

LAOCOONTE

RÉVISTA DE ESTÉTICA Y TEORÍA DE LAS ARTES

Nº 5 • 2018 • ISSN 2386-8449

CONVERSANDO CON

“La resistencia del documento”, Entrevista a Jorge Ribalta, por **Mar García Ranedo** y **Fernando Infante del Rosal**

UT PICTURA POESIS

Versos de amor insensato, Poemas de **Antonio del Junco**

PANORAMA: FILOSOFÍA DE LA FOTOGRAFÍA Sección coordinada por **Zsolt Bátori**

The philosophy of photography: From ontological and epistemic status to interpretation, **Zsolt Bátori**

TEXTO INVITADO: El verdadero reto de la fotografía (como arte representacional comunicativo), de **Robert Hopkins** (Trad. **Andrés Luna**)

Is photography really limited in its capacity to communicate thought? A response to Hopkins, **Paloma Atencia-Linares**

What does a presentist see when she looks at photographs of dead relatives? **Guilherme Ghisoni da Silva**

La importancia de llamarse Aylan. Fotografía y activismo en tiempos hiperconectados, **Esther González Gea**

Fotografía y Post-Realidad, **Adolfo Muñoz García** y **Ana Martí Testón**

Poder y agencia icónica. El negro africano como víctima en la cultura visual hegemónica, **Hasan G. López Sanz**

La “cosa étnica” ¿está de moda? Performatividad indoamericana en el discurso gráfico de Vogue (2000-2017), **Julimar Mora Silva**

Entre la fotografía documental y la fotografía callejera: marginalidad y género, **Mar García Ranedo**

El asco en la fotografía documental, **Mª Jesús Godoy Domínguez**

Hágase con luz y con luz se hizo. El origen de la fotogramática de László Moholy-Nagy, **Milagros García Vázquez**

Una transgresión incómoda. Entre lo privado y lo público en la fotografía de familia, **Eunice Miranda Tapia**

A imagem-enigma na fotografia contemporânea, **Mônica Zarattinia**

La pintura como huella: fotografía y pintura en la obra de Gerhard Richter, **Victor Murillo Ligorred**

MISCELÁNEA

Velázquez y el origen de la modernidad filosófica, **Carlos M. Madrid Casado**

Duchamp según Jean Clair vs. Arthur Danto, a 100 años de la Fuente, **Andrea Carriquiry**

RESEÑAS

EDITA

SEyTA.
SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA
DE ESTÉTICA Y TEORÍA DE LAS ARTES

<https://ojs.uv.es/index.php/LAOCOONTE/index>

COORDINACIÓN EDITORIAL

Anacleto Ferrer (Universitat de València)
Francesc Jesús Hernández i Dobon (Universitat de València)
Fernando Infante del Rosal (Universidad de Sevilla)

SECRETARÍA DE REDACCIÓN

Lurdes Valls Crespo (Universitat de València)
Vanessa Vidal Mayor (Universitat de València)

COMITÉ DE REDACCIÓN

Tamara Djermanović (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), **Rosa Fernández Gómez** (Universidad de Málaga), **Anacleto Ferrer** (Universitat de València), **Ilia Galán** (Universidad Carlos III), **Ana María García Varas** (Universidad de Zaragoza), **María Jesús Godoy** (Universidad de Sevilla), **Fernando Infante del Rosal** (Universidad de Sevilla), **Miguel Ángel Rivero** (Universidad de Sevilla), **Miguel Salmerón** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), **Gerard Vilar** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona).

COMITÉ CIENTÍFICO INTERNACIONAL

Rafael Argullol* (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), **Luis Camnitzer** (State University of New York), **José Bragança de Miranda** (Universidade Nova de Lisboa), **Bruno Corà** (Università di Cassino), **Román de la Calle*** (Universitat de València), **Eberhard Geisler** (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz), **José Jiménez*** (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid), **Jacinto Lageira** (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), **Bernard Marcadé** (École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy), **Elena Oliveras** (Universidad de Buenos Aires y Universidad del Salvador), **Pablo Oyarzun** (Universidad de Chile), **Francisca Pérez Carreño*** (Universidad de Murcia), **Bernardo Pinto de Almeida** (Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto), **Luigi Russo** (Università di Palermo), **Georges Sebbag** (Doctor en Filosofía e historiador del surrealismo), **Zoltán Somhegyi** (University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates), **Robert Wilkinson** (Open University-Scotland), **Martín Zubiria** (Universidad Nacional de Cuyo).

*Miembros de la Sociedad Española de Estética y Teoría de las Artes, SEyTA

DIRECCIÓN DE ARTE

El golpe. Cultura del entorno

REVISIÓN DE TEXTOS Y TRADUCCIONES

Antonio Cuesta



Excepto que se establezca de otra forma, el contenido de esta revista cuenta con una licencia Creative Commons *Atribución 3.0 España*, que puede consultarse en <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/es/deed.es>

EDITA

SEyTA.
 SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA
 DE ESTÉTICA Y TEORÍA DE LAS ARTES

CON LA COLABORACIÓN DE



LAOCOONTE aparece en los catálogos:



“Cuanto más penetramos en una obra de arte más pensamientos suscita ella en nosotros, y cuantos más pensamientos suscite tanto más debemos creer que estamos penetrando en ella”.

