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Introduction

This paper, like almost all the other contributions to this issue, was written in the course of a three year project involving participants from nine international research centres entitled *Towards a political ontology of violence: reality, image and perception*.[1] The aim of the project was to study how acts of violence and their representation in the media are impacting on democratic politics both within and outside Europe, by combining a *political ontology of violence* with an *aesthetics of the image*. In this paper, I would like to tackle a fundamental question for any attempt to understand and describe the relation of images to violence. What kind of vocabulary best enables us to describe the power (some) images have to affect us in ways that words / discourse cannot? What kind of philosophical vocabulary is best suited to describing images, and their otherness to discourse? I am asking how to conceptualise images, as a preliminary to asking about images of violence and the violence of the image. This question does force – possibly distort – the issue, since the images in circulation are (almost) all accompanied and framed by words. But by forcing the issue I aim to get at the specificity of the image, and to address head-on the tension between thought and image in thinking about images.

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[1] For a more detailed description of the project, please see the Foreword. The only contribution that was not initially part of the project is the interview with the philosopher Mathieu Triclot on violence and video games.

I. Desiderata

There are, I propose, at least four *desiderata* for a philosophical vocabulary that could describe the specificity of the image and its relation to violence.

1. It should be a vocabulary that can show how images (unlike words or speech) resist conceptual analysis – a vocabulary for the non-conceptual character and logic of images.

2. It should be vocabulary that links the perception and creation of images to the body, specifically the partiality of a body damaged by violence.

3. It should be a non-representational vocabulary that resists the naïve realist answer to the question of the image *of violence*, as re-presenting violence in reality, and its presupposition in the subject – object opposition. One which instead acknowledges that images create a "world" that, while fictional, has a unique capacity to reveal underlying structures and relations that remain opaque to empirical experience. The *desideratum* is, then, to treat the question of the "image of violence" as a *creatum*, not a mimesis-datum.

4. Finally it should be a vocabulary that can show how the perception of images has the capacity to unsettle and change the ways in which we perceive things around us. In this paper I take seriously the claim that in our media-saturated environment (Baudrillard), we have become immune to images, or to put it differently: that our perception of the world is damaged (*beschädigt*)[2]; that damaged perception is the norm, but that certain images can break through our mediatized immunity and influence our perception and action. These then are the images that can have political consequences or provoke the reactions we need to study in the project. The proposal here is to pose the question of the "violence of (certain) images" against the general background of damaged perception.

The thesis of this paper is that Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762), the founder of modern aesthetics, offers conceptual tools for thinking about images that go a long way to addressing these desiderata.

II. Why Baumgarten?

There are certainly reasons for *not* choosing Baumgarten as a guide through our world of mediated violence. For one, his account of perception is situated in the coincidence of logic and ontology of Leibniz's best of all possible worlds, and oriented towards harmony and perfection. Violence is, to say the least, contradiction, even real contradiction or opposition in Kant's sense, and has no place there; nor does a critical-historical account of damaged perception. On the other hand, the main impulse behind Baumgarten's aesthetic science or science of sensate knowledge (*Ästhetik, Wissenschaft der sinnlichen Erkenntnis*) was to emancipate our sensibility from the curse of confusion, error and vice placed upon it since Plato and from what he calls the "tyranny" of the understanding and reason advanced by rationalism (Aesthetica 12).[3] In order to rehabilitate sensibility, he developed a conceptual vocabulary designed to re-describe the non-conceptual character of our sensible capacities in positive terms – a

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[2] Heinz Paetzold, *Ästhetik des deutschen Idealismus* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), 53ff.

[3] Alexander Baumgarten, *Ästhetik* 1. & 2. Teil, Lateinisch- Deutsch. Übersetzt, mit einer Einführung, Anmerkungen und Registern hrsg. von Dagmar Mirbach. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2007). Henceforth Aesth.

vocabulary that would do justice to the qualitatively distinct nature of our sensate representations and the logic of sensations, and thereby secure a kind insight and knowledge for sensibility that is *sui generis*: unique and irreducible to conceptual knowledge – what he calls "cognitio sensitive" or the "analogon rationis." It is this vocabulary that I want to present, with the question of whether it can be set loose from its metaphysical moorings in Leibniz's best of all possible worlds and made fruitful for describing the power of certain images against the contemporary problem-background of generalized immunity and damaged perception.

Baumgarten is important because he shifts the focus in rationalism on representations to the *relations* we have with our presentations. Beauty resides not so much in the representation of perfection (Wolff), but in the ways we exploit its possibilities with our sensory-imaginative-creative capacities. As I will try to show, Baumgarten is a profoundly relational thinker, who opens up the space of our perceptual-creative relation with images to thought.

