

## Introduction

“Kurz gesagt: da stimmt etwas nicht mit den Punkten. Denn was behauptet eigentlich [...] diese Geschichte? Sie treibt die Schöpfung auf die Spitze: zuerst auf die Steinsplitterspitze, dann auf die Pinselspitze, dann auf die Federspitze, und schließlich auf die Tasten drückende Fingerspitze. Sie ist eine spitzfindige Geschichte. Und die Spitzen, die sie findet, nennt sie ‘Punkte’. Wohl, weil das Wort ‘Punkt’ vom lateinischen Verb ‘pungere’ kommt, das etwas ‘bohren’ bedeutet.“

Vilém Flusser, *Pünktlich*

“In diesem Sinne wäre eine Kultur, die auf der Unsterblichkeit des einzelnen in den anderen abzielt, etwas ganz [N]eues. Und das können wir wollen.”

Vilém Flusser, *Was man wollen kann*

The 12<sup>th</sup> issue of Flusser Studies contains a wide array of contributions ranging from Andreas Ströhl’s exploration of Flusser’s Prague origins and Victor Echeto’s discussion of the relationship between the technical image and magic, to a series of texts written by young post-graduate and doctoral students from universities in Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) and Belo Horizonte (UTMG) and contributions from a group of German students of the University of Kassel.

The two unpublished texts by Vilém Flusser included in this issue – *Pünktlich* and *Was kann man wollen*<sup>1</sup> – are the last two chapters of his unfinished book *Menschwerdung* that was partially published within the volume *Vom Subjekt zum Projekt* by Bollmann in 1994. In his editorial afterword Stephan Bollmann speaks of future chapters that were not completed because of Flusser’s sudden death in a car accident twenty years ago, on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 1991, but does not mention the existence of other already finished chapters.<sup>2</sup> These texts document the lines along which Flusser’s thinking was evolving at the time.

*Pünktlich* consists of a short introduction – *Wunderliche Vorbemerkung* – and three sub-chapters: *Gesetze*, *Streuungen* and *Stoffe*. In this text Flusser explores the ambivalent meaning

<sup>1</sup> The two texts are listed in the Flusser Archive in Berlin as texts number 2554 to 2060.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Vilém Flusser, *Vom Subjekt zum Projekt*, Bensheim und Düsseldorf, 1994, S. 277 sowie 280ff.

of the point, the dot, the full stop, the particle, being actually nothing but at the same time the very matter out of which our world is built.

*Was man wollen kann*, on the other hand, focuses on two interlinked questions: What can we expect, nowadays, from scientific and technological progress in general? And, secondly: What is the relevance of an existential point of view within a world increasingly determined by technology?

In *Currents of Media History I – The Prague Flusser* encountered Andreas Ströhl focuses on the formative importance of the Czech-German and Jewish Habsburg-Austrian environment for the development of Flusser's thinking and writing. Ströhl argues that in the development of Flusser's thought a projection of the Prague past onto the Brazilian future can be made out. The source of this projection also sheds light on the consequences Flusser drew from the failure of the Brazil Project in the early 1970s.

Víctor Silva Echeto's *Flusser's ghosts: on magic, communication and the visual image* deals with the relation between technical image and magic, the post-historic and the post-magic era and the role they play within the philosophy of Vilém Flusser.

In *Was Flusser a Moral Philosopher?* Wanderley Dias da Silva discusses an aspect of Flusser's oeuvre that has been neglected so far: his contribution to a moral philosophy. In his essay Da Silva, moreover, compares Flusser's and Hegel's understanding of the notion of evil.

Tim O'Riley's *Chance and improbability* discusses Flusser's thinking with regard to the technical image and in relation to his own recent book *Accidental Journey*.

The following three contributions focus on the significance of aesthetics in Vilém Flusser's philosophy.

Debora Pazetto Ferreira's paper *The beautiful is elevated, the pleasant is conservative* proposes a reflection on art starting from Flusser's lecture *L'art: Le Beau et le Joli* (compare <http://www.flusserstudies.net/pag/06/1-art.pdf>) as well as Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche. Despite significant differences between the three authors, there is a great similarity in the ontological role assigned to art, as that which is closest to humanity, to the ineffable or to the will to power.

Rachel Cecília de Oliveira Costa's *Art and the Emptiness of Culture* explores the relation between art and culture from the point of view of the profound ambiguity inherent in any artwork.

Lucas Matos' *Words and signs: on Deleuze's and Flusser's aesthetics of signification*, finally, compares Flusser's *Língua e Realidade* and Deleuze's *Proust et les signes*.

Mariana Bertelli Pagotto – *Look Again: The influence of Vilém Flusser on Brazilian photographer Rosângela Rennó* – analyzes the work of the Brazilian photographer Rosângela Rennó and the role Flusser played in her method of critical appropriation. Some pictures by the artist have been included in the issue. For further information about the artist see also <http://www.rosangelarenno.com.br/> Four works by the Swiss artist Gabriella Disler have also been included in this issue.

The last section of the issue is dedicated to a question that has not been dealt with so far in Flusser Studies: How can Flusser's thinking be used within a teaching context both on high-school and university level?

Detlev Edler von Graeve's *Teaching Flusser in Grammar Schools!* deals with Flusser's phenomenological style and its intellectual challenges for students and teachers. The essay discusses some crucial aspects of Flusser's way of thinking and contains commented excerpts from four student texts.

Karen Joisten held a seminar at the Art Academy in Kassel that had Vilém Flusser's media theory as a central issue. Together with the seminar, she initiated a study group on a voluntary basis with the goal to motivate the students to discuss Flusser with a mind of their own and to find their personal approach to his work. A variety of works has emerged from this project and three of them are presented in this edition of Flusser Studies.

In "Kopfkino – *according to Flusser*" Anna-Katharina Henning reflects about the meaning of pictures and in "The Future Without Written Language". Annika Berressem imagines a world without writing. Finally, in "Interpersonal encounter" Jelena Toopekoff contributes a short photo-series trying to capture the difficult and fragile nature of human communication.

I would like to add two more important announcements: To expand the publication range of the journal, Spanish and Italian have been added as publication languages of Flusser Studies. And secondly, in view of the growing number of publications about the work of Vilém Flusser, especially in Brazil, the journal has decided to dedicate a page to reviews. Please send suggestions of books to be reviewed and reviews to [michaelhankebeaga@yahoo.com.br](mailto:michaelhankebeaga@yahoo.com.br).

Rainer Guldin

Editor-in-Chief

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