

ANTON WILHELM AMO LECTURES

EDITED

BY

MATTHIAS KAUFMANN, RICHARD ROTTENBURG

AND REINHOLD SACKMANN

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT HALLE-WITTENBERG

HALLE (SAALE)

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TRANSLATION AND DISSONANCE

INNOVATION PATTERNS  
IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

BY

MICHAEL HUTTER

WISSENSCHAFTSZENTRUM BERLIN FÜR SOZIALFORSCHUNG

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT HALLE-WITTENBERG

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# Inhalt

Vorwort

Matthias Kaufmann, Richard Rottenburg, Reinhold Sackmann | 9

Translation and Dissonance.

Innovation Patterns in the Creative Industries

Michael Hutter | 13

Über den Verfasser | 43



## Vorwort

In der Schriftenreihe „Anton Wilhelm Amo Lectures“ des Forschungsschwerpunkts „Gesellschaft und Kultur in Bewegung“ werden seit 2013 an der Martin-Luther-Universität gehaltene Gastvorlesungen bedeutender Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler publiziert, die unter diesem Titel von den beiden Forschungsschwerpunkten „Gesellschaft und Kultur in Bewegung“ und „Aufklärung, Religion, Wissen“ gemeinsam veranstaltet werden und Anton Wilhelm Amo gewidmet sind.

Im Jahr 1727 kam Anton Wilhelm Amo – als Kind im heutigen Ghana versklavt, dann 1707 von der Holländisch-Westindischen Gesellschaft an den Wolfenbüttler Hof Herzogs Anton Ulrich von Braunschweig und Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel verschenkt – nach einer umfassenden Ausbildung an die Universität Halle zum Studium der Philosophie und der Rechtswissenschaften. 1729 verfasste Amo die Disputation „De iure Maurorum in Europa“, in der er die Frage erörterte, inwieweit die Freiheit oder Dienstbarkeit der von Christen gekauften „Mohren“ in Europa nach dem damals geltenden Recht gerechtfertigt sei. (Diese Schrift gilt als verschollen.)

In Wittenberg wurde Amo im Jahr 1734 mit der Inauguraldissertation „De humanae mentis apatheia. Die Apatheia der menschlichen Seele“ zum philosophiae ac liberalium artium Magister promoviert und wurde als Magister legens zugelassen. Anders als der im stoischen Umfeld prominent gewordene Terminus „Apatheia“ vermuten lässt, geht es dabei nicht um Gelassenheit oder Gleichmut der Seele. Mit dieser Schrift leistete Amo vielmehr einen eigenständigen Beitrag zur Debatte zu dem, was man im 20. Jahrhundert das Leib-Seele-Problem nannte, indem er der menschlichen Seele Empfindungen und überhaupt die Fähigkeit des Empfindens aufgrund ihrer Immaterialität radikal abspricht. Wie wir im gleich anzusprechenden Hauptwerk erfahren, befasst sich die Seele mit intentionalen Repräsentationen der vom Körper sinnlich erfassten Dinge. In ausdrücklicher Wendung gegen Descartes, der ja den „Passions de l’âme“ ein ganzes Werk

gewidmet hatte, betont er, dass die Seele nicht leiden könne, was bei lebendigen Dingen dasselbe wie empfinden sei (*pati et sentire in rebus vivis sunt synonyma*) und stellt sich in seiner Psychologie somit eher in eine scholastische, wolffianische Tradition (zu den lokalen Kontroversen, die aufgegriffen werden vgl. Edeh 2003, 53f.).