But there is another reason for not choosing Baumgarten as a guide to our mediatized environment. His *Ästhetik* aims to show how our sensate capacities for insight into the order of things are activated in the mode of the beautiful, as that which takes place in art in general. Yet his vocabulary is oriented almost exclusively to poetry, as are the examples on which he draws, not the plastic arts. I can only express my astonishment that neither he nor anyone else I have come across share my intuition that his vocabulary is eminently suited to picking out features specific to images, rather than poetry, and to our perception of images in ways that address the *desiderata* set out above. It is not, therefore, without a certain violence, a hermeneutic violence, that I will make my case.

III. Towards an aesthetics of the image

A. The Non-Conceptual Character of the Image

The first *desideratum* was for a vocabulary that describes the non-conceptual character and logic of images. There are several key concepts in Baumgarten for describing the qualities of our sensate representation: richness or plenitude (*Fülle*, *Reichtum*, venusta, ubertas); liveliness (*Lebendigkeit*, vividitas); complexity; singularity; aesthetic determination; and the logic of the individual. There is also a range of sensate capacities he ascribes to us, including: (1) wit (*Witz*, ingenium sensitivum): the capacity to see the agreements among things (die *Übereinstimmungen der Dinge einzusehen*), and (2) perspicacity (*Scharfsinnigkeit*, acumen sensitivum): the capacity to recognise the differences between things (*die Verschiedenheiten der Dinge zu erkennen*), and the conjugation of ingenium and acumen in what he variously calls "taste in the broader sense" (*Geschmack in der weiteren Bedeutung*, gustus significatu layiori, sapor, palatum, nasus), or "sensate judgement-power" (*sinnliches Beurtheilungsvermögen*, facultas diiudicandi), or "the lower judge" (*der untere Richter*, iudex inferior), or "judgement of the senses" (iudicium sensuum). But let me begin with the central concept: that of *confused or fused (verworren, confusus) representation*.

This term is inherited from Leibniz, who criticized Descartes for restricting knowledge to clear and distinct representations and proposed instead a graduated account of knowledge in terms of degrees, and new criteria for distinguishing them. For Leibniz, as for Baumgarten, the question of knowledge is posed in terms of composite things (*zusammengesetzte dinge*). Knowledge is knowledge of composite things. Composite things are conceived as wholes composed of different parts (marks, *merkmale*, notae). The parts in turn are conceived as wholes composed of different parts (marks, *merkmale*, notae) as far as limit-case: parts that are simple, non-composite, primitive or basic. Knowledge, then, consists of the analysis of the concepts of things, that is, the listing of parts (and parts of parts etc.) of things conceived or represented, that is, subsuming the parts under concepts from lower to higher-order concepts,

until (at ideal end of analysis) one reaches simple concepts and statements of identity: "prim-itives" (see fig. 1.).

LEIBNIZ: degrees of knowledge (source: *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas*)
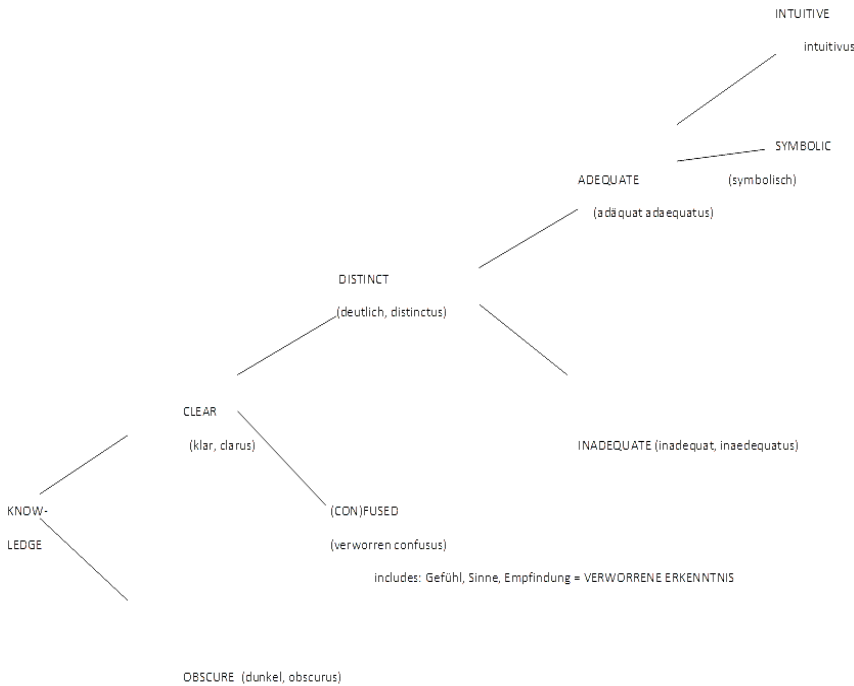
INTUITIVE

intuitivus

SYMBOLIC

ADEQUATE   (symbolisch)