G. E. Lessing, *Laocoonte o los límites entre la pintura y la poesía*, 1766.



LAOCOONTE

REVISTA DE ESTÉTICA Y TEORÍA DE LAS ARTES

Nº 5 • 2018

PRESENTACIÓN	7-8
CONVERSANDO CON	9
“La resistencia del documento”, Entrevista a Jorge Ribalta, por Mar García Ranedo y Fernando Infante	11-21
UT PICTURA POESIS	23
Poemas y fotografías de Laocoonte n. 45, Antonio del Junco	25-26
<i>Versos de amor insensato</i> , Poemas de Antonio del Junco	27-47

PANORAMA

FILOSOFÍA DE LA FOTOGRAFÍA	49
The philosophy of photography: From ontological and epistemic status to interpretation, Zsolt Bátori (Coord.)	51-55
TEXTO INVITADO	57
El verdadero reto de la fotografía (como arte representacional comunicativo), de Robert Hopkins . Traducción de Andrés Luna Bermejo	59-79
ARTÍCULOS	81
Is photography really limited in its capacity to communicate thought? A response to Hopkins, Paloma Atencia-Linares	83-96
What does a presentist see when she looks at photographs of dead relatives? Guilherme Ghisoni da Silva	97-116
La importancia de llamarse Aylan. Fotografía y activismo en tiempos hiperconectados, Esther González Gea	117-132
Fotografía y Post-Realidad, Adolfo Muñoz García y Ana Martí Testón	133-141
Poder y agencia icónica. El negro africano como víctima en la cultura visual hegemónica, Hasan G. López Sanz	142-155
La “cosa étnica” ¿está de moda? Performatividad indoamericana en el discurso gráfico de Vogue (2000-2017), Julimar Mora Silva	156-180
Entre la fotografía documental y la fotografía callejera: marginalidad y género, Mar García Ranedo	181-201
El asco en la fotografía documental, Mª Jesús Godoy Domínguez	202-216
Hágase con luz y con luz se hizo. El origen de la fotogramática de László Moholy-Nagy, Milagros García Vázquez	217-232
Una transgresión incómoda. Entre lo privado y lo público en la fotografía de familia, Eunice Miranda Tapia	233-245
A imagem-enigma na fotografia contemporânea, Mônica Zarattinia	246-263
La pintura como huella: fotografía y pintura en la obra de Gerhard Richter, Víctor Murillo Ligorred	264-275

MISCELÁNEA	277
En la periferia de las estéticas de lo virtual. Un análisis de la integración del cuerpo en la poética digital de Charlotte Davies, Alejandro Lozano	279-293
Invencción: arquitectura sin Arquitectura, José Antonio Ruiz Suaña	294-311
RESEÑAS	313
Frente a frente: los dos Cioran, Joan M. Marín	315-316
Retazos de una estética no escrita, Francesc J. Hernández i Dobon	317-319
La autonomía del diseño. Diseño como categoría estética, Jorge Martínez Alcaide	320-322
De la ficción como método de conocimiento. Áurea Ortiz Villeta	323-326
Imágenes sin mundo. Modernidad y extrañamiento, César Moreno-Márquez	327-331
Crear en tiempos digitales o cómo vivir a base de méritos, Guillermo Ramírez Torres	332-335
Ernst Friedrich y el entusiasmo por la paz, Raquel Baixauli	336-338
La Novena Elegía. Lo decible y lo indecible en Rilke, Javier Castellote	339-342
Pensar problemáticamente. Un ensayo sobre Gilles Deleuze, Raimon Ribera	343-345
Y tú, ¿por qué eres negro? Carlos García Martínez	346-350

Fotografías de **Antonio del Junco**.

Fotografía de portada de **Tamara Djermanovic** intervenida con fotografía de **Antonio del Junco**.

Fotografías de 'Conversando con': **Antonio Cuesta**.



Is photography really limited in its capacity to communicate thought? A response to Hopkins

¿Es cierto que la fotografía presenta limitaciones en su capacidad de comunicar pensamientos? Una respuesta a Hopkins

Paloma Atencia-Linares*

Abstract

In *The Real Challenge to Photography (as a communicative representational art)*, Robert Hopkins claims that a particular and significant kind of photography – what he calls ‘authentic’ photography – cannot exploit the same range of resources as non-photographic images when it comes to communicating thoughts. In this paper, I question this claim by raising concerns regarding the conditions Hopkins poses for something to qualify as *communication of thought* and, more importantly, by arguing that there are indeed techniques in ‘authentic’ photography that allow the artist to exploit the vehicle properties of the medium independently of the content.

Key words: photography, communication, Hopkins

Resumen

En *The Real Challenge to Photography (as a communicative representational art)*, Robert Hopkins sostiene que un tipo particular pero significativo de fotografía –lo que llama fotografía ‘auténtica’– no puede explotar la misma variedad de recursos que las imágenes no fotográficas a la hora de comunicar pensamientos. En este artículo cuestiono, por un lado, las condiciones que Hopkins postula para que algo cualifique como *comunicación de un pensamiento* y, de un modo más importante, argumento que la fotografía ‘auténtica’ si cuenta con técnicas que permiten al artista explotar las propiedades vehiculares del medio independientemente del contenido.

Palabras clave: fotografía, comunicación, Hopkins

In his paper, *The Real Challenge to Photography (as a communicative representational art)*, Robert Hopkins poses a challenge to photography with some Scrutonian influences. He claims that a particular and significant kind of photography – what he calls ‘authentic’ photography – cannot exploit the same range of resources, with the same degree of sophistication, as hand-made images (drawings, etchings, paintings, etc.) when it comes to communicating thoughts.¹ So “authentic photography, unlike painting, is not able to develop to the full as a communicative representational art”

¹ In his, as influential, as controversial paper, *Photography and Representation* (1981) Roger Scruton claimed that photography cannot be art because it is not really representational and is incapable of communicating thoughts.