Dass er indessen keineswegs ein schlichter Gefolgsmann Wolffs ist, zeigt sich in der wesentlich umfangreicheren Schrift „*De arte sobrie et accurate philosophandi. Traktat von der Kunst, nüchtern und sorgfältig zu philosophieren*“ von 1738 (vgl. u.a. Edeh 2003, 57ff.). Dort entfaltet Amo nach einem Überblick über die traditionellen Felder des Wissens, wie Jurisprudenz, Theologie und Mathematik und einer Warnung vor Pedanterie sowohl als Vielwisserei, v.a. soweit es sich um Unnützes handelt (er bezieht sich dabei auf Thomasius), seine Lehre, die der Philosophie die Aufgabe des kontinuierlichen Erkennens der Dinge und der Vervollkommnung des Menschen auf allen Gebieten, von der natürlichen Existenz bis hin zur ewigen Glückseligkeit, zuweist (*Partis Generalis Cap. II, Membrum II §§ 4-6*) und kritisiert diejenigen, die in ihr „heutzutage“ nur einen Verstandesakt ohne Verbindung zu ihrer pragmatischen Seite sehen. Philosophie ist Weisheit als Tugend und diese beweist ihren Wert in der Handlung (ebd. § 1). Nicht nur durch die Bezugnahme auf Ciceros „*De Officiis*“ in diesem Kontext zeigt sich eine Nähe zu stoischen Prinzipien (vgl. auch *Partis Generalis Cap. V Membrum I § 11*, wo als gute Wirkungsweise der Seele die Mäßigung der natürlichen Instinkte und des sinnlichen Begehrens identifiziert wird). Im umfangreicheren speziellen Teil des Werkes erläutert der „schwarze Philosoph in Halle“ seine Auffassung von den Aktivitäten der menschlichen Seele beim Vorgang des Erkennens, von der Begriffsbildung über die Reflexion, bis hin zur Logik mit samt den Regeln der Syllogistik, der Kritik und Hermeneutik. Er befindet sich dabei trotz einiger deutlicher Abweichungen – etwa seiner religiösen Fundierung der Ethik – im Umfeld der Wolffschen Schule (Edeh 2003, S. 164).

Nach einigen Jahren der Lehre als Magister legens der Philosophie und der freien Künste in Halle und Jena sah sich Anton Wilhelm Amo von seinen Gönnern verlassen (Ludewig war gestorben) und rassistischen Repressalien ausgesetzt, die ihn dazu veranlassten, im Jahr 1747 nach Afrika zurückzukehren. 1747 wird er noch als Bürger Jenas erwähnt, doch dann verschwindet seine Spur, bis auf den Bericht eines schweizer Schiffsarztes, der im Dienst der niederländischen Westafrika Companie den „beroemden Heer Anthonius Guilielmus Amo Guinea Afer, Philosophiae Dr. et Artium Liberalium Magister“ 1753 in Axim im

heutigen Ghana besuchen ging (vgl. Brentjes 1976, S. 66 u. 69, Firla 2012, Dokumente, Halle 1968, 297).

Anton Wilhelm Amo hat sich mit seiner Kritik an dunklen, rational nicht zu begründenden Gesetzen, an Rechtsauslegungen, die sich allein am Wohl der Gesetzgeber ausrichten, und der Mahnung zur Humanität in der Jurisprudenz, die im Zweifelsfall immer Vorrang vor dem strengen Recht haben soll, als ein Humanist und früher Verfechter der Menschenrechte erwiesen.

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MICHAEL HUTTER

WISSENSCHAFTSZENTRUM BERLIN FÜR SOZIALFORSCHUNG



# Zusammenfassung

## Übersetzung und Dissonanz. Innovationsmuster in der Kreativindustrie

Die Zweige der kulturellen und kreativen Industrie bringen einen zunehmenden Strom neuer Produkte und Dienstleistungen hervor. Bei der Produktion dieser Neuheiten lassen sich zwei grundlegende Muster erkennen. Ein Disney-Film dient dazu zu zeigen, wie Formen der Bedeutung, die erfolgreich darin sind, emotionale Erlebnisse beim Publikum auszulösen, auf neuen Inhalt übertragen werden, und ein Beatles-Song dient dazu zu zeigen, wie neue Unterschiede zwischen Welten der Wertschätzung in neue Produkte verwandelt werden.



## I.

Imagine that you have this vague research idea, so vague, you find it hard to explain it even to yourself. Then, one day, you stumble onto a project proposal, or a proposal for an entire research cluster, and in that proposal, you find your own – no, not idea, but something even more your own – your own quest, your own desire for what you want to know more about, what you want to find out.