(adäquat adaequatus)

DISTINCT

(deutlich, distinctus)

CLEAR

(klar, clarus)   INADEQUATE (inadequat, inaedequatus)

KNOW-

LEDGE   (CON)FUSED

(verworren confusus)

includes: Gefühl, Sinne, Empfindung = VERWORRENE ERKENNTNIS

OBSCURE (dunkel, obscurus)

Fig. 1. Degrees of Knowledge in Leibniz

obscure notion = insufficient for re-cognizing & distinguishing the thing that it represents from other things

clear notion = gives us the means for re-cognizing & distinguishing the thing that is represented from other things

clear & *(con)fused* = we cannot list, one by one, the marks that are sufficient to distinguish thing represented from others:
non-analysable

clear & *distinct* = we can list all marks sufficient to distinguish thing represented fr others, i.e. to give nominal definition:
analysable/defineable

distinct & *inadequate* = we can list individual marks sufficient to distinguish the thing reresented fr others, but cannot list all marks of individual marks (not defineable)
distinct & *adequate* = we can list individual marks sufficient to distinguish the thing represented from others and all the marks of the individual marks (complete analysis)

On this schema, a *clear and distinct* representation is one for which all marks sufficient to distinguish the thing represented from others can be listed, i.e. one can give a nominal definition. But Leibniz also acknowledges as a degree of knowledge representations that are *clear and confused*. By this he means presentations that fall below the threshold of conceptual analysis: we cannot list, one by one, the marks that are sufficient to distinguish the thing represented from others, yet the representation is still *clear* because we can still re-cognize and distinguish the thing represented from other things at a sensate level:

> […] and so we recognize colours, smells, tastes, and other particular objects of the senses clearly enough to be able to distinguish them from one another, but only through the simple testimony of the senses, not by way of marks that we could list. […] Similarly, we see that painters and other skilled craftsmen can accurately tell well-done work from what is poorly done, though often they can't explain their judgments, and when asked about them all they can say is that the works that displease them lack a certain *je-ne-sais-quoi*. [4]

An obscure (that is, un-clear) perception is one that is not sufficient for recognizing the thing that it represents e.g. of a certain flower, which, when I try to recall it, cannot be sufficiently recognized, i.e. distinguished from other nearby flowers. Obscure representations fall below the threshold of apperception or self-conscious awareness, as do clear and confused representation, so that Leibniz leaves space for degrees of knowledge below the level of conscious self-awareness, understood as perceptions without apperception.

Leibniz, then, ascribes cognitive value to perceptions that resist conceptual analysis and subsumption and fall below self-conscious awareness, yet can be recalled or re-cognized as distinct unities and can serve us to make qualitative judgements (without grounds: *je-ne-sais-quoi*) concerning (the quality of) what they represent – all at the level of sensation. The implication is that sensibility houses pre-conceptual resources for synthesis and discrimination, as well as for judgement.

These cues are taken up and developed by Baumgarten, for whom clear and confused perceptions lie at the core of sensate knowledge (see fig. 2). As an example of clear and confused perceptions, Baumgarten describes the way colours merge or flow into one another to give an overall impression, which can be recalled and re-cognized as such again. As an example of obscure perceptions, he gives the sound of single wave in a thunderous surge, which could never be recognized as such again. Of particular interest for my argument is **(a.)** the way Baumgarten reinterprets the notion of "con-fusion" (*Verworrenheit*), so as to give it a new, positive meaning, and **(b.)** the way he extends Leibniz's notion of clarity by distinguishing "intensive" from "extensive" clarity.

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[4] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas* (transl. Jonathan Bennet), 2, https://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/leibniz1684.pdf (accessed 20.05.2019). Translation modified by author.

BAUMGARTEN

OBERE ERKENNTNISSVERMÖGEN (Met 383)
HIGHER FACULTY OF KNOWLEDGE
                    HORIZONT

                                    deutlich /disctinct
                                    distinctus   intensiv

                                                        extensiv

UNTERE ERKENNTNISSVERMÖGEN   klar/clear
LOWER FACULTY OF KNOWLEDGE   clarus

                                            intensive Klarheit
                                            clarity

          Perzeption

          Vorstellungs-   verworren = SENSITIV
          Kraft   confusus/ confused   clarity
                                                        extensive Klarheit

SEELE =   includes: Gefühl, Sinne, Empfindung
SOUL   = VERWORRENE / SENSITIVE ERKENNTNIS / CONFUSED
                                                              KNOWLEDGE

