TOTalitarian ARTs

TOTALITARIAN ARTs:

The Visual Arts, Fascism(s) and Mass-society

Edited by

Mark Epstein, Fulvio Orsitto and Andrea Righi

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PREFACE

The essays contained in this volume were inspired by the conference *Tot Art: The Visual Arts, Fascism(s) and Mass-Society* organized by Mark Epstein and Fulvio Orsitto, and hosted by California State University's Program of Italian and Italian American Studies at the Chico campus on September 26th 2013. We would like to thank California State University and the N.E.V.I.S. (New Echoes and Voices in Italian Studies) caucus for their patronage, and Prof. Patricia Black, Chair of the ILLC (International Languages Literatures and Cultures) Department, for her generous help in organizing the event. For further information on the conference visit the website https://sites.google.com/site/totart2013/home.

INTRODUCTION

TOTalitarian ARTs: The Visual Arts, Fascism(s), and Mass-society analyses the connections between the visual arts and mass-culture in totalitarian societies (within capitalist social formations). Rather than providing an unrealistically comprehensive investigation of the innumerable ramifications of said connections, the essays collected in this volume offer multidisciplinary approaches that map the link between artistic media and imagination, as well as between them and the persuasion and indoctrination of the masses. They explore the physical and mental continuum between coercion and consensus in totalitarian regimes.

Although the adjective 'totalitarian' may only be evoked in the title of this volume by the term *TotArt*—a neologism we coined to highlight the relation between totalitarian societies and visual arts, but especially as a parody of Andy Warhol, to call attention to the consumer aspects of contemporary totalitarianism, in which often the individual actually aspires to become part of the mass, gaining a sense of 'normalcy', legitimacy and bonding in so doing—and despite it being seemingly eclipsed by the term 'fascism(s)', it is indeed the exploration of the associations of totalitarianism(s) and visual arts that constitutes the epistemological horizon of this collective work. As editors, we adopted an inclusive and comparative approach that allowed us to incorporate and study a varied number of political systems influenced by Italian fascism (from Spain to Portugal, from Germany to the military regimes in Latin American countries), which are all subsumed under the 'totalitarian' rubric. Finally, our expansion of the word 'totalitarian' is not only geographic and political but also historical.

While the term 'totalitarian' was coined in fascist Italy, it has a rather labored and contradictory history. Totalitarianism has been investigated by historians of fascism (i.e. Hannah Arendt[1] and Emilio Gentile[2]) and

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[1] It should be noted that Arendt herself fell under Heidegger's spell, something that is relevant not just in terms of their personal relationship, but in how it can have influenced her later analytical framework. Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Schocken, 2004); and Antonia Grunenberg, *Hannah Arendt und Martin Heidegger: Geschichte einer Liebe* (Munich: Piper, 2006).

Marxist scholars alike (especially by experts on state-theory and relations between state and civil society such as Nikos Poulantzas and Bob Jessop[3]). This complex and interdisciplinary examination of its contradictions has continued in recent years, with works by Sheldon Wolin, William Engdahl, Mike Lofgren, and Herbert Schiller among others, on the various forms and aspects of totalitarianism that have been developing in western parliamentary systems.[4]

    As editors we see the phenomena discussed in this collection as part of a series of continuums, where the connection between an art medium (cinema for instance), a specific grouping of human beings (family, group of friends, group of protesters, party gathering, crowd at a sporting event, mass at a rally, etc.), and the political institutional setting in which they occur are not given once and for all, but congeal in specific constellations in a time and a place. From direct democracy to the most encompassing and controlling forms of totalitarianism there is a continuum, from solitary meditation while reading a lyric poem to the (potential) revelry of spectators joining in the performance of a dance with professional dancers in a ballet there is a continuum, from life as a hermit in a Tibetan shrine in the Himalayas to participation in a mass rally against the TPP there is a continuum. In other words, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to isolate an event or a temporary state of existence that is purely individual or purely social, a purely introspective elaboration/'consumption' of a work

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[2] Emilio Gentile, *La via italiana al totalitarismo: il partito e lo stato nel regime fascista* (Rome: Carocci, 2008); especially Chapter 9 "I silenzi di Hannah Arendt. Il fascismo e *Le origini del totalitarismo*", 315-339, which demonstrates fairly conclusively that Arendt was wrong in not considering fascism a form of totalitarianism.

[3] Nikos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London: New Left Books, 1974); *The Crisis of the Dictatorships* (London: New Left Books, 1976); Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002)—only one of many works by probably the leading Marxist theorist of the state.