That is roughly what happened to me when I stumbled onto the self-description of the Cluster “Society and Culture in Motion”.<sup>1</sup> It’s the way that motion is conceptualized which caused my resonance. There are, the text states, entities called ideas, materialized in models, artifacts and even persons. These ideas are movable. They migrate in time, from one context to another. As they arrive in new contexts, they transform those contexts. In another document from roughly the same group of scholars, the proposal for a DFG collaborative research center, more detail is added. In this version, the core process, the motion that changes societies is called a translation, and the contexts are differentiated as networks of persuasion.<sup>2</sup>

Migration, transformation, translation – those are the resonant terms. I use them in my texts, when I want to describe how the esteem for highly original and innovative aesthetic artifacts wanders into other kinds of artifacts that are reproduced industrially and then are sold to their users. Does the value of an original invention – in architecture, or in poetry, or in videogames – does it migrate, like people, or some other organic species? Or is the change a process of translation, of “Übersetzung”, where one symbolic construct is reformulated in the grammar and semantics of another order of meaning? And how do the new ideas, aesthetic ideas in my cases, affect their environment? How do the minds of the persons

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<sup>1</sup> Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Kaufmann and Rottenburg 2010.

that are affected by them change, how do the orders of meaning change, and thus – how does society change?

Migration, translation, transformation – these terms are not viewed as alternatives. They are metaphors from the biological, the linguistic and the material world to capture different aspects of a social process. All of them have their limits of interpretation, all of them are crutches to aid in capturing the salient features of the phenomenon.

From my research, I would add a fourth aspect, a fourth crutch that I have found helpful, and that is the notion of dissonance.<sup>3</sup> The process of migration/translation is never smooth, there is always an invisible border to be crossed. That crossing is signified by dissonance, by mild or strong forms of rupture, before the new interpretation takes hold and becomes a matter of course. The sensory, musical metaphor is used to express that the change is not like a crossing of geographical borders. It is a change between worlds of understanding, a moving through a period of confusion, surprise, even panic. Dissonance – *Missklang* – is more than just disruption, it is a particular kind of constructive change – that is the salient point. Salient comes from Latin *salire*, to jump. The jumping point, *der springende Punkt* – that is the point at which someone's understanding leaves one level and is about to reach a new level. I found a certain resemblance to this sort of concern in the cluster's notion of an "interstitial space", in which orders are negotiated. Only that in my cases, there isn't much negotiation going on. The successful artifacts gain recognition because they overwhelm, because they make people feel alive with new opportunities and possibilities.

It is now high time to move from the level of abstractions to the level of empirical, historical facts. I would like to familiarize you with concrete cases of translation which I have investigated. My field of study are the cultural and creative industries. The sector, as a statistical entity, was introduced in the 1990's.<sup>4</sup> There are several variations of its size, depending on national preferences, but it encompasses, in general, three subdivisions: first, the Arts, Visual and Performing, and Cultural Heritage, second, old and new media, ranging from books to movies and videogames, and third the creative services, including fashion, design, advertising and architecture.<sup>5</sup> The common feature of all these

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<sup>3</sup> Stark 2009.

<sup>4</sup> DCMS 1998.

<sup>5</sup> UNCTAD 2008.

branches is the characteristic of novelty. The newness of the products is their major attraction. To make, or rather to invent a novel or a fashion collection demands creative acts on the part of the producers, and it demands creative responses on the part of the users. The audience of an opera wants the experience of being surprised by a new production, and the visitors of art museums admire the originality of paintings that were created centuries ago.<sup>6</sup>

This central feature of newness makes the sector so interesting for the study of processes of change. The creators of novelty are constantly searching for sources of inspiration, which they can then turn into, or translate into new works. These works are rarely material. In most cases, they consist of symbolic content, arranged in images or words or sounds. Quite often, they find these sources in successful works of the past. These works consist themselves of a myriad of ideas that are composed in such a way that the spectator, reader or listener is moved, thrilled, overwhelmed. Some of these elements from older forms of symbolic content are selected, they are modified and then assembled with other elements in a new artifact. That artifact must again have the ability to surprise and fascinate, and, in order to be a successful industrial product, it must also be reproducible at a cost that is low enough to sell it at a profitable price.

