe and its institutions as well as to the needs of trans-European educational and cultural practices, which subject their diversity to the aforementioned shared normative values.

- The logic of past cultural-political practices of national governments, based on which they separated domestic cultural policy from foreign cultural policy, would then have to be revised. Only in this way can the potential of art and culture fully develop strength for a more democratic Europe. However, the separation of interior and exterior must also be interrogated at the European level, for example when the question of decolonizing hegemonic Western European politics is raised.

- Education and transmission of knowledge in particular can, against the backdrop of the observed co-creativity, make a decisive contribution to bringing Europe into "reach" for its citizens. For this, it is important to strive for relevant promotion of European transcultural and political education and transmission of knowledge within institutions and programs.

- If art and culture constitute a resource for creating a Europe that believes in itself again, then the case must be made for much stronger commitment to promoting artistic and cultural practice. In addition to the principle of subsidiarity, various forms of co-production and collaboration must play especially important roles in the policies of that promotion.

- The more comprehensively that expanded autonomous realms are created and secured in which art and culture can unfold, the greater their contribution, including their critical potential, toward a more democratic Europe. However, these realms must be shaped, by forces including education and transmission of knowledge, into societally resonant spaces.

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[43] Maria do Mar Castro Varela. Verlernen und die Strategie des unsichtbaren Ausbesserns. Bildung und Postkoloniale Kritik ("Unlearning and the Strategy of Invisible Revision. Education and Post-colonial Criticism"), in: http://www.igbildendekunst.at/bildpunkt/2007/widerstand-macht-wissen/varela.htm Here, Castro Varela references positions taken by post-colonial theorist Gayatri Spivak.

- Participation by European citizens as co-creatives of a diverse European artistic and cultural landscape is a key resource. This will require promotion of mobility (e.g. expansion of Interrail) and promotion of participation (e.g. European Culture Card with discounts for visiting facilities and events in the member countries where one is not domiciled). The growing heterogeneity of European societies must be taken into account in this process. The politics of art and culture, and the instruments used to promote them, should be positioned self-reflectively and inclusively and should resist the logic of identity politics.

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