[4] F. William Engdahl, *Full Spectrum Dominance: Totalitarian Democracy in the New World Order* (Boxboro, MA: Third Millennium Press, 2009); Mike Lofgren, *The Deep State: The Fall of the Constitution and the Rise of a Shadow Government* (New York: Viking, 2016); Sheldon Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Naomi Wolf, *The End of America: Letter of Warning to a Young Patriot* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Pub., 2007); Tariq Ali, *The Extreme Centre: a Warning* (London: Verso, 2015); Herbert Schiller, *Culture, Inc.: the Corporate Takeover of Public Expression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); *Mass Communications and American Empire* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992).

of art or a purely participatory sharing in a work of art, a purely 'free', 'democratic', unconstrained act or event as against a completely predetermined, controlled, totalitarianly imposed event. Raymond Williams in the course of more penetrating reflections on the concept of 'hegemony' introduced the ideas of residual, dominant and emergent forms, which exist side by side, but whose normative power shifts historically during their struggle for preeminence.[5] The cognitive, cultural, psychological and corporeal states of individuals changes throughout their lives, the human aggregates in which they socialize do as well, and so do the institutional settings in which they operate (which mostly preexist them, but to which they may also constructively contribute)—institutions to whose formation and transformation both individuals and aggregates may contribute in quite different degrees.

The concept of 'mass', which generally has connotations that are more closely associated with the political than 'crowd' for instance, has been at the center of many reflections on modernity, from those of Charles Baudelaire and the *flaneur*, to Walter Benjamin's on Baudelaire and his Paris.[6] Of course, in material terms a 'mass' is simply an aggregate of individuals, but its perception has been subject to significant transformations since the Enlightenment. From fears of the 'crowd' associated with the ferment of the French Revolution, to the ambiguous shifts between fear/distance and being lost in/merging with the 'mass' (in both Baudelaire's and, later, Benjamin's works), to essays speculating on the crowd's characteristics and how to manipulate them (such as Gustave Le Bon's—which, according to a scholar of fascism, George Mosse, may have influenced those movements),[7] 'mass' and 'crowd' represent the 'otherness' that any individual outside the 'self' already constitutes in

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[5] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 121-127.

[6] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (London: Phaidon Press, 1995); Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002). Benjamin is probably one of the most important intellectuals to study symptomatically for the transition to fascism, as his interest in the 'mass' intersects that for the loss of the 'aura' in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, in which he significantly quotes Abel Gance, the director of the monumental, three-screen, film *Napoleon*, whose subject of course points to the possible ideological continuities of earlier forms of Bonapartism or Caesarism and contemporary fascism within the capitalist mode of production.

[7] Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Dunwoody: N.S. Berg, 1968); George Mosse, *Nazi Culture. Intellectual, Cultural and Social Life in the Third Reich* (London: W. H. Allen, 1966), xxiii-xxiv.

societies that are increasingly predicated on a consumerist, fairly mechanical, individualism—one which, ultimately, rarely explores processes of socialization, or the many possible forms of shared association, living, work, play, and art. The tension between 'individual' and 'mass' is also one of the many components of the historically complex opposition of 'civilization' and 'culture', or, in the context of post-Nietzschean German culture, between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur*: where 'civilization' is the bearer of the many institutional, social, and 'normalized' values of the broader (mass) society, while 'culture' (especially with the onset of Romanticism), gathers many of the connotations of individual cultivation of inwardness (which also in some ways harp back to earlier religious, pre-Enlightenment ideologies).[8] These tensions and ruptures within cultural traditions, eventually can lead to the forced/imposed forms of bricolage in which a Futurist programmatic refusal of tradition, and a cult of seemingly completely new and rootless forms of technology and power coexists in the Fascist regime with the cultivation of symbols of past imperial power and glory.

The symbol of the *fascio littorio*, was originally Etruscan, then adopted as a symbol of power in Imperial Rome, and later, prior to its adoption by the Fascist movement, had been used by movements on the Italian left, for instance in the so-called "Fasci siciliani" (if perhaps with more corporatist than imperial overtones). This transition from left to right is characteristic of the biography of Benito Mussolini himself, and the forced (tied) bundling of the individual staves into a 'mass', presided over by the life and death power of the axe, very succinctly expresses the lack of any exploration of inter-individual, non-constrained, forms of association. In other words, it expresses virtually complete lack of consideration for the complexities of both individual(s) and their association, whether in more coerced, classic, forms of fascism, or more induced, hegemonic, consumerist forms of contemporary totalitarianism—where the individual is basically only given consideration as a unit of consumption and production, a statistical blip in an ocean of drones. In short, where the individual is only seen as a consumer and not a citizen or a political animal.