Perhaps you can see already how the notions of translation and dissonance become relevant for my research as well. My examples of cultural change may be small in scale and weak in their power to transform their surrounding orders of meaning, but they have the advantage that the symbolic forms involved can be registered in great detail, down to the mental reactions of the persons involved. This level of detail might help in understanding broader processes of change and innovation in our society.

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<sup>6</sup> Hutter 2011.



## II.

I will demonstrate my approach in two cases of translation and dissonance that led to highly successful novelties. Each of them constituted a major innovation in its branch of the creative industries, and in each case there have been voices that consider these works, or at least the larger cluster of works of which they are a part, powerful enough to even transform their epistemic, moral and material contexts.

I start off with a case that involves the first feature-length animated movie, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, produced by the Walt Disney Studio in 1937. The film project was of a size and complexity that demanded new organization structures, new production techniques and new pricing scales for distribution. The project was nicknamed “Disney’s Folly” in Hollywood, but he and his team managed to complete it.<sup>1</sup> The success was without precedent, it has been compared to the success of *Star Wars* in more recent times. *Snow White* initiated an entire style of making animation films, and the shapes and figures designed for the film have remained in the visual memory of generations of young people, around the globe.

The first and fundamental translation is evident: a European folk tale, written down in the collection of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* published by the brothers Grimm in 1812, migrated to North America. Disney translated it into a visual, musical-style presentation. That presentation took the form of colored drawings, which were reproduced and distributed in a large number of celluloid copies. The translation included a number of intermediary steps, like a theatre play performed in 1913 that was based on the fairy tale, and a movie which adapted parts of the play and which was seen by young Walt Disney in 1917. It might be worthwhile to study the ways in which the story was transformed, what was left out and what was added, but I will concentrate entirely on the visual content of

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<sup>1</sup> Gabler 2006.

*Snow White*, because that seems to be the dimension with the highest degree of inventiveness. Given our restrictions of time, I will focus on some early scenes of the movie.



*Fig. 1: Snow White's castle, Disney Enterprises*

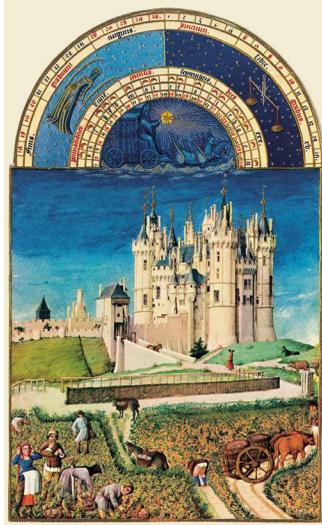
Here is a view of the castle in which Snow White lives with her stepmother, the Evil Queen (fig. 1). That castle has a number of sources, and these sources can be documented through images stored in the Disney Research Library which Disney founded with the clear intention of inspiring the shapes created by his drawing artists.<sup>2</sup>

The oldest is the view of the Chateau de Saumur, invented in its exaggeration of turrets and pinnacles by the Limbourg brothers, as part of the book of hours for the Duc de Berry, created around 1410 (fig. 2).

The Alcázar of Segovia was built around 1200, but it gained its unique slate spires centuries later when Philip II had them added in 1570 as a reference to the castles in the homeland of his wife, Anna of Austria – a theatrical gesture rather than an architectural tradition (fig. 3).

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<sup>2</sup> Allan 1999.



*Fig. 2: Limbourg brothers: Book of hours for the Duc de Berry, 1410.  
Victoria and Albert Museum*



*Fig. 3: Alcázar of Segovia, Frank Kovalchek / flickr*

Even more theatrical are the castles commissioned by Louis II of Bavaria. The most successful of them, at least in terms of continuing tourist attraction since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, is Schloss Neuschwanstein (fig. 4).