* Instituto de Investigaciones Filosóficas, UNAM, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
atenciap@filosoficas.unam.mx
Artículo recibido: 30 de abril de 2018; aceptado: 30 de octubre de 2018

(Hopkins 2015: 329).² This is not to say that Hopkins shares all the sceptic claims that Roger Scruton makes regarding the capacity of photography to communicate thoughts and thereby to be a genuine representational art (Scruton 1981). Hopkins clearly rejects most of Scruton's claims: Hopkins does not think that photography is not representational, and he does not think either that photography cannot be art. Also, Hopkins denies that *the only way* photography communicates thoughts is by drawing attention to its content, another claim Scruton holds. Actually, Hopkins argues that photography exploits other resources different from mere content to communicate thought. Now, there is one specific resource, what he calls *the interplay* between the content and the vehicle properties of the representation, whose exploitation, he claims, is somehow restricted for a given type of photography, i.e. 'authentic' photography. This is important, he claims, because presumably, authentic photography aims at being a form of (communicative) representation with artistic potential. But communication is of artistic interest not merely in virtue of the idea or thought being communicated, but in virtue of how that thought is conveyed by the work. Since *the interplay* is key for achieving this purpose, the challenge must be taken seriously.

In this paper call into question that photography is in fact limited in exploiting the resources Hopkins claims are important to achieving *the interplay* (section 3). Also, I will argue against the importance Hopkins gives to such notion when it comes to the ability for representational art to communicate thought (section 4). But firstly, I will clarify Hopkins' terminology (his notion of *the interplay*, *authentic photography*, etc.) and his overall argument. This will be done in the following section.

1. Hopkins' Challenge and Key Concepts

Let us begin by clarifying some key concepts and ideas: what exactly is *Authentic Photography* (AP), what is the *interplay* and why is AP's capacity to exploit the interplay limited, according to Hopkins?

Authentic photography (AP): is one kind of photography that involves the formation of images by imprinting.

Imprinting a picture: "some scene acts on some system in such a way that a picture is produced, where the content of the picture is determined, via a chain of mind-independent sufficient causes, by the nature of the scene." (331)

AP, according to Hopkins, is the kind of photography that registers and reflects objects and scenes of the world without the need of the mental states of an agent. This does not mean that it does not require *any sort* of intervention –the photographer can press the shutter release, for instance– but what ultimately causes the content of the picture to be what it comes to be, *need not involve* any intervention of an intentional agent. Hopkins emphasizes that AP is not the only kind of photography, neither it is the *ideal* of photography, as Scruton suggests. However, Hopkins claims that it is central to photography's self-conception – and perhaps to the general idea that people have about the medium.

One may take issue with the purported neutrality of the term "authentic" that

2 Since a vast number the references in this paper are to Hopkins paper *The Real Challenge to Photography (as a communicative representational art)*, I will just include the page number. When references are not to Hopkins' paper I will make this clear by indicating the author and year of publication.

Hopkins uses to name this type of photography or with the characterization of the notion of ‘imprinting’. I don’t want to do so here. I am going to be concerned, in particular, with Hopkins’ claim that AP is limited with respect to its capacity to exploit the *interplay* when trying to communicate a thought. So, again, what is the *interplay*?

Interplay: it is one of four possible resources that is available for a representation to communicate a thought.³ This resource consists in different relations between content and vehicle properties that can be exploited to achieve the communicative purpose.⁴

If a picture communicates a thought, it does so by means of displaying certain content –what the picture depicts– but the content is what it is in virtue of certain properties of the medium i.e. color, lines, textures, etc. The relation between these two resources –content and vehicle properties– is what Hopkins calls *the interplay*. Now, what is Hopkins’ argument against AP’s capacity to exploit the interplay to communicate thought? In a nutshell, it is this (I develop the argument a little bit more than Hopkins does, in order to reflect some of the justifications he uses to back up each premise, and to clarify some technical notions. In this way, the reader can have a robust summary of Hopkins’ view):

- (i) If interplay is to play a role in the communication of thought, and thus in communicative representational art, it must lie under the artist’s control in a way that appreciators can detect (336).
 - a Communication involves more than getting the audience to grasp the thought (a given content or information). It involves that the audience recognizes that the thought was intended by an agent and that it was meant for the audience to be understood in virtue of its being intended.⁵
 - b In order for someone to recognize that the thought was intended, the communicative intention must be manifest.
 - c In order to make the communicative intention manifest, the representation (or parts/resources thereof) must vary in ways that reflect the intention of a given agent.
- (ii) To have suitable control of interplay, the artist must control vehicle properties independently of content. The candidates are content-determining, local content-neutral, and global content- neutral properties.⁶(337)
 - d The artist must be able to vary the vehicle properties without affecting the content because otherwise she will not be able to make it manifest that it was her intention for the picture to communicate what she wanted to communicate. (337)

[Content-determining properties (CDP): those properties in virtue of which the picture’s content is determined.

3 Others are the content itself, the vehicle properties, and the means by which the representation is made.

4 This is a paraphrase of Hopkins definition

5 Here Hopkins appeals to the Gricean notion of communication and the necessity of the reflexive intentions. (Grice 1989)

6 Content-determining properties, local content neutral properties and global content-neutral properties are types of vehicle properties. This will be clarified in due course.

Local content-neutral properties (LCNP): properties that *do not fix what the picture depicts* and vary across different parts of the picture.

Global content-neutral properties (GCNP): properties that *do not fix what the picture depicts* and “are common to the picture as a whole” (337)].