Our collection of essays explores some of the many variants in which totalitarian institutions coerced compliance, induced and enticed participation, channeled individual energies towards goals desired by the regimes in question; or, in the case of totalitarian movements aspiring to

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[8] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 11-20.

power, how they shape(d) their works and messages to interact with certain kinds of implied public(s).

Historically the visual arts, but also new media and technologies have had a strong association with fascism(s), arguably because of a strong sensory component, which, like analogous forms of subconscious persuasion exploited in advertisement, often helped channel individual energies and beliefs towards totalitarian goals. One need only think of futurism and vorticism in painting, theater and film, or of the strong connection of the cinema medium to totalitarian regimes (Leni Riefenstahl being one of the most iconic examples in this regard). In reality, as Sabine Hake reminds us, the study of fascism(s) seems almost inseparable from the analysis of their "unique status as a filmic fantasy."[9] Hence, recalling the considerations of many film theorists[10] and directors[11] of the so-called early cinema period—who, while investigating the ontology of the new medium, found numerous similarities between cinema and the slumbering state of daydreaming the audience experiences while watching a film[12]—it is not hard for one to see how, while being seated in a movie theater, spectators undergo a 'regressive' process that shares many characteristics with the dream state;[13] a 'regressive' process that one could also associate with the

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[9] Sabine Hake, *Screen Nazis. Cinema, History, and Democracy* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 4.

[10] Ricciotto Canudo, Hugo Münsterberg and Louis Delluc, among many others.

[11] Germaine Dulac, Jean Epstein, René Clair, and Luis Buñuel, to mention a few.

[12] A thorough survey of early film theorists who drew attention to the oneiric nature of cinema is provided by Laura Rascaroli—consult "Like a Dream: A Critical History of the Oneiric Metaphor in Film Theory." *Kinema* (Fall 2002), http://www.kinema.uwaterloo.ca/article.php?id=141&feature—who also offers valuable reflections on a debate that characterized early cinema: that on the primary function of the medium itself, which according to some theorists was merely to reproduce reality, while according to others it was to explore and, ultimately, exploit the technical possibilities of the medium in order to depict (or evoke) aspects of the human experience like fantasy and dream. The 'regressive' process that permits cinema to resemble the dream state will also attract the interest of more contemporary film theorists (Christian Metz, Raymond Bellour), semioticians (Cesare Musatti, Roland Barthes), and psychoanalysts (Guy Rosolato).

[13] In order to facilitate this 'regression' to immobility, spectators even find the most comfortable position on the chair, just like they do before going to sleep. Moreover, the very language of cinema seems to mimic the dream state "from the *iconic* language on which it is based, to the flashbacks, the sudden shifts in perspective and the jump cuts between one scene and the next." ["a partire dal linguaggio *iconico* con cui è strutturato, ai flashback, ai salti improvvisi di prospettiva e alle cesure fra una scena e l'altra."]. Franco De Felice and Alessandro

passive position of the masses being indoctrinated by totalitarian regimes; a 'regressive' process that, ultimately, cannot but favor filmic fantasies on fascism(s). Moreover, as an artistic medium, cinema embodies many aspects that draw it to totalitarian forms of control of the consumer's response. Ontologically speaking, cinema is a medium that requires a very complex technical setup and a large number of specialized collaborators (to an even greater extent than theater or opera, the whole area of special effects and animation being just two technical directions pioneered by cinema). However, what differentiates filmic events from theatrical and operatic events is their uniqueness, given by the fact that their consumers are not physically in the presence of other human beings (whose performance can always be, albeit theoretically, altered by the audience). Consequently, cinematic spectators are reduced to passive witnesses of a projection of images and sounds that flow by; a projection that cannot be altered by viewers and that, in all its sameness, could be repeated an infinite number of times in front of supposedly unlimited audiences. In other words, what differentiates cinema from 'older' artistic expressions (such as theater and opera), and equates it to 'newer' ones (like television) is its absolute (one might even say 'totalitarian') control over pro-filmic space and time.[14] In fact, although cinema and television share the arrangement of space and actions with theater and opera (so that the term *mise en scène* could technically be used in all these fields), cinema's—and, to a certain extent, television's—peculiarity consists in the fact that the results of said preparation are then recorded as immutable pro-filmic micro-events (later to be assembled in a filmic narrative through the *montage* process).[15] Hence, the spectators' passive state during the pleasurable

Pascucci, *Cinema e psicopatologia. Aspetti psicologici della rappresentazione cinematografica e potenzialità applicative in psicologia clinica* (Ariccia: Aracne, 2007), 34.