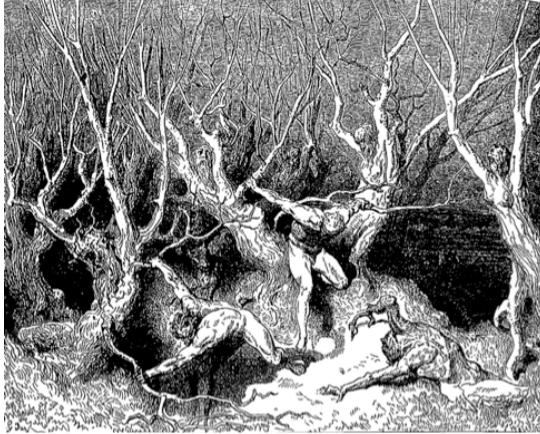
*Fig. 4: Schloss Neuschwanstein. Colored Photography, ca. 1900*

Back to the story: The Evil Queen orders her huntsman to kill Snow White in the woods, but he lets her escape. She flees into the dark forest and eventually falls down into a deep hole.



*Fig. 5: Snow White falling, Disney Enterprises*

The viewer glimpses into a dark world composed of roots that turn into the jaw of an animal, before a background in which the bundles of roots look like nerve cells. These interpretations of the dark world have migrated from Romantic drawing traditions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, most prominently the work of Gustave Doré and Arthur Rackham (figs. 6 and 7).



*Fig. 6: Gustave Doré: Illustration for Dante's "Inferno", 1861.*



*Fig. 7: Arthur Rackham: Illustration for "A Midsummernight's Dream", 1908.*

For the particular frame that shows Snow White falling, we can even compare the earlier artist's sketch (fig. 8) with the final version (fig. 5). Note how Snow White's skirt became much longer, and her legs more puppet-like.



*Fig. 8: Snow White falling, artist's sketch, 1937. Pastel, 19,2 x 25cm. Walt Disney Animation Research Library*

Here, I localize the moment of dissonance. The dissonance occurs in the mind of the viewer, most likely a child or a mother. Accompanied by pulsating music, Snow White leaves, falls out of her familiar world and is on her way to another world, the fairy-tale world. This is the moment, where viewers cover or close their eyes, and where it is decided whether they tell others that the novelty is “too much”, or “too little”. This kind of dissonance, admittedly, is very hard to document. To us, 75 years later, the thrill seems slight, but it has become slight because generations of viewers since then have been exposed to much rougher dissonances. It is also slight because the Disney technique has been and still is one that minimizes the extent of dissonance, and thus maximizes the number of potential buyers.

In any case, Snow White's fall continues. After a few hallucinating seconds she lands softly, sings the song *With a smile and song*, and is led by the animals of the forests to a bucolic glade (fig. 9).



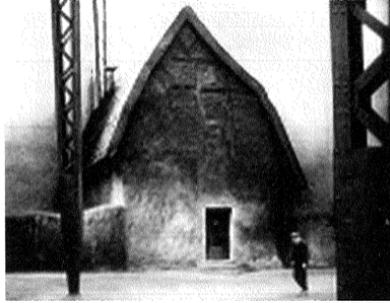
Fig. 9: *The dwarfs' cottage, Disney Enterprises*

The colors retain the menacing purple, but the sunrays break through, the brook glitters, white birds spread their wings, and, in the center, there is the dwarfs' cottage, tiny in scale compared to the surrounding trees.

The features of the cottage are, again translations. The documentation from the Animation Research library shows that the so-called inspirational artists – those who set the stylistic rules – used fairy-tale illustrations by Ludwig Richter, and a photograph of the house of the crazy inventor Rotwang in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*. There is also an obvious connection to the shape of the barns in Disney's native Marceline, a railroad town in Missouri, erected around 1900 (figs. 10 to 12).



Fig. 10: *Ludwig Richter: Illustration from "Buch für Kinder und Kinderfreunde", 1853.*



*Fig. 11: Fritz Lang: Metropolis – Dr. Rotwang’s House, 1926, film photograph, Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Stiftung*



*Fig. 12: Farmer’s barn in Marceline, Missouri, in: Allan 1999*

Similar processes of a transformation of old ideas into new ideas took place in creating the characters that act in the play. I will concentrate on two particularly successful inventions – the Evil Queen and the Seven Dwarfs.