- (iii) Painting offers the artist this control in respect of all three candidate properties. (338)
- (iv) Authentic photography offers the artist only limited scope for controlling interplay –i.e., with respect to global content-neutral properties alone.
 - e The notion of imprinting excludes control over the CDP
 - f AP (as actually developed) offers little control over LCNP
 - g The authentic photographer only has room to intervene in GCNP

In what follows I will to call (iv) into question. In particular, I will argue by means of counterexamples, against premises e, f and g. I will therefore assume, at first, that (i) and (ii) are correct. Then, in section three, I will raise some concerns about (i) and (ii) as well.

2. The interplay and the purported lack of control of the photographer

Hopkins claims that in AP, the photographer cannot vary the CDP and is limited with respect to varying the LCNP without thereby varying the content itself or moving away from the imprint which is the defining mark of AP. Why should we think this is so?

Here are some thoughts that make this claim plausible: In an authentic photograph (AP), what we see in the image depends on the configuration or pattern of lights and shadows *imprinted* in the surface, but the configurations or patterns of colours and/or lights and shadows themselves are determined by the objects or scenes that were in front of the camera. For example, if I have a photograph that displays a certain configuration of lights and shadows (vehicle properties) as a result of which we see in the picture a scene of Marion and Moises sitting next to each other (Marion right, Moises left) with a dog on Marion’s lap (content), it is because Marion and Moises were actually sitting next to each other in that specific way and the dog was in Moises’s lap. The lines that mark the figures of Marion, Moises and the dog, as well as the colours, lights and shadows in virtue of which we see the distinctive features of these three subjects depend on the light the subjects reflect (or absorb) onto the photosensitive surfaces – a causal mind-independent process – and the shapes the objects actually have. Clearly, the photographer can ask Moises to sit on the right and Marion to move to the left together with the dog; in this way, the photographer would manage to alter the patters of lights, colours and shadows that are displayed by the image (vehicle properties), but she will achieve this only by altering the configuration of the scene and thereby the content of the image. The photographer will thereby be changing the vehicle properties by changing the content itself.

An alternative way to try and vary the vehicle properties without varying the content would be, say, by pursuing some darkroom ‘tricks’: the photographer can add some light with a light pencil in the darkroom to the border of the figure so as to soften or sharpen the lines of her figure (LCNP). Now, in doing this, she may not be changing the content – the photograph depicts the same figure in fundamentally the same way

– however, she will be moving away from AP: the light-halo around the figure is not the product of the unmediated action of light coming from the original scene onto the photosensitive surface. It is rather an extra element brought about by the action of the photographer.

Now, are there really no other ways in which the photographer can vary the vehicle properties without changing the content *or* moving away from AP? I think there are indeed. But first let me try and clarify what I think entails, for Hopkins, to ‘change the vehicle properties’, to ‘change the content’ and to ‘move away from AP’. If I understood Hopkins correctly, then I think his claims are subject to counterexamples.

Let us do this bit by bit. First of all, what would it mean to vary the CDP? CDP are, according to Hopkins, properties that determine the content the picture has. A given painting, for example, represents (has as its content) a gentleman with a stick because there are some lines (drawn by me) creating the figure of a man with a stick, or some patches of colors lying on the surface in a certain way. The CDP of a painting would be things such as the lines that determine the figure of a given object or the patches of colors in virtue of which we see the different parts or details of that object. Changing the CDP in paintings then means changing, for example, the ways in which lines are drawn – e.g., with oils, in ink, with chalk on slate, or carving a line in wood –, changing the types of lines – e.g. thick or thin lines, lines that are rough-edged or finely drawn, etc., changing the form or the quality of patches of colors and lines, etc.

What about the LCNP? LCNP are properties that do not play a role in ‘fixing what the picture depicts’. Examples of LCNP in paintings are similar to the CDP but applied to local areas of the picture, for example, things such as brushstrokes that are finer in some areas and coarser in others, or marks that are more precise in certain areas and less precise in others. Changing the LCNP would therefore amount to changing the type of brushstrokes in different parts of the image, or how precise or rapid these marks are.

What could be the CDP and LCNP of photography? Presumably, the CDP would also be patterns of colors, lights and shadows that configure the lines on the surface that mark the figures and in virtue of which we can see the depicted content. Changing the CDP in photography presumably would mean changing the patterns of colors, lights and shadows that mark the edges of the figures of the things we see in the photographic pictures. What about LCNP? Hopkins claims that in photography the texture does not vary across the picture, there is no ‘facture’, “no brushstrokes, impasto, or any sign of the rapidity with which the surface has been marked” (339). In other words, according to him, there are no techniques or elements in photography that can be equivalent or similar to those available in painting. But is this really so? I will propose that some of these properties can be things like local changes in focus, or locally brighter, ‘glossier’ or smoother parts of the image, and other resources. But before developing my proposal let me ask another question.

What exactly counts, for Hopkins, as ‘changing the content’? This, I think, needs a bit more clarification. According to Hopkins, ‘content’ “is simply whatever it [the picture] represents” (334) e.g. scenes, people, etc. But *whatever the picture represents* means, say, the *particular* referent of the picture, e.g. Churchill, the White House or the Thames river, or a given *type* of object, e.g. a house, a river, a man? Presumably none of these is what Hopkins means. Intuitively, changing the content of the picture is not the same as changing the referent or the type of thing depicted: two pictures can have

very different contents even if both of them depict Churchill, the White House and the Thames, and similarly, two pictures can have different contents even if both of them depict, say, rivers e.g. one of them can depict a very wide river going from the right to the left of the picture, while the other may depict a very small and narrow river located in a small section in the top left side of the picture. Presumably, something will count as a change in the content of the picture, not necessarily because there is a change of object or subject depicted but because there is a change *in some significant aspects of how these objects or subjects are depicted*. For example, one would change the content if instead of drawing Churchill as sitting on a chair in his office, one draws Churchill dancing on a table.