[14] A separate discourse needs to be developed as regards the video-making explosion on the Internet brought about by the Web 2.0 revolution. If, on the one hand, the preceding reflections on the pro-filmic seem at first to also be applicable in this instance, on the other, one has to consider that the complex chain of postings and re-postings that characterizes the contemporary social media scene, and the easy access to software that makes editing feasible and available to all, undermine the concept of a finite product, ultimately affecting the unamendability of every video uploaded on web.

[15] This sense of totalitarian control in the 'reproduction of reality' (or at least the illusion thereof), includes a sense of control over all time and space (past, present and future precisely), and possibly brought some of the psychological impulses in the totalitarian personalities of some leaders into closer proximity with some of the ideals embodied in the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

consumption of a dreamlike filmic narrative, is comparable to the submissive state of the masses receiving and 'consuming' (more or less hidden) messages provided by totalitarian regimes eager to foster oneiric filmic fantasies in them. Finally, the expression 'visual arts' in the title of this volume, is also used in reference to 'performing arts', and to evoke those that—perhaps more appropriately—should be referred to as 'plastic arts'. Hence, in the *TotArt* context, this phrase also incorporates architecture, urban planning and the shaping and control of spaces (especially public ones). If the sense of (totalitarian) control characterizing the cinematic medium affected what one could call 'lived life', the control of architectural spaces and urban planning obviously are part of what totalitarian ideologies and cultures would value as control over the actual spaces in which life and social interaction occurs, and which are therefore contained and molded by them.

The first part of the volume, *Totalitarian Environment: Spaces and Images*, contains four essays that examine the definition of fascist urban spaces and the representation of Mussolini's public image. Social spaces and public art are central to any form of government. For fascism, however, squares, buildings and public places in general, were all the more important as these were areas the regime aimed to control and monopolize also in terms of expression. In this context, Silvia Boero's essay, "The Use and Abuse of the Classic Fragment: The Case of Genoa and Sculptor Eugenio Baroni," considers the political and social implications of the reconstruction of the Foce area in Genoa. As Boero reminds us, the fascist government intervened on this working class neighborhood by forcibly removing its inhabitants to make room for a new square and for a modern replica of the Arch of Triumph. Hence, the renovation of the Foce area perfectly exemplifies how the regime intended to follow a Roman aesthetic in order to reinforce the myth of fascist Italy as the modern embodiment of Imperial Rome. Nevertheless, the political use-abuse of architecture was not always successful, stumbling from time to time on its own illusion of grandeur or on sporadic instances of opposition. This is the case with the work of artist Eugenio Baroni, whose group of statues, commissioned to celebrate the *House of the Mutilated Soldier*, stands as a silent reminder of the horror of war. In her contribution entitled "Fascist Ideology, Mass Media, and the Built Environment: A Case Study," Maria D'Anniballe continues the exploration of fascist intervention in architecture by documenting the origin and scope of the ideologically charged restoration of the *Palazzo della Provincia* in Verona. Taking a different approach from Boero, D'Anniballe makes the case for a political use of architecture that did not follow the example of classical Rome but

rather that of the middle Ages. As D'Anniballe illustrates, the dictatorship's centralized political system was flexible enough to allow for such cases of bottom-up experimentation, an episode that differs from what happened in Genoa. In this sense, Verona is also an interesting case-study in the medievalization of Italy, showing how local authorities took the lead in creating a counterfeit building and how, with the media's help, they promoted a distinctive image of the town as an emblem of medieval society (in order to generate tourism while reinforcing a shared notion of identity and Italianness). Although Mussolini's cult of personality has been frequently studied, the last two chapters of this section of the volume propose two somewhat different perspectives. Amanda Minervini's essay, "Face to Face: Iconic Representations and Juxtapositions of St. Francis of Assisi and Mussolini during Italian Fascism," shows how the regime was able to win Saint Francis to the nationalist cause by co-opting his inflexible ethic of sacrifice, obedience and mystical love. Investigating the work of Father Paolo Ardali, Minervini explains how Saint Francis is turned into a precursor of the Duce. Finally, in his "Mussolini in American Newsreels. The Duce as Modern Celebrity," Pierluigi Erbaggio focuses on how the fascist leader became a celebrity of the Hollywood star system. As the author explains, well before the well-known propaganda of *Istituto Luce*, it was actually two US companies (Fox and Hearst productions) that—casting him in the captivating light of a business man—first portrayed him as a modern leader, well versed in the latest technologies.