The Queen combines stylistic components from two different periods (fig. 13). One of them is contemporary: the features of Joan Crawford are translated into the Queen’s eyebrows, nose and mouth. The second component is medieval: the Queen conveys a sense of majesty that “reaches back” to the year 1250 – a time when royal power was accepted without questions.



*Fig. 13: Anonymous: The Evil Queen, 1937. Cel set-up; 49.5 x 59.7 cm. Walt Disney Animation Research Library*

The sculpture in Naumburg Cathedral represents Lady Uta, consort of Count Ekkehard II of Meißen (fig. 14). It is one half of a series of six pairs of sculptures in Naumburg Cathedral, commemorating benefactors of the church and its clerical chapter. There are many documents, throughout that long period, that attest to the unbroken fascination triggered by her expression and her bearing. The admiration reached a high point in Germany during the Nazi regime, when Uta was chosen and promoted as the ideal of German womanhood.<sup>3</sup> The dissonance, in the Queen's apparition, is generated by two kinds of evilness. One is the evil of inhuman, unchangeable superiority that implies the inferiority of all others. This dissonance smolders, it adds to the aura of the character. The other one grips the spectator suddenly when the Queen is transformed into the Witch (fig. 15) – a figure in which ugliness, in a conventional kind of caricature, symbolizes the destructive nature of dark forces.

<sup>3</sup> Ullrich 2005.



*Fig. 14: Master of Naumburg: Uta von Naumburg, around 1250*



*Fig. 15: The Queen as Witch, Disney Enterprises*



*Fig. 16: Six of the seven dwarfs. Cel Set-up; 54,6 x 90,2 cm. Walt Disney Animation Research Library*

In the case of the Seven Dwarfs (fig. 16), the challenge, again, was the handling of dissonance. Dwarfs are semi-human, they are also creatures of the dark world, they work in mines, like trolls or gnomes. In romantic stories and illustrations, their features oscillate between friendly and hostile, and their features reflect that ambiguity. The versions by Kittelsen and Jüttner, both created at the beginning of the century, demonstrate that difference (figs. 17 and 18).



*Fig. 17: Theodor Kittelsen: The troll mines, 1907. 44,5 x 33,5 cm. Theodor Kittelsen Museum*



Fig. 18: Franz Jüttner, *Illustration for Schneewittchen*, 1905.

In Disney's version, the hostile component has been taken out. Now, they are harmless, childlike, comical figures. These are the figures that a few decades later migrated into the Disney Theme Parks, where visitors can meet them and shake hands with them. The parks were Disney's next ambitious project – *Disneyland* opened in 1954. *Disneyland* became proverbial for an artificial world of make-believe harmony. This larger project, of which *Snow White* was a part, did transform the larger orders of meaning, first in US society, then on a global level. Once the Disney vision of communal living had been turned into an affective, sensual experience, it began to influence the imagination of event organizers and city planners, and the expectations of their audiences.

### III.

I will come back to these findings, but will now introduce my second case of translation and dissonance. In the genre of Popular Music, the early songs of The Beatles rank about as high as the Disney Studio's animation film in cinematic history, and within that series, *She Loves You* takes, like *Snow White*, a special place. It was their all-time bestselling single record in the UK, their first hit in Continental Europe and a somewhat delayed success in the USA. Greil Marcus, a prominent music journalist, claimed that *She Loves You* would be the one record to explain Rock 'n' Roll music to Martian visitors. The phrase "yeah, yeah, yeah" became synonymous with the entire musical movement of Beat and later Rock music.

I will be brief on the translation of artistic sources. The general pattern, a translation of Afro-American blues patterns into European harmonic pattern, is quite clear. With respect to the genesis of this particular song, Paul McCartney said in 2000 that he took a song by the now forgotten Bobby Rydell as a starting point: "as often happens, you think of one song when you write another ... I'd planned an 'answering song' where a couple of us would sing 'she loves you' and the other ones would answer 'yeah yeah'." Co-author John Lennon said that the 'Yeah, yeah'-Phrase was inspired by the singing of Elvis Presley. When the Beatles went to the recording studio – and here comes the first dissonance – the recording engineer, Norman Smith, remembers: "I thought, Oh my God, what a lyric! This is going to be one that I *do not* like. But when they started to sing it – bang, wow, terrific, I was up at the mixer jogging around."<sup>1</sup>

These *yeah, yeah, yeahs*, which are shouts rather than articulated words, are only the surface. The core of the impact lies in the music. That is where the dissonance becomes real, even material in nature.