However, what counts as a change in the content cannot be so narrowly interpreted so as to involve change *in significant aspects, or significant amount of details visually detectable in the picture* (even if these details or aspects may contribute to the expressive aspect of the content) because, according to Hopkins, one can change various CDP or LCNP in a painting – for example, certain techniques of drawing a line (with oil paint, chalk, ink or carving a line in wood), certain types or qualities of lines and colors (thin or thick, rough-edged or finely drawn lines, and maybe also quickly and schematic lines or sharp and careful ones) without changing the content, i.e., how the scene or object is depicted. Clearly, the figure of a standing man facing forward, drawn carefully with precise thin lines in ink will look very different from a man (say, the same man in the same situation) drawn quickly with thick lines made with oil. Even thin and precise lines made with chalk look very different from those made with oil; the chalk has a very different texture and a different brightness than the texture and brightness of the oil paint. Ink and lines in wood are typically more ‘dramatic’ than watercolors or, again, chalk. Also, ink typically allows more precision and sharpness than the most precise and sharp watercolor, wood-carved or chalk mark. Because different techniques have their own characteristic qualities, it would be expected that changing one technique for another would bring with it slight changes in the visible qualities of the image or part thereof: loss/gain of brightness, perceived detail, smoothness, etc. Moreover, it may also bring slight changes in colors, as the range of colors available in each type of paint vary according to the materials needed to produce it. Now, according to Hopkins, none of this seem to count as a change in content in the relevant sense – or at least these are considered acceptable or perhaps not significant ways to change content.

We have seen that, according to Hopkins, paintings (drawing, etchings...) can vary the CDP without varying content in the relevant sense. This, presumably, is not to say that paintings do not have limitations in this respect, e.g., if I want to depict a certain scene of Churchill eating an apple, I can choose to draw a sketch very quickly with ink or chalk or a careful detailed portrait, I can choose the type of line I want (thick, thin, double line, made with ink, chalk or oil), also, there are a variety of shapes and forms that my line can take and still depict Churchill eating an apple. However, there are limitations to the shapes that these lines can take if I want to depict Churchill and not any other man. So, painting is in some way limited by how the things of the world are.

But authentic photography, according to Hopkins, is much more limited with respect to varying CDP; in fact, the photographer cannot vary the patterns of colors and lights and shadows without thereby varying the content or moving away from AP. This is the challenge.

Now what entails moving away from AP?

Hopkins is explicit in saying that AP is compatible with human intervention “provided that intervention is limited to causing the causes to be as they are.” (331) So, the idea, I take it, is that the photographer can intervene in the process so long as the last stage of the causal chain that results in the production of the image –or parts thereof– does not involve any intentional actions on the part of an agent.

This, according to Hopkins, allows the photographer to do a variety of things without moving away from AP: she can, for example, select various things from the scenes and configuration of objects that stand before the lens to how the camera is set up (e.g. short, long exposure). Also, she can *discard* certain elements: she can reframe the picture in the darkroom, thereby re-selecting the relevant bits of the image that she wants to print. And she can do things such as use automatic filters to vary the contrast or turn a color photograph into Black and White.

What the photographer cannot do if she does not want to move away from AP, according to Hopkins, are things such as the following: she cannot touch things up in the darkroom or do combination printing; she cannot do any manipulation (presumably in the darkroom or via digital software) that *changes* content in the relevant way. Basically, the idea is that if the photographer does not want to move away from AP, she cannot be the ultimate cause of the content of the picture; the sufficient causes of the formation of the image would need to be mind-independent.

Now, is Hopkins right in claiming that the AP photographer cannot vary the CDP and is limited with respect to varying the LCNP – without thereby varying the content itself or moving away from AP?

Here are some cases that may make us think this is not the case.

Let us begin with the CDP. In the same way as the painter may choose to use different types of lines to define the contour of the figures and details of the objects, so does the photographer. A photographer can try to define or blur, sharpen or soften the lines that determine the depicted objects by illuminating the set in different ways. For example, the photographer can choose to give volume or depth to the object depicted by placing a source of light on the back of the subject of a slightly higher colour temperature than that placed in the front.⁷ If the backlight is located sufficiently close to the subject, this creates a thin and defined line of light around the subject marking her silhouette.⁸ If the backlight is located a bit further away but is still intense enough, then the line will be thicker but also softer; and, of course, the photographer can choose not to use any backlight. In this case, if the background of the image is of the same (reflected) colour or shade as certain parts of the subject, these will merge with the background.⁹

Relatedly, backlights are also used in portraits together with elevated lateral lights to define the silhouette behind the shadows of the main (lateral) light and to emphasize the real width of the face. In particular, it is frequently mentioned by photographers that this technique is often used to remark the jaw’s prominence, for example, to indicate masculinity and roughness.

A more dramatic variation of the silhouette lines are solarizations or what is called

7 If there’s no light in the front, the photographer will just obtain a silhouette.

8 For an example check <https://goo.gl/images/kWh3yV>

9 For an example check <https://goo.gl/images/dzA61v>

'the Sabatier effect' (partial solarisations). Solarizations, or partial solarizations (the Sabatier effect) create a partial or complete reversal of the tones of a photograph and typically create a very characteristic dark line around the figures.¹⁰ More importantly, producing a solarization only involves one more step in the developing process – which actually can be accidentally produced or automatized – i.e. no need for *intervention*. The only 'extra' necessary step is to expose the partially developed image to a strong source of light and continue the developing process afterwards. As a matter of fact, there are films such as the 'Agfa contour professional film' that simplifies the process: one only has to use the specific Agfacontour chemicals to produce a pseudo-solarised image – so no extra step is necessary: AP would be fully preserved.