The four chapters comprised in section two of the volume, *Totalitarianism, Italian Cinema and Beyond*, offer more analyses of cinematic representations, and further the study of everyday life and survival under fascist regimes, by addressing the built-in-desire to conform to fascist norms and institutions, as well as to be molded by modern subtle and pervasive forms of social control (which often tend to reduce individuals to mere objects). In his "Pasolini's Reflections on Fascism(s): Classic and Contemporary," Mark Epstein offers a reading of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò* (1975) and its treatment of sexuality, as both a recantation of its celebration in the so-called *trilogia della vita*, and, within a much broader framework, as well as a depiction of what Pasolini himself called the "anthropological mutation" carried out by neo-capitalism. Epstein elaborates on Pasolini's distinction between historical ('classic') and neocapitalist fascism. According to Pasolini, contemporary fascism is qualitatively different from its previous counterpart: the totalitarian end-product of contemporary mass society is its ability to commodify every aspect of life via consumerism (a form of capillary control on the individual level that 'classic' fascist institutional coercion could only

dream of). In this sense, Epstein reads the scandalous nature of *Salò* and its treatment of sexuality as a metaphor to understand the pending catastrophe of a new and ubiquitous form of fascist oppression, one that is especially pernicious due to the depths it is able to penetrate. In the last part of the essay, Epstein discusses Pasolini's theory of the sacred, underscoring its materialist foundations, and highlighting how Pasolini understood the sacred as a bulwark against the rampant instrumentalization of life under capitalist rationalization and commodification (and as the point of origin for a genetic reconstruction of a non-moralistic ethics). Angelo Fàvaro's inquiry into the idea of conformism as a pillar of fascist ideology—"From Moravia to Bertolucci: the Monism of The Conformist. The Farce after the Tragedy"—comes in two parts. The first one, "From Tragedy to Myth," deals extensively with Alberto Moravia's novel *The Conformist* in light of its filmic adaptation by Bernardo Bertolucci in 1970. By means of a meticulous close-reading, Fàvaro details how Moravia produced a rational explanation for the tragic desire for normalcy that pushes Marcello, the protagonist, to collaborate in the homicide of an anti-fascist intellectual in France. Bertolucci, on the other side, depicts this path in more expressionistic tones, thus proposing a less tragic view of Marcello. The second part of the essay, "From Treatment to Farcical Finale," examines the film's treatment (which Fàvaro recovered from the *Archivio Centrale di Stato*), and through a careful and original analysis of the plot shows how the text can be used as an intermediate artefact to interpret both the film and the novel. In the chapter that concludes this section, "Nazi-Fascist Echoes in Films from WWWII to the Present," Fulvio Orsitto analyses the so-called Nazi-Fascist imaginary emerging in post fascist cinema from a cultural perspective. In order to discuss the countless Nazi characters emerging in filmic narratives since WWII, Orsitto proposes a division of this vast corpus of examples into three phases: the first one ranging from WWII to the late 1960s, the second one from the 1970s to the early 1980s, and the third one from the late 1980s to the present. Orsitto's overview of the Nazi-Fascist imaginary emerging in post fascist cinema shows how, from the early 1940s to the late 1960s, the cinematic Nazi-Fascist imaginary is inhabited almost exclusively by stereotypical depictions of Nazi (many) and Fascist (few) characters informed by three kinds of perspectives: the mocking attitude (prevalent in the 1940s but, occasionally, resurfacing in other decades and media as well), the rehabilitating outlook (visible in a handful of 1950s films that tend to portray Germans as the last bastion against the Communist threat), and the 'perverting' approach (launched by Hollywood films of the 1940s, taken up by Rossellini's so-called War Trilogy and then incorporated and

further explored in the Nazisploitation genre of the 1970s—which is discussed in the second part of this chapter). The final part of this essay is devoted to the discussion of the proliferation of Nazi characters in the contemporary mediascape.