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<sup>1</sup> Lewisohn 1988, 32.

Together with a musicologist, we have analyzed the structure of that dissonance. Unusually, the song begins with the hook, the signature chorus that is supposed to stick in the listener's memory, rather than introducing it after some verses. The hook ends with a difference of two sung notes that is so small that it is perceived as one dissonant clustered sound, rather than a harmonic chord.<sup>2</sup>

Here is a central quote from the analysis of that clustered sound: "The particular effect of the final sound cluster lies not only in its duration, but above all in the friction which is caused by positioning a sixth chord in such a way that a sixth grates a fifth – a friction of a musical second. The consonant sound of two notes that are relatively near to each other in their frequencies generates a sound effect that is called 'roughness' in acoustical science. This interval of a second, provided by two equally loud voices, accounts for the particular tonal effect that surpasses the previous dissonances between human song and guitar."<sup>3</sup>

When they recorded the song, the producer hesitated. McCartney recalls: "We took it to George Martin and sang 'She loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeeeeeaaah...' and that tight little sixth cluster we had at the end. George said: 'It's very corny, I would never end on a sixth.'

But we said 'It's such a great sound, it doesn't matter'"<sup>4</sup>

The sound was truly great, and the Beatles kept using it in other songs, for instance, in *I Want to hold your hand*, and years later in *Ticket to Ride* and *Paperback Writer*. They had found a dissonance that was able to be moved to a higher, more universal level of significance. The roughness of that major sixth chord could be translated into other material media, particularly into clothing and appearance.<sup>5</sup> There was dissonance in boots, in jeans, in sheepskin coats and, of course, in long hair. But these fashions were only the outward signs of something that happened in the minds of those who participated in concerts, festivals or long afternoons in stuffy bedrooms.

Dissonances demand some form of solution. One solution is the return to the former state of harmonies. Another solution is a shift to a new constellation of meaning, one that tolerates and even esteems outside elements. That solution was performed by those who recognized each other in their response to the new, unheard-of sound.

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<sup>2</sup> See, or rather listen to [http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u30/she\\_loves\\_you.mp3](http://www.wzb.eu/sites/default/files/u30/she_loves_you.mp3).

<sup>3</sup> Hutter and Krönig 2011, 347.

<sup>4</sup> The Beatles 2000, 96.

<sup>5</sup> Hebdige 1990.

The agents of the new dissonance, taken together, constituted a cultural collective, with various names: Yeah culture, Beat culture, Rock culture. That culture – needless to say, an anthropological entity – had the power to transform ethical, epistemological and even material orders around them. In the Eastern bloc, it was perceived as a movement of resistance against political domination, in Western countries it changed lifestyles in families, in schools, in organizations and in other collectives.

I do not put the heavy weight of this claim on the small shoulders of the chorus of *She loves you*. All processes of social change take place in and along network structures, the case of the major sixth chord is no exception. As we look for the links to the past, we register only some of those nodes. They are the earlier ideas and artifacts that are referred to, either through direct recognition or in later recollections. That list is never complete, one can at best identify some of the major ideas that migrated and were recombined in an invention like the chorus of this particular song by the Beatles. Secondly, the invention, although singular, was still one in a series of inventions of similar nature in the works of The Beatles as well as the music of the many other bands that found huge audiences, some of them until today. The simultaneity of such similar events is a strong factor in understanding why similar inventions often happen rapidly and are thus able to generate a larger, more lasting social innovation. Thirdly, the actions and convictions of those who changed their lifestyle or protested against obsolete restrictions were not only exposed to the cluster of inventions that came to them through rock music, but at the same time to impulses that came to them through other sensory channels. Ideas migrate in any conceivable form, and sense-making is not limited to rational logic. The fairy-tale logic of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, played out in visual and musical sequences, was an example of that.