          Appetition   Dunkel / obscure *grosse Anzahl, 'Grund der Seele'* (Met 378)
          Streben / Wille   obscurus

dunkel = representation <u>not</u> distinguishable, <u>not</u> re-cognizable e.g. sound of single wave in a thunderous surge (cf. Med 12)
klar = representation distinguishable and re-cognizable (memory) (Med. 12), insofar as it is
    verworren = indivdual marks can*not* be listed, e.g. clours flowing into one another as parts of an overall impression
    deutlich = individual marks can be conceptually listed   (Med 15)
        intensive Klarheit: distinctness of marks (Med 16; Met 393); intellectual; whole is lost
        extensive Klarheit: number of marks (Med 16; Met 393) whole is clear; inner plentitude / inhaltliche Fülle (Aesth § 559; 619)

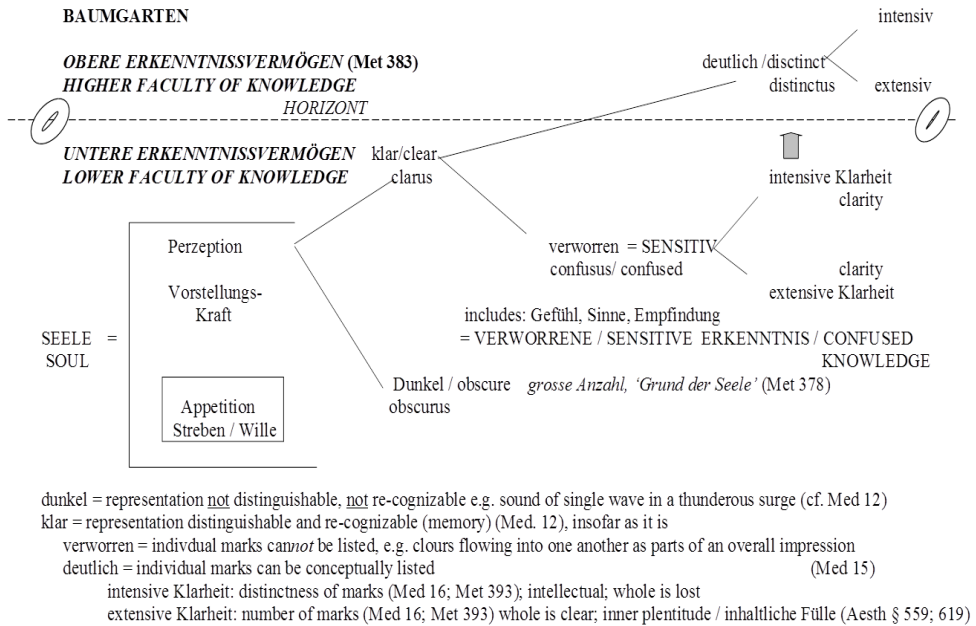**Fig. 2. Sensate Knowledge in Baumgarten (below the *Horizont*)**

(a.) In the *Meditationes*, Baumgarten's first text on aesthetics, he writes:

> Confusus: what is meant is that the individual marks [i.e. features / parts] of a representation fuse [*verschmelzen*] in an intuitive overall image [*Gesamtbild*] (which is the case in every sensate perception). (Meditationes 15) [5]

In other words: "confusion" no longer means that which is incapable of conceptual analysis, confuses rational understanding and is therefore the source of error (confusio mater erroris). Rather, it describes the way sensate perceptions cannot be broken down into constitutive elements, but instead constitute *relational wholes*. Transposed onto the plane of images, we might say: "Con-fusion" describes the way images are perceived as relational wholes, where the whole is a complex of relations, which cannot be resolved into their relata as the elements or features that constitute the whole image. The relata or elements remain *obscure*, indiscernible and insignificant, and the only whole we perceive is the *image as a complex of significant relations*.

(b.) Building on the concept of a relational whole, Baumgarten then extends the notion of clarity in the direction of *increasing complexity or inner plurality*. With "intensive clarity" Baumgarten designates the transition or transformation of sensate to conceptual knowledge (*Verstandeserkenntnis*) achieved by focusing our attention on the individual elements or relata

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[5] Alexander Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus = Philosophische Betrachtungen uber einige Bedingungen des Gedichtes* (Lateinisch-Deutsch / ubers. und mit einer Einl. hrsg. von Heinz Paetzold, Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983); henceforth Med. Translated by author.

in succession and analyzing them into their constituent elements etc. The gain in "depth" of understanding is accompanied by a loss, which Baumgarten places under the heading of "abstraction": to focus our (limited) attention on one mark, then another, is to cast everything else into obscurity, and the first victim of discursive analysis is the whole, the relational whole that is – or was – the image of perception: we lose the image in analyzing it.