Part three, *Totalitarian Aesthetics and Politics*, contains four essays that address fascist aesthetics from a theoretical perspective (i.e. as they emerge in intellectual discourses in Germany and France) and from a more practical one (i.e. with close-readings of specific examples present in the visual arts in France and Spain). In "The Other Modernity: Fascist Aesthetics and the Imprint of the Community Myth against the Failure of Liberalism," Ana Rodríguez-Granell explores fascist aesthetics, suggesting that the fascist imaginary not only fueled the cult of efficiency (derived from a rationalist modern mass society) but also referred to the primitive and ancestral joy of belonging. Indeed, this is where, according to Rodríguez-Granell, one discovers the connection between the fascist aesthetic tradition, the irrationalist tendencies of nineteenth-century Romanticism, and the *fin-de-siècle* imaginary. This chapter charts the continuity between various periods of German history characterized by the belief in aesthetic and artistic redemption and by the notion of culture as a political project. Analyzing those discourses that construct the concept of community as a pre-rational impulse, Rodríguez-Granell discovers links with the later neo-pagan and regenerative ideals of *völkish* movements (Fidus) and the mysticism of the *Konservative Revolution*, and highlights the inherent contradictions in a notion of modernity that is widespread in European fascism. In "Thought vs. Action: Golden Age Aesthetics in French Proto-Fascist and Fascist Discourses," Gaetano DeLeonibus investigates the distinction between the nationalistic (proto-fascist) discourse of the turn of the 20th century and the pro-European fascist discourse of the 1930s. For both groups, aestheticism informed or was informed by a political attitude. However, the former subscribed to a view that could be labeled as "aestheticized politics" (believing that aesthetics should shape political action), while the latter fostered "politicized aesthetics" (asserting that political criteria should determine aesthetic criteria). In his essay, DeLeonibus offers a meticulous examination of these two views through examples taken from the writings of two French literary figures turned ideologues, Charles Maurras and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, concluding that theirs were not fully formed ideologies, but rather aesthetic positions inspired by a Nietzschean spiritual conflict against a culture they considered to be vulgar and decadent. In "Envisioning Vichy: Fascist Visual Culture in France 1940-44," Sean Connolly proposes an in-depth study of the visual culture of Vichy's

Révolution nationale and underlines how, although Petain's regime shared many of the ideological characteristics of fascist Germany (i.e. corporatism, peasantism, xenophobia, antisemitism, religious nationalism, and the rejection of liberal democracy), many of these tenets were not merely an import from the German occupiers, since they already had well-established roots in Right-wing groups of the Third Republic such as *Action Française, Croix de Feu,* and *Jeunesses Patriotes.* The mythologizing of national heroes, heroines, and enemies that characterized the fascist visual culture of Vichy analyzed by Connolly, allows the author to reflect on the mythic interplay of a national past, present, and future, and on the characters constituting the rich palingenetic national mythology of Petain's regime. Finally, Anna Vives—in "Salvador Dalí: the Fascist Genius?"—offers a series of thought-provoking observations on Salvador Dalí's flirtation with fascism(s). Starting with the consideration that the two most common approaches to this topic (the aesthetic attitude and the scandalized one), are limited in scope and do not address the fundamental reasons that fueled Dalí's interest in Hitler and Franco, Vives maintains that—although the artist was certainly not an apolitical subject—his fascination with totalitarianism was not motivated by political but by 'artistic' reasons. In order to clarify the peculiarity of Dalí's political position, Vives details his involvement with the Surrealist movement, and concludes that the artist's interest in fascism(s) was inspired by his artistic interest in mocking orthodoxy regardless of its nature.

Part four, *Totalitarian Geography*, contains three essays investigating forms of fascism that developed in countries with Romance-language based cultures. In his "The Impossible Reconciliation: Pedro Lázaga's *Torrepartida* (1956)," Daniel Arroyo-Rodriguez exemplifies how cinema was used by the Franco regime as a means to cement its political control, and subtly modulate its interpretations of the Spanish Civil War, in order to further ideological, social and political control in the short term. The film combines elements of the Western, the political documentaries of the 1930s and 1940s, and nods to the *cine de cruzada*. Compared to Hollywood products of the time, Francoist cinema is still technologically backwards. Its legitimizing strategy consists in simultaneously humanizing individual members of the enemy (the opposition to the dictatorship) while showing that, as a group and a potential institution, they represent something alien and dangerous, which needs to be eradicated. The following chapter by Isabel Macedo, Rita Bastos, and Rosa Cabecinhas—"Representations of Dictatorship in Portuguese Cinema"—provides the reader with a brief history of recent Portuguese cinema and of the military dictatorship that dominated Portugal for a good portion of the 20th century,