## IV.

I come to my conclusions. A first and central conclusion is that the terms translation and dissonance stand for complementary aspects of change. Translation stands for that which can be observed in the external world – practices, words, sound choruses, image sequences, material structures. Dissonance stands for that which can be observed in the internal world – the surprise, the joy and disappointment that flares up as new content is cognized, but not yet re-cognized in the minds of those who live and communicate in their worlds of meaning, in the iron cages of their regimes, their orders, their plays.

A second conclusion concerns the expanded meaning of translation. The movable elements, the ideas that have taken some sensory shape or form, are transposed – they are *über-setzt*. The process works on three levels, and here I repeat my statement from the introduction:

“We use metaphors from the biological, the linguistic and the material world – migration, translation, transformation – to capture different aspects of a social process. All of them have their limits of interpretation, all of them are crutches to aid in capturing the salient features of the phenomenon.”

Notice that none of these metaphors implies a connection to property or to possession. The new ideas are not borrowed, appropriated or even stolen – they are transposed, and therefore new inventions in their own right.

My third conclusion concerns the expanded meaning of dissonance. I attributed dissonance to a musical sound, where the structure and the extent of deviation can be analyzed, even measured. The reflection of such dissonance was found in the behavior of the sound engineer, who first cringed and then danced, in the behavior of the producer who called the major sixth chord “corny”, and in the reaction of the audiences who shrieked even louder when hit by the sound. In my first case, I attributed dissonance to the moment when Snow White disappears head first in the ground, and the audience gasps. With regard to the artists creating that movie over the course of three years, I could have men-

tioned the situation, reported by Disney's biographer Neal Gabler, when the project team that was charged with designing the characteristics of the dwarfs dropped the idea of making Dopey a mixture of successful comedians, like Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, and saw him as "a human with dog mannerisms..., in a way like Pluto".

My fourth and final conclusion concerns the transferability – or translatability? – of my observations from the context of aesthetic products to the larger social scene. It seems to me that legal cases, political strategies or scientific experiments are just as carefully constructed as the symbolic content of entertainment products. The emergence of new inventions in those fields of action can also be interpreted with the metaphors of migration, translation and transformation. Dissonance takes the form of controversies that can be louder than any shrieking audience. It becomes even clearer in these contexts that dissonance implies critique, and that any critique is an attribution of value, an internal, mental engagement that links lawyers, judges, politicians, journalists, scholars and scientists to certain new ideas, and makes them discard others. It is this mental engagement to certain nodes in the networks of meaning that makes us feel alive as we play our parts in the webs of social significance.

Which brings me, at last, to the person whose migration gave the name to this lecture series. As you might expect, I had not heard of Anton Wilhem Amo before I was asked to give this lecture. What moved me most in reading about Dr. Amo's life was his decision to return to the region of his birth, the town of Axim on the Gold Coast, now Ghana.<sup>1</sup> He migrated back to a network of meanings which he had hardly perceived as a child, in which the European languages he had learned were not spoken and the philosophies around the nature of sensory experience carried no validity. How did he deal with the dissonance? In what sense did he continue to be alive?

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## Über den Verfasser

Michael Hutter studierte Mathematik und Wirtschaft in Deutschland und in den U.S.A. und bekleidete Stellen an der Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität München und am Claremont McKenna College, Californien/USA. Von 1987 bis 2008 war er Inhaber des Lehrstuhls für „Theorie der Wirtschaft und ihrer gesellschaftlichen Umwelt“ an der Universität Witten/Herdecke. Von 2008 bis 2014 war er Direktor der Abteilung „Kulturelle Quellen von Neuheit“ am Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (WZB) sowie Forschungsprofessor am Institut für Soziologie der Technischen Universität Berlin. Von seinen Veröffentlichungen seien der zusammen mit David Throsby herausgegebene Band *Beyond Price: Value in Culture, Economics and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2008) sowie seine jüngste größere Veröffentlichung *Ernste Spiele: Geschichte vom Aufstieg des ästhetischen Kapitalismus* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 2015) genannt.