With "extensive clarity," Baumgarten means the opposed directionality: increasing complexity, increasing differentiation by way of a greater *plurality of marks*. Perceptions with extensive clarity are characterized by richness or plenitude (*Fülle, Reichtum*, venusta, ubertas); but also by liveliness (*Lebhaftigkeit*, vividitas) (Metaphysica 393)[6], and in the *Aesthetica* 619, Baumgarten makes it clear that he has a *dynamic* multiplicity of relations in mind:

> I therefore believe I can rightly call those thoughts lively in which a special diversity and as it were a rapidly succeeding change of marks, pressing each other reciprocally, can be perceived. And from which, in their exceptional con-fusion, that radiance and luminescence of thought in particulars arises, which must nonetheless remain transparent and absolutely clear in its wholeness.
>
> (Aesth 619)
>
> *Darum glaube ich mit vollem recht jene gedanken lebhaft nennen zu können, in denen eine besondere verschiedenheit und gleichsam ein rasch erfolgender wechsel der sich gegenseitig bedrängenden merkmalen wahrgenommen wird, aus deren außerordentlicher verwirrung jener glanz und jenes leuchten des denkens im einzelnen entspringt, das doch in seiner gesamtheit durchsichtig und absolut klar sein muß.*

Reading this as a statement about image-perception / creation, I would suggest that *certain* images have this character: the image as a dynamic complex of shifting relations that remains all the while an identifiable whole; a plenitude (venusta) or excess of relations that press and pressurise one another (*bedrängen*), generating what Baumgarten calls "the infinitely many meanings of such an object that is almost incomparable in its way" (Aesth 561).

At the heart of sensate knowledge is a concern with the *concrete particular* in its *qualitative singularity*, understood as a plurality of shifting relations and meanings. This requires a complete re-orientation, a reversal of the directionality of thought from the logic of the universal, driven by the understanding and the operations of analysis and subsumption, to what Baumgarten calls *the logic of the individual* (see fig. 3).

This re-orientation can be seen clearly in Baumgarten's concept of sensation (*Empfindung*), marked by pluralizing (*Merkmalfülle*), concretizing and synthesizing functions, which allow for a focus on the individual *qua* particular, so as to give it its "maximal determination" (*Bestimmung*). The same can, I suggest, be said of the logic of images, or at least: of certain "violent" images. Baumgarten's logic of the individual was conceived in opposition to the hegemony of conceptual knowledge and the logic of the universal in rationalism. When set against the contemporary problem-background of generalized immunity to the image, it suggests that the logic of individual has been overrun by generalized logics of image-exchange and sharing in our mediatized environment, and that our immunity is precisely *our incapacity to perceive the concrete particular* in the image. But it also suggests that *certain images*, "violent images", have the power *to return the concrete particular to our damaged perception.*

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[6] Alexander Baumgarten, *Metaphysica / Metaphysik* (Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, G. Gawlick and L. Kreimendahl transl., intro. and ed.s, Stuttgart: Fromann-Holzboog, 2011). Henceforth Met.

2 MODELS OF RATIONALITY:

* **OBERE ERKENNTNISVERMÖGEN / HIGHER FACULTY OF KNOWLEDGE**
ORGANON = Verstand /understanding (intellectus)
Logik des Allgemeinen / logic of the universal via: subsumption of manifold & abstraction from qualitative singularity

TELOS: the universal & simple

* **UNTERE ERKENNTNISVERMÖGEN / LOWER FACULTY OF KNOWLEDGE**
(Met 468(640) and: 426, 428, 432, 438, 451, 452, 455, 459)
ORGANON = das Vernunftähnliche / analogue of reason (analogon rationis).
Vermögen, die Verbindungen der Dinge undeutlich zu erkennen:
Capacity to know the relations of things indistinctly:

Logik der Konkretion / logic of concretion or of the individual

TELOS: the specific, singular,
the concrete and complex (composite / zusammengesetzt)
= to grasp singularia in fullest possible determination: qualitative uniqueness
= complexity

Fig. 3. The Two Models of Rationality in Baumgarten

The best formulation of this thought is in *Aesthetica* 559, where Baumgarten speaks of "the unlimited plenitude [*Fülle*] of significant particulars" in every "individual appearance", of the "numberless marks of endless differences" that can be thought if we really know things as individual appearances, and of the losses incurred by the logic of the universal, when it abstracts from the individual in its singularity. Baumgarten then gives an extraordinary list of qualities in the individual that are lost to the understanding in abstraction:

1) that which is in greater plenitude than belongs to a complete representation,
2) that which in greatness and significance points beyond the level presupposed when knowledge reaches its object,
3) whose truth and untruth cannot be sufficiently clarified through determinate exact science, such that nothing false in knowledge remains,
4) that which does not necessarily belong to distinction [*Unterscheidung*] and so withdraws from clarification by a specific subject
5) that which for just this subject is not completely certain and not strictly demonstrable, where the fear of the opposite is not yet controlled,
6) that which could lead to an opposed supposition, could hinder our assent and perhaps even evoke loathing (*Abscheu*[7], taedium) (Aesth 559)

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[7] Schweizer translates "taedium" with *Abscheu,* which ranges in meaning from loathing to revulsion, disgust, horror. See Alexander Baumgarten, *Theoretische Ästhetik: die grundlegenden Abschnitte aus der "Aesthetica"* (1750/58) (Lateinisch-Deutsch, übers. und hrsg. (transl. and ed.) Hans Rudolf Schweizer, Hamburg: Meiner, 1983). Mirbach (see note 3) opts for the blander *Unlust* or displeasure.