Another choice the photographer has available is to vary the vehicle properties that determine the details of certain parts of the image. For example, a photographer shooting a portrait may want to soften the expression by diminishing wrinkles and marks on the subject's face; she may also try to unify the skin tones, or project a softer texture. She can do this, for example, by using very large soft boxes with diffusers located very close to the subject, overexposing by one or two [f]-stops and using some filters. By doing this, the photographer can manage to minimize the lines on the face or make them as soft, thin and subtle as possible. Alternatively, the photographer can choose to make the facial expressions, skin texture, wrinkles and facial shadows more hard or prominent. In that case, the photographer will probably use a harsher illumination – she may use a frontal not very large light without diffusers located a further away from the subject. By doing this, the textures will be accentuated, and the lines made more prominent by the strong lights and shadows.

These examples, I think, show that the photographer can – and actually very frequently does – vary the content-determining vehicle properties (things such as the quality, and types of lines and patterns of lights and shadows) without changing the content – provided, of course, that 'changing the content' is understood in the way mentioned above, and changing the vehicle properties involves things such as changing the quality of the lines, lights and shadows that determine the figures of the depicted objects. Also, none of the of these variations involve moving away from AP, since all the changes are performed *before* shooting the image – the photographer is thereby merely 'to causing the causes to be as they are', and all parts of the content can be traced back to sufficient causes which are mind-independent.

But the photographer can also vary the content-neutral local vehicle properties without varying content or moving away from AP – or so I think. Here are some cases:

The photographer can choose to enhance the brightness of certain parts of the image so as to give them more volume, make them shinier, deeper, or simply more prominent or salient. She can do this by illuminating specifically these parts of the image with a directive flashlight or with lights of specific types placed at specific places or by combining specific types of lights and different depths of field. An example of this are Martin Schöller's 'Close ups'.¹¹ To produce these images Schöller worked with a combination of a very shallow and narrow depth of field (wide aperture, long lens) and a bright and continuous light ('Kino Flos') in order to enhance volume and

10 See Man Ray's solarizations, for instance: <https://goo.gl/images/Et2VEp>

11 <https://martinschoeller.com/WORK/Close-Up/1>. Notice that these are not digitally manipulated images.

mark certain features while masking or foregrounding others. In many of his *Close ups* Schöller's focus is mainly on the eyes and mouth of the subjects, the illumination is frontal and directed to these facial features; other aspects of the image are slightly out of focus and thereby their detail is less marked.¹²

A different resource that the photographer can use to vary the LCNP of the image without varying the content is the surface where the image is imprinted. Hopkins acknowledges that the photographer can choose gloss paper over matt or vice-versa –so he accepts that the surface can be exploited as a content-neutral vehicle property– but the surface, he claims, counts as a content-neutral property that is common to the picture as a whole (so a global content-neutral property). Now this does not need to be so. It is true that there are industrially produced photographic papers that are either matt or gloss, warm or cool in tonality, and when the photographer uses them, they indeed affect the whole content of the image. It is also true that these photographic papers are very frequently used. However, the photographer can also prepare her own selected photosensitive surface by applying certain (photosensitive) chemicals onto the desired surface – provided that the surface is suitable both for the photosensitive and the developing chemicals. This being so, the photographer can select a surface with different textures and coat it with a given type of photosensitive chemical. Alternatively, she can select a uniform surface and coat or impregnate it with different types of photosensitive chemicals in order to produce different outcomes in different parts of the surface (e.g. warm or cool tones, more or less glossy, or more or less contrasted). In this way, she could use the surface as a local vehicle property, either by giving different textures to different parts of the surface or by using different types of chemicals in different parts of the image. Moreover, she could control it independently of content.

All these examples try to show that in photography there are indeed ways to vary the CDP (e.g. backlight to define or blur the lines of the figure) and the LCNP (e.g. local techniques of illumination and selective use of coats to impregnate the photosensitive surface) without changing the content or moving away from AP. These examples also show that, contrary to what Hopkins claims, there are indeed ways to vary the (apparent) texture across the photograph. Sure, in photography –or AP– there are no brushstrokes, impastos or incision, but that does not mean that photography cannot provide the appearance of different textures. As we have seen, different techniques to illuminate can emphasize wrinkles or make a surface seem softer; they can give volume or flatten certain parts of the content. Alternatively, texture can be achieved by adding *grain* to the image either by using a high ISO film or by over-enlarging the image. Furthermore, Hopkins claims that in photography there is no 'sign of the rapidity with which the surface has been marked' (339), but long-exposure photography is a case where there is evidence of the *slowness* with which the surface has been marked. Moreover, long-exposure photography allows for certain parts of the image to be blurred while others remain focused –given that the photographed object moved too quickly, and the duration of the shutter speed was too long. Hence, this can also be considered a change in LCNP that preserves the content and does not move away from AP.

If all these examples are sound, then premises (e), (f) and (g), in the argument

12 This is very clear in Schöller's portrait of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, for instance. See <https://goo.gl/images/GCRJte> and <https://goo.gl/images/XNEcEh>

above are wrong and therefore (iv) is flawed too.

3. Communication and control

So far, I assumed that premises (i) and (ii) of the argument were correct and focused on arguing against (iv). However, I happen to think there is a problem with (i) and (ii) as well. In particular, there is a problem with premises (i)-c and (ii)-d, or so I will argue.