focusing on two films in particular: *Fantasia Lusitana* (*Lusitanian Illusion,* 2010), by João Canijo, and *48* (2010), by Susana de Sousa Dias. These two films' portrayal and examination of memory underscores its importance for the contributions of history from below to an overall historical picture of Portugal under the military dictatorship. Both films demonstrate how multiculturalism can become a strategic tool in the hands of totalitarian regimes, exploring the uses of "lusotropicalism" by Salazar's dictatorship (as part of the diplomatic stratagems used to avoid being categorized as a fascist regime). The essay combines examinations of frameworks (the history of the dictatorship and its, especially cinematic, representations), the regime's use of cinema as part of its propagandistic strategies, and the institutional connections of Portuguese directors, institutions, and film schools to their analogues within the broader European context. Finally, in "Looking Forward, Looking Backwards: Notes on the Dictatorship in Uruguay," Claudia Peralta examines an often overlooked dictatorship among the many that plagued Latin America for decades: the dictatorship in Uruguay. After explaining the varied reasons for its having garnered less attention, and being researched less often, Peralta chooses four documentaries to expose the realities of this period to a wider readership. They are: *A Las cinco en punto,* (2004), *Nos sobra una ley* (2011), *Por esos ojos* (1997)*,* and *Romper el muro de la impunidad* (2013). As in the case of Macedo, Bastos and Cabecinhas, Peralta argues that recollecting memory of the period—especially in the testimony of its victims—is one of the most important achievements these documentaries can contribute to. The documentaries deal with the initial days of the coup and the reactions to it (*A Las cinco en punto*); with interviews and eyewitness accounts of relatives and people involved with the "disappeared" (*Por esos ojos*); with the corrupting and degrading influence of not repealing the *Ley de Caducidad*—which essentially protects the impunity of the dictatorship's perpetrators and accomplices (*Nos sobra una ley*); and, last but not least, advocating for a reopening of the cases against individuals involved in the dictatorship's abuses, crimes and oppression (*Romper el muro del impunidad*).

    Part five, *Contemporary Forms of Totalitarian Representation*, contains three essays that analyze current relations between totalitarianisms and the visual (and performing) arts in Germany and Sweden. In "Totality and Destruction in Contemporary German Culture: Playing on Fascism in the Total Art of Serdar Somuncu," Arina Rotaru examines the role of minorities in conjunction with ethnicity and performance as it intersects with fascism(s). Focusing on the work of actor and performer Serdar Somuncu, Rotaru offers an in-depth analysis of this artist's experimentations with

genres, and of his venturing into the taboos of National Socialist history. Rotaru underlines Somuncu's intervention against the entirety of German public memory as a national discourse composed of German perpetrators and Jewish victims (a seamless whole which blocks the possibility of confluence between the German, Turkish and German Turkish pasts), and his crucial role in questioning the notion of a monolithic German discourse about public memory as national discourse. Finally, through a close reading of *Hitler Kebab*, *Mein Führer*, and *Hate Messiah*, Rotaru explains the true meaning of Somuncu's total art and the way in which it foregrounds the war of cultures (which is truly a war on minorities, with whom no shared humanity is possible). In "*Seit heut früh wird zurückgeschrieben*. Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity in Political Comics of the Far and Extreme Right," Maria Stopfner offers a stimulating analysis of the neo-fascist ground offensive against the democratic status quo, focusing on the youth wing of the German Nationalist Party, and its attempts to broadcast its ideology to a young audience via the genre of political comics. Using *Der grosse Kampf: Enten gegen Hühner* (*The Big Battle: Ducks against Chickens*) as a case study, Stopfner examines this text's strategies of typological and referential intertextuality and its interdiscursivity (with reference to ethnic prejudice and to collective memory). Through the investigation of the aforementioned communicative strategies, Stopfner unveils the 'hidden' meaning encoded in this 2009 comic, and explores the atmosphere of intended ambivalence that informs this socio-political operation and that, ultimately, favors a communication game aimed at group-bonding (in which the ability to understand the 'true' meaning embedded by the author depends on the reader's background knowledge). Finally, in "You Tube Fascism—Visual Activism of the Extreme Right," Matias Ekman presents a series of pioneering observations on the online video activism of neo-fascist groups in Sweden. Ekman's analysis is grounded in the (demonstrated) assumption that the development of digital communication and information technology has played an important role in facilitating the production and dissemination of political propaganda by far right-wing movements. As Ekman recalls, Swedish far right-wing groups and the white-power music scene have a long history of media production, and were quick to adopt digital communication practices. In recent years they benefited greatly from the progression of online communication, as the Internet provided new distribution channels and facilitated new environments in which activists and supporters could consume propaganda and communicate. Providing us with a comprehensive overview of more than two hundred video clips produced and uploaded on You Tube by five organizations, Ekman's

chapter discusses how the video content relates to the political strategies of the extreme right, and reflects upon the relationship between mediated communication and the socio-cultural context of far right-wing politics.