> *1) was in grösserer Fülle vorhanden ist, als zu einer vollständigen Vorstellung gehört, 2) was an Größe und Wichtigkeit über die Stufe hinauswest, die in der Erkenntnis vorausgesetzt ist, welche ihr Objekt erreicht, 3) dessen Wahrheit oder Unwahrheit durch eine bestimmte exacte Erkenntnis nicht genügend erklärt werden kann, und zwar damit nichts Falsches in der Erkenntnis zurückbleibe, 4) was nicht notwendig zur Unterscheidung gehört und ebenso, was sich der Klärung durch ein bestimmtes Subjekt entzieht, 5) was für eben dieses Subjekt nicht vollständig gewiß und nicht streng beweisbar ist, wo die Furcht vor dem Gegenteil noch nicht gebannt ist, 6) was zu einer gegenteiligen Annahme führen, unsre Zustimmung verhindern und vielleicht sogar Abscheu hervorrufen könnte.*

There is an unmistakable shift in these lines from qualities of sensate representations to the subject. Or, reading it as a phenomenology of image-perception: from the qualities of the image to the subject. The movement is from the way the image exceeds its own boundaries ("greater plenitude than belongs to a complete representation"); from the image, whose meanings exceed the bounds of conceptual subsumption, whose truth / untruth exceeds determination by exact science, and whose relations exceed our capacity for analysis – a movement from these qualities of the image, to what confronts the subject with his fear of error, defies affirmation, and ultimately provokes horror or disgust (*Abscheu*). In the context of our generalized immunity to the image, I want to suggest that Baumgarten here gives us a compelling phenomenology of "violent" images, and their impact on us. As sensate images of particulars, their radical indeterminacy provokes fear in us: fear concerning the undecidability of truth/untruth – of our incapacity to determine whether something is true / untrue. In short: fear of ambiguity. We therefore negate and reject these images with bodily disgust. And perhaps this *disgust of indeterminacy* is one of the "the small beginnings" of political acts and events.[8]

B. Heterocosmic fictions

All of this raises the question of representation: if sensate knowledge is knowledge *of things* as concrete particulars, if images are images *of* concrete particulars, what is the status of those things? What, in the final analysis, is an image *of violence*? The short answer for Baumgarten is: their status is imaginary or fictional.

The third *desideratum* was for a non-representational vocabulary that breaks with the subject-object opposition and the assumption of an independently existing order of things, which is the source, the explanans and the measure of representational content. On the other hand, doing justice to the violence of certain images requires that we keep open the question of the image and reality. *Violent images are precisely those images of sensuous particulars that break through the mediatized logics of image-sharing and -exchange, and can impact on our damaged perception – with disgust.* I think Baumgarten may help us to understand this better.

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[8] On intolerance of ambiguity and the need for cognitive closure in social psychology, see e.g. Jim Sidanius "Intolerance of ambiguity and socio-politico ideology: a multidimensional analysis." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 8 (1978): 215-235; Else Frenkel-Brunswik "Intolerance of Ambiguity as an Emotional and Perceptual Personality Variable."*Journal of Personality* 8/1 (1949): 108-143; D.M. Webster and A.W. Kruglanski, "Individual differences in need for cognitive closure.*" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67 (1994): 1049–62; Jeff Victoroff and Janice Adelman, "Why Do Individuals Resort to Political Violence? Approaches to the Psychology of Terrorism," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence*, ed. Marie Breen-Smyth, Marie (London: Routledge, 2012 [20160323. VitalBook file]). According to Victoroff and Adelman "[l]ittle systematic research has explored possible links between cognitive style and political violence."

Baumgarten's commitment to Leibniz's best of all possible worlds means that there is an objective order of things (*Zusammenhang der Dinge*, nexus rerum) to be known. It is to be known, not by re-presenting objects empirically, but by unravelling that same order that lies darkly in each of us (Leibniz's micrcosmos), in the domain of obscure (non-clear) representations that Baumgarten calls the "field [*Feld*] of darkness" or "the ground of the soul". But how can "the order of things" be re-presented out of the disorder (resistance to conceptual understanding) that defines the field of darkness? Baumgarten's answer is: through the creation of *heterocosmic fictions*.