- (i) If interplay is to play a role in the communication of thought, and thus in communicative representational art, it must lie under the artist's control in a way that appreciators can detect. (336)
 - c In order to make the communicative intention manifest, the representation (or parts/resources thereof) must vary in ways that reflect the intention of a given agent.
- (ii) To have suitable control of interplay, the artist must control vehicle properties independently of content. The candidates are content-determining, local content-neutral, and global content-neutral properties.¹³ (337)
 - d The artist must be able to vary the vehicle properties without affecting the content because otherwise she will not be able to make it manifest that it was her intention for the picture to communicate what she wanted to communicate. (337)

In this section I will rely on Sperber and Wilson's model of communication (1995), to argue that, while control of the interplay in the way suggested is a way to make the intentions manifest, it is not necessary to communicate thought.

Hopkins is absolutely correct in pointing out that communication requires making one's intentions manifest. This is one important difference between communication and mere transmission of information endorsed by most theories of communication. Mere transmission of information only requires that the receiver is exposed to certain content that she can retrieve by her own means, for example, by perceiving directly certain evidence or states of affairs. Now, sometimes, to process such information efficiently –even if the information is available in front of us– one needs others to point it out for us and to recognize their intention to make that information *relevant* is sometimes necessary to retrieve it: “someone who fails to recognize this intention may fail to notice relevant information” (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 50). Furthermore, in order to be able to notice someone's intention, such intention must be manifest in some way. But what ways can be thought to be sufficient to make an intention manifest? According to influential models of communication, such as Sperber and Wilson's *Relevance Theory* (1995), a simple ostensive behaviour on the part of the transmitter is enough to make this intention manifest. Moreover, once we have these ‘two layers’, namely, the information or states of affairs available for the receiver, and an ostensive behaviour that can be recognized, we have full fledged cases of communication.

Let me illustrate this with an example. Imagine the following scenario: Pau is sitting in front of Natalia and behind Pau there is a window that he is partially occluding. If Pau just wants Natalia to realize that it is raining outside, he can just move furtively so as to let her see that it is raining outside. In this way – and provided Natalia actually

13 Content-determining properties, local content neutral properties and global content-neutral properties are types of vehicle properties. This will be clarified in due course.

sees the rain outside – Pau can contribute to the transmission of information. However, this will not count as a case of communication (according to most theories) because Pau did not make his intentions manifest: Natalia was not aware that Pau wanted her to see that it was raining. In fact, she may even fail to pay attention to the rain or fail to consider it as relevant information. Now, if Pau really wants to make sure that Natalia pays attention to the fact that it is raining –perhaps because this is relevant for their future plans– he can make his movement evident and maybe make a gesture with his face to point to the window, so that Natalia not only sees that it is raining but be aware that Pau wanted her to realize that it is raining. In this case, Pau would be performing an ostensive behaviour which Natalia can recognize and, in doing so, she may be able to process the information effectively. Pau does not have any control on the fact that it is actually raining or on the way rain drops are falling and are perceivable through the window. But according to Sperber and Wilson, his ostensive behaviour is sufficient to provide evidence of his thoughts (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 50). Clearly, Pau has to do *something* in order to make his intentions manifest and this involves having control over certain actions –such as his moves and his facial expressions– but not necessarily over the information itself or *the content* he is trying to convey, namely, “that it is raining outside in this particular manner.” This ostensive behaviour, together with its recognition is sufficient– again, according to Sperber and Wilson –for something to qualify as proper communication (of thought). But if this is so, it seems that both (i)c and (ii)d are imposing too demanding requirements for something to count as a proper manifestation of intention and as communication proper. I will come back to this point, but first, let me give a parallel example in the case of photography.

Tim Sloan published a photograph in the New York Times¹⁴ on November 10, 2008 just some days after the US Presidential Elections that Barack Obama won against George Bush –then President in function. The photograph shows Obama walking besides Bush– both are shown sideways in the left-hand side of the picture; Bush is in the foreground and Obama a bit behind apparently making a gesture with his hand that we cannot see because it is occluded by Bush’s body. The light of the picture –which is purely natural light– is such that Bush’s figure is dim, completely in shadow, while Obama’s is fully illuminated. On the right-hand side of the photograph we see a shadow; it is Obama’s shadow projected on the wall, and the figure of the shadow suggests that he is waving his hand –the gesture that we fail to see on the left because Bush’s figure is occluding it.

It is not likely that Sloan had much control over the content of this image – most likely, he just captured an instant in time as it was happening. However, by selecting this image and choosing to publish it in a particular context – the New York Times, just after the US Presidential elections – one could argue that he was performing an ostensive behaviour. Moreover, the viewer can easily understand that Sloan was using the image with the intention of trying to communicate an ironic thought about the change of government: the face of George Bush is in shadow while the face of Obama is illuminated, this seems to suggest that Obama is the ‘chosen one,’ the new person leading the government. At the same time, the shadow on the wall with the waving hand, seems to be saying “goodbye” as if the photographer were ironically

14 The photograph can be found here <https://goo.gl/images/K5QxQd>

commenting on the departure of George Bush from office. Again, the representation itself –or the content thereof– may not have been fully on the photographer’s control, above and beyond the selection of the image. Moreover, the photographer did not attempt to vary the vehicle properties without changing the content –the scene itself fully determined the content. Nonetheless, it seems that it is pretty easy to identify Sloan’s communicative intentions. If one had been there at the moment when these events took place, one could have easily failed to notice this instant, let alone interpret it this way. However, in capturing the instant and making it motionless, in framing the picture in the way it is framed, in having selected it and published it in the relevant context, the photographer is clearly making an ostensive behaviour parallel to that of Pau in the example above. What Sloan is doing is calling our attention to this content and, given that there is, presumably, mutual knowledge regarding the US presidential election situation, he is *exploiting this mutual cognitive environment* (Sperber and Wilson 1995, 41) in order to make the information relevant and have some confidence that the (target) viewer will be able to retrieve the relevant thought. If this is so, it seems that one can indeed communicate certain content or information without necessarily being able to *control* it in the way that Hopkins suggests. Again, one does not need to be able to vary the content of a representation in order to make one’s intention manifest. More specifically, one does not need to be able to vary the vehicle properties of the representation without changing the content in order to make one’s intention manifest and thereby communicate one’s thought. No doubt, if one can do so, that is, if one is able to control the interplay in the way Hopkins explains, one may be able to make one’s intentions even more manifest; or at any rate, these would be *other ways* in which the photographer can make her communicative intentions clear. But the point is that they are not necessary –a clear and detectable ostensive behaviour as the one illustrated above seems to suffice. If this is so (i-c) and (ii-d) are false or, at the very least, they impose unnecessary stringent conditions for something to qualify as proper forms to communicate thought.

Now, what could be the motivation behind the stringent conditions Hopkins imposes for successful communication of thought as representational art? Here is one conjecture.

Hopkins relies on Grice’s model of communication (336), a model that itself imposes more restrictive conditions for something to qualify as proper communication. In his influential article *meaning* (Grice 1989), Grice tries to differentiate between cases of *showing* (or natural meaning) and cases of *speaker-meaning* (or non-natural meaning),¹⁵ where, for him, only the second qualify as proper cases of communication. For Grice, cases of *mere ostentation* would be considered cases of *showing* or natural meaning. According to him, these are cases where the receiver could potentially retrieve the information by her own epistemic means –e.g. by perceiving the evidence in front of her. The recognition of an intention on the part of an agent to inform her of certain states of affairs is not sufficient to fulfil the requirements of non-natural meaning: again, if the information or evidence is there for her to access it, the recognition of the intention, even when it is manifest, and the uptake takes place, does not play a significant

15 As Mitchell Green correctly points out, the label *speaker-meaning* is misleading “because according to philosophers’ usage, an act can be one of speaker meaning with no sounds uttered or even any inscriptions made.” (Green 2017)

role. For Grice, in order for something to qualify as a proper case of communication (or non-natural meaning), we not only need the recognition of an intention to convey certain information, but also that the recognition of such intention be the reason for fulfilling that intention –i.e. the reason why she can actually obtain that information. This is what happens, for example, in ordinary linguistic assertions: if a doctor who has been performing a surgery on a patient comes out from the operating room and tells me that “the patient is alive and well” with the intention of informing me that the patient is alive and well, I have to take his words as evidence for the information; his intention and mental states are the only means by which I can access such information –since I cannot go inside the operating room and see these facts with my own eyes.

The conjecture is that Hopkins might be following this model as well. One could interpret Hopkins as saying something along these lines: if one wants to talk about proper cases of communication, the agent –the photographer– has to have substantive control of the relevant information being conveyed, in such a way that the receiver can take the artist’s production as the means to access the information. If the information can be fully accessed independently of the artist’s control, then it is a case of mere transmission of information, not a case of proper communication. Admittedly, this seems a very forced interpretation of Hopkins’ words, but since he explicitly says he is following Grice’s view, one could think this is the reason for his restrictive conditions. If this is so, one could ask why he is following this particular model of communication and not an alternative more permissive one. After all, more recent and influential theories of communication –which are otherwise Gricean in spirit– have widely criticized the Gricean requirement of reflexive intentions (Sperber and Wilson 1995, Green 2007). Moreover, they have done so partly by appealing to similar cases such as the one of Pau and Natalia mentioned above. These cases, the critics argue, are meant to show that there is no sharp distinction between natural and non-natural meaning, as Grice has it, but simply a continuum. That is, certain cases of *showing* can indeed be full-fledged cases of communication of thought; mere ostensive behaviour can suffice for recognition of first order intentions and play a more significant role than Grice is willing to concede in successfully conveying certain information. There is no need to appeal to second-order or reflexive intentions. This is no place to develop in full the criticisms of Grice’s view that his objectors have raised,¹⁶ the fundamental point is this: if Hopkins is following Grice’s model, it seems that he needs to justify why he does so, given that there is substantial literature showing that Grice’s view is too restrictive. Now, if Hopkins is not strictly following Grice, and the interpretation above is indeed forced, then the arguments provided above that follow Sperber and Wilson’s model may suffice as counterexamples to Hopkins’ premises (i) and (ii).

4. Conclusion

In this paper I tried to make two points. First, I argued, against Hopkins fourth premise, that AP does not limit the artist in her possibility to control the interplay in the way he suggests. There are a variety of techniques that have to do with the control of light and illumination, as well as with the printing of the images, that allow the photographer to control both the CDP and the LCNP independently of the content

16 The reader can see the details in Sperber and Wilson 1995 and Green 2007.

and without abandoning AP. Then, I questioned the first and second premises of the argument and argued that while control of the interplay, in the way suggested is a way to make the intentions manifest, it is not necessary to communicate thought.

Bibliography

- Green, M. S. 2007. *Self-Expression*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- , 2017. “Speech Acts” en *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Winter 2017 Edition, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), en: <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/speech-acts/>>.
- Grice, P. 1989. *Studies in the Ways of Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hopkins, R. 2015. “The Real Challenge to Photography (as Communicative Representational Art)” en *Journal of the American Philosophical Association*. Summer 2015, Vol. 1, Issue 2, pp 329–348
- Scruton, Roger. (1981) ‘Photography and Representation’ en *Critical Inquiry*, 7, 577–603.
- Sperber, D. & Wilson, D. (1995). *Relevance*. Oxford: Blackwell.

EDITA

SEyTA.
SOCIEDAD ESPAÑOLA
DE ESTÉTICA Y TEORÍA DE LAS ARTES

CON LA COLABORACIÓN DE