Part six, *Comparative Reflections on Totalitarian Worldviews*, contains three essays that reflect on contemporary forms of fascism/totalitarianism, as expressed and pursued in various media (or, in the case of Epstein, as embodied in the new institutional and political arrangements of the current US dominated unipolar world-system). All these contributions challenge the widely accepted belief that 'liberal democracy' and 'fascism' (a totalitarianism that defends, entrenches and/or deepens capitalist social relations of production) are somehow polar opposites, rather than political, social, ideological and institutional phenomena that can be followed along a continuum. In "Totalitarian Trends Today," Mark Epstein examines the devolution of current capitalist institutions and the rise of a new form of 'disenfranchisement' totalitarianism, which are predicated on the complete destruction of the ideological foundation of the 'liberal' theory of democracy, 'informed consent.' Epstein follows the many ways the US and UK are devolving according to this new totalitarian model, and compares the characteristics of this process with those considered typical for 'classic' forms of totalitarianism. On the level of 'high' culture he also shows the continuities between the (political, as well as ideological roots) of Heideggerian theory and those postmodern verbalizations that accompany the current neoliberal descent into totalitarianism. In his essay "Theories of Video Activism and Fascism," Matias Ekman analyses the ways in which the far right has appropriated audio-visual media and strategies typically associated with liberal and progressive groups for its own political purposes. Ekman argues that these strategies often follow a bio-political path, reinforcing cohesion among group members, through both sexual hyper-masculine bonding practices and a strategy of the aestheticization of politics—one pursued by means of the mass group-communications of late modernity—which are more fragmented and detached from physical space than those which were characteristic of the more classic forms of mass propaganda in the fascist and Nazi periods. This more disseminated and pseudonymous strategy still pursues far right aims through a cultural politics of emotions. In the last chapter of the volume, "Deleuze's and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* as a Theory of Fascism," Andrea Righi uses Deleuze and Guattari's text to help us understand the other side of fascism: not the monstrous, violent, aberrant side, but the one whereby fascism gains the consensus of those it seduces, becoming a means for those it subjugates to will their own oppression. Righi examines the film *The Hunger Games* (2012) as an example where this 'other side'

is also revealed. He then proceeds to discuss the French authors' theory of desire as a means of subverting the distinction between the object desired and its representation (making them one, using chains of fluxes of desire flowing through their mechanistic model of the *ensembles of machines*). This is where fascism is able to capitalize on desire by channeling it toward its oppressive uses. Righi also discusses how Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between a "molar" type of fascism (which is basically consistent with the historical, hierarchical, "monstrous" kinds of fascism) and a "molecular" type of fascism, which Righi argues has now come to be the predominant one. In order to exemplify some characteristics of this newer molecular fascism, Righi analyzes another Hollywood film, *The Bling Ring* (2013), showing how 'production' and 'reproduction', economics and life (biology, sexuality) have in some sense merged.

In conclusion, the connections between the visual arts and mass-culture in totalitarian societies explored by *TotArt* contributors in many of their nuances offer crucial critical insights into the relationships between mass and individual, civil society and state, community and individual (d)evolution, autonomy and self-knowledge. Moreover, the essays contained in this volume provide a significant framework for assessing not only the historical development of capitalist societies since the Enlightenment, but also where they might be located on a continuum from most coercively totalitarian to most democratic (at least in terms of institutional, juridical and ethical self-regulation), albeit in hegemonized forms. Despite the variety in perspective and style offered by the twenty chapters comprised in this volume we, as editors, believe that they form a polymorphic whole that can be perceived as such from beginning to end. Our thanks go to our contributors, without whom this collective effort would not have been possible, and to our readers, for whom we hope this work will open new spaces for debate on the connection between the visual arts and mass-culture in totalitarian societies.

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PART I:

TOTALITARIAN ENVIRONMENT:
SPACES AND IMAGES

CHAPTER ONE

THE USE AND ABUSE
OF THE CLASSICAL FRAGMENT:
THE CASE OF GENOA
AND SCULPTOR EUGENIO BARONI[1]

SILVIA BOERO

Introduction

In 1932 Mussolini delivered a speech in Perugia before the Academy of Fine Arts, a speech that summarized his plan to forge a fascist culture and aesthetics. He felt the time was ripe to call upon writers, artists, and architects in order to convert that part of the population (mainly intellectuals) to fascism which, despite showing some sympathy with its goals, had not yet adhered to his ideology. He had successfully overcome the crisis that followed the assassination of Socialist representative Giacomo Matteotti in 1924, and now his main objective was the *fascistizzazione* of Italian culture *in toto*. Leonard Barkan, speaking of the Renaissance in Italy, directs our attention the use/abuse of the classic fragment as a tool of persuasion: "The whole phenomena of classical survival—disjointed, challenging to read, open, seeming to solicit modern response—makes it difficult to separate fragmentation from reconstruction."[2] This statement is also valid for the Italian fascist dictatorship—or, better, for the years between 1924 and 1940. This period marked what in Italian I call *appropriazione indebita* or illegitimate appropriation of the classical fragment, in the figurative arts as well as in

[2] Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 341.