Baumgarten's *Ästhetik* is primarily a production aesthetics that aspires to understand better the nature or physis of the artist or "aestheticus", in order to guide it towards beauty and (aesthetic) truth. Leibniz's *vis activa* become *vis creativa*, differentiated into a range of capacities or "natural dispositions" (see fig. 4).

Of central importance for both the *Metaphysica* and the *Aesthetica* are the imagination (*Einbildungskraft, Phantasie*, phantasia) and poetic disposition (*Dichtungsvermögen*, *Dichtungskraft*, facultas fingiendi). Together they draw on sensations, memory and the obscure representations on the ground of the soul to create a "new world": a world that is impossible in our world (since it follows different laws), but is not absolutely impossible in the sense that it is non-contradictory, or put more loosely: coherent. Such worlds are the product of the capacity for non-conceptual synthesis, which Baumgarten ascribes to sensibility or the "lower capacity for knowledge". A *heterocosmic fiction* – Baumgarten's term – is not a mimesis or re-presentation of the objective order of things; at most, it is a mimesis of the creative principle of nature, natura naturans or what Baumgarten calls "the inner principle of change in the universe" (Med 110). As such, the artist enjoys full creative freedom to create a "new" world according to laws and principles (form) of his own devising, an entirely other order of things. And in this way, Baumgarten argues, the artist can exhibit *in a sensate manner* insights into the order of things that escape our everyday perception. The paradox of fiction – in Baumgarten's thought – is that the underlying connection of things in reality (nexus rerum), often inaccessible at the phenomenal level, can be better understood by constructing a different, possible world (heterocosmos). It is the very otherness of fictional worlds that lend them unique disclosive powers.

In line with the logic of the individual, the task of the heterocosmic artist is, by discriminating and combining images (*Einbildungen*, phantasmata, imaginationes), to create a world of concrete particulars with maximal extensive clarity, so that we can "behold several things in a representation, which are not contained in many sequences of our representations" (Med 43). For Baumgarten, concrete particulars with maximal extensive clarity of this kind are not normally available to experience, so that they can only be imaged as fictions that "have no locus in this world" (Aesth 511). Fictive images of this kind break through our everyday forms of perception and the connotations they carry, so as to make possible a *productive reconstruction of habitual patterns of perception*.[9] One could say: their task is to enhance the (extensive) clarity of our representations without surrendering their sensate plurivocity to our fear of ambiguity and the univocity of the concept.

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[9] See Heinz Paetzold, *Ästhetik des deutschen Idealismus* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), 44-47.

METAPHYSICA
UNTERE ERKENNTNISVERMÖGEN (Met 468(640) and: 426, 428, 432, 438, 451, 452, 455, 459)

ORGANON = das Vernunftähnliche / analgue of reason (analogon rationis).

Vermögen, die Verbindungen der Dinge undeutlich zu erkennen:
Capacity to cognize the connections among things indistinctly:

1) Witz/wit: Übereinstimmungen d Dinge einzusehen (ingenium sensit.)
2) Scharfsinnigkeit/ perspicacity: Verschiedenheiten d Dinge zu erkennen (acumen sensit.)
3) sinnl. Gedächtnis / sensate memory (memoria sensitiva)
4) Dichtungsvermögen / poetic capacity (facultas fingendi)
5) Einbildungskraft / imagination (phantasia)
6) Geschmack / Beurtheilungsvermögen / taste (facultas diudicandi)
7) Erwartung ähnlicher Fälle / expectation of similar cases (expectatio casuum similium)
8) sinnl. Bezeichnungsvermögen / capacity for sensitive signification (facultas characteristica sensitiva)

TELOS: the specific, singular, the concrete and complex (zusammengesetzt)

AESTHETICA:
Baumgarten's natürliche Ästhetik §28
To the 'beautiful and fine spirit' (INGENIUM VENUSTUM) or "gift" (*Begabung*) belongs:

A) untere Erkenntnissvermögen with the following dispositions:
a) disposition 'sharf zu empfinden' / to distinguish (acute sentiendi)
esp. inner (over outer) Empfindung as
the capacity to take on changes / impulses from other (incl. higher cognitive) capacities and maintain them under its own guidance / governance
b) disposition to imagination/ Begabung der Phantasie (imaginandum)
focused on time / ordering in time, such that:
past events can be presented (memoria)
present state can be sustained despite its passage into past
future events can be known / anticipated from past
c) disposition to perspicacity (perspicacium): penetrating insight =
the effect of combining;
Scharfsinn (acumen) and Geist (ingenium, Witz)
i.e. capacity to see differences and similarities
d) capacity to recognise and remember (memoria)
e) poetic disposition (poetica) (Dichtungskraft)
capacity to combine & separate images together in service of form
capacity to create (quasi) world: creative moment
f) disposition to good taste / guten Geschmack (saporem)
NOT public (allgemein verbreitetem) but 'refined'
i.e. NOT conformity to prevailing taste
cf. Met 608: Urteil der Sinne / sensate judgement
Taste together with disposition to perspicacity (i.e. discrimination & identification) = der untere Richter / lower judge (iudex inferior)
g) capacity to anticipate future (Zukünftiges voraussehen – ahnen)
h) capacity to express thoughts (dispositio ad significandas perceptions

Fig. 4. Sensate creative capacities or dispositions in Baumgarten's
Metaphysica* and *Aesthetica

At the same time, however, Baumgarten insists that these other-worldly images are not just fictions, but disclose something about things and the relation of things in this world. How can this be? His best answer comes in the form of a requirement or criterion for heterocosmic fictions: not only must they obey the principle of non-contradiction (loosely construed as a criterion of coherence); they must also be "analogous" to reality, even if they are impossible in this world. Whatever exactly he means by "analogy", it seems to compromise his fictionalist aesthetics with the demand that heterocosmic fictions re-present in one way or other the order of things in this, the best of all possible worlds. But what if we replace the moral-metaphysical concept of the best of all possible worlds with the generalized logics of exchange and sharing that characterise our mediatized world? What if Baumgarten's concern with the limits of habitual patterns of perception is radicalized into a critical-historical theory of damaged perception and mediatized immunity? And what if Baumgarten's orientation towards beauty as the sensate representation of the objective order of things (or: perfection) is replaced with an orientation towards violence, as that which breaks or breaks through the mediatized logics of exchange and sharing?

With these questions I am proposing that Baumgarten's fictionalist aesthetics can be bent towards a fictionalist account of images that gives us a vocabulary, a way to think about the violence of certain images and images of violence. The claim is that the "violence of the image" designates those sensate images of particulars, whose complexity and plurivocity ("infinitely many meanings") defeat our cognitive capacity to determine truth/untruth univocally, provoking that fear of ambiguity and disgust that Baumgarten describes so well. Such images dis-locate and disorient us, confronting us with our incapacity to make sense of them, by creating fictional worlds, heterocosmic fictions that stand in a relation of *radical dis-analogy* to our mediatized environment. By presenting (not re-presenting) the really lived experience of violence in its singularity with maximal extensive clarity, they are also uniquely capable of breaking through generalized logics of image-exchange and -sharing. It is this combination cognitive failure with an insight into the concrete reality of violence obscured by our mediatized environment that can provoke acts of political violence.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to present a synopsis of the argument in a series of propositions and the lines of research needed to realise it as a project:

- Our mediatized environment is characterized by generalized logics of image-exchange and -sharing.
- These logics have damaged our perception such that we have become immune to perceiving concrete particularity (and this includes the really lived experience of violence).
- A "violent image" is one that breaks through our immunity, returns the particular to our sensation and confronts us with it.
- This kind of image is best described as a "con-fused" or "fused" image with extensive clarity à la Baumgarten, that is: a dynamic complex of shifting relations, which cannot be resolved into their relata, but remains all the while an identifiable whole: a preconceptual synthesis.
- Only this kind of image can capture the concrete particular in its qualitative singularity, understood as a plurality of shifting relations and meanings.
- Such images defeat the comfortable standardized images and narratives that immunize us against really lived violence by creating a fictional world (a "heterocosmic fiction") that confronts us the experience of violence in its singularity.

- Their complexity and plurivocity ("infinitely many meanings") defeat our cognitive capacities to determine truth / untruth univocally and provoke a fear of ambiguity, a feeling of insufficiency or powerlessness that leads to disgust, rejection, dis-location and ultimately – that is my claim – to acts of political violence.

If they are to be of use in understanding the relation of images to violence, these propositions require research along four lines:

1. Research into the *logics that characterise our mediatized environment*, understood as generalized forms of *exchange, sharing, circulation* etc. that override *the logic of the individual* specific to sensate images, and immunize us against perceiving concrete particularity.

2. Related to this: *critical-historical research* into the ways in which our perception has been *damaged* in our mediatized environment, such that we have been *immunized* against images of concrete particularity.

3. Research into the sources or "small beginnings" of political acts of violence in the encounter with "violent images" that break or break through the mediatized logics of exchange and our damaged perception, confronting viewers with their cognitive failure in the face of the "infinitely many meanings" of sensuous particulars, the fear of ambiguity, leading to disgust, rejection and radical dis-location.

4. Research into a *non-representational theory of images* understood as heterocosmic fictions that stand in relations of *dis-analogy* to our mediatized environment by creating a world that confronts us with the experience of violence in its singularity